



2010 - 2011
Church School Handbook
For Children ages 3 to 5th Grade

Saint Mark Presbyterian Church
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Church School Handbook

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1. Welcome Statement

Welcome to our Christian Formation Ministry at Saint Mark Presbyterian Church! We hope to provide your child with a strong sense of Christian community while exploring and learning about our one shared belief: our love of Christ and desire to be Christ's faithful disciples.

Christian Formation for children at Saint Mark is based upon our goal of building a foundation for a life-long relationship with Christ. We seek to accomplish this through story-telling, interactive play, songs, scripture lessons, and involvement of the extended community of the church family.

With your help, we will provide a safe and sacred space for our youngest disciples to learn, play, and grow in faith. I look forward to a wonderful year!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor LeAnn

Associate Pastor for Family Ministries and Christian Formation

2. Theological Principles

Core Values

- Develop a living relationship with God.
- Discover how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Nurture an understanding of prayer.
- Explore what it means to worship the Triune God.

Objectives

- Explore the relationships of the Triune God: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.
- Connect stories of Jesus and acts of worship.
- Learn Bible study skills as the guide to daily living.
- Learn to talk and listen to God through prayer.
- Participate in corporate worship.

3. Milestones

PRESCHOOL (ages 3-4)

Worship:

- ❖ Children are a part of the church
- ❖ We say thank you to God
- ❖ We pray and share

Bible:

- ❖ The Bible is a special book

Key Concepts:

- ❖ God Loves Me
- ❖ God takes care of me
- ❖ God created all things

Songs:

- ❖ Jesus Loves Me
- ❖ Away in a Manger (1st verse)
- ❖ Silent Night (1st verse)
- ❖ We are the Church

Prayer:

- ❖ God is Great and God is Good

KINDERGARTEN to FIRST GRADE

Worship:

- ❖ Introduce Lord's Prayer
- ❖ Doxology
- ❖ Baptism
- ❖ Communion

Bible:

- ❖ Memorize selected scriptures
- ❖ Old Testament: Creation story, Moses, David, Psalm 23, Introduce Ten Commandments
- ❖ New Testament: Christmas and Easter

Key Concepts:

- ❖ God created the earth and expects us to care for it
- ❖ God is always with me
- ❖ Prayer is the way we talk with God
- ❖ Seasons of the church year (colors, names, and symbols)

Songs:

- ❖ Jesus Loves Me
- ❖ Away in a Manger
- ❖ Silent Night
- ❖ We Are the Church
- ❖ For the Beauty of the Earth

SECOND AND THIRD GRADES

Worship:

- ❖ Basic vocabulary of worship services
- ❖ Memorize Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, Doxology, and Gloria Patri
- ❖ How to find hymns in hymnal

Bible:

- ❖ How to find scripture, read aloud, and follow along
- ❖ Introduce books of the Bible
- ❖ Understand and memorize selected scriptures
- ❖ Old Testament: read stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, Saul, David, Moses, Solomon, and Joseph
- ❖ New Testament: Jesus as Good Shepherd
- ❖ Names of the Gospels
- ❖ Names of the disciples

Key Concepts:

- ❖ God created the earth and expects us to care for it
- ❖ God is always with us
- ❖ Prayer is the way we talk with God
- ❖ Seasons of the church year (colors, names, and symbols)
- ❖ Explore selected Bible stories and connect with our lives
- ❖ Develop familiarity with worship practices

Prayer:

- ❖ Learn Lord's Prayer
- ❖ Understand elements of prayer (praise God, ask for forgiveness, thanksgiving, and pray for self and others)

FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADES

Worship:

- ❖ Expand vocabulary of worship services
- ❖ Identify specific areas in sanctuary and define use
- ❖ Review Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, and the Doxology
- ❖ Become familiar with Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed, Brief Statement of Faith
- ❖ Describe elements of communion and baptism
- ❖ Familiarity with both hymnals

Bible:

- ❖ Find scriptures easily
- ❖ Compare passages from 2 or 3 different translations
- ❖ Use Bible dictionary, atlas, Commentary and Concordance
- ❖ Memorize selected scriptures: Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Psalm 23, and the Lord's Prayer
- ❖ Old Testament: Classify the major Biblical characters as Patriarch, Judges, Kings, and Prophets
- ❖ New Testament: Identify disciples, major events, and other important apostles
- ❖ Describe Jesus' life and ministry
- ❖ Describe Paul's life and ministry

Key Concepts:

- ❖ God created the earth and named us as stewards of the earth
- ❖ God is always with me
- ❖ Prayer is the way we talk with God
- ❖ Seasons of the church year (colors, names, and symbols)
- ❖ Explore selected Bible stories and connect them with our life
- ❖ Continue to develop familiarity with worship practices
- ❖ Introduce history of the Bible, chronological order, BCE and CE and key translations (NSRV, NIV, King James, The Message)
- ❖ Introduce Presbyterian Church Government and History

Prayer:

- ❖ Understand elements of prayer (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession)

4. Classroom Covenant

Saint Mark's mission is to nurture our children in the Christian faith. Our classroom covenant is a guide to how we relate to one another. Each class is encouraged to develop their own covenant and will talk about the following principles in age-appropriate ways.

I have a right to be treated with kindness and respect.

- No one will laugh at me, ignore me or hurt my feelings.
- I will be kind to others, include others, and be considerate of the feelings of others.

I have a right to be myself in this room.

- No one will treat me unfairly because I am different.
- I will treat others fairly, even if they are different from me.

I have a right to be safe in this room.

- No one will hurt me, tease me, or harass me.
- I will protect others from harm.

I have a right to hear and be heard in this room.

- No one will yell, scream, or shout.
- I will keep my voice down.
- I will listen to others.
- I will speak up about my opinions and desires.

I have a right to learn about myself in this room.

- I will be free to express my feelings and opinions.
- I will hear what others have to say.
- I will respect the difficulty we have in learning who we are.
- I will participate in class.

5. Safety Policy

While Saint Mark's Theological Principles and Classroom Covenants are the foundation of our children's Christian formation ministry, your child's safety is of the utmost importance to us. We strive to create both a safe and sacred space, aware of both emotional and physical needs, and ask that you act within these guidelines.

For children through grade 5:

- A parent/guardian (or responsible adult designated by parent/guardian) must be on the church grounds during church school in the event of an emergency.
- Parents/guardians, siblings 6th grade or older, or a responsible adult designated by parent/guardian will pick up children directly from the classroom.
- Parents/guardians will inform teachers at drop-off if someone other than they will be picking up the child.
- Teachers may not release a child to someone other than a parent/guardian or designee. Teachers may not release a child to a sibling grade 5 or younger.
- Children may not ride the elevator without an adult.
- Children may not roam unsupervised in the classroom areas, Fellowship Hall, or church grounds.
- Parent/Guardians are asked to wait in the hallway until children are released from choir practice.

For all ages:

- We must have an emergency number on file.
- All parents/guardians must complete the Church Registration Form for each child/youth in the church.

Copies of Saint Mark's Staff and Volunteer Sexual Misconduct and Child Protection Policy are available in the office.

6. Parents/Guardians: What to Expect

Your child's Christian formation is a cooperative effort. Parents and guardians play the primary role in developing your child's journey with Christ. Your active participation is encouraged and here are some ways you can help:

Share your faith practices. Be open with your children about your understanding of the Christian faith. Practice Christian acts with your children: hospitality, stewardship, prayer, Bible study, etc. Be patient with your children and with yourself as you grow in mutual understanding of what it means to live the life of discipleship.

Review our Safety Policy together.

Come to church regularly, and arrive on time. Children develop a sense of belonging when they are present each week. They look forward to seeing their friends and building on lessons learned the previous week.

Be on time to pick up your child. Children, especially younger ones, sometimes fret if all the other kids have been collected by their parents or guardians.

Introduce yourself to your child's teacher. The Christian Formation Team is happy to hear from you. Look over available literature and follow the activities of your child's class. If take-home papers are available, use them during the week to learn about your child's class. Parents and Guardians should feel comfortable in addressing any concerns directly to their child's teacher.

Spend time together at Saint Mark. Attend church as a family, be with your child at intergenerational celebrations, introduce your children to adults in the congregation, and show them that their participation and presence is welcome and appreciated. Children learn to worship by worshiping in a community.

Be available to help. We hope that you find time to include volunteering in your schedule. Sometimes a volunteer teacher is unavailable and parents/guardians may be asked to step in. Additionally, parents/guardians may be called to help in the classroom from time to time.

Attend parent/guardian meetings and events. Some meetings are designed to help you and your child. We know that you are the primary teachers of the faith for your children and that it is our responsibility to support you. In return, we ask for your support and time. Social gatherings will enhance your family's connections.

7. Spirit & Service Sundays: Children's Enrichment

To encourage our church to connect worship with service, we will gather on the first Sunday of every month at 9:30am. We will share in Worship with Holy Communion followed by ministry (committee) meetings in which all will be invited to participate. This is a way for the congregation to display our desire to be a community "where Spirit and service come together."

For Children...

- Childcare for children under the age of four will be available 9:30am – noon.
- Children ages four and up will be encouraged to attend worship at 9:30am and provide leadership as often as possible (reading liturgy, ushering, providing special music, etc.) After that, during the 11:00am hour, children who are in preschool – 5th grade will participate in enrichment classes, learning about key aspects of Christian formation that may not be covered in Sunday School curriculum, focusing on our milestones listed previously.

8. 2010-2011 Liturgical Year & Program Calendar

Ordinary Time/Season of Pentecost: The Season of Pentecost, called Ordinary Time, is a period of growth. The church emphasize Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God. We engage issues of daily life and concerns of the community, nation, and world. This Season comes after we have remembered Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday and celebrated his resurrection on Easter and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Easter and Pentecost.

Sun., Sept. 19	Church School begins for all ages at 9:30am. Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Sept. 26	Evangelism Sunday – Bring a friend to church today! Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Oct. 3	Spirit & Service Sunday Worship for all ages at 9:30am - Celebrating Holy Communion Activities for all ages at 11:00am, with enrichment time for children, mission project for youth. <i>(This is the same for every First Sunday of the month, unless otherwise noted.)</i>
Sun., Oct. 10	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am. Church-wide potluck at 6:00pm at the church.
Sun., Oct. 17	Bread for the World Sunday Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Oct. 24	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Oct. 31	Reformation Sunday Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am. - Celebrating Holy Communion
Sun., Nov. 7	Spirit & Service Sunday. (See Oct. 3 for details.) Worship at 9:30am. - Celebrating Holy Communion & All Saint's Day.
Sun., Nov. 14	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.

Christ the King: This last Sunday of the Christian Year celebrates the coming reign of Jesus Christ.

Sun., Nov. 21	Christ the King Sunday 9:30am Children's Church School and NO Adult CE. 9:30am Worship - Celebrating Holy Communion. 11:00am Advent Festival, with Hanging of the Greens.
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Advent: Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ: preparation to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas, to receive faithfully the risen Christ who comes to us in Word and Spirit, and to await with hope Christ's coming in final victory. The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming."

Sun., Nov. 28	1st Sunday of Advent. Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am. NO Church School for all ages.
Sun., Dec. 5	2nd Sunday of Advent. Worship at 9:30am. Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.)
Sun., Dec. 12	3rd Sunday of Advent. Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Dec. 19	4th Sunday of Advent. Worship at 9:30am. Christmas Pageant at 11:00am.
Fri., Dec. 24	Christmas Eve 5:00pm Family Worship Service 10:00pm Communion & Candlelight Worship Service

Christmas Season: Christmas Season is the time of celebration, thanksgiving, and praise for God present with us in Jesus Christ. Christmas Day was first celebrated on December 25 in Rome sometime between 336 and 354 C.E. A pagan winter solstice festival, the birthday of the unconquered sun, was already celebrated on December 25. Christians adopted that date to celebrate the birth of the Son of God. Christians have often adapted and transformed the customs of the world around them.

Sun., Dec. 26	One Worship Service at 9:30am. NO Church School for any ages. Childcare available 9:15-10:30am.
Sun., Jan. 2	One Worship Service at 9:30am. NO Church School, and NO Spirit & Service Sunday activities, unless otherwise noted. Childcare available 9:15-10:30am.

Epiphany: The word Epiphany is from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, which means "manifestation." On the Day of Epiphany, January 6, we celebrate Jesus being revealed to the world and the visit of the wise men, the first gentiles to whom he was made known. Scripture doesn't say how many wise men came to Bethlehem. At various times tradition has set the number from two to twelve. However, because three gifts are mentioned, we usually think of three wise men or Magi.

Sun., Jan. 9	Baptism of the Lord Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Jan. 16	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Jan. 23	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Jan. 30	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Feb. 6	Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.) Worship at 9:30am.
Sun., Feb. 13	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Feb. 20	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Feb. 27	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., Mar. 6	Transfiguration of the Lord Worship at 9:30am. Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.) Pancake Brunch at 10:30am.

Lent: Lent is a season of preparation for the celebration of Easter. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lencten*, which means “spring,” the time of the lengthening of days. At first, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism on Easter Eve. Eventually, Lent became a time of reflection and self-examination for all Christians.

Wed., Mar. 9	Ash Wednesday – Worship at 7:00pm Celebrating Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
Sun., Mar. 13	1st Sunday in Lent – Worship at 9:30am. Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.)
Sun., Mar. 20	2nd Sunday in Lent - Worship at 9:30am & 11:00.
Sun., Mar. 27	3rd Sunday in Lent - Worship at 9:30am & 11:00.
Sun., Apr. 3	4th Sunday in Lent - Worship at 9:30am. Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.)
Sun., Apr. 10	5th Sunday in Lent - Worship at 9:30am & 11:00.
Sun., Apr. 17	Palm Sunday Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am. Children process with Palms in both services.
Thur., Apr. 21	Maundy Thursday

Good Friday – 2011: In Old English usage good meant “of God.” Good Friday is God’s Friday: Jesus’ death shows God’s salvation.

Fri., Apr. 22	Good Friday
Sat., Apr. 23	Holy Saturday

The Easter Season – 2011: The Easter Season, also known as the Great Fifty Days, begins at sunset on Easter Eve and continues through the Day of Pentecost. At this season, we celebrate with joy Christ’s resurrection and ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit on the first Easter (John 20:22-23) and on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Sun., Apr. 24	Resurrection of the Lord/Easter Worship at 9:30am & 11:00am. NO church school for any ages.
Sun., May 1	Worship at 9:30am. Spirit & Service Sunday (See Oct. 3 for details.)
Sun., May 8	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., May 15	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am.
Sun., May 22	Worship at 9:30 & 11:00am. Last Day of Church School.
Sun., May 29	Worship at 10:00am. Childcare available for younger children.
Sun., June 5	Worship at 10:00am. - Celebrating Holy Communion

Pentecost -2011: Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, comes from the Greek word for fiftieth, *pentekoste*. Greek-speaking Jews called the Jewish Feast of Weeks the Day of Pentecost. Acts tells how the anxious and fearful disciples, who had gathered on the Day of Pentecost, were filled with the Holy Spirit and thereafter preached boldly the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Sun., June 12	Worship at 10:00am. All church picnic following worship.
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