

Children's Sunday School Playbook

Description of the Ministry:

Purpose:

This ministry is an in-reach ministry for the children of St. James's, ages 2 – grade 5. Sunday School is held from 10:15-11:00 a.m. on Sundays September through May. The goal of this ministry is to provide a safe, fun learning environment for the children of St. James's. This ministry fosters positive spiritual development among our younger parishioners.

Activities/Events:

Children's Sunday School meets most Sunday mornings from 10:15-11:00 a.m. and follows the liturgical calendar. Special events include the Advent Fair and preparation for CARITAS.

Impact Observations:

This ministry positively impacts the spiritual development of our younger parishioners. For many children, Sunday School is the first structured activity in which they independently participate within the church. The Sunday School ministry helps to set the tone of the church for our children, as well as for their families.

Additionally, adult parishioners are invited to serve in Sunday School classrooms as volunteers, teachers, shepherds (K-5), and workshop leaders (K-5). Adults who have served in any of these roles have reported that they have concluded a unit of study with a greater understanding of the scripture and the liturgy, as well as a stronger connection to the families of St. James's.

Roles in the Ministry:

Chairperson(s):

The Director of Children's Ministries Kent Duffey works in collaboration with the Vestry to select and organize materials, including curriculum, used in Children's Sunday School. Additionally, two Sunday School superintendents concurrently serve in two-year volunteer positions under the Director of Children's Ministries. Current Sunday School superintendents are Sarah Hubard (knoxandsarah@comcast.net) and Kristin Davis (kristindavis@verizon.net).

Sunday School superintendents assist with evaluating and implementing meaningful curriculum, purchasing and organizing materials needed to support each unit of study, and supporting the Director of Children's Ministries as needed.

Sunday School superintendents should enjoy working with families and children at St. James's and should be able to clearly communicate goals and objectives of the Sunday School programs. Knowledge of pedagogy is helpful when evaluating and implementing curriculum; however, this background is not required.

Staff involvement:

The Director of Children's Ministries is a paid staff member. She works in collaboration with Vestry representatives to evaluate, select, purchase, and organize appropriate curriculum materials needed for the Sunday School ministry.

Committee members/Opportunities for Involvement:

The Children's Sunday School ministry offers a variety of opportunities for involvement, each with varying levels of commitment. Parishioners may serve in any of the following roles: pre-school lead teacher, pre-school assistant teacher, shepherd (K-5), workshop leader (K-5), or parent volunteer.

Pre-school lead teachers prepare lessons and teach two Sundays during a given month. Pre-school assistant teachers assist with lessons at least two Sundays during a given month.

Shepherds, who work with K-5 students, commit to attending Sunday School on most weeks, following their "flock" of students to their new workshop each week. Shepherds offer the gift of consistency to the children and assist with workshops as needed. However, shepherds do not need to prepare to teach lessons. They are truly shepherds.

Workshop leaders are the lesson teachers. They facilitate weekly workshops within a given unit. Serving as a workshop leader is typically a three week commitment. Many of our workshop leaders serve for two or three units (three weeks each) per program year (September – May). These workshop leaders teach using many different skills: storytelling, cooking, art, science, games, music, video, etc. So, if a parishioner is particularly interested in or talented in one of these areas, he or she can do a rotation in that area (i.e. using cooking as the teaching method for all three weeks). It is important to understand that for each three-week teaching segment, the workshop leader is only preparing to teach one lesson to three different groups of children. The rotational model means that the children rotate; the workshop leaders stay the same. For example, a workshop leader assigned to the K-2nd grade group would teach the same lesson to K one week, to 1st grade the next week, and to 2nd grade the final week. All of the materials required to prepare and teach are provided to the workshop leaders in advance.

Materials Team members gather, organize, and prepare materials behind the scenes for weekly workshops. Our rotation model of K-5 Sunday School would not be possible without the countless volunteers who perform this duty. They communicate by phone/email to coordinate materials needed for units of study.

One of the benefits that accrue to the shepherds and the workshop leaders is the ability to meet and get to know the children of the church, as well as their parents. If your child is Sunday School age, he or she will likely love the idea of having you as a Sunday School teacher, and you will have the opportunity to meet the peers that your child will socialize with for years to come.

Time Commitment by Chair(s) and Committee Members:

Pre-school lead teachers prepare lessons and teach two Sundays during a given month. Pre-school assistant teachers assist with lessons at least two Sundays during a given month. Serving in either of these positions requires approximately two hours per week.

While working with K-5 students, shepherds commit to attending Sunday School on most weeks, following their "flock" of students to their new workshop each week. Following the lesson, shepherds communicate with families about the day's activities, as well as any other pertinent information relating to Children's Ministries. This role requires approximately 1.5 hours each week.

Workshop leaders facilitate weekly workshops within a given unit. Lessons are chosen and prepared by the Director of Children's Ministries and the Sunday School superintendents and all materials are provided by the Materials Team; therefore, minimal preparation is required of workshop leaders. This role requires approximately 1.5 hours each week for the duration of the rotation (typically 3 weeks).

Members of the Materials Team communicate by phone/email Monday-Friday to coordinate materials needed for units of study. This role requires approximately two hours each week, but with enough Materials Team members, each person does not need to work each week. This year the Materials Team thrived under the leadership of Melanie Campbell. Melanie coordinated volunteers, consistently evaluated the needs of workshop leaders, and replenished supplies as needed. Serving in the role of the Materials coordinator requires approximately three hours each week (Monday-Friday).

Involvement by Other St. James's Groups:

All St. James's adults are encouraged to participate in this ministry! You do not need to be the parent of a child in Children's Sunday School to participate.

Resources Required:

Financial:

The church financially encourages and supports the positive spiritual development of our children. "Godly Play," a Sunday School program new to St. James's will be implemented in our 4/5 year old Sunday School class in Fall 2011. Implementation of this new program would not be possible without the financial support of our Vestry and church.

Space:

Children's Sunday School classes meet in both the newly renovated Children's Center, as well as in the Michaux House. Pre-school classes meet on the ground floor of the Children's Center. Workshops for K-5 students are held in the Michaux House.

Staff:

We are fortunate to have the support and help from our sextons to move furniture as needed for our K-5 workshops. Workshop leaders are not responsible for creating room arrangement for K-5 workshops.

Advertising/Publicity:

Parents may visit <http://stjameschildren.wordpress.com/> for updated Sunday School information.

Manpower:

Volunteers are always appreciated in Children's Sunday School! More hands, more eyes, and more hearts are always welcome!

Community Impact/Partners:

The Children's Sunday School is a part of St. James's ministry in partnership with CARITAS. Each year, as we prepare to host our overnight guests as part of CARITAS, the Sunday School children assist us in getting ready by gathering necessities for the guests, by creating welcome cards, placemats, etc., and by raising money to support CARITAS.

(February 2011)