



WESTVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Children's Spiritual Pathway

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ENCOURAGING AN UNDERSTANDING OF
SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN CHILDREN

Where a Child's Spiritual Pathway Goes

Westview's mission statement is: **To make fully devoted followers of Jesus;** people who are following Jesus, making a difference in the world, growing in Christ likeness, helping others to grow in Christ likeness and ultimately helping others help others to grow in Christ likeness. Westview's desire is to disciple disciple makers.

Children's Ministry is committed to aiding and nurturing this process in the lives of children entrusted to our ministry. Our desire is to see firm foundations built into the lives of our kids so that they will journey towards the ultimate goal of following Jesus to be all He created them to be.

At every stage along this journey we want to help children in meaningful and age appropriate ways understand Who God is, Who they are, and Who their world is and at every stage along this journey understand How they relate to God, How they relate to themselves, and How they relate to those in their world.

By the time children leave grade 6 our goal is that they would have a maturing understanding of what it means to be a "**SWORD**" person; a person involved in **Service, Worship Outreach, Relationships, and Discipleship**, and be journeying a pathway that results in living this lifestyle. Our hope is that we will have given them the basic understanding of the theological principles that are needed form a Biblical worldview that they can build their lives upon.

Children's Ministry committed to starting a child on their journey to becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DEVELOPING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A BIBLICAL WORLD VIEW

So Children become Adults who



- Recognize the authority of scripture
- Know the stories of scripture
- Know how to filter decisions through scripture:
 - Likes & dislikes
 - Attitudes
 - Relationships
 - Habits & Disciplines
 - Goals
- Find answers on their own through scripture
- Think critically about information
- Persevere through the challenges of life
- Discover and use their God given gifts
- Become disciples that make disciples that make disciples

The spiritual pathway of those under 5



PRESCHOOL CHILDREN LEARN EXPERIENTIALLY THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT & THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM

The spiritual pathway for a child begins at birth. One of the earliest stepping stones along their pathway is trust. Developing trust in God begins when a baby learns to trust in the dependability of parents and those involved in their life and their unconditional love.

Another major stepping stone in this early childhood stage is the development of self confidence. For a child to smoothly move along their spiritual pathway confidence allow them to ask and explore many questions.

To help a preschooler move along their spiritual pathway we need to recognize that young children have the ability to:

- Pray, worship and trust God
- Know the Bible is God's special book
- Enjoy Bible stories and will listen to them over and over
- Learn through their environment
- Blend together truth and fantasy
- Create and imagine
- Ask a million questions.

To encourage preschoolers to journey along their spiritual pathway we must be willing to activate their senses in helping them to relate faith to their daily lives. We must be willing to listen to the children, and use simple language. We should encourage them to hear clear stories from the Bible especially about Jesus and start to encourage them to spot God in the everydayness of life.

WHAT THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY LOOKS LIKE FOR A PRESCHOOLER

Younger Preschool are:

- developing a sense of trust as needs are met
- consistently sensing attitudes and expression of love
- growing in trust of adults
- beginning to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors
- beginning to recognize simple pictures of Jesus
- singing simple songs about God and Jesus
- saying thank You to God
- listening to Bible stories

Middle Preschool are:

- identifying some Bible people and stories
- understanding that God, Jesus, and the church are special
- beginning to develop a conscience and are sensitive to feelings of shame and guilt
- retelling Bible stories
- recognizing that God and Jesus love people and help people in special ways
- expressing love for God and Jesus

Older Preschool are:

- remembering Bible stories
 - retelling Bible stories
 - recognizing how God and Jesus love people
 - seeing how God helps people in special ways
 - using the Bible to ask questions about God
 - making life application of Bible verses
 - seeing Jesus as a friend and a helper
 - starting to make conclusions about God
-

SWORD For those under 5



S To lay the groundwork for service in preschool children we must teach that the world is bigger than self and that others have value and importance. This is lived out in the interactions with those in their world.

W To nurture worship in preschool children we must remember they relate to God through their imagination. Help children know God's love and know that they are loved. Help teach children to do God sightings (see God in the everydayness). Worship is lived out through music, body movements and physical expressions of love within God's family.

O To Lay the groundwork for outreach in preschool children we must teach children that Jesus wants to be their forever friend and that he values all people.

R For preschool children loving relationships expressed through family and leaders is needed to foster a child's experience of God's love's. Children need to establish trust, develop confidence and cultivate self control. For preschool children it is essential that nursery and church preschool classes and activities offer a safe and caring environment.

D To encourage discipleship in preschool children we will offer systematic, age appropriate Bible teaching on a weekly basis. We will provide resources for families to use at home. Preschool children need their imaginations and senses activated within a structured experience. Children of this age need to know that God made them and the world they live in, God loves them and Jesus wants to be their forever friend.

The spiritual pathway of Elementary Kids



Kids at this age are concrete thinkers. They need repetition and clear applications in their everyday world.

In this season of a child's life they are learning how their world works and how to have fun in it. Kids of this age are motivated by FUN.

They are gradually moving from needing just the acceptance of adults to needing the acceptance of peers and adults. Friendships are becoming more important and putting those friendships into a Christian context is part of their spiritual development.

Adults speaking into the lives of children in this stage have the special job of being a role model, a concrete example of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Children in this stage are concrete thinkers. They can take in a lot but need frequent repetition and for ideas to be connected to everyday experiences. This is a stage where basic theological concepts can be taught and woven into the fabric of their lives but they are usually unable to apply them on their own.

Elementary kids learn through story but can usually only handle one main concept at a time and allegory is hard for them to grasp.

WHAT THE SPIRITUAL PATHWAY LOOKS LIKE FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

Early Elementary Kids are:

- seeing Jesus as a friend and helper
- enjoying learning from the Biblebeginning to have a simple understanding of sins
- seeing consequences to sin
- beginning to have a simple understanding of the gospel
- knowing the right answers but may not understand application
- ininterested in finding out more about God and Jesus and His plan of salvation
- using the Bible to ask questions about God
- starting to make conclusions about God

Middle Elementary Kids are:

- asking serious questions about religion
- developing values learning about being truthful and honest
- having difficulty making decisions
- beginning to feel the need for a Savior
- growing conscious of themselves and of sin
- wanting to do things the right way
- thinking in terms of right and wrong more than good and evil

Preteens are:

- developing concepts of love and trust
 - hearing their conscience
 - developing a value system
 - forming concepts of personal worth
 - seeking spiritual answers
 - making many choices but may not follow through on long-term commitments
 - feeling deeply about their own experiences
 - beginning to adopt a religious belief system of their own
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SWCRD for Elementary Kids



S To lay the groundwork for service in elementary kids we must help children grow in their understanding that there is hurt in the world and they can make a difference. Make sure Sunday School lessons have practical applications and offer short term special service projects.

W To increase worship at this stage kids need to know they can trust God no matter what and that God wants them to make a personal decision to follow him daily. Participation in "Big Church" and personal home devotions are important. Kids also need to be encouraged in learning how to spot God in everyday life.

O To help children grow in their outreach it is important to help them start to tell their story of who God is and what he is doing in their life. We need to help children gain a deeper appreciation that all are valued by God. We need to encourage children to be successful in visiting friends to day camps, Sunday School, Brood, and other church activities.

R To help kids grow in loving relationships it is important that they understand that they should treat others in the way they want to be treated. Continue to help kids realize the value that God puts on other's lives. Children gradually are moving past just needing approval of adults towards needing approval of peers and adults. Give space within ministries to nurture adult-child and child-child relationships.

D To encourage discipleship in elementary children we will offer systematic, age appropriate Bible teaching on a weekly basis. We will continually expose children to and teach basic theological concepts in such a way that when a child leaves grade 6 they will have an understanding of the basics of the Christian faith. Children will be challenged regularly to respond to the Gospel and other Biblical teaching. We will resource and encourage families so that they will have regular home devotions.

EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

THREE YEAR ROTATION

Events and Activities that reinforce development & movement for children and families as they journey along their Spiritual Pathway.

	2019	2020	2021
JR. CADRE GRADE 5 & 6		JAN- MAR	JAN-MAR
MOTHER/DAUGHTER SLEEP OVER Catherine Swanson-Lindy Wylie	JAN-28	JAN 24-25	JAN 22-23
GRADE 5, 6 LEADERSHIP PROJECT Cook Senior's Luncheon		FEB 13	FEB 11
FATHER/CHILD HOCKEY Tyler Hagan	FEB	COVID 19	FEB
WINTER CAMP GR 4-6 Dawn & Brood	MAR 1-3	FEB 28-MAR 1	MAR
PARENTING WORKSHOP		APRIL- MAY (ONLINE)	SPRING
GRADE 2 BIBLE DEDICATION		SPRING	SPRING
FATHER/ DAUGHTER BANQUET Nicky, Angela	APR 13		APR 17
MOTHER/DAUGHTER SPA		COVID 19	
FAMILY PICNIC Ivonne & Day Camp Staff	JUNE 23		JUNE 13

EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

THREE YEAR ROTATION

	2019	2020	2021
FAMILY CAMPING TRIP Rebecca, Marty, Ivonne, Todd, Kira			
DAY CAMPS Hired Staff	MAY-AUG	MAY-AUG	MAY-AUG
MOTHER/SON C-TRAIN SCAVENGER HUNT Kevin D & Derek M	SEPT 28		SEPT 25
FAMILY HIKE		SEPT 26	
JR. CADRE GRADE 5 & 6		OCT-NOV	OCT-NOV
FAMILY BOWLING	OCT 26		NOV 6
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP GRADE 5 & 6 (USHERING) Chris Thomas	NOV	NOV	NOV
ADVENT EVENT	NOV 30 ADVENT WREATHE	NOV28 JESSIE TREE	NOV 27 ADVENT WREATHE
FAMILY CHRISTMAS MUSICAL & FAMILY EVENING Jen Makus and Teams from other departments	DEC 15	DEC 20	DEC 19

