

Some Learnings and Experiences for Growing in the Faith: Five- and Six-Year-Olds

For developing faith foundations, five- and six-year-olds need

- to develop and express their own identity as individuals and in relationship to others;
- to be guided in playing cooperatively with other children;
- to practice decision-making through optional activities;
- to develop a sense of stewardship by placing an offering in the offering plate, helping put materials away in the classroom, and seeing parents give time and money to the church;
- to be surrounded by adults who have developed satisfying relationships;
- to hear words such as *God, Jesus, faith, love, and Holy Spirit*; and
- to be surrounded by adults who live out their faith and who are comfortable talking about their faith.

For knowing the Bible and our faith traditions, five- and six-year-olds need

- to recognize the Lord's Prayer and Doxology; and
- to hear stories of Bible people who lived as God wanted them to live, especially stories that retell Jesus' teachings.

For relating to God and the church, five- and six-year-olds need

- to hear short stories about the church today and in the past;
- to participate in Holy Communion with parents or other caregivers and to be present in worship when the sacraments are observed; and
- to be introduced to symbols of tradition such as the cross, the baptismal font, and the Advent wreath.

For relating faith to daily living, five- and six-year-olds need

- to be surrounded by people who have experienced God's love;
- to experience prayer: seeing and hearing parents and other adults praying; participating in family and classroom prayer; and perceiving that prayer is good, helpful, and important;
- to use Sunday school take-home items during the week;
- to practice appreciating and caring for God's world; and
- to have opportunities for learning about and accepting all persons without regard to age, gender, ethnicity, or ability.