

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Infants - 5th Grade



2018 - 2019

First Presbyterian Church Belmont

*Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."
Matthew 19: 14*

Dear Family,

We at First Presbyterian Belmont are pleased to have the opportunity to share God's love with your child. We are excited about how the Holy Spirit is going to work this year. As God works through each of us, we pray that there will always be the knowledge and joy that God is present with us.

If your child is participating with us for the first time or if you are a long-time participant, it is our desire that your child will experience with us the joy of walking together with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our Children's Ministry partners with parents to come alongside in helping with the spiritual development of children from infancy through the elementary school years.

We invite you to volunteer with our children! We have opportunities that take very little time and others that are a longer commitment but all are important.

We stay in communication through the Harbinger Newsletter, the church email, group texts and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Across our various children's programs, we seek to nurture in our children an awareness of the family of faith as a place identified by love, a sense of acceptance and belonging and a yearning to learn and grow with Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Grace and Peace,
Robin Russell, Director of Christian Education

Table of Contents

<i>We Believe</i>	1
<i>Safety & Medical Concerns</i>	3
<i>Faith Milestones</i>	4
<i>Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers</i>	
<i>Nursery Policies</i>	5
<i>Sunday at FPC</i>	
<i>Schedule</i>	10
<i>Family Sunday School</i>	11
<i>Children in Worship</i>	12
<i>Wednesday</i>	
<i>Kids Central</i>	14
<i>Family Night Supper</i>	15
<i>Week Day School Chapel</i>	
<i>Praise Kidz</i>	16
<i>How You Can Help</i>	17

We believe...



- *All children are created in the image of God.*
- *As a covenant community we are called to live out our Baptismal vows which call us to be faithful with and for children.*
- *We are responsible for providing a developmentally appropriate educational program that nurtures the whole child, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually, in an atmosphere of love, respect and acceptance.*
- *We must nurture the growth of each child in the understanding of his or her uniqueness as a child of God.*
- *We are responsible for supporting parents and families and to assist them as they mold their children into healthy, thoughtful, responsible and spiritual individuals.*
- *We must strive to empower children to become all that God intends, love them unconditionally and listen to them.*

Therefore, we covenant to live out our ministries which shape...

Identity:

Ministry that shapes and encourages Christian identity where every child knows him or herself to be a child of God and where children and adults together as partners create a community that celebrates diversity and cherishes one another's gifts and talents.

Belonging:

Ministry that creates a place where children are nurtured, welcomed, valued and recognized as vital members of the whole community and where children grow in confidence, maturity and security that is necessary to live boldly into their identity.

Discipleship:

Ministry that teaches and shares the love of God with each child by showing that love in concrete ways as they learn to love their neighbor as themselves and where children learn to love the Lord their God with their whole heart and soul and are called into a meaningful faith journey with our Lord and Savior.

It is our intention to live this covenant by...

Growing in greater understanding of our Baptismal vows; praying for children and families in our congregation and the world and intentionally engaging in ministries that seek the identity, belonging and discipleship of children and their families.

Safety: Children and Youth Protection and Medical Concerns

We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children and youth. In 2009, we instituted a Children and Youth Protection Policy and require all volunteers and paid caregivers to go through training in the policy and procedures as well as a criminal background check.

We ask that you sign your child in and out of church activities. We are phasing in an electronic sign-in to facilitate this process.

Please be assured that our staff and volunteers are carefully watching your child while he or she is with us. In the event that your child is seriously injured, we will start the appropriate first aid while we contact you.

There is always an adult certified in Infant-Child CPR/ First Aid present during all children's activities.

Please let us know if your child has a medical concern, such as severe allergies, that may require attention while he or she is with us.

Faith Milestones

In the 6th grade, our children begin their ***Confirmation Journey***, a three- year process culminating in the 8th grade with their Profession of Faith in Jesus Christ and becoming members of the church. During that time they study scripture, learn about the history, traditions and structure of the Presbyterian Church and serve in ministries inside and outside the church.

But, a child's faith journey really begins at birth because ***parents are the single greatest influence on their child's faith formation***. We partner with parents to teach their children about being disciples of Jesus Christ so that they have a solid foundation in scripture, worship and faith as they embark on their ***Confirmation Journey*** in 6th grade.

We celebrate these ***Faith Milestones*** which are markers along the way to help your child prepare for ***Confirmation Journey*** in middle school.

- Baptism- as infants or children of any age
- Kindergarten: receive first Bible in worship, recite Lord's Prayer
- 1st grade: Recite the Ten Commandments
- 2nd grade: Name the books of the Bible in order
- 3rd grade: receive a new Bible, Communicants' Class
- 4th grade: Acolyte Training and service
- 5th grade: Recite Apostles' Creed, assist with Children's Church

Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers



Because the birth of every child is God's opportunity to bless humankind anew;

Because the birth of your particular child widens by one precious member the circle of fellowship and love that is our church;

Because we want to share with you and your family the responsibility that is yours as Christian parents;

We strive to provide opportunities to meet your situation, to celebrate the uniqueness of your child, to meet your needs and to include all members of your family within the life of God's family.

We provide a loving and safe environment for infants and toddlers while their parents are being spiritually nourished in worship, education and fellowship.

We employ nurturing caregivers who provide continuity of care for babies, toddlers and their parents.

We schedule adult and youth volunteers to assist paid caregivers in order to maintain a low ratio of children to adults.

Infants, Toddlers, 2's and 3's

Our nursery ministry offers infants, toddlers, 2's and 3's a caring introduction to God's community.

Sunday Morning: Infants through 2-year-olds
9:00 - 11:45 am in Room E108

Children are assigned to a classroom based on their age as of August 31 and will remain with that group until they "move up" with their class on Rally Day. Each nursery room is supplied with age appropriate toys and books.

Other Nursery Times

A Nursery is available for all worship services **except** the 11:00 am Christmas Eve Family Service. Child care may be provided for adult education programs or other events during the year. We request reservations in order to provide the proper number of adults.



Security

A safe environment is primary concern for the church, parents and families. In addition to our Child and Youth Protection Policy, we are phasing in a computer check-in system with labels for our infants through preschoolers. We appreciate your patience when a check-in line forms, as we want to be sure that every child is checked in properly and given a label.

Wellness Policy

For the well-being of all our children, staff and volunteers, no child should be brought to the nursery showing signs of illness, such as fever, listlessness, excessive crying, diarrhea, coughing or colored runny nose (not due to allergy).

Snack Time and Feeding

If there is a special time you want your baby to be fed, please note that on the sign in sheet and alert one of the staff. We will do our best to honor your wishes.

We are happy to give your child a bottle.

If your child is using a sippy cup, please bring it labeled with his or her name. If you prefer your child have something other than water, please provide it in the cup.

If you'd like your baby to have a snack while sitting in a high chair, please provide the snack food you prefer.

Please do not bring snacks that contain nut products.

Diaper Changes

Diapers will be checked and changed as needed, at least once during the hour using the procedure that is posted in the rooms. Paid staff wear gloves during each diaper change and spray the changing pad with disinfectant after each change.

Housekeeping

All rooms are cleaned and toys are disinfected daily by the Week Day School staff. During your time in the nursery on Sunday, each toy placed in the mouth is sanitized and disinfected after the child is finished with it. Crib sheets are laundered after each use.

Crying

It is natural for children to experience some separation anxiety. Many children cry when they are left in the nursery. We will make every effort to comfort and redirect your child, however, please be assured that we will come to get you if we are unable to calm your child within a reasonable amount of time.

Please avoid coming to the door of the room to check on your child as this can be very unsettling to him/her. If we have spent a good deal of time comforting your baby, we may have to start again when he/she sees you.

If you'd like to know how your child is doing, please ask someone who does not have a child in that room to check for you.

Biting

Biting is a very upsetting problem that commonly occurs during the toddler years. If your child is bitten, the area affected will be washed. Unless your child is distraught, we will inform you of the incident at pick up time.

If your child bites another child, you will be told of the incident when you come to pick up your child.

Fire Alarms

Should an alarm sound, all children will be escorted out of the building by their Teachers and the Deacons. In the event that this occurs, parents should look for their child's teacher outside the building. **Please do not remove your child from the scene until you have checked him/her out with the adults who are in charge.**

Supervision



Our nursery is a cooperative effort, staffed by faithful, compassionate employees and adult and youth volunteers assigned on a rotating basis.

All our staff and volunteers have passed a background check and have received training in our Children and Youth Protection Policy. In addition, our paid staff are trained in Infant/Child First Aid and CPR.

Our paid nursery staff report directly to our Director of Christian Education, Robin Russell. Robin attends to all staffing issues and makes sure the rooms are prepared for the arrival of your child. Please contact Robin at the church (704-825-3357) or rrussell@fpc-belmont.org for your questions or concerns.

Sunday at FPC Belmont



Schedule

- 8:30 am: Early at 8:30 Outdoors Worship from April through October. This is a very informal service of about 45 minutes.
- 9:30 am: Family Sunday School for K-5th graders and their families, with donut holes, coffee.
- 10:30 am: Worship in the Sanctuary- a more traditional



Family Sunday School

Preschool 4's (by 8/31/18) - 5th Grade

The Chapel

9:30 - 10:15 am

This year in Sunday School, our kindergarten through 5th graders will use the internationally acclaimed curriculum *SuperBook Academy*. Using phenomenal videos and graphics, children travel through a “time tunnel” back to the world of the Bible where they explore the people and historical background of a scripture passage and learn to connect the stories to their own lives in practical ways. There are creative games, great music and fun crafts to keep kids engaged.

Life is hectic for families and it’s hard to carve out time to be together. So we invite parents, grandparents or other important adults to come with your child to Sunday School. Together you can build a strong biblical foundation that will set your kids on the path of life long faith. Plus you can meet new people and have fun! We’ll have plenty of coffee and light breakfast items.

If you don’t want to miss your adult class, no worries! Your child can attend without you. If you’d like to attend some weeks but not others, feel free! You won’t get behind. There will be plenty of coffee and light breakfast items.



Children in Worship



We encourage children to come with their parents to the Early at 8:30 Outdoors worship service or the 10:30 am service in the sanctuary. Children are invited to come to the front for Children's Sermons during both services and for baptisms in the 10:30 service.

Following the Children's Sermon at the 10:30 service, our 3- and 4-year-olds may go to PAWS (Preschoolers At Worship Service) for age appropriate songs and activities.

During the singing of the Doxology at the 10:30 service, our Kindergarten through 3rd graders may go to the library for Children's Church, a special time of learning and fun. They return to their parents during the final hymn.

Your children may also stay with you during worship.

There is no PAWS or Children's Church during the 8:30 service.

When you bring your child to worship...



RELAX! God put the “wobble” in children; don’t feel you have to suppress those wiggles in God’s house. Here are a few ways you can keep your child engaged and help him or her to learn about worshipping God:

Consider sitting closer to the front where it is easier for a child to see and hear.

Quietly explain the parts of the service and what the pastors and other worship leaders are doing.

Encourage your child to put the offering in the offering plate.

Have an older child bring his or her own bible and follow the scripture reading. Bring a storybook bible for little ones.

Allow children to bring a favorite stuffed animal, colored pencils or crayons, or a book in the church library.

Sing the hymns, pray and voice the responses. Your child will learn by seeing what you do.

Feel free to leave the sanctuary with your child, if you need to do so. An usher will help you find the changing table, the nursery or you may stay in the Gathering Area and watch the service on the monitor. But please come back! As Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Wednesday: Kids Central

Preschool 4's (by 8/31/18)- 5th grade

4:30 - 6:00 pm



We use the same curriculum in Kids Central as we use in Family Sunday School- the *Superbook Academy*. The lessons are coordinated so the children see different perspectives on the same Bible story, which reinforces their learning. Our

Week Day School children are invited to come to Kids Central.

We open in the Fellowship Hall with music, energizers, an introduction to the Bible story and an offering for our mission project, drought resistant seeds for Haiti through Operation Kid to Kid.

The children are grouped by age: preschool 4's- Kindergarteners; 1st and 2nd graders and 3rd- 5th graders. They rotate in small groups through games, crafts, drama and lessons.

After the first of the year, the 3rd graders take Communicants' Class, led by Rev. Daria Ragan. They will learn about the Lord's Supper and receive certificates at the Ash Wednesday service. The 4th graders take Acolyte Training with Rev. Sam Warner and receive certificates at the Ash Wednesday service. The 4th and 5th graders will have field trips outside the church.



Register: (www.fpc-belmont.org/registration).

Family Night Supper

Wednesday 5:30 - 6:30 pm



Family Night Supper is served every Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. It's a quick, easy and very informal way to get your tired children fed, catch up with friends and still be home in time for homework and baths. Family Night Supper is open to all our church members and our Week Day School families.

Our Week Day School chef, Brittany Grant, cooks a nourishing, family-friendly meal served cafeteria style.

Please make reservations by Tuesday at noon by using the link on the church calendar (www.fpc-belmont.org/calendar-events) or by calling the church office 704-825-3357.

Cost:

Adults: \$5.00

Children ages 3-12: \$3.00

Children under 2: FREE

Family maximum \$20.00 if paying at the door.

Week Day School Chapel

Our preschool children participate in chapel time in the church sanctuary on Wednesday mornings from 9:15- 9:30. Our church staff leads the children in a Bible story, music and prayer.

Our school age children of the Week Day School participate in chapel on Tuesday at 3:00 pm in the sanctuary, led by our church staff. These children learn Bible stories and how to use the hymnal and the Bible.



Praise Kidz

Praise Kidz is 30 minutes of music and fun for infants though preschoolers. Moms, grandparents or other loving adults join their little ones in games, dance, and playing instruments. Praise Kidz meets every Thursday morning from 10:00- 10:30.

How You Can Help



You can make your child's Christian Education experience more meaningful by being at church with them when you can, participating in Family Sunday School, Kids Central or other opportunities and bringing them to worship.

We understand that your family schedule is crazy with too much to do and too little time to do it. We have volunteer needs that take very little time, others that are longer and many that don't involve dressing up as a Roman soldier! If you can't volunteer, come with your children when you can. They love having parents with them at church.

We welcome suggestions! We have the same goal of building lifelong faith in our children. So, please feel free to talk to Sam, Robin or Daria about your ideas.

Finally, please pray for the church staff, our volunteers and our children, that we will grow closer to Christ and to one another this year.