

Church School Handbook

St. John the Baptist Episcopal Parish

2017-2018



The Episcopal Parish of St. John the Baptist
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The Rev. Canon Robert Bryant, Rector
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Children and Youth at St. John the Baptist

At St. John's, we understand that our children are being formed daily, by every conversation, relationship and experience. Rarely, however, do most children hear and experience the most important formation: that at their very core God loves them. For this reason, St. John's views Christian education as the life-long process of learning this message, what it means to be blessed AND a member of a community practicing faith, hope and love. Knowing God in real ways motivates us to create a better world. Through an accessible study of scripture and tradition, through life experiences shared, and reflection on worship, teachers present the stories of faith and learn from the youth.

We accomplish our mission through three parish programs: Church School, Rite 3 Sundays (child centered liturgy) and confirmation for middle and high school students. Social events compliment these ministries, such as the summer pool party, Celebration Sunday, Advent Wreath Making, Christmas pageant, Easter Egg hunt, service learning projects of Potluck in the Park and others.

St. John's is committed to meeting SAFE Church standards, polices and practices, including background checks for all staff members and parishioners who work with children and the vulnerable elderly. We routinely adhere to SAFE standards through attendance taking, and asking parent/guardian to provide educational supports to their child that are employed at their child's school. Note that if your child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), allergies or learning plans, the parent/guardian provide these same supports at St. John's.

It is our pleasure to work with and learn from your children.

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Church School & Rite 3 Sundays

Registration forms filed, classrooms open, and the first lesson of the year begins on Kick Off Sunday, September 10. Our community's custom is to gather in the sanctuary at 10am for announcements. We begin worship with a centering prayer, when the children and youth are lead in a procession to Church School to engage with the Liturgy of the Word. Classes, with the exception of the Nursery, resume at the Peace when the community gathers together once again to prepare for Holy Communion. The Nursery Class (birth-age 4) and the Holy Innocents Class is PreK-5th grade. Students in grade 6-8 are encouraged to participate in the liturgy through service as an acolyte, lector, and/or usher. Some youth sing in the choir and confirmation classes are offered to engage their individual questions and spiritual development.

Church School is held every Sunday, with the exception of children attending the entire liturgy on Rite 3 Sundays (3rd Sunday of the month). Rite 3 is designed specifically for children as an informal child-centered worship experience. Children actively participate as Greeters, Oblationers, Acolytes and Lectors. The service has a child-centered homily and contemporary music encouraging congregational singing and playing of handheld instruments.

Church School Teachers

Nursery	Rachel Pippinger Rebecca Bakken
Holy Innocents (PreK-Grade5)	Jordan & Allison Dominic Margaret Siversten & Lilya Siversten Robin Mullins & Laura Moran Lindsey & Fr. Colin Williams
Early Christian (6-8th Grade)	The Rev. Heather Wenrick
Substitute Teachers	Mary Hagood Mary McCarter
Church School Coordinator	Sue Meyer

Curriculum Description

Like a cookbook, curriculum is only as good as the people who use it. We are so fortunate to have an outstanding team of dedicated and talented teachers, teaming up in consistent pairs to learn with the children.

The Nursery Class (birth-4 years old)

The Nursery staff shares a love of God by leading an Opening Prayer, introducing the theme outlined in the lectionary-based curriculum, Feasting on the Word, and concludes with an activity. Feasting on the Word is used throughout our children's program and adapted to meet the current needs of our children. The teaching team selects the "tots activity" within the lesson plan that reinforces the theme of the day. Activities may be learning a song, art project, role play, clay work, storybook reading and more. Additionally, healthy snacks are given at the conclusion of the activity.

Your contribution of supplies such as healthy snacks, wet wipes and crayons are appreciated throughout the year.

Holy Innocents (PreK-grade 5)

The Holy Innocents class uses Feasting on the Word Multi-Age curriculum. Feasting on the Word introduces biblical, historical and character development teachings from the Sunday Gospel. The teachings are then reinforced by hands-on activities. Children gather in the sanctuary during announcements. At the conclusion of announcements, the clergy invites all children and teachers forward for a prayer and together they go in procession to the Holy Innocent classroom in the Under Croft. The classroom has a designated altar where the children continue their worship. A short worship service begins the classroom instruction when they learn liturgical roles, such as lighting candles, ringing a bell, silence, officiating an opening prayer, discussion of the color and season of the church year and a concluding prayer. Worship ends with extinguishing the candles. Worship is immediately followed by the Sunday lesson presented by the team teachers. Each teaching team is consistent throughout the year. When needed, the teachers split the class into a PreK-grade2 and Grade 3-5 groups for the activity. This one room schoolhouse model allows children to participate in the Gospel in age appropriate ways and fosters rich community. Church School is 30minutes, concluding in sufficient time for children to rejoin the entire congregation and prepare for Holy Communion.

Early Christians (grade 6-8)

The Early Christians class restructured this year to support them in their acolyting and liturgical service duties. When youth are not serving as an acolyte, they serve as Greeters, Oblationers, lectors and choir members during the Sunday service. Community service learning opportunities with Potluck in the Park and Western Farm Works are offered to this class throughout the year to support them in their faith. The first opportunity is serving a free lunch in downtown Portland with Potluck in the Park on Sunday, Sept. 10 from 3-6pm.

Confirm not Conform (CnC) Grades 6-12



Confirm not Conform explores the beliefs and questions that come from the youth themselves. We adapted this program to be a 4 month study with the Associate Rector. Class topics include Where do you stand?, Heretics Among Us, Scripture, Tradition, Faith in Action, World Religion and visits to 2 other Episcopal parishes. Confirmation is organized to promote debate and discussions that ignite faith into something lively and real for young adults. CnC takes the idealism and skepticism that co-exist in young people and uses that energy to help youth become engaged with their faith and their community. Youth interested in Confirmation notify Mtr. Heather on All Saints Day and classes begin shortly afterwards on Sunday mornings. The rite of Confirmation is Saturday, May 19 at 7pm.

Recommended Book List for **Children's** Ministries

The *Beginner's* Bible: Timeless *Children's* Stories Pulley, Kelly
Grandfather Twilight Berger, Barbara Helen
Grandad's Prayers of the Earth Wood, Douglas
A Lot of Otters Berger, Barbara Helen
Dog Heaven Rylant, Cynthia
I'm Coming to Get You Ross, Tony
The Selfish Giant Wilde, Oscar
Sacred Places Yolen, Jane
The Mare on the Hill Locker, Thomas
The Three Questions Muth, Jon
It Must Hurt A lot: A Book about Death and Learning and Growing Sanford, Doris
The Araboolies of Liberty Street Swope, Sam
The Mitten Brett, Jan
The Glorious Impossible L'Engle, Madeleine
The Quilt Story Johnston, Tony
Gwinna Berger, Barbara Helen
The *Magician's* Nephew (The Chronicles of Narnia) Lewis, C.S.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES

In order to strengthen our program, *we* have established the following policies:

1. In so far as possible, volunteers who provide child care, teach Church School or work with youth as volunteers must have been active at St John the Baptist and known to this community for at least four months prior to their involvement. This entails, but is not limited to, regular church attendance, involvement in church activities, letter of transfer, or participation in Inquirer's processes.
2. All persons working in either full or part-time paid positions or volunteering with children or youth must submit a criminal background check in keeping with requirements of the Diocese of Oregon. They must undergo the mandatory sexual abuse prevention training offered through the Diocese for those working with children in a church setting.
3. The Parish of St. John the Baptist will strive to have two adults or child care providers in the room or conducting an activity at all times. When this is not possible, classes and care will be provided only under the following circumstances: open door or window view and/or random visitation by supervisor.
4. No overnight activity will take place without two or more unrelated adults present and without written consent from the parents/guardians of participants. No adult leader will sleep alone in a room with only one or two youth participants.
5. Under no circumstance may a child under the age of twelve be instructed to wait for someone to pick them up at the office/church entrance. Likewise, children are not to be dropped off and left to fend for themselves until Church School begins.
6. A sheet of guidelines and expectations for parents will be issued at the beginning of each year and posted in the classroom. This child safety policy will also be posted at all times in the public view.
7. Attendance records will be kept on children and youth programs sponsored by St. John the Baptist. These records will be stored for a minimum of three years.
8. By law, all suspected child abuse, physical or sexual, must be reported immediately to the clergy, who must contact authorities to begin an investigation. If the suspected abuser is a clergy, the teacher and/or parent must immediately report the suspected abuse to the Bishop.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

In an effort to provide as safe and happy a place as possible for children, we ask parents to observe the following guidelines:

- Please register your child formally by filling out a St. John the Baptist registration card. It is extremely important that you indicate on that card any medical conditions or learning needs which we should know. That information will be noted to the teachers. The registration card also contains a photo release statement in which to indicate whether or not you are willing to have your child's picture (without name) posted on our website or other external publicity.
- Under no circumstance should children under twelve be dropped off and left to fend for themselves until Church School begins.
- Likewise, under no circumstances may children under the age of twelve be instructed to wait for someone to pick them up at an entrance to St. John's.
- Parents must inform the teacher in charge if someone other than a parent is picking their child up.
- Children in grades PreK-5 are generally brought in the service at the Peace and expected to be with their parents in church during the Eucharist. It is the parent's responsibility to be present in worship, to have the child sit with them or to make alternative arrangements for where and with whom they are to sit.