

Family and Children's Ministry at St. Luke's

Core Beliefs

1. St. Luke's welcomes children in worship.

"When we baptize a child into the family of God, that child has a meaningful place in what that family does as a group" (Including Children in Worship, 7).

2. St. Luke's takes pride in its intergenerational, multicultural worship.

"It is not only possible, but desirable, to develop worship which works for the entire community" (Children at Worship, Congregations in Bloom).

3. St. Luke's wants to model God's design for a community where individuals—no matter their differences—know they belong.

"When you welcome and involve children in worship, you'll follow Jesus' admonition to "let the little children come to me"—for they belong to the kingdom of God" (Involving Kids in Worship).

4. St. Luke's affirms and empowers Christian parents in raising their children in the faith.

"Parents are the best people to teach their children what it means to worship God" (Parenting in the Pew, 38).

Learn Together, Worship Together

Cooperative Christian Education

- ▶ Kids are split into **two classrooms**: 1) Preschoolers (ages 3–5) and 2) Elementary (K–5th graders)
- ▶ We use the Live B.I.G. curriculum published by Abingdon Press (www.ilivebig.com). Parents **rotate teaching duties** with each couple leading one class one Sunday per month along with the help of volunteer teaching assistants, if needed. These parents arrive 15 minutes early to set up the rooms and be ready to welcome the children. On non-teaching Sundays, parents participate in a parents' small group that runs concurrent to the children's time and reinforces family ministry.
- ▶ Parents participate in **quarterly meetings**. Families who have recently joined the church will go through an orientation/teacher training and be added to the rotation. At the meetings, all parents sign up in advance for the Sundays they will lead the children's programming and take home the lessons they're in charge of. The calendar will be disseminated to all shortly after the meeting and reminders issued the week previous to when the parents are scheduled to teach. Parents who unexpectedly have a scheduling conflict should contact another couple from the list and arrange a switch. They should then notify the church staff person who coordinates the master calendar.

Including Children in Worship

- ▶ We have redesigned the **worship bulletins** to incorporate graphic symbols for non-readers to be able to follow along and comprehend the order of worship (e.g., praying hands out beside prayer time and musical notes next to songs). This new design also benefits people with intellectual disabilities and the unchurched.
- ▶ **Integrated activities** allow children to bring God praise in ways that are age-appropriate. Children are sometimes invited to choose items from a box of musical percussion instruments, scarves and ribbon streamers during certain parts of the service. During the sermon time, a craft table with Play-Doh, coloring sheets and other quiet activities is set up in the Courtesy Room as an option for younger children. Activities always relate to and reinforce the theme for the day, and volunteers will guide the children.
- ▶ When parents need another outlet, we rely on back-up **nursery care** for children ages 4 and under, should parents so choose. Nursery workers for babies and toddlers will consider their jobs as "more than babysitting" and implement Christian songs, stories and other activities in a loving environment that fosters spiritual growth.
- ▶ We value the contributions children offer to the congregation and to God. We often have children help with **worship elements** by writing prayers, creating artwork for the altar, participating in drama, and taking leadership roles in lighting candles, ushering, singing, etc.

More Details

- ▶ **When does our family need to be there?**
Families need to be at church by 9:30 am on Sundays. The children go to their class and parents to their small group time. If it is your Sunday to teach, please arrive at 9:15 am to prepare your room and greet the kids.
- ▶ **Who can I contact with questions?**
KELSEY JOHNSON (kaj.rdj@gmail.com) is the children's ministry coordinator and plans family ministry events.
JERRICA GEORGE (georgefamily08@gmail.com) manages the master calendar and teacher scheduling.
- ▶ **What are other resources about kids in worship?**

Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Your Children into the Joy of Worship by Robbie Castleman. InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Including Children in Worship: A Planning Guide for Congregations by Elizabeth J. Sandell. Augsburg Fortress, 1991.

Involving Kids in Worship. Group's Children's Ministry Magazine. Online: <http://www.childrensministry.com/article.asp?ID=2206>

Children at Worship, Congregations in Bloom. Online: <http://www.childrenatworship.org>