

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SEQUENCE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to identify milestones children and youth will have the opportunity to experience while participating in the life and ministries of Unity Presbyterian Church. This is not a check list since we realize children learn very differently. The learning goals are based upon age appropriate faith development. These learning goals are designed to guide teachers as to what to teach and to guide families in their child's spiritual growth.

When a child is baptized, parents and the congregation promise to nurture the child's faith development. The church then promises to help parents on this journey. Children and youth learn about faith first at home, second at church. This guide is a resource for families to use as they desire within their own family. Unity as a church is committed to the children and their families and will continue to provide opportunities for children and youth to experience these learning goals.

This guide contains the following:

- Prayer
- Bible Knowledge
- Bible Skills
- Worship Participation
- Mission & Service
- Building Christian Community & Experiencing God's Love
- Milestones – Established in 2016 As A Guide For Unity Children & Youth Programs

PRAYER

Pre-School – Children will

- Learn that prayer is talking to God and you are quiet and listen when others are praying aloud
- Give thanks before eating snacks
- Join in echo prayers with adult leaders
- Be given the opportunity to add to group prayers

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will

- Learn to pray by following adult leadership through echo prayers, songs, etc.
- Discuss what it means to pray.
- Discuss different ways to pray.
- Be introduced to The Lord's Prayer.

Second & Third Grade - Children will

- Learn reasons why we pray, and when we pray.
- Engage in prayer by following adult leadership through listening and echo prayer.
- Engage in silent personal prayer and oral group prayer.
- Listen to and interpret the Lord's Prayer.
- Memorize the Lord's Prayer and understand its meaning.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will

- Understand that prayer is a closer relationship with God.
- Understand why we pray.
- Value the importance of prayer.
- Demonstrate the ability to pray individually and with and for others.
- Be able to pray The Lord's Prayer from memory.

Middle School - Youth will

- Develop prayer as a source of comfort and reliability in our faith when problems weigh on our hearts
- Make use of a devotional to stay connected throughout the week to God, through prayer and the Bible
- Develop ability to pray for themselves, friends, family and world
- Develop ability to pray publicly

High School – Youth will

- Continue developing personal prayer (intimate and mindful)
- Continue developing public prayer abilities (spiritual and shared)
- Learn about different ways to experience prayer (songs, silence ,music)

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Pre-School - Children will

- Interact with familiar Bible stories through storytelling, crafts, songs, puppets, drama
- Recognize Christmas is a celebration for Jesus birthday and the story is found in the Bible
- Identify that Jesus is God's son and that He loves them

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will

- Learn the characters and stories of the Bible through age appropriate stories, songs and crafts.
- Be involved in the creative telling and dramatizing of Bible stories.
- Be encouraged to ask questions about the Bible readings and imagine what the Biblical characters might say if they could be there.

Second & Third Grade - Children will

- Explore the contents of specific books of the Bible.
- Compare and contrast their own personal life experiences to the stories they learn about in the Bible.
- State the moral or lesson of specific stories being studied in the Bible.
- Demonstrate understanding that the Bible tells that God sent Jesus to earth because He loves all people.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will

- Recognize the impact of the Bible on our faith.
- Develop an in depth understanding of familiar Bible stories.
- Learn the importance of using the Bible as a guide for living.
- Recite The Lord's Prayer, 23 Psalm, and other favorite scriptures from memory.

Middle School - Youth will

- Learn how the Bible stories are applied to modern day situations and how to apply them to their lives
- Learn Bible verses through memory challenges
- Learn through skits, puzzles, drawing, reading, storytelling, and other activities to connect the Bible and to help them remember what they are learning
- Discuss the historical context of the Old and New Testament, using timelines and visuals to help in the process

High School - Youth will

- Maintain and continue progress in the knowledge of the Bible
- Lead peer group Bible devotions
- Lead personal Bible devotion time
- Study God's word for application to their own lives

BIBLE SKILLS

Pre-School - Children will

- Understand that the Bible is a special book that tells stories about God, his people and Jesus.
- Learn the Bible was written a long time ago and life was different during that time.

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will

- Be introduced to the concept of Old and New Testaments.
- Be introduced to the many authors of the books of the Bible.
- Have a better understanding of the stories they are told and how they can locate them within the Bible.

Second & Third Grade - Children will

- Locate two main parts of the Bible- Old and New Testament.
- Participate in activities, songs and games to aid in the pronunciation and knowledge of the books in the Old and New Testament.
- Locate books in the Bible, chapters and verse with assistance.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will

- Expand their knowledge of the Bible both Old and New Testaments.
- Participate in activities to remember and quickly locate the books of the Old and New Testament and remember their order.
- Identify Biblical characters and their importance to our faith.
- Use the Bible to locate specific books, chapters and verses.
- Tell stories of our faith from memory.
- Tell the story of Jesus from memory.

Middle School - Youth will

- Read Bible lessons weekly
- Be able to identify books of the Bible as Old/New Testament and know how to find them
- Utilize their devotionals at home and use in conjunction with the weekly lessons and prayer
- Learn the Catechism in preparation for confirmation class

High School - Youth will

- Advance in proficiencies for use of the Bible by topic research with the Bible .and
 - Exploring biblical values and applying with current culture/happenings
 - Exploring the relationship between Bible stories and major periods in history
 - Participating in roundtable discussions of faith and life issues with peers.
 - Taking greater focus towards love, forgiveness and acceptance

Worship Participation

Pre-School - Children will be encouraged to

- Participate in Children's time during worship.
- Observe an infant baptism and review their own baptism
- Tour the sanctuary and meet ministers and other leaders.
- Use children's bulletins

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will be encouraged to

- Attend a worship readiness opportunity to help them understand what it means to worship and worship etiquette.
- Use children's bulletins to complete activities related to the lesson
- Participate in Children's Time during worship.
- Perform songs and skits based on their studies

Second & Third Grade - Children will be encouraged to

- Become familiar with the typical order of events of a worship service at Unity Presbyterian Church.
- Attend and participate in worship services with their family.
- Perform songs and skits based on their studies
- Attend church services Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and other activities
- Learn about the sacrament of communion and observe or take communion during worship

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will be encouraged to

- Attend church services, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and other church related activities.
- Recite the Apostle Creed and know other creeds and confessions exist
- Demonstrate knowledge of the sacraments and be able to explain their importance in our faith
- Be familiar with the Christian Calendar
- Share God given talents in worship (singing, playing instrument, becoming an acolyte)
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Middle School - Youth will be encouraged to:

- Participate in Youth Sunday
- Be liturgists
- Be Ushers
- Help in the nursery
- Be Acolytes

High School - Youth will be encouraged to

- Have regular attendance for worship service
- Participate in various roles (usher, liturgist, choir, etc)

MISSION AND SERVICE

Pre-School - Children will

- Show compassion and care by sharing and being kind to others
- Contribute to 5 cents a meal offering, One great hour of sharing offering and VBS special offerings
- Make paper cards and gifts for parents, family and shut ins

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will

- Discuss helping others from a biblical perspective.
- Explore ways young children can serve in their communities.
- Donate offerings during children's time to help others and collect the Five Cents A Meal offering during worship
- Participate in children's service projects

Second & Third Grade - Children will

- Discuss how to be kind, caring, and helpful to others from a Biblical perspective.
- Participate in making cards for church members on the prayer list, to be mailed to their homes, throughout the year.
- Participate in children's service projects planned throughout the year.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will

- Learn about mission projects that help others here and around the world.
- Participate in mission activities locally.
- Support mission activities by giving of their time and talents.
- Serve as ushers, welcome visitors, handout bulletins, collect offering, and other activities.
- Visit nursing homes with parents and church family.

Middle School - Youth will

- Participate in the CROP Walk and reflect on reasons for the event
- Participate in the PYC events with youth of other churches
- Participate in Dash-N-Go Christmas Mission event
- Participate in Middle School mission trips and projects

High School - Youth will

- Demonstrate their Christian values by defining and using their gifts/talents
- Demonstrate their Christian values by their Mission/Service involvement in
 - Participating in intergenerational learning experiences
 - Help with MS youth night (guest speaker), VBS, Sunday school
 - Helping with various events (staying focused on the Church calendar)
 - Planning and participating in national and international mission activities

Build Christian Community & Experience God's Love

Preschool- Children will be encouraged to

- Participate and join in fellowship with other believers in fun and positive educational activities provided by the Church

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will be encouraged to

- Participate in the fun and educational activities provided by Unity.
- Show kindness towards others

Second and Third Grade- Children will be encouraged to

- Demonstrate forgiveness when necessary.
- Share God's love while interacting with peers by showing acceptance of others, despite differences among them.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will be encouraged to

- Show God's love to others.
- Practice kindness toward others.
- Be patient with others and respect the differing opinions.
- Participate in Christian activities at church and in the community.

Middle School - Youth will be encouraged to

Share and live out their faith at school, in sports and in their lives.

- Invite friends to youth church events.
- Participate in activities with other churches from the Presbytery.
- Learn the structure of Unity within the Presbytery and how the PC evolved historically from the Christian community

High School - Youth will be encouraged to

- Be involved with other youth Christians within the community, sharing and witnessing God's love
- Participate in planned events with other Christian youth groups in the community
 - Through joint fellowship activities/service projects (Christian concerts)
 - Crop Walk and other community events
- Develop a basic understanding of other faiths and the distinctiveness of Christianity

- **Milestones – Established in 2016 As A Guide For Unity Children & Youth Programs**

Pre-School - Children will

- Be baptized. Families will receive a Bible story book and certificate of Baptism. Family pictures will be posted on a bulletin board.
- Begin to attend Sunday school with peers.

Kindergarten & First Grade - Children will

- Be trained about donating offerings to help others and to collect the five cent a meal offering. They will collect the bags with the ushers at offering time.
- Participate in children's time during worship.

Second & Third Grade - Children will

- Be trained in the sacraments of baptism and communion. They will hand out bulletins on baptism Sunday and collect communion cups at the end of communion service.
- Memorize Bible verses including John 3:16. They will learn the Books of the Bible song and study the Lord's Prayer.
- Share what they have learned and memorized in Sunday School during worship service.
- Learn the Doxology and sing during worship service
- Receive a story Bible when entering third grade.

Fourth & Fifth Grade - Children will

- Be trained as acolytes and serve as acolytes during worship.
- Be recognized for developing skills in the use of the Bible. They will become familiar with the books of The Old and New Testament and develop skills in finding information in the Bible.
- Memorize 23rd psalm, other Bible verses and stories. They will lead children's time to share what they have learned with younger children.

Middle School - Youth will

- Be encouraged to attend Confirmation training between 8th and 9th grade.
- Be welcomed into the middle school program with a special lock in and ceremony.
- Participate in Youth Sunday
- Participate in middle school activities and retreats as offered by the Presbytery.

High School - Youth will

- Participate in a welcoming middle school to high school event.
- Participate and lead in Youth Sunday worship.
- As graduating seniors, share faith experiences.
- As graduating seniors, be recognized during a senior breakfast and be recognized during worship on Graduation Sunday.
- Participate in the Montreat youth conference.
- As graduating seniors will be partnered with a Church friend mentor to continue communication with Unity and the youth when they attend college or move away
- Be selected to serve as youth elders or members of the Youth Advisory committee.

Dates for Children's Planned Activities in addition to Sunday School:

Sept. 11- **Third Grade** children receive a Bible

Kick off event

Oct. 2- Crop Walk for families, all ages

Oct. 16- **Fourth/ fifth** practice for worship presentation of 23rd psalm, activities

Oct. 29- Hall of Sweets and Spooks – **Preschool-Fifth grade**

Oct. 30 **Fourth/fifth** grades lead children's time to share memory of 23rd psalm, Dwell song, other information-. Sunday school teachers assist.

Nov. 20 **Kindergarten/First Grade** sing Shout- Psalm 100 and share memory verse from Sunday School during children's time and with assistance of teachers

Dec. 4 **Second/ Third Grade** sing Joy,share memory verse with Sunday School teachers

Advent Activity for Families and Children- Sunday night U connect time

Dec. 24 Christmas pageant for children to sing and share the Christmas story(watch for more details) during 7:00 service

Jan 8 **Kindergarten/First Grade** trained about Five Cents A Meal, collect the offering with the ushers during worship

Feb. 5 **Second/Third Grade** Training about communion. Help with set up and cleanup of communion, visit communion room and either observe or participate in receiving communion during worship.

Communion:

- The Book of Order W-2.4011 b. states:

"Baptized children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord's Supper, recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity."

Recommendation- Continue to educate children and parents.

- Review communion once a quarter as part of children's time on communion Sunday.
- Designate a section of the newsletter for parents of young children as a reminder about communion Sunday. Publish a summary of the communion policy with a reminder that Communion will be served on Sunday and take a few minutes to review communion with their children. Set up a display in gathering area for parents to review procedures on communion Sundays.
- Involve second and third grade students in set up and cleanup of communion materials, discussing significance of each element.
- Offer a Preparation for Worship Sunday School Class every two years. This can also offer instruction for parents and students about the significance of the different parts of worship.

Confirmation

The youth of Unity Presbyterian Church will go through the Confirmation process as a milestone between their 8th and 9th grade year or at their readiness after that time. Youth will be matured, developed and equipped to formulate what they have learned through Sunday school as well as what it is that they believe about their faith independent of their parent or leaders views. The confirmation process will be a combination of affirmation of faith and Bible knowledge, community service, identification/implementation of gifts and talents, group bonding, intergenerational mentoring, and church/denominational history. Final Confirmation curriculum is at the discretion of the minister(s) of the church.