

St. Francis Episcopal Church Family Ministry

Program Summary

Babies & Toddlers (Ages 0–4)

Highlight: Welcome and cared for in a safe nursery environment

The nursery provides babies and toddlers with a **safe, welcoming, and nurturing experience of church community**. Through consistent caregivers, play, and age-appropriate experiences, children begin to develop a sense of belonging and trust. At this stage, children primarily experience faith through the care and example of the adults around them.

- **Love:** Experience love through consistent, attentive, and nurturing care.
- **Worship:** Become familiar with the people, spaces, rhythms, and practices of the church.
- **Serve:** Experience service through the care adults provide and begin to see church as a community that cares for one another.

Elementary - Discovering Faith through Godly Play

Highlight: Weekly Godly Play, Quarterly Family Events

Elementary children **discover their place within God's story and the life of the church**. Through weekly Sunday school, Godly Play, and participation in the rhythms of the church, children encounter Scripture through wonder and imagination while learning the basic elements of liturgy and worship. Regular opportunities to participate in worship and quarterly community events help children connect their faith to the life of the wider community.

- **Love:** Build friendships and discover a sense of community through weekly Sunday school participation.
- **Worship:** Encounter biblical stories through Godly Play, learn the language and rhythms of liturgy, and participate in an aspect of worship each month.
- **Serve:** Participate in quarterly events that welcome, serve, and build relationships with the wider community.

Older Elementary & Middle School - Exploring Faith in Community and Service

Highlight: Monthly Youth Group, Quarterly Service Projects, shift from Godly Play retelling to developing tools to encounter the text itself

Older elementary and middle school students **explore their faith more deeply through Scripture, community, and service.** They move from hearing biblical stories primarily through retelling to engaging directly with the biblical text, asking questions and developing their own understanding of faith. Monthly youth gatherings and quarterly service opportunities give them space to grow in relationships and put their faith into practice.

- **Love:** Gather monthly for youth group to build friendships, connect with peers, and develop a deeper sense of community.
- **Worship:** Explore Scripture directly and develop a deeper understanding of worship and faith.
- **Serve:** Participate in quarterly service projects and discover ways they can contribute to the church and wider community.

High School

Highlight: Continuing youth group and service projects with an increasing emphasis on developing leadership within the program.

High school students **grow into active leaders within the church and youth community.** They are invited to take increasing responsibility for worship, youth gatherings, and the experience of younger students, moving from participation toward leadership. Through service and leadership opportunities, students learn to use their gifts and take ownership of their role in the life of the church.

- **Love:** Help create a welcoming and caring youth community while building relationships with peers and younger students.
- **Worship:** Take increasing leadership in worship and contribute their gifts to the worship life of the church.
- **Serve:** Participate in service projects while taking greater responsibility for planning, organizing, and leading them.

Ministry Rhythm

The ministry will follow a consistent rhythm that provides **weekly formation, monthly connection and participation, and quarterly opportunities for service and community-building.**

- **Weekly**

- **Nursery:** Safe, welcoming care for babies and toddlers.
- **Godly Play:** Story-based faith formation for elementary children.
- **Youth Class:** Biblical exploration and faith formation for older elementary and youth students.

- **Monthly**

- **Youth Group:** A dedicated time for older elementary, middle school, and high school students to build relationships and community.
- **Worship Participation:** Children and youth participate in an aspect of the congregation's worship service.

- **Quarterly**

- **Service Project:** Children and youth put faith into practice through hands-on service to the church and wider community.
 - Fall: Meal Ministry?
 - Winter: MLK Day, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Fundraiser for Camp Scholarships
 - Spring: Feed My Starving Children Food Packing - April 8 - 11
 - Summer - Camp Firebird, VBS
- **Family Event:** An intergenerational event designed to bring families together, strengthen community, and create opportunities to welcome others.
 - Fall: Pet Blessing, Back to School
 - Winter: Christmas Event/Parents Night Out
 - Spring: Minecraft Messy Church in February, Stations of the Cross Activities?, Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday (March 28)
 - Summer: Camp Firebird, VBS
 - Probably want a volunteer meeting in February to discuss VBS and see if we have the volunteer buy-in to pull it off. Also need to

decide if we want to do a day or evening program (which will probably be determined by volunteer availability).

Next Steps

1. Continue to build and solidify Sunday morning team.
2. Connect kids with worship on a monthly basis
3. Build routine of quarterly events/service
4. Monthly newsletter with themes/activities
 - a. To-Go bags of activities?

Needs

1. Volunteers - especially non-parents.
2. Nursery Help - group of secondary helpers to Tulin. Probably will need to be paid.
3. Budget -
 - a. Sunday Morning Supplies
 - b. Quarterly Events
 - c. VBS