



St. Paul's
LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

2022-23 Children's Ministry Handbook

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Faith Formation Philosophy

Faith Formation at St. Paul's is built around passing on the faith to the next generation. We hope to equip, encourage and partner with parents and caregivers to share their faith with their children. Relationships are the cornerstone of faith formation. The children, youth and family ministry at St. Paul's creates opportunities for adults to be present in the lives of children and youth and to walk with them in their faith journey. From birth through 12th grade, we strive to have as many adults as possible in the lives of children and youth that support them, encourage them, share the Gospel with them and pray for and with them.

Five principles that guide children, youth and family ministry:

1. Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships, often in our own homes. Faith is passed on first and foremost in the home and we hope to equip, encourage and partner with parents and caregivers.
2. The church is a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and the ministry of the home. You cannot send your kids to church to "get" faith. It has to be a partnership.
3. Where Christ is present in faith, home is church too. The church is not a building, but a community of believers and that can be present anywhere, not just the building we gather together in on Sunday mornings and other times.
4. Faith is caught, not taught. The opportunities we have for our children and youth to see faith in action are vital to their faith development. It is not just about what we just teach (yes of course it is important to teach the faith), but our youth need living examples of people trying to live the faith and encouraging them in their faith.
5. If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian parents and adults. As adults, we all need to keep learning and be willing to grow and stretch. If we aren't growing and learning, how can we expect our kids to do it? You aren't going to pass on the faith if you aren't willing to continue to grow in your own faith.

**Five Principles taken from Frogs Without Legs Can't Hear by David Anderson and Paul Hill*

The ELCA is committed to a church wide call to discipleship, and that includes youth. We are focusing along with the ELCA on seven faith practices. Followers of Jesus are inspired to develop practices and patterns for living that characterize a life that is devoted to daily discipleship. Here are the seven common practices that have been identified as key to model and nurture.

Pray: Prayer is the way a disciple enjoys an intimate relationship with God.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Study: The regular study of the Bible and books that help to enliven its message is a key way the disciples practice loving and knowing God.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).

Worship: Worship is the practice of "stepping away" from the pattern and press of daily life to intentionally love God.

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together (Psalm 34:1-3).

Invite: The experience of God's loving touch in one's life is a gift the maturing disciple feels compelled to share with others.

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15).

Encourage: Disciples are not born mature; in reality, many disciples never grow beyond the infancy stage of their relationship with Christ. Growth in faith happens as we are mentored and as we mentor and encourage others.

Little children, let us love, not in word of speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18).

Serve: Practicing justice and doing acts of mercy and service put flesh on God's love.

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Give: In response to God's touch in our lives, we offer ourselves joyfully to others: our time, our talent and our financial treasures.

"...give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38).

*The seven faith practices, descriptions and Scripture references were taken from the ELCA's website.

The only way we can have youth that develop these practices is by working together. It is all of us—staff, volunteers, families and congregations—partnering together to pass on the faith to our youth. We want our youth to know and take ownership of this congregation as well as the congregation taking ownership of them and their families. We want them to feel loved, supported, encouraged and part of this faith community. We want them to know the church here at St. Paul's, the church in Waverly and the church in the world. There are things that the community here can do that the larger church cannot do. This community of faith can know our youth in a way the larger church cannot – they can support and nurture our youth in ways the larger church cannot. It's not about being single minded or limiting our youth, but about nurturing and supporting them. The congregation will be invited in to the youth and family program here at St. Paul's. It will not be a separate identity, but an integral part of this faith community.

Who is included in our children's ministry?

Any child from birth through 6th grade are included in our children's ministry. This includes a number of different opportunities and programs.

What opportunities are available?

There are several opportunities available:

1. **Splash monthly mailing:** This is for our children under the age of 3. It is a monthly newsletter mailed to your house that has articles and activities to guide parents in development and faith building activities. If you do not receive, please contact Deb to get on the list.
2. **Milestones Ministry:** This is the foundation of our children's ministry. Milestones takes important events in the lives of our children and youth and lifts them up through learning, worship celebration and a special gift. Our milestones include baptism, baptismal remembrance, worship, prayer, Bible 101, first communion, entering confirmation, affirmation of baptism and graduation from high school. A schedule is included later in this handbook.
3. **Saints Alive:** This is our Wednesday after school program for ages 3 (potty trained) through 6th grade. It runs every Wednesday during the school year from 2-4:20 p.m. More details about this program are included later in this handbook.
4. **Sunday School:** This is a new re-addition to the lineup for this school year. It is geared towards students age 3 through 4th grade (possibility of adding something for older students in the near future!) that meets most Sunday mornings from 10-10:45 a.m. in the parish hall. There are special activities for families throughout the year. There will also be parenting classes offered throughout the year. More details and dates are included later in the handbook.
5. **5th and 6th grade youth group:** Once a month, these students (and their friends) are invited for

their very own youth group. Activities will range from fellowship, games, service activities and learning activities both on and off site. More details and a schedule are provided later in the handbook.

6. **Vacation Bible School:** Vacation Bible School is typically held in July each summer. It runs from Sunday through Thursday. Thursday is a family meal with a closing program. VBS is for children age 3 through finishing 4th grade. Those finishing 5th and 6th are invited and encouraged to be helpers for the week. **VBS 2023 will be held July 9-13.** The theme will be announced later.
7. **Children's Choirs:** Cherub Choir is for children preschool through 2nd grade. It is led by Karen Dickman and meets every Wednesday when there is Saints Alive from 4:20-5 p.m. Friends of the Lord choir is for students in grades 3-6 and is led by Erika Benschoter. It also meets every Wednesday that Saints Alive meets from 4:20-5 p.m.

Milestones Ministry



Our Milestones Ministry Program has four components. The first component is one or more learning events that children attend with their parents. These events are either held on a Saturday or Sunday morning and are taught by both Pastor Mark and Deb Bachman. During these sessions, we dive deeper into the topic that we are discussing and facilitate and encourage conversation between students, parents and children. This does happen differently with milestones with our older youth as the learning events take different a shape throughout the confirmation class process and high school youth activities.

At most of the milestones, there is some component that we give to families to take home and do together. It may be a booklet of prayers, a Bible story to read, or a conversation of faith in their homes. Parents are the primary faith former in any child's life so we not only encourage parents to come to these events with their child, but to take the conversation home.

Thirdly, we celebrate these milestones in worship. With some it's an acknowledgement of the milestone and with others, it's part of our liturgy. Worship is foundation in any Christian's life and it's important we lift up these special events with the whole body of Christ. As a congregation, we make promises to help these children grow in their faith and as a congregation, we support and encourage children throughout their years through these milestones.

Finally, at each milestone, there is a tangible gift for each child to take home. From their baptismal candles, Bibles, prayer booklets, chalices and quilts, these gifts give children and their parents to remember these milestones as they continue in their faith journey.

Dates for 2022-2023 Milestones

Baptisms: Happen throughout the year during worship

Worship: For Kindergarten students and parents—Sat., Nov. 19

Prayer: For 1st grade students and parents—Sun., Feb. 12

Bible 101: Sun., Sept. 18

First Communion: 2nd grade students - Sat., March 25 OR Sat., April 1; AND Thurs., April 6

Entering Confirmation: For 7th grade students—Sun., Aug. 21

Affirmation of Baptism: For 9th grade students—service will be Sun., Oct. 30

Graduation: For our 12th grade students—Sun., May 21

Saints Alive



During Saints Alive, children experience worship, games, hands on learning grounded in Scripture, snacks and more. There is a small fee for Saints Alive — \$100/ child or \$150/ family for the entire year. Saints Alive is for children age 3, and potty trained, through sixth grade. We are always looking for volunteers.

This year, we are starting a new curriculum that will cover the Bible (major Bible stories) in three years. There is a strong focus on discipleship traits that line up great with our faith formation philosophy here at St. Paul's.

When: Beginning Wed., Aug. 24 and running through Wed., May 24 from 2 - 4:20 p.m. We will **NOT** meet on Nov. 23, Dec. 21, Dec. 28, or March 15. If school is let out early (earlier than the early out) or cancelled on a Wednesday, Saints Alive is also cancelled. **Preschool Saints Alive begins on August 31!**

Sunday School



Sunday School is making a return starting Sunday, Aug. 28. It will run most Sunday mornings from 10-10:45 a.m. in the parish hall. This is for children ages 3 through 4th grade. Each Sunday morning, you can expect a snack, music, story time and activity.

The curriculum for Sunday School is based off of our lectionary readings that we hear in worship services. We want to reinforce what families are hearing in worship, but it is also stand alone in case you didn't make it to worship.

While there is no registration for Sunday School, we will ask parents to sign their child in each week, leave a contact phone number and then sign their child out when they pick them up. It's just to keep the children safe and protected. At the sign in/out table, there will also be resources that parents can take home to reinforce the lessons at home if wanted. We will also need some volunteers. A sign up sheet will be posted online that parents can choose to sign up to help. We will ask that anyone who volunteers fills out a background check form. It's our policy that anyone working with children and youth have one completed every three years.

The Parish Education Board will also be offering a once a month parenting class on the 3rd Sunday of the month starting in October. This will range from videos to speakers to discussion to simply sharing strategies. The Parish Education Board will be asking for feedback as we meet to get more ideas and ideas of what is needed from parents.

Dates to be aware of:

Sept. 11: No Sunday School due to God's Work Our Hands service day (service opportunities available for all ages)

Oct. 16: First parent class (most classes will be on the 3rd Sunday of the month)

Oct. 30: Special Reformation activity (parents and students together)

Nov. 6: No Sunday School due to All Saints Brunch

Nov. 13: Advent Fair (preparing for Advent activities to be used at home)

Dec. 25 & Jan. 1: No Sunday School due to Christmas Break

Feb. 12: Lent Fair (preparing for Lent activities to be used at home)

April 9: No Sunday School due to Easter Breakfast and Easter

May 7: Last day of Sunday School

5th and 6th grade youth group

The 5th and 6th grade youth group will meet once a month on Sunday afternoons. The usual time will be 12-2 p.m., but that will vary depending on the activity. Some will be held at the church and some will be offsite. When events are held at the church, students will be asked to bring a small sum of money to cover pizza or another type of lunch for that day. Information for each month's activity will be publicized a month before. The dates are below to mark your calendars.

Sept. 18
Dec. 11
March 5

Oct. 16
Jan. 15
April 16

Nov. 27
Feb. 12
May 7

Communication

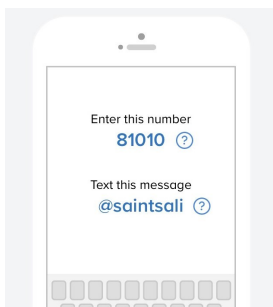
Communication is key to keeping parents up to date with what is happening. A weekly email will be sent of what is happening each week, any announcements, upcoming activities or deadlines, and other information. Email addresses will not be shared and used for communication purposes only.

If you do not currently receive the weekly e-news, go to <https://www.stpaulswaverly.org/newsletter-sign-up/> to sign up for both the children's ministry newsletter as well as the church announcements and other lists (there is a separate youth ministry email).

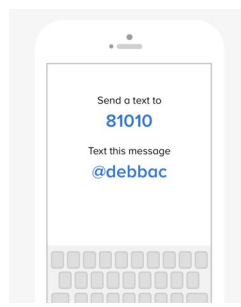
We also have a Facebook group that has a post almost everyday (or that's the hope!). You can join that and keep up to date there as well. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/664153864578795> (It's called St. Paul's Faith Formation.)

Texting is another way to pass along quick and vital information. There is a texting group for Sunday School, 5th and 6th grade and for Saints Alive. The three photos below show the way to join the groups for both of them. For Saints Alive, texting will only be used in case of cancellation or a change in programming. I am committing to using them more often this year!

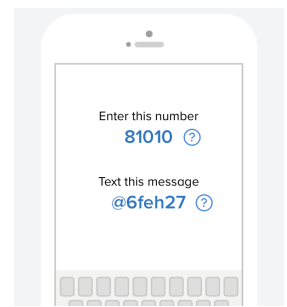
To join the Saints Alive group, use the information below.



To join the Sunday School group, use the information below.



To join the 5th/6th grade group, use the information below.



Inclement Weather

On Wednesdays, the policy remains that if school lets out or is cancelled due to weather, there will no programming for children or youth. We will post it on KWWL, the website, Facebook, emails will be sent as well as a text to those subscribed to the texting list.

For Sunday events, we will play it by ear! We want to keep families safe and if the weather is really bad, we will post on Facebook, KWWL, we will send emails and texts to let you know as best as we can!

Programming Behavior Covenant

Children's programming at St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School strives to be place where Christian values are practiced, and students have a positive and rewarding experience of God, faith and community. We believe following guidelines will helps provide these experiences. By signing below, you and your student understand the expectations made clear by St. Paul's Children's Ministry.

I promise to treat other students in a way that models the behavior of Jesus.

I will speak about others in kind and caring ways.

I will act in respectful and helpful ways toward other students, leaders and helpers.

I will take good care of church and school property.

I will be on time.

I will not go to places in the church where there is no adult supervision.

I will follow all directions that are given to me from staff and volunteers.

I understand that if I do not follow this covenant, my actions may exclude me from programming.

If the covenant is broken, there is a three step process we will take:

1. Conversation with the student when it happens (or as soon as possible following the incident). Parents will be notified.
2. If it happens a second time, parents will be asked to come in with their child to have a conversation with the Director of Faith Formation and/or the Lead Pastor.
3. If it happens a third time, a meeting with the Director of Faith Formation and Lead Pastor will be held to talk about the next steps with the child and their behavior.