

August 2011



Children's Religious Education Committee Newsletter

God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth
and tell it in love – like Christ in everything!
- Ephesians 4:15

Grounded in the Gospel

Peace and grace and a whole lot of love for Jesus be with you as we start a new year of Sunday School and faith formation programming for our young people at Grace!

It's hard to believe this is the fourth year of Sunday School at Grace for me, and I'm excited for some of the changes and growth that are upon us. A search committee is hard at work, looking for a new Youth and Family Ministry Director and a Children's Ministry Coordinator. Please continue to keep this committee and the possible candidates in your prayers. I am confident that God will provide!

This year, we'll be trying out a few new things during Sunday School:

- High school students will join us on Family and Story Sundays as older-but-youthful guides in the faith.
- Kindergartners will join in the rotational model.
- The fourth and fifth grade participants will be invited to participate in a "Rotation Challenge" during the third and fourth week of rotations (more about that on Rally Day).
- Two Sunday School Lite Sundays are scheduled - one in May and one on the Sunday of the Harvest Festival in Forrest, IL (see inside for more exciting information about this event).

As always, we need you! We need children and families and other adults to gather in community so that the good news of God's love and forgiveness in Jesus might be shared and lived. Please consider teaching a rotation or serving as a shepherd or helping with one of our Family or Story Sundays.

It's going to be a great year grounded in the Gospel!

In Christ,

Pastor Faulstich

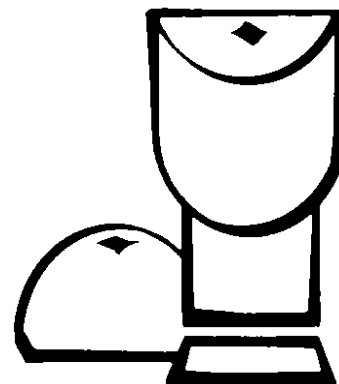
Foods Resource Bank Harvest Festival - Sunday, October 9th

Every year, our Benevolence Committee supports the efforts of the Foods Resource Bank by participating in local growing projects. We're matched with three other churches and a community in Forrest, Illinois. The proceeds of the crops grown on that land go to international and local agencies that work to alleviate hunger and its effects in people's lives. Every year, we are invited to a Sunday morning Harvest Festival in Forrest, Illinois. Members from the churches gather for worship, combine rides, and other farm activities. This year we will have a Sunday School Lite day for those who stick around, but are encouraging our Sunday School families to attend this event. Our Fall Sunday School offerings will also go to support this project.

First Communion Instruction

(Fifth Grade)

At Grace, young people are invited to participate in a formal First Communion Instruction during Lent of their 5th Grade year in school. They receive their First Communion (or celebrate with their classmates if they already commune) on Palm Sunday. Some children who worship regularly might express to their families that they would like to commune earlier than Fifth Grade. If this happens in your family, please talk with Pastor Faulstich or Pastor Modahl and they will be happy to help discern what is best for your child and family.



Grace Nursery

(infant to 4 years)

Come all ye little children! The Nursery is open every Sunday from 8:15a.m. - 12:15 p.m. We have a silent paging system that allows us to call parents when needed.

Confirmation

(Sixth-Eighth Grade)

We gather on every Sunday morning and one Sunday and one Friday evening a month for faith formation, catechism study, fellowship, and fun. Questions? Contact Pastor Faulstich.



Spark Bibles

Still want to purchase a Spark Story Bible for your young children or as a gift for nieces, nephews, neighbors, and other special kids in your life? There are still some that will be available on Rally Sunday for \$15. Checks can be made to Grace Lutheran, memo line: Sunday School.

Sunday School Curriculum

Sunday School children in Kindergarten through 5th grade will be taught using a rotation model. There are 5 rotations throughout the year. Each rotation is introduced at "Story Sunday" where all the children join together and stay in the commons to hear a story from one of our very own Elders or other adults from the congregation. For the 3-4 weeks following Story Sunday, the lessons will all focus on the rotation's theme. This year we are excited to be using the Spark-Activate Faith curriculum again.

Preschoolers and Kindergarteners will follow the Spark Classroom model where classic Bible stories come to life with interactive Bible readings and engaging activities that get kids excited as they grow in God's Word. This curriculum walks through key Old Testament and New Testament Bible stories using the beautiful Spark Story Bible, colorful take home lesson leaflets and a variety of multisensory activities that integrate Bible learning with life. We know your little ones will be engaged and entertained as they get to know Jesus!!

Joyful Voices

"He who sings prays twice." St. Augustine

Joyful Voices begins its fifth year at Grace this fall, welcoming singers from grades 1-6. Our first rehearsal is on Wednesday, August 31, at 6:00 p.m. We're expanding the age range of the choir this year to include fifth and sixth graders, so that choristers already in the group can continue to sing with us and so that more children can be a part of the choir. Children from the community as well as Grace families are welcome to sing with us.

A child's singing voice is a precious gift from God. Young children sing spontaneously, sing with joy and with thoughtfulness, for fun and to express their unique thoughts and feelings. Piano lessons, violin lessons, and learning other instruments also shape musical skills, but there's no experience of music that is as immediate and as simple as singing.

Grace's Joyful Voices choir nurtures children's singing and musical abilities hand in hand with nurturing their faith. Our rehearsals are a special time in a child's week, to gather at church with fellow young Christians and sing and talk about the God who loves and cares for us. Singing for worship gives children a unique leadership experience, one in which the gifts of music they bring to the congregation are every bit as welcome as the work of adults. Singing also helps children connect emotionally with their faith, a connection they will cherish into adulthood. And singing church music helps children develop good vocal technique and a solid understanding of musical form and expression.

Joyful Voices rehearses once a week, on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. Grace. The group sings for worship approximately once a month. I'm hoping to add one or more field trips or special events to our schedule this year. You can see the schedule on the Joyful Voices blog:

joyfulvoicesgraceriverforest.blogspot.com.

If you have questions, please contact me. Or just come to the first rehearsal!

Gwen Gotsch, Joyful Voices director

ggotsch@graceriverforest.org

708-366-6900, ext. 122

CAFÉ

(Coffee, Adult Fellowship, and Education)

CAFÉ is a series for adults that coordinates with the Sunday School calendar and time. Starting September 25th, CAFÉ begins at 10:00 and ends at 10:40, so parents can worship with their Sunday School children and meet them at their classrooms.

Located in the 6th grade classroom in the northeast corner of the upstairs commons, discussions will be led by the pastoral team (awesome!) with some special guest stars. Stop by and join the conversation!

Mustard Seeds

(Infant – Five Year Olds)



Mustard Seeds organizes gatherings for families with children who are infants through 5-year olds, such as:

October Event - Halloween Party

January Event - Open Gym @ Grace

April Event – Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch

If these events are going to happen, we are in need of a person or group of people to coordinate Mustard Seed or take charge of just one event. If you would be willing to take the lead on one (or all!) of these events, please contact Pastor Faulstich.

Rally Day Breakfast for Sunday School Families

Sunday, September 11, 2011
9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Calling all children age 3- 5th grade
and their families!

Please join us as we kick-off the new Sunday
School year with a pancake breakfast! We
will also worship, sing, and register for a
year of fun-filled bible learning.

Then, join the children as they participate
in the procession
at the 11:00 am worship service.

Do you enjoy crafts or puppets
or dress-up or games or cooking?
Can you take pictures or videos?

We need parental help
to teach 3-4 week rotations.

Shepherds will be in each classroom to
provide consistency and structure.

Teach with your spouse!
Co-teach with someone
you want to get to know!

Look for other Sunday School Volunteer
opportunities at Rally Day!

Contact Heidi Bohlmann
heidi@izeug.com



**Children's Religious
Education Committee**

Grace Lutheran Church and School
7300 West Division Street
River Forest, IL 60305
Phone: 708-366-6900
www.graceriverforest.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY

September 11, 2011

9:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall