



FALL 2015

NEWSLETTER

**FALL DATES:**

Mark your calendar and join us!!!

Wed. Aug. 19th – 6:30-7:30 - GraceKIDS kick-off

Wed. Aug. 26th – 5:30-6:15- GraceOUTLOUD begins

Wed. Sept. 2nd – 6:10-6:30 – Preschool Choir begins

Sun. Sept. 13th – Grace Family Picnic (Meat & drinks provided, bring a covered dish to share)

Sat. Sept. 19th – Grace Family Bonfire & Hayride

Oct. 9th -11th – Grace Family Camping Trip

Oct. 25th – Grace Fall Fest

Nov. 7th – Shoebox Packing Party & Movie Night

Nov. 25th – No GraceKIDS Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 23 – Dec. 30th – No GraceKIDS Christmas Break

Jan. 6th – GraceKIDS resumes

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?**GraceKIDS END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION:**

We had planned to end a great year with field games, water balloons, ice cream and more!! However, the great downpour changed our plans. Instead we played a few indoor games and enjoyed ice cream.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

In June Grace was transformed into Sports Camp where about 200 campers learned sports skills and most importantly learned about Christ. Campers also enjoyed a visit from the Douglas the Sasquatch.

We ended the crazy Sports Camp week with a family movie night. "The Rookie" was shown in the gym.

In July Wes and Laura teamed up for our first Grace Water Wars. Over 600 water balloons were filled, a bouncy house inflatable was rented, and two slip in slides were built. Many families came out to get wet and have lots of fun!!!

Summer was brought to a close with an outdoor movie night. Families gathered in downtown Dalton and enjoyed watching "The Lion King".

**GraceKIDS WORSHIP CENTER**

Lots of work has been done to the GraceKIDS Worship Center. Since the spring an accordion wall has been removed, a projector, screen, and speakers have been installed. This summer the room was painted blue (the students voted). Currently, families are encouraged to purchase and decorate a ceiling tile for the room. Thank you to everyone who has pitched in and helped to make this room our GraceKIDS Worship Center. This room hosts kidsWORSHIP, GraceKIDS Wed. nights, and much more.

**CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

Mary McLawhorn and Heidi Long will continue to lead GraceOUTLOUD this year. Practice will be from 5:30-6:15 in the choir room. Children will be dismissed to go eat after the practice is over. GraceOUTLOUD welcomes everyone from first grade up.

Jeanne Rausch and Hope Parsons will lead the preschool choir this year. Preschool choir is for children ages 3 – K and will meet each Wed. from 6:10-6:30.

FAMILY MEMORY PLAN

Twelve children completed their memory work for the year. These children will enjoy a day at Lake Winnie. Congratulations:

Bethany Ayllon

Hudson Boyd

Elsa Geweke

Lina McDaniel

Benji Michmerhuizen

Kristen Michmerhuizen

Jaeger Rausch

Ted Vasquez

Sophia Velazquez

Avery Woodson

Cooper Woodson

Kinsey Woodson

If you would like your child to participate pick up a "Family Memory Book" from the Gathering Room, in the GraceKIDS Worship Center or online

(<http://www.gracedalton.org/#/ministries/memorization-program>). Work with your child regularly to memorize God's Word. Jennifer Woodson meets children in the GraceKIDS Worship Center each Sunday between worship and Sunday School to hear them recite verses.

TIPS TO SHARE:



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS:

(By Mary McLawhorn)

Exodus 4:11 *The Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."*

I truly believe that God planned all of our children to be who and what they are. He made some of them tall, some of them short. Some He made blonde headed and some He made brown. Some are stubborn and others are peaceful. Some can run and are good athletes while others wear braces on their legs or are confined to a wheelchair. Every one of us is different because God planned it that way. It wasn't a mistake or a fluke, it was a plan. We are all examples of God's plan but it is children with special needs that I want to focus on.

My son Will is a special needs child. While I was pregnant with Will I caught a virus called Cytomegalovirus (CMV). For me, CMV was nothing more than cold-like symptoms. For Will it was devastating. Although he recovered in utero and was born free of

symptoms, the CMV damage was done. Will has brain damage on the frontal left side of his brain. This damage caused cerebral palsy which is why Will has physical disabilities. Will's left ear drum did not develop. This means a total hearing loss in that ear. This hearing loss caused the speech delays as well as most of his communication issues. Will cannot distinguish background noise from close conversation. CMV also caused developmental delays, sleep issues, and behavior problems.

I know it is difficult to know exactly what to do or what to say around kids with special needs (or their parents for that matter). I am going to try my best to help it be less awkward. This is my advice- How to help your children learn to accept, befriend, and show God's love to kids with special needs.

1. Tell your children that special needs kids are all a part of God's plan. I am honored that I get to parent this amazing kid! Through Will I have seen some of God's most amazing love. I have learned patience and understanding that I know I didn't have before he was born. I do not see Will as anything other than a blessing from God. I hope other people see him that way too. God made each of us as unique individuals with unique qualities. Rather than dwell on the things that are wrong I choose to dwell on the things that are right.

2. Tell your child that special needs kids are normal kids in so many ways. Talk to your children and help them find ways they could make connections with special needs kids. Remind your children that special needs kids have feelings too. Will is just like other kids- he can be happy, sad, fearful, embarrassed, etc. Will wants friends. He wants to be a part of the group.

Communication is always going to be an issue with Will. He may not be able to talk but I promise you he hears everything that is said to him and about him. Encourage kindness, understanding, and acceptance.

3. Remind your children that special needs kids often move slower than everyone else. Encourage them to slow down and include their special needs peers in their play. Will loves to run and play but he just can't keep up with his able bodied peers. Too often I have watched him catch up to the group only to have the group take off again on the next adventure. Will always seems to be chasing the group rather than playing with the group.

4. Encourage your children to ask questions (and don't be embarrassed when they do it bluntly). I love to talk about Will. Special needs parents see all the looks and hear all the whispers from kids (and adults too). I would much rather talk to the kids and help them understand Will. I can explain Will in adult or kid friendly terms. I would rather tell children about why Will is the way he is rather than have them fear him because he is different.

5. Let your children know that special needs kids like Will are ok. Will isn't fragile. He isn't contagious. He isn't something to be afraid of. Will doesn't know how to communicate. When his emotions change he doesn't always express them the same way other kids do. He yells, he has fits, he grabs people, he pulls hair. All of these things stem from being unable to talk. He simply cannot express his emotions the way others do.

6. Finally, Let your children know that special needs kids often develop and mature at slower paces than they do. Will is a 6 year old in size but developmentally he is closer to a 3 year old. It takes Will's body twice as long to go through developmental stages than it does his peers. He will eventually master skills but he will do them on his own pace. This brings us back to God's plan for Will. God knew what He was doing when He created Will and all of the special needs kids in the world.

REMINDERS:

CHILDREN'S BULLETIN:

Children's Bulletin Clipboards are located in the sanctuary. These clipboards are meant to be a tool to help transition our children from kidsWORSHIP to corporate worship. If your child participates in kidsWORSHIP please do not take a clipboard instead help your child participate in worshipping with you.

KidsWORSHIP:

KidsWORSHIP is a "worship training" experience for children between the ages of 3 and 1st grade. This experience is designed to prepare children to worship corporately with their parents.

