

Children, Youth and Family Ministry Handbook

Included Inside:

- Sunday School
- Firelight
- Club 56
- Live Out Loud
- High School Ministry
- Milestones



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Philosophy of Children, Youth and Family Ministry

St John Mission: We are a community called by Jesus Christ to “go and make disciples” by equipping and inviting people of all ages to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

St John Vision: Growing the kingdom of God by living and sharing a life changing and passionate faith in Jesus Christ.

All that we do and hope for as a community is focused on expanding the kingdom of God by inviting and equipping individuals and families to live an authentic faith in Jesus Christ through celebrating God’s love in worship, growing as disciples of Jesus Christ, and living the purposeful life of a disciple.

The Children, Youth and Family Ministry at St John is built around passing on the faith to the next generation. We hope to equip, encourage and partner with parents and caregivers to share their faith with their children. Relationships are key in passing on the faith and being disciples of Jesus Christ. The children, youth and family ministry at St John creates opportunities for adults to be present in the lives of children and youth and to walk with them in their faith journey. From birth through 12th grade, we strive to have as many adults as possible in the lives of children and youth that support them, encourage them, share the Gospel with them and pray for and with them.

Philosophy of Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Five Principles that guide Children, Youth and Family Ministry:

1. Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships, often in our own homes. Faith is passed on first and foremost in the home and we hope to equip, encourage and partner with parents and caregivers.
2. The church is a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and the ministry of the home. You cannot send your kids to church to “get” faith. It has to be a partnership.
3. Where Christ is present in faith, home is church too. The church is not a building, but a community of believers and that can be present anywhere, not just the building we gather together in on Sunday mornings and other times.
4. Faith is caught, not taught. The opportunities we have for our children and youth to see faith in action are vital to their faith development. It is not just about what we just teach (yes of course it is important to teach the faith), but our youth need living examples of people trying to live the faith and encouraging them in their faith.
5. If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian parents and adults. As adults, we all need to keep learning and be willing to grow and stretch. If we aren’t growing and learning, how can we expect our kids to do it? You aren’t going to pass on the faith if you aren’t willing to continue to grow in your own faith.

*Found in the book *Frogs Without Legs Can’t Hear* by Paul Hill and David Anderson

Nursery

Age Level: Birth through age 3

Location: For Wednesday nights: The nursery is located on the lower level. It is in the cluster of classrooms next to the bathrooms. For Sunday mornings: The nursery is located in the Cornerstone room, next to the Faith and Life Center.

Time Open: The nursery is open on Sundays from 7:45am until the conclusion of the 11:00am service. On Wednesdays, it is open from 5:45pm until 8:00pm.

Check In/Out Procedure:

1. Please sign your child in with the attendant.
2. Please leave a diaper bag with supplies and instructions.
3. You will be asked to leave your cell phone number with the attendant in case that you are needed.
4. Please sign your child out when you pick them up.



Other information: There is no charge for this service and the nursery is staffed by a nursery attendant and volunteers. Nursery attendants are easily identifiable by their name tags. Please remember to be prompt in picking up your children after the event is over.

Sunday School—Spark

Age Level: Age three (by September 9, 2012 and potty trained) through 6th grade

Location: Ages 3&4: Preschool classrooms on lower level

Kindergarten—2nd Grade: Lower level (classrooms 107-110)

3rd Grade—6th Grade: 2nd Floor (classrooms 305—321)

Time: Sunday Mornings 9:30am—10:30am starting September 9th through May 20th

Check In/Out Procedure: See page 17 on Check In/Out Procedures

Curriculum: Our curriculum is from Augsburg Fortress called Spark! Spark is a faith formation program that gets children ages 2 through grade 6 excited about God's Word. Spark lessons bring to life 150 stories from the Old and New Testament through games, art, music, and science, to accommodate all the different ways kids learn.

The curriculum uses the Spark Story Bible for preschool through 2nd grade students. With colorful and imaginative artwork, the Spark Story Bible brings to life 150 stories from the Old and New Testament. Its engaging text makes it easy for kids to read stories aloud and follow along with others. And the adorable Squiggles caterpillar featured on every page spread helps kids focus on the lesson.

(continued on the next page)



Sunday School, cont.

3rd through 6th grade students will use the Spark Bible. The Spark Bible (NRSV) features stickers that introduce Bible marking methods to help connect kids with the Bible. It also includes kid-friendly introductions to the books of the Bible, along with definitions, facts, trivia, and questions to help kids think about their faith.

Worship: Each Sunday morning, students will participate in an opening or closing time with singing and learning about worship. Preschool children will have a time of singing in their classroom. Kindergarten—2nd grade students will attend the opening and 3rd—6th grade students will attend the closing.

Christmas program rehearsal (grades Kindergarten—6th grade) will take place during these times. There are additional rehearsals and those are on the calendar on page 20.

Students will also sing occasionally in worship at the 9:30am service. Dates will be announced in Sunday school announcements.

Other Information: Classrooms are open to children beginning at 9:20 a.m., when teachers arrive. Please do not leave your child in a classroom before 9:20. Please pick up your child promptly at 10:30.

Sunday School Together: On the weeks where there are no regular classes, there will still be an opportunity for students to gather during the Sunday school hour. These will take place in fellowship hall. Check calendar for dates.

Wednesday Night Schedule and Meals

Family Night at St John

Wednesdays at St John

5:00pm—6:00pm

Dinner served in fellowship hall. These dinners will be healthy, family friendly options.

6:00pm—7:15pm

Firelight (for Kindergarten—4th grade)

Club 56 (for 5th—6th grade)

Connect (for 7th—9th grade)

Adult offerings: Fall 2012 includes a women's Bible study and a men's Bible study

7:15pm—8:00pm

Kid's Zone (This is a supervised quiet study and activity time for children preschool through 9th grade whose parents are in programming)

7:30pm—9:00pm

High School (for 10th—12th grade)

Nursery is available for newborns through preschool age students from 5:45pm until 8:00pm.

Families will have the opportunity to sign up to help with preparations and clean up for the meals as well as providing desserts each week.

Menus include: Taco Bar, Baked Chicken, Salad Bar, Sloppy Joes, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Baked Potato Bar, Macaroni and Cheese, Chili and Chicken Noodle Soup, and Pizza.

Firelight

Age Level: Kindergarten through 4th Grade

Location: Fellowship hall on lower level and classrooms 107-110

Time: Wednesday nights 6:00pm—7:15pm starting August 29th through May 15th. There are seasonal breaks for Advent and Lent. Please check the calendar on page 20 for specific dates.

Check In/Out Procedure: See page 17 on Check In/Out Procedures

Curriculum: Our curriculum is from Augsburg Fortress entitled, Firelight II. This year's unit is entitled Circle of Seasons: Living the Church Year. It uses experiences and activities to get learn-ers moving — living what is taught. Firelight II is based on Bible stories. Firelight II moves faith education beyond simply being the handoff of information. Firelight II uses group cooperation not adult control to shape what kids learn, and provides a shared platform and comprehensive process for Bible learning that really sticks. Leaders add spice to the program by using and adding art, science, drama, technology, and even more options to the learning experience. This year's unit focuses specifically on anticipating Advent, celebrating Christmas and Epiphany, exploring hope in Lent and Holy Week, experiencing Easter, and playing through Pentecost.

Other Information: Students can be dropped off in the classrooms at 5:55pm. Students dropped off prior to 5:55pm will need parent supervision. Students can be picked up promptly in the lower level classrooms at 7:15pm or attend Kid's Zone if parents are still involved in programming.



Club 56

Age Level: 5th and 6th grade

Location: 2nd Floor rooms (rooms 302-321)

Time: Wednesday nights 6:00pm—7:15pm starting August 29th through May 15th. There are seasonal breaks for Advent and Lent. Please check the calendar on page 20 for specific dates.

Check In/Out Procedure: See page 17 on Check In/Out Procedures

Curriculum: Our curriculum is an extension of “Holy Moly” from Augsburg Fortress titled “Connect”. Through discovering bible stories and relating them to their everyday lives students will connect with each other. We will use large group gathering time, games, and small group time to dig into the lesson.

Other Information: There will be many service opportunities and fun activities to engage in. A couple to look forward to are the Food Scavenger Hunt, Trunk or Treat, Valentines for Elderly, Ice Skating, Spring Blast, and more!



Live Out Loud

Age Level: 7th—9th Grade

Location: Faith and Life Center and other rooms utilized for small groups

Time: Sunday nights 5:00pm—7:30pm starting September 9th through May 19th. Please check the calendar on page 23 for specifics.

Curriculum: Here We Stand and re:form are the base curriculums used and are supplemented with other resources to fill out the curriculum. Worship notes, service projects, fellowship events and learning opportunities are also part of this program.

Other Information: Students receive a Bible as they enter into Live Out Loud as a 7th grade student and Live Out Loud culminates at the conclusion of the 9th Grade year as students affirm their baptism. The Live Out Loud Handbook has all the program specifics and is available to families online after the orientation session on August 19th.



Junior High Ministry

The **Junior High (grades 7-9) Ministry** at St John is more than just the confirmation program, Live Out Loud. The planned events and activities that promote fellowship, service and learning with junior high students and their friends. These events and activities happen about once a month. A complete list of events and activities can be found on the calendar on page 23. Some highlights of these events for the upcoming year are:

- Romans and Christians
- UNI Lock In
- Game and movie nights
- Food Scavenger Hunt
- Commercial Party
- Mystery Dinner
- Ski Trip

The youth room is open once a week (after school on Wednesdays) for students to come and be in fellowship with one another. There are snacks available for purchase, games to play and time to relax in a positive environment.

On Wednesday nights, students are invited to participate in Connect. Connect runs from 6pm until 7:15pm. This program helps students to connect to each other, to God, and their faith to their everyday lives. Students can be picked up promptly at 7:15pm or attend Kid's Zone if parents are still engaged in programming.

Junior high students are also encouraged to put their gifts to use in volunteering for many of the activities at St John.

Senior High Ministry

The **Senior High (grades 10-12) Ministry** at St John encourages our youth to dig deeper into their faith journeys through fellowship, service and learning events and activities. Senior High students have opportunities to gather twice a week for fellowship and Bible study. Tuesday nights (6pm-8pm) provide a time for students to gather in a positive environment to support one another, share a meal and have some fun.

This year, Wednesday nights start with the youth room open from 3:30pm until 5pm. Then a meal is served at 5:00pm. We encourage our high school students to then volunteer in our children's and junior high programming from 6pm until 7:15pm. At 7:30pm, high school students will gather in the youth room for a time to dig into Scripture together and meet in small groups.

Topics this year include: books of the Bible studies, media choices, characters of the Bible studies, and more.

High school students plan and lead the Good Friday service here at St John. Practices start after Spring Break on Sunday evenings.

Milestones

Milestones are about marking the journey of faith for children, youth and families. The entire congregation is involved in celebrating during worship and partnering with parents to pass on a passionate and life-changing faith in Jesus Christ to the future generations. Milestones bring an awareness of the presence of God not only to children but families and individuals of all generations through a vital partnership between home and congregation. Milestones brings God's presence into the home and the rituals of daily life into the congregation. Milestones involves parents, caregivers, and other caring adults with the Christian education of children and youth and engages them in their own adult faith formation. Milestones support and encourage children and families as they grow in their faith.

Milestones celebrated at St John:

- Baptism
- Baptismal Birthday (age 1)
- Entering Sunday School (3 year olds)
- Prayer and Worship (Kindergarten)
- Bible (3rd Grade)
- Communion (5th Grade)
- Faith-Filled Relationships (6th Grade)
- Entrance into Confirmation (7th Grade)
- Affirmation of Baptism (9th Grade)
- Driver's License (10th Grade)
- Graduation (12th Grade)



Special Events

Vacation Bible School: Vacation Bible School will be offered this summer in addition to three days of Day Camp throughout the summer. The dates for the Day Camp are included in the calendar. The dates for Vacation Bible School have not yet been set.

Carnival: Each year St John hosts a carnival that is fun for all ages! There are games, food, activities, and prizes....all free of charge. This year's Carnival will be held on Wednesday, February 6th.

Easter Egg Hunt: The Easter Egg Hunt encourages families to come together to learn about the Easter story. The morning includes crafts and activities for families to do together, a time to hear the Easter story, snacks and of course an egg hunt. This is for families with children from birth through 4th grade. This year's hunt will be Saturday, March 30th 9:00am—10:30am.

Advent Family Style Worship: Advent Family Style Worship runs for three weeks in December and is geared towards families with children in preschool through 6th grade. Advent Family Style Worship is a service from 5:45pm until 6:10pm and focuses on encouraging families to learn more about the Christmas story, but also about the importance of waiting for the coming Christ child. Activities for during the week are available to take home.

Lent Family Style Worship: Lent Family Style Worship runs for six weeks in February and March and is geared towards families with children in preschool through 6th grade. Lent Family Style Worship focuses on encouraging families to learn more about the season that precedes Easter and why the season of Lent is important in the lives of Christians. Activities for during the week are available to take home.

Safety, Weather and Emergency Procedures

Background Checks: To assist in ensuring the safety of children and youth who participate in St John programming, we conduct background checks on our volunteers. There are two forms to fill out and will be kept on file. Each volunteer needs to fill out these forms each year.

Medical Release Information: We require a *Medical Release/Permission Form* from each student that participates in St John programming. This ensures proper treatment of each child in case of an emergency and authorizes your child to travel off church property. It is important that we know of any pre-existing conditions, medications or allergies that a student may have along with the phone number of their physician. Any changes in medical condition need to be updated and in our records. All information will be kept confidential. Church staff members or youth sponsors will secure the services of the appropriate health care professionals and contact the parents as soon as possible about serious illness or injury. This information is included in registration forms for Sunday School, Wednesday night programming and Live Out Loud. If this information is needed for other events, it will be included on registration forms for each event.

Nametags:

All adult and student volunteers are to have nametags on when they are volunteering. We want parents to know who their child is with and that the adults they entrust their children with have been screened and trained by St John staff. This is true for all Sunday morning programming, Wednesday night programming and Live Out Loud on Sunday evenings.

Safety, Weather and Emergency Procedures

Sunday morning Check In Procedures:

Check In/Out Procedures need to be followed by all parents and in place for the safety of our children and youth.

Children in grades preschool through 2nd grade will need to be escorted by their parents to the Welcome desk in the lower level of the building. Parents are asked to check their child in by picking up the child's nametag and take the corresponding parent card with them. The parent card will need to be presented to the child's teacher upon pick up in the classroom at the end of Sunday school. Children in grades 3rd—6th will need to also be escorted to their classrooms by their parents. There will also be a corresponding parent card to pick up. At the conclusion of Sunday school, parents will need to pick up their children and return the parent card to pick up their child.

Wednesday night Check In/Out Procedure:

Children attending Firelight will need to be escorted to the classroom by a parent. At the conclusion of Firelight children not attending Kid's Zone will need to be picked up by a parent. Fifth and sixth graders attending Club 56 will sign in when they arrive.

Footwear Policy:

As you well know, footwear can be fun, comfortable, and functional, and sometimes hazardous. It has come to our attention, through our church insurer of the risk being posed by wearing flip-flops, heelys, and open toed shoes. We are implementing a new policy at this time, for the safety of all who come to St John Lutheran Church. We ask that no flip flops, heelys, or open toed shoes are worn to children, youth and family ministry events for the safety of all involved.

Safety, Weather and Emergency Procedures, cont.

First Aid Kits: A chart is located in the Resource Room that outlines treatment for a variety of First Aid situations including wounds, burns, choking, CPR, poison control and many others. First Aid kits are located in the following places:

1. Resource Room - Drawer labeled First Aid.
2. Nursery - on counter.
3. Welcome Center - Left side of console.
4. Youth Room - Plastic container in drawer by sink.
5. Office - Drawer labeled First Aid.
6. Room # 321 - Upstairs in the closet
7. Kitchen - On counter by ovens.
8. In all Sunday School rooms

Fire: In each room, a map is posted of the most efficient escape route. Teachers, volunteers or staff will review this plan with students and practice with the students

Tornado: In each room, a map is posted of the safest place to take the children in the event of a tornado. Teachers, volunteers or staff will review this plan with students and practice with the students

Inclement Weather: For Wednesday activities, St John follows the same weather decision as the Cedar Falls School District. If the Cedar Falls School District cancels classes or dismisses early due to bad weather, St John children and youth activities will be cancelled as well.

Should storms occur after school hours or in the rare event that a Sunday morning is in question, tune your television to KWWL, check www.kwwl.com for cancellation information or call the St John Weatherline at 268-0165 ext. 190, or check our website - www.stjohnncf.org.

Communication and Other Policies

Communication: News and information can be found in *Weekly Happenings* articles distributed with the Sunday bulletins, *Monthly Happenings* (mailed to your home or by email), our web site (www.stjohncf.org) and through emails.

Each Sunday morning, students will also be given a handout (will also be posted online on our website) that includes family activities to do during the week as well as announcements and news on upcoming events and activities.

Please read these publications to learn about our children, youth and family ministries. If you do not receive the *Monthly Happenings* and would like to, contact the office at 268-0165 or office@stjohncf.org.

Video Policy: The use of videos to aid in teaching a lesson is a valid form of education. All movies and video clips will be pre-viewed for content and age appropriateness before being shown in any ministry setting.

Photo Release Policy:

Included in registration forms for all programming is a photo release. We only use the pictures of children and youth in publications, print ads, direct mail pieces, electronic media (video, internet, Facebook, etc.) or other forms of promotion. We do not print children or youth's names along with their pictures. The only exception would be if a student chooses to tag themselves on Facebook photos.

Children's Ministry Calendar

This calendar includes any ministry event or activity for students in preschool through 6th grade.

August

19th: Backpack Blessing

26th: Sunday morning Leader Orientation

29th: First Wednesday Night; Schedule is as follows unless noted:

Meal 5:00pm—6pm in fellowship hall

Firelight and Club 56 meet 6pm—7:15pm

Kid's Zone meet 7:15pm—8:00pm

September

9th: First Day of Sunday School

Sunday School continues each Sunday morning unless noted

3 year old Entering Sunday School Milestone

16th: 3rd Grade Bible Milestone Worship Celebration

23rd: 3rd Grade Bible Milestone Learning Time

October

19th: Club 56 Outdoor Event

21st: 3rd Grade Bible Milestone Learning Time

28th: Sunday School Together (no regular classes)

November

11th: 3rd Grade Bible Milestone Learning Time

14th: Last Firelight and Club 56 until January

25th: Sunday School Together (no regular classes)

28th: Advent Family Fair 6:00-7:15pm

December

5th: Family Advent Worship begins for 3 weeks

9th: Last Day of Sunday School until January

15th: Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal 9am—11:30am

16th: Children's Christmas Program 9:30am and 11:00am

January

6th: Sunday School resumes

3rd Grade Bible Milestone Learning

9th: Family Night Resumes

13th: Baptismal Birthday Milestone Celebration

Kindergarten Bible Presentation at 11:00am worship

20th: Kindergarten Prayer and Worship Milestone Learning

27th Camp Sunday

Kindergarten Prayer and Worship Milestone Learning

30th: Last Family Night until after Easter

February

3rd: Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday School Together (no regular classes)

6th: Winter Carnival

13th: Lent Family Style Worship begins and runs until March 20th

24th: 5th Grade First Communion Milestone Learning

March

3rd: 5th Grade First Communion Milestone Learning

10th: 5th Grade First Communion Milestone Learning

March cont.

- 17th: No Sunday School—Spring Break
- 24th: Sunday School Together (no regular classes)
- 27th: 5th Grade Communion Milestone Bread Baking
- 28th: 5th Grade Communion Milestone Worship Celebration
- 30th: Easter Egg Hunt
- 31st: No Sunday School—Easter

April

- 3rd: Firelight and Club 56 resume
- 6th: Spring Blast at Riverside for Club 56

May

- 15th: Last Firelight and Club 56
- 19th: Last Sunday School

June

- 12th: Day Camp

July

- 10th: Day Camp
- 31st: Day Camp

Junior and Senior High Ministry Calendar

This calendar includes any ministry event or activity for students in 7th through 12th grade.

August

19th: Backpack Blessing

7-12 Grade Orientation 5pm

26th: Sunday evening Leader Orientation

29st: First Wednesday Night; Schedule is as follows unless noted:

Youth Room Open 3:30pm—5:00pm

Meal 5:00pm—6pm in fellowship hall

Junior High (grades 7-9) meet 6pm—7:15pm

Senior High (grades 10-12) meet 7:30pm—9pm

September

9th: 7th Grade Bible Presentations in Worship

First Night of Live Out Loud

Live Out Loud continues every Sunday night unless noted

29th-30th: 7th-9th Grade Retreat

30th: No Live Out Loud Classes

October

12th-13th: UNI Lock In for Junior High Students

27th: 100 Wells and Malaria Campaign Concert at Luther College

November

11th: Food Scavenger Hunt for Junior and Senior High 5pm

14th: Last Wednesday night for Junior High students until January
(Senior High Students will continue to meet in Advent)

November, cont.

25th: No Live Out Loud

28th: Family Advent Fair 6:00-7:15pm

December

16th: Last Live Out Loud until January 6th

19th: Last Wednesday night for Senior High until January 18th

January

6th: Live Out Loud resumes

9th: Regular Wednesday Night Programming resumes for all

30th: Last Wednesday Night for Junior High until April 3rd (Senior High will meet during Lent)

February

3rd: Souper Bowl of Caring

6th: Winter Carnival

March

3rd: Senior High Good Friday Practice 7:30pm

10th: Senior High Good Friday Practice 7:30pm

17th: No Live Out Loud —Spring Break

20th: No Youth Room, or Senior High—Spring Break

24th: No Live Out Loud —Spring Break

Senior High Good Friday Practice 7:30pm

27th: Senior High Good Friday Practice 7:30pm

28th: Senior High Good Friday Practice 8:00pm

29th: Senior High Good Friday Practice and Service

31st: No Live Out Loud—Easter

April

3rd: Regular Wednesday Night Programming resumes for all

12th-13th: 9th Grade Spring Retreat

May

1st: FaithLife Plan Presentations 6pm

5th: 9th Grade Affirmation of Baptism Milestone

15th: Last Wednesday Night of Programming

19th: 12th Grade Milestone Breakfast 9:30am

12th Grade Milestone Worship Celebration 11:00am

Last Live Out Loud of the school year