

Targets for Learning and Discipleship
Ministry with Children and Their Families 2013-14

Our Youngest

Our 2 year olds experience wonderful Bible stories and begin to recognize that the storybook Bible has very special stories in it. They begin hearing about the person named Jesus who loves them. And begin to learn to trust people other than their parents and extended family to care for them. They experience prayers by listening to adults speak simple prayers, such as morning and bed-time prayers and meal graces.

Our 3 year olds begin with the introduction to the Bible as God's special book. We'll use a variety of story Bibles to begin telling the stories of God and we will surround these little ones with loving adults so that they continue to learn to trust other people (besides their parents) and begin to make their world a little larger. Trust lays an important foundation for faith. They will recognize the spoken word "Bible", know that Jesus is God's Son, and that the Bible tells them how much God loves each person and God's creation. We will also introduce prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for other people, especially family members.

Our 4 year olds focus on knowing that Jesus loves them and that Jesus shows us how to live God's Way. Their Bible knowledge is centered around recognizing the word "Bible," knowing that the Bible is God's Word and tells stories about God, God's people, and Jesus, knows there are 2 parts of the Bible (Old and New testaments), and can express their favorite Bible story or stories and locate them by picture in a story Bible. They will gain competence with some of the key phrases of worship liturgy and gain familiarity with the church year clock. They will recognize church as people who gather in a special place to learn about the greatness and goodness of God and our Lord Jesus and to praise God. Their prayer life is expanding with prayers of adoration and confession (thanksgiving and supplication introduced to our 3's).

Our 5 and 6 year olds focus on knowing that Jesus loves them and that Jesus shows us how to live God's Way. Their Bible knowledge is centered around knowing the story of Creation and several of the key Old Testament stories. They will know that the New Testament tells us about Jesus and his followers. They will grow confident in God's love as they are introduced to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the concept that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and belong in God's family. They will gain familiarity with the 4 types of prayers (adoration, thanksgiving, confession and supplication).

First through Third Grades

The 3-year block from 1st-3rd grade emphasizes the two sacraments – *Baptism* (being washed) and the *Lord's Supper* (being fed), and the *Bible*, God's love letter written to us. It all leads to the 6th grade year of Confirmation when our children respond with a resounding "yes" to Jesus' invitation to "Come and follow me."

1st Grade begins a strong focus on Bible skills; actively working on learning the books of the Bible in order and recognition of the New Testaments books. It is the beginning of discipleship training with family participation in *Serving Together*, and the study of *The Sacrament of Baptism* guides children to experience this visible sign of God's grace through Jesus Christ and know that they are "a child of God made possible by God's grace and welcomed into God's family."

2nd Graders continue with a focus on Bible skills; introducing use of the Table of Contents, chapter and verse, recognition of the Old Testament books, and the ability to sequence the major stories. Discipleship training continues with family participation in *Serving Together*. The study of *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* guides children to experience this visible sign of God's grace for us in Jesus Christ and know that they "belong to God, who loves them and they are fed at the table of God's family."

3rd Grade focuses on more advanced Bible skills and introduces interpreting the Bible, using reference materials, and categorizing the 66 books into their proper categories. It continues discipleship training with family participation in *Serving Together*. The study of God's Word intensifies and the role of the Holy Spirit is recognized as the Sustainer of life and the tie that binds believers together.

Fourth through Sixth Grade: The Journey to Confirmation

4th Grade begins the "Journey to Confirmation" – an integrated 3-year study, "The One Story of the Bible" which is an overview of the Bible. 4th graders primary focus is on the Old Testament. They will continue honing their Bible skills, knowing the 66 books, introduction to Biblical maps, understanding how the Bible came to be, and how we interpret the Bible. Discipleship training continues with family participation in *Serving Together*. A hallmark of this year is an emphasis on both the personal aspects of our faith journey, with the introduction to devotional Bible reading and spiritual practices, as well as our community of faith partners, with corporate worship and a Retreat with fellow 4th graders.

5th Grade is the 2nd year in the "Journey to Confirmation" – an integrated 3-year study, "The One Story of the Bible" which is an overview of the Bible. 5th graders focus primarily on the New Testament. They will continue honing their Bible skills, understanding how the Bible came to be and how we interpret the Bible. Discipleship training continues with family participation in *Serving Together*. A hallmark of this year is an emphasis on what it means to be the "church" and developing our children to be leaders for Christ.

A Retreat with fellow 5th graders helps to shape this group of children into a band of disciples. The 5th grade year provides solid preparation for the 6th grade year when our children profess their own faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, gain the privileges of church membership, and assume the responsibilities in the life of our church family that come with membership.

6th Grade-Confirmation is the final year in the "Journey to Confirmation" – Grades 4 and 5 studied "The One Story of the Bible," that provided solid preparation for this Confirmation year. Confirmands will focus primarily on articulating their own faith. Because your family said "yes" to God for yourselves and on behalf of your Confirmand, your young person's life has been different. Saying "yes" to God means saying "no" to other things. During this time, Confirmands will have the opportunity to understand more fully the church's faith and then to declare that it is also what they believe.

Discipleship training continues with family participation in *Serving Together*.

A hallmark of this year is the overnight Retreat when Confirmands will write their own personal statement of faith.