



St Thomas's Children's Ministries

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Welcome to St Thomas's Children's Ministry 2023-2024!! We are very excited about our plans to come together as a ministry and as a community of "wondering believers". And we hope that many new and old friends will join us this year. Our mission in Children's Ministries remains the same: to give our children a safe, loving place to discover and experience the living and present God. We strive to give our children new and exciting ways to discover more about God and who God is calling to them to be.

- **Goals of St. Thomas's Children's Ministry:**

- To provide a comprehensive, collaborative multi-age program with a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and easily available both online and in person. All of our curricula are intended to be multi-sensory, hands-on approaches to Christian formation. The children are introduced and enter into the religious language by: hearing the stories of God, wondering and responding to the stories, worship, prayer, Bible readings and music.
- To involve the whole family of the child in mutual ministry
- To be an active part of the overall St Thomas's community and mission
- To partner with neighbor churches whenever possible

- **Regular Weekly Children's Worship:** Sunday School will meet in-person at St. Thomas's three or four Sundays a month, gathering at 10:00 a.m. for fellowship and a snack then beginning the lesson/worship at 10:15 a.m. Children in grades K to grade 6 are invited to participate. Seventh graders and up are invited to participate as junior leaders. If community health changes make it necessary, our program will be held virtually on Zoom and families will be notified of the change. Our main framework will be a worship schedule that mimics the liturgy of the Episcopal Church: greeting and opening prayer, liturgy of the word, response in the form of art and prayer, and feast and fellowship. This schedule may differ by age group or week depending on topics and activities.

- **Weaving God's Promises** will be the main curriculum used this year and activities will be chosen each week to match the needs and interests of our group.
- **Confirmation Class** will be offered to youth in grade 8.

- **Supplies** for Sunday sessions and supplemental activities can be delivered or made available for pickup by families who are unable to attend due to COVID concerns. Please notify Belinda if this is needed by your family.
- **COVID Safety Guidelines:** We will continue to follow COVID-19 guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Episcopal Church in Delaware to ensure our safety and well-being. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available at all times for those who need them. We will strive to limit times of sustained close contact between participants to reduce transmission risk. In addition, hand sanitizer will be available and used before and after snack-time. We ask that families who are experiencing symptoms that may indicate infection with COVID, please remain at home and request materials be mailed to you.
- **Family Church Sundays:** Every last Sunday of the month will be family Church Sunday. On these days, children will attend the full service with their families. On these days, families will be invited to fulfill service roles in the church. A SignUp Genius will be available beginning in October for families to sign up to serve together. Training will be available as needed.
- **Bi-Monthly Family Fellowship Events:** Occasionally on Sunday morning but often on other days and times depending on the activity. Examples include Fall Festival, Family Movie Night, Holiday Cookie Exchange, and a family trip to an orchard or bowling.
- **Service Projects:** Kid and family friendly service projects 2-3 times per year such as Trick or Treat for UNICEF, serving at coffee hour, cleanup of different areas of church, making cards for parishioners not able to come to church, collecting supplies and assembling bags of supplies for Newark Empowerment Center.
- **Other Special Events:** Held about every other month, events may include a Back to School Party, Christmas Pageant, Lenten Tween Lock-in, Easter Egg Hunt, and a parish-wide Pentecost Picnic.
- **Adult and Teen Volunteers Needed:** Our team needs volunteers to serve as lead teachers, classroom helpers, and special event hosts. Leading education and worship involves an average commitment of one-two Sundays a month and an hour or two of preparation the week you are the lead teacher. Leading a family fellowship event, service project or special event could involve one time or many times, depending on your interests and would of course, include helpers as needed. This ministry is an act of both giving and receiving. The children and youth teach and inspire us as much as we do them. Training is available for all positions. We are asking this year that as many people as possible be Safe Church trained. If you feel called to be a part of children's ministries in any way or have questions about volunteering, please speak to Belinda Young-Payne or Madeline Johnson.

Proposed Children's Ministries Schedule for 2023-2024

Sept 10 Sunday School Kickoff!!

Sept 17 Sunday School

Sept 24 Family Church Sunday

Oct. 1 Sunday School

Oct. 8 Sunday School

Oct 15 Sunday School

Oct. 22 Sunday School

Oct 29 **Family Church Sunday/Fall Festival/Children Host Breakfast between services**

Nov. 5 Sunday School

Nov. 12 Sunday School

Nov 19 Sunday School

Nov. 26 Family Church Sunday

Dec. 3 Sunday School (Advent I)

Dec. 10 Sunday School (Advent II)

Dec. 17 Sunday School (Advent III)/**Potluck Holiday Lunch and Cookie Exchange**

Dec. 21 Parish Event: St Thomas Dinner/Special Children's Presentation

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve (Advent IV)/NO Sunday School

Dec. 31 Family Church Sunday

Jan 7 Sunday School

Jan. 14 Sunday School

Jan 21 Sunday School

Jan 28 Family Church Sunday

Feb 4 Sunday School

Feb 11 Sunday School

Feb 13 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Feb 18 Sunday School

Feb 25 Family Church Sunday

Mar 3 Sunday School

Mar 10 Sunday School

Mar 17 Sunday School

Mar 24 Sunday School/Palm Sunday

Mar 29 Good Friday Mini-Mini VBS

Mar 31 EASTER/Family Church Sunday

Apr 7 Sunday School

Apr 14 Sunday School

Apr 21 Sunday School

Apr 29 Family Church Sunday/Family Brunch

May 5 Sunday School

May 12 Sunday School

May 19 Last Day of Sunday School/Pentecost

May 28 Family Church Sunday/Pentecost