

Children's Ministries News

St. Thomas Church, Newark, DE

September/October 2016

Welcome to St. Thomas Children's Ministries for another great year!! In this newsletter you will find useful information about our regular programming as well as highlights of special events that are coming up. Please read carefully and find out how your family can be involved!!



Blessings of Backpacks (and other items?)

On September 4, Father Paul will be blessing backpacks for all students who bring them as a way to start the school year on the right path. All who desire to participate are welcome to participate, regardless of age.



Regular Weekly Children's Worship

Regular Children's Worship will begin again on September 11 for children ages 3 years to 6th grade. Registration for Sunday School will begin at 9:15 in the Great Hall on September 11 and will be followed by a short introduction to St. Thomas' children's and confirmation programs. The children will then join their worship leaders for a shortened session. We will again be using *Godly Play* for children 3 years to 3rd grade and *Living the Good News* for children in grades 4 to 6. In each of the classrooms, we will follow a worship schedule that mimics the liturgy of the Episcopal Church: greeting and opening prayer, liturgy of the word, response in the form of art and prayer, then feast and fellowship. The older children will also participate in activities which will give them a deeper understanding of our Episcopal faith and traditions.

We will meet weekly for children's worship (Sunday School) from 9:30 to 11:10 in the Undercroft. The only exceptions will be Family Church on September 25 and October 30. Please try to bring your child as close to start time as possible. But if being a bit late is necessary, don't hesitate to send him or her downstairs. Some worship/fellowship time is better than none. Below is a typical schedule of our worship time.

9:30-9:45	Building the Circle/Getting Ready	10-15 minutes
9:45-10:05	The Lesson and Wondering	20 minutes
10:05-10:30	Individual Response Time	25 minutes
10:30-10:35	Putting Things Away/Cleanup	5 minutes
10:35-10:45	Bible Reading	10 minutes
10:45-10:55	Great Thanksgiving/Prayers	10 minutes
10:55-11:05	Feast	10 minutes
11:05-11:10	Blessing	5 minutes

*Times are approximate, will vary with age of children, size of class, time of year, and special circumstances.



Family Church Sunday

September 25 and October 30 will be Family Church Sundays. The children and youth are again invited to serve as ushers, readers and communion assistants during the 10:30 service. In addition, Father Paul will be delivering a grab bag sermon. Please encourage and support your children's participation in the service in whatever way her or she is interested. Let Belinda Young-Payne know who is interested. Readings can be provided early and training is available for any service role. Children are invited to bring anything that is not alive to put in the grab bag.



UNICEF Sunday

October 30 is UNICEF Sunday at St. Thomas. The children of St. Thomas will be participating in Trick or Treat for UNICEF again this year. We will spend the month of October talking about the campaign and who and what the money collected is used for. Then on Oct. 30, the children will give a presentation during the 10:30 service and then collect donations at offering time and after the services. Children's Ministries will also host coffee hour on October 30. Please help us by practicing your child's part with him or her, bringing your change (or larger amounts if you like) on Oct. 30 and/or bringing a sweet or savory snack to share for coffee hour.



WAYS THAT PARENTS CAN SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY

As we have done in the past, this year we are asking families to donate their time, talent and/or resources to support our Children's Worship/Sunday School program. There are several ways to do this:

The first, of course, is to visit a time or two in your child's classroom. There are two benefits of this. First, you will be able to experience firsthand what we do in Godly Play or with Living the Good News. Second, your child will feel that you value what he or she is doing in their classroom.

The second way is to be in the library from 9:15 to 9:30 with the children who are waiting for Sunday school so that the teachers will have an uninterrupted time to prepare for the day and to pray together.

The third way is to donate supplies (e.g., goldfish crackers, popcorn, animal crackers, cheese crackers, pretzels, light colored juices or water) or money for supplies for our feast. These things can be sent in to your child's classroom, given to me or another children's worship leader or placed in the marked bin in the Great Hall. If each family made one donation a year to our Feast supplies, then we would have enough for the entire program year.

The fourth way is to be the coordinator of our annual Christmas pageant. We are seeking someone to coordinate the various activities/committees necessary: rehearsals, costumes, props, snacks for the children. Of course, the children's worship leaders would be available and willing to support whoever was coordinating.