

St. John's Church School Handbook 2009-2010

“Let the children come to me,
and do not hinder them,
for the Kingdom of God
belongs to such as these.”

- Mark 10:14

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September 13, 2009

Dear St. John's Parishioners,

The Christian education and formation of our youth is one of our most important responsibilities as parents and as a church. At each baptism at St. John's Church, the entire congregation is asked the following question:

"Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?"

And we all respond with a resounding, "WE WILL!"

So, this Christian formation program and these young disciples are depending on all of us: Teachers, Substitute Teachers, Pageant and Passion Story Coordinators, Lenten Volunteers, Vacation Bible School Volunteers, and above all parents.

Parents play the central role in the religious development of the children at home and by bringing them to worship and to class. So, we hope this handbook makes your jobs easier. Within it, you have a list of schedules and programs which can enrich your child's spiritual journey.

We look forward to an exciting year where all of us have the opportunity to grow in our faith from one another!

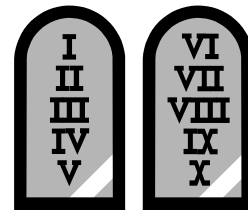
Faithfully,

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MISSION STATEMENT AND GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Mission Statement

The mission of St. John's Church School is to fulfill the baptismal covenant by equipping the children and youth of St. John's Church for a life of fruitful Christian service and to encourage their interest and involvement in the life of the parish. In seeking to accomplish this mission, our teachers, the Youth Christian Education Committee members, parish staff and clergy will strive to achieve the following objectives:



1. Minister to each child as a unique child of God;
2. Proclaim the Gospel to our children in ways that empower them to receive and respond to God's love;
3. Assist their formation as well-rounded Christians who participate fully in the life and mission of the Kingdom of God, embodying the five promises of the Baptismal Covenant;
4. Help them explore what it means to be a Christian within the Episcopal tradition; and
5. Instill in them a sense of freedom, joy, and confidence in their Christian faith as they grow to face the challenges of our world.

General Expectations

Class Meetings

Church School Classes meet immediately after the 9:00 a.m. service every Sunday except for those Sundays designated on the enclosed calendar as having no classes. If you worship at the 11:15 a.m. service, please make sure that students are in their classrooms by 10:10 a.m. Students are dismissed at 11:00 a.m. (Please see "Children's Safety at St. John's Church on the following page.)

Session Format

Within the general framework established by the curriculum and this handbook, teachers are encouraged to conduct classes and present material in the way that they believe will be most effective for their particular class. We suggest that a general framework be followed:

- *Attendance is taken and new people are introduced to the class.
- *Presentation of the lesson for the day
- *Crafts and/or activities (depending on the age level)
- *Closing Prayer Time (At this point, prayer requests can be shared and a closing prayer will be offered by either a teacher or a student.)

Classroom Discipline

In order to make class an enjoyable experience, a degree of discipline is necessary. Students are expected to be attentive and respectful of the rights of others. Occasionally, behavior problems may be encountered that go beyond natural exuberance. When problems occur, teachers should speak with Lisa Fikes.

Children's Safety at St. John's Church

At St. John's Church, we are blessed with a caring community of people. This is especially manifested in the care we exhibit for the children within our congregation. Children are our greatest asset, and it is the responsibility of the entire congregation to be aware of behavior that can affect their health and safety.

It is unsafe for unsupervised students to be in the Church School classrooms or wandering the halls when there are no adults present. During class time and worship, please keep tabs on your children and make sure they are under your supervision unless they are in the classroom with an adult or Children's Chapel with adult teachers and leaders.

Church School begins five minutes after the conclusion of the 9:00 a.m. service.

Unless previous arrangements with the teacher have been made, children in the Pre-school through Second Grade Church School classrooms are to be dropped off and picked up at the end of class by their parents or caregivers in the classroom.

All other students will be released after class and should meet their parents or caregivers in Shears Hall.

Sometimes children are so excited to be with their friends that they forget to watch for hazards on the church grounds. As adults, it is especially important for us to drive in the parking lot in a manner which will allow us to be on the lookout for unexpected behavior. Please slow down; it is better to be late for church than to put a child at risk.

At St. John's Church, we are committed to offering a safe and nurturing environment for people of all ages. With your care and consideration this can continue.

CURRICULUM



PRESCHOOL THROUGH SIXTH GRADES:

Episcopal Children's Curriculum

The Episcopal Children's Curriculum (ECC) is the primary tool we use in the Preschool through 6th Grade classrooms. Based on the central place of worship in the lives of Christians, its mission, as stated in the ECC, includes the following:

- To share the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ as revealed through Scripture, tradition, and reason;
- To take seriously the baptismal covenant as the foundation for the Christian education of our children;
- To rely on the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Hymnal as our primary sources for teaching in Episcopal parishes and congregations; and
- To help children discern clearly what it means to be a Christian within the Episcopal tradition.

Within that mission, the ECC focuses on four general areas of study: Old Testament, New Testament, Sacraments, and the Church. These four areas are studied each year at age appropriate levels.

To designate the years within each age level, three symbols have been adopted: Shell (in the year that Baptism is studied); Chalice (in the year that the Eucharist is studied); and Cross (in the year that worship is studied). **From September 2009-May 2010, we will be using the Chalice curriculum guide, which means that there will be an added emphasis on the Eucharist.**

SEVENTH GRADE PRE-CONFIRMATION CLASS AND EIGHTH GRADE YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASS:

In the Seventh Grade Pre-Confirmation Class, the Bible is their textbook. Throughout this year, students will have an opportunity to see how all of the stories they have learned over the years in Church School weave together. They will see the history of God transforming God's people and ultimately drawing us closer in relationship to God through the life and ministry of Jesus. Students will also learn of Paul's travels and epistles and will look at the early Church.

Building on their experiences from the Seventh Grade Pre-Confirmation class, students are prepared to enter the Eighth Grade Youth Confirmation Class. Using the Episcopal textbook, My Faith, My Life as a guide, eighth grade confirmation students will explore the theology of our faith. They will look at such topics as the Trinity, prayer, and sacraments. They will also tackle such questions as: How should we as live as a Christian? Why do evil and suffering happen? And what do Christians believe about life after death?

These classes are structured so that students are encouraged to explore and raise questions in an open environment in which a variety of points of view are honored. At the end of this process, students can decide to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church.

SENIOR HIGH CHURCH SCHOOL (9th-12th Grades)

Using Scripture, tradition, and reason as our guide, the Senior High Class is a class which strives to relate our faith to our everyday lives. The curriculum often depends on what is happening in the world on that particular Sunday. All thoughts and opinions are welcome as we seek to learn from one another how to live lives that are pleasing to God.

