

# What We Want Your Children to Experience and Learn Through Our Resources



## Our Call to Ministry

To reach, empower, and equip children, and those who care for them, with resources that help them on the journey to

- understand themselves as children of God;
- explore and deepen their relationship with God through Jesus Christ; and
- love and serve God and neighbor.

## Our Task

Our task is to create lessons, books, and videos that help children grow spiritually. This is not an easy task, because the needs of children vary based on their situations and experiences. The needs of children are multicultural; they are economic; they are related to time and place and circumstances. The needs of children also differ according to their learning styles, their abilities, and their individual stages of physical, mental, and spiritual development. And most of all, the needs of children are always growing and changing.

Our task to help children grow spiritually also includes caring for the needs of the adults who care for children—parents/guardians, teachers, pastors, and the entire congregation. Without providing tools for these adults, our call to reach, empower, and equip children cannot happen.

## Objectives

To live out our call and accomplish our task, we have identified specific objectives that we will meet through our resources.

## Children will

- experience the awe and mystery of God's love;
- experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ;
- identify themselves as children of God, the recipients of God's love;
- respond to this love by commitment to God and to the community of faith through Jesus Christ;
- know the Bible and make its stories part of their lives;
- learn skills for reading the Bible so that it can be applied to daily life;
- experience the faith community through worship and service;
- connect with people of faith, both past and present;
- grow in discipleship through the spiritual practices of study, service, prayer, and witness;
- address life issues faithfully; and
- recognize the value of diversity in cultures and abilities within the community of faith.

## Parents will

- find help for their own faith and life skills and
- be given the tools to empower them to model and speak about their faith with their children.

## Teachers will

- be nurtured in the Christian faith;
- be given the tools that enable them to model and speak about their faith, especially with children; and
- be equipped with the skills and understandings needed to teach effectively.

## Faith communities will be encouraged to

- recognize children as an integral part of a vital community of faith;
- value the participation of children in worship, mission and service, and fellowship as well as in the specific settings of children's ministries; and
- be advocates for children in the communities and world in which they live.

## General Areas of Content

### Children will learn about

- the Bible—its stories, people, passages, and verses; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and skills for using and understanding the Bible;
- the church—its beginnings; its practices of worship; its sacraments; its call to service, mission, and outreach; and the relationships found in the community of faith;
- Christian identity—commitment to God; commitment to Jesus Christ; commitment to the church; commitment to the practice of spiritual disciplines; and commitment to one's own ministry; and
- Christian living—self-esteem based on knowing oneself to be a child of God; relationships with others and with the natural world; ethical decision-making; coping with difficulties; and the skills of critical thinking.

## Specific Learnings and Experiences for Growing in the Faith

We will be teaching most of the specific knowledge, skills, and values that children need in order to experience God's love, recognize themselves as children of God, and live out their Christian faith through our various resources.

*Some of our resources may focus more wholly on some of these topics than on others.*

## Knowledge

- Bible stories
- faith heritage, which includes stories of the history and development of the church
- language of the faith, including special words and symbols
- the elements of worship (sacraments, music, and so on)

## Skills

- coping skills and tools for handling change and tough situations
- decision-making
- spiritual practices, such as prayer, praise, and play
- Bible-use skills, such as being able to find books, chapters, and verses
- using Bible-study tools, such as atlases, concordances, and dictionaries

## Relationships and Experiences

- relationships with loving, caring adults who help them experience trust
- relationships with parents, teachers, and other adults who speak about their faith and model faithful living
- positive relationships with their peers
- baptism and Communion
- caring support of a Christian congregation
- experiences of being nurtured
- participation in acts of service
- opportunities to help others
- a sense of belonging
- being forgiven and forgiving others
- acceptance and participation in the community of faith
- commitment (to God, to Jesus Christ, to the church, to one's own ministry)
- awe and mystery of God's love
- awe in the experience of God's creation
- Christian living in response to Christian learning
- experiences of the reality of living in a multicultural world
- opportunities to be creative
- giving

## Attitudes and Values

- awareness that God is with us wherever we are
- identity as a child of God
- wonder and awe for God's world
- a sense of responsibility for creation care
- value for the diversity among people
- respect for the rights of others
- an understanding that God expects us to act toward others in fair, kind, and loving ways
- knowing that we are called to be followers of Jesus
- recognition that the Bible is an important book for Christians
- belief that every person is important to God
- concern for meeting human needs

## Age-Level Learnings and Experiences for Growing in the Faith

To help children grow spiritually, we have to understand how children grow and develop. But children don't develop faith in a linear way. The process of faith development is like a spiral, with each new concept building on the learning and experiences that came before.

Because faith formation builds on previous experiences, children need to hear the same Bible stories many times as they grow. Every time they hear a Bible story, they will bring with them new experiences and maturity that lead to learning new things.

We have created, and made available for download, one-page descriptions of "Some Learnings and Experiences for Growing in the Faith" for each age level. However, these age-level documents are limited. Though they describe the learning and experiences that are important for children at different stages of growth, no list can identify the needs of all children. No list can completely define the process of faith development for any one child. Use the lists as a guide, and be open to hearing how your child experiences God in her or his life.

## Bible Stories Every Child Should Hear

### Old Testament

- Creation (Genesis 1:1–2:4a; 2:4b-25)
- Noah (Genesis 6:13–7:16; 8:1-21)
- Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6; 18:1-15; 21:1-7)
- Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24:1-67)
- Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-46; 28:10-22)
- Joseph (Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1–40:23; 41:1-57; 42:1–46:34)
- Moses and the Exodus (Exodus 1:8-14; 2:1–3:22; 5:1–13:9; 13:17–15:21)
- Wandering in the Wilderness (Exodus 15:22–17:7)
- The Giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1–20:21)
- The Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9; 35:4–40:38)
- Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9; 2:1-24; 3:1– 4:24; 6:1-27; 24:14-28)
- Deborah (Judges 4:1–5:31)
- Ruth (Ruth 1:1–4:22)
- Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-28)
- Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-21; 7:15–8:22; 10:17-24; 16:1-13)
- Saul (1 Samuel 10:17-24; 16:14-23; 17:1–51a; 20:1-42)
- David (1 Samuel 16:1-13; 16:14-23; 17:1-51a; 18:1-5; 20:1-42; 25:1-42; 2 Samuel 6:1-19; 9:1-13)
- Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:1-15)
- Building the Temple (1 Kings 6:1-38; 8:1-66)
- Elijah (1 Kings 16:29-30; 17:1-7; 18:20-39; 19:1-21)
- Elisha (1 Kings 19:1-21; 2 Kings 4:1-7; 5:1-19a)
- Esther (Esther 1:1–10:3)
- Psalms (Psalm 8:1-9; 23:1-6; 100:1-5; 121:1-8; 139:1-24; 150:1-6)
- Proverbs (Proverbs 3:5; 6:6-8; 10:1; 17:17)
- Isaiah (Isaiah 2:1-5; 6:1-8; 11:6-9)
- Jeremiah (Jeremiah 23:5-8; 33:14-16)
- Daniel (Daniel 1:1-21; 3:1-30; 6:1-28)
- Jonah (Jonah 1:1–4:11)

## New Testament

- Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1:5-25)
- The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
- Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-66)
- Joseph (Matthew 1:18-24)
- The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7)
- The Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)
- The Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)
- Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:21-38)
- Jesus' Visit to the Temple at Age Twelve (Luke 2:39-52)
- John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22)
- Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22)
- Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)
- Jesus' Temptation (Luke 4:1-13)
- Jesus Declares His Ministry in the Synagogue (Luke 4:14-30)
- Calling the Disciples (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32; 8:1-3)
- The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)
- Jesus Heals (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 5:21-43; 10:46-52; Luke 4:38-44; 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 7:1-10; 17:11-19; 18:35-43; John 5:1-17)
- Jesus Performs Miracles (Mark 4:35-41; John 2:1-12; 6:1-15, 6:16-25)
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12; 6:5-15; 6:25-34; 7:12; 7:24-27)
- The Sower (Luke 8:4-15)
- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- The Mustard Seed and the Yeast (Luke 13:18-21)
- The Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son (Luke 15:3-32)
- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)
- The Ten Talents (Luke 19:11-26)
- Jesus and the Children (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17)
- Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
- Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19)
- The Widow's Coins (Luke 21:1-4)
- Mary Anoints Jesus (John 12:1-8)
- The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20)
- Foot Washing (John 13:1-17)
- Praying in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46)
- Judas' Betrayal (Matthew 26:17-25)
- Jesus' Arrest and Trial (Matthew 26:47-68)
- Peter's Denial (Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75)
- The Crucifixion (Mark 15:1-47; Luke 23:13-56)
- The Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18)
- The Appearance to the Men on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)
- The Appearance in the Upper Room (John 20:19-31)
- The Ascension (Acts 1:1-11)
- Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)
- Peter and John (Acts 3:1-4:22)
- Living Together in Community (Acts 4:32-37)
- Choosing of the Seven Helpers (Acts 6:1-7)
- Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)
- Paul's Conversion (Acts 9:1-25)
- Paul and Barnabas (Acts 9:26-31)
- Peter and Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43)
- Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48)
- First Called "Christians" (Acts 11:19-30)
- Peter in Prison (Acts 12:1-17)

## **New Testament (continued)**

- Timothy (Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:7b-16; 2 Timothy 1:5-7)
- Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)
- Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-40)
- Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-23)
- Paul's Letters (1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 13:1-13; Galatians 5:22-23a; Ephesians 6:10-20; Philippians 4:4-14; Hebrews 11:1-34)
- New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-6)

## **Language of Faith Children Should Know**

### **Christian Year**

- Advent (purple)
- Christmas (white)
- Epiphany (white)
- Lent (purple)
- Palm Sunday (purple)
- Holy Week (purple)
- Good Friday (purple)
- Easter (white)
- Pentecost (red)
- Ordinary Time (green)

### **Worship**

- Sacraments
- Baptism
- Holy Communion
- The Lord's Supper
- Praise
- Prayer
- Intercession
- Thanksgiving
- Offering
- Confession and Pardon
- Scripture
- Sermon or Testimony

### **Names for Jesus**

- Christ
- Lord
- Messiah
- Emmanuel
- Savior
- Shepherd
- Son of God
- Human One

### **Names for God**

- Creator
- Father
- Mother
- Lord

## **Symbols Children Should Be Familiar With**

- Cross
- Dove
- Cup and Loaf
- Water
- Rainbow
- Palm Leaves
- Empty Tomb
- Lily
- Butterfly
- Fish
- Candles
- Sheep/Shepherd
- Trinity
- Altar
- Hands in Prayer
- Church
- Bible

## **General Theological Concepts and Words**

- Creation
- Promise/Covenant
- Blessing
- Sabbath
- Prophet
- Good News/Gospel
- Disciple/Discipleship
- Body of Christ
- Christians
- Church
- Grace
- New Life
- Faith
- Child of God
- Reconciliation
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Justice
- Peace
- Incarnation
- Kingdom of God
- Ministry
- Servant/Servanthood
- Love
- Hope
- Joy
- Trust
- Holy
- Truth
- Miracle
- Community