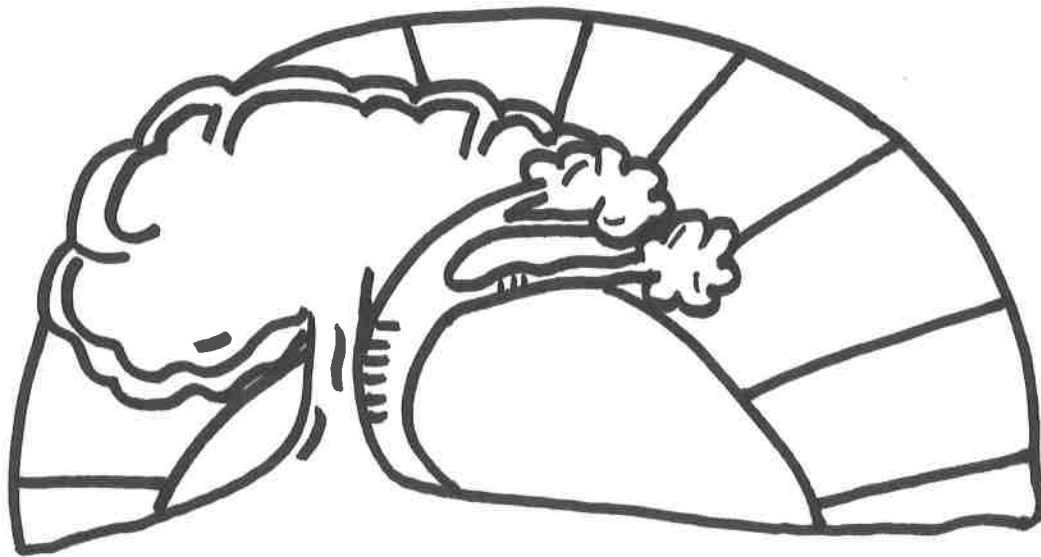


S u m m e r 2 0 1 7  
P r e s c h o o l t o 5 t h  
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



**Summer Plans:**

For June and July preschool to 5th graders will join us for the entire worship gathering. They will not be dismissed to class. This packet includes all the information you need to prepare to worship together.

**To Our Church Body:**

The presence of children is a gift to the Church and they are a reminder to us that spiritual formation is for all ages. We recognize children, and the way they experience God, as a gift to us in our own spiritual formation. We welcome them into our Sanctuary this summer as that: a gift. Please welcome them, show the children they belong, and give a smile of encouragement to their parents.

**To Parents of Our Children, May We Suggest...**

Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to make them sit still. They are welcome! Sit toward the front where it is easier for children to see and experience what's going on. Only seeing the backs of heads is no fun. Quietly explain the parts of the service; the songs, the prayers, communion, and the greeting of people around us. Children learn worship by copying you, just as we can learn from them.

## SUMMER LITURGY

# Service Order

### **Call to Worship**

This is the time to welcome each other and begin our worship. This portion will be led by a child or youth by the reading of a Psalm and a prayer.

### **Musical Praise**

Children are welcome to move about during this portion of worship. They are welcome to use the shakers and ribbons from the basket in the front. While we are singing "Bless the Lord Oh My Soul" they should put their shakers and ribbons back in the basket and take a seat on the floor so that they are ready for the story.

### **Story**

Children are encouraged to sit up front, on the floor, for the story. You are welcome to join the children! After the story the children are invited to use the response materials located on the shelf near the front on the left side.

### **Sermon**

During the sermon the children can use their response materials to respond to the story they just heard. They should take the materials and come back and sit with you for the remainder of the service.

### **Communion**

Some parents wonder when it's appropriate for a child to participate in taking communion. We have included information about communion in this packet. We will have a "feast" table up front for children who do not yet participate in communion. Children can go forward and get a cup of pretzels for their feast. There will be gluten free pretzels as well. If your child takes communion and also wants feast, they are welcome.

### **Contemplative Worship**

After communion we will enter into contemplative worship music. It a time to respond to God in a prayerful way. Children can continue to use response materials as they worship alongside you.

### **Benediction**

We will end our worship service by joining hands and saying the Lord's Prayer together. Our Godly Play curriculum includes learning the Lord's Prayer, so most children will be familiar with this prayer.

# C o m m u n i o n

At Common Ground we believe that the communion table is a profound moment to experience God's love through Christ. It is a time for the church family to be reminded of Jesus' death on the cross that pays the price for our sin and God's work to restore His creation. We celebrate communion every week and invite all who look to Jesus for God's grace and mercy, including children, to the "family meal."

The inclusion of children is primarily based on our understanding that communion is greatly linked to the celebration of Passover. At a Jewish Passover the children have very active roles, including the youngest child present asking, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" We believe that children at Common Ground also have the capacity of asking and answering, "Why is this meal different from all other meals?" referring to communion.

That said, we would ask parents to wait until their child has expressed interest in communion before they participate. Waiting provides an opportunity for parents to assess their child's level of faith understanding and also observe how God may be revealing Himself to their child. Parents can help prepare their child by talking about Passover, Jesus' last supper, and sharing why they take communion.

Lastly, we highly recommend parents using the "You're Invited" book to explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper. We believe this resource is a helpful way to discern if the child is ready.

## **What is Feast?**

In children's ministry Feast is the time when we gather in a circle and share a "meal." We say prayers (silently or out loud) and then eat together. Matzo bread becomes part of our feast when we tell the Exodus story. When we eat the bread we remember the stories.

# Music and Stories

## **The Music**

Worship music becomes powerful when it becomes familiar and we know it by heart. This summer we will have a playlist of songs that we sing regularly. We will email the list with you so that you can listen at home and in the car. On Sundays it helps to sit in a place where the children can see the words and the musicians.

## **The Sermon and Stories**

Each Sunday will include a Godly Play story that is for everyone. Please tune in to the story knowing that it isn't just for the children.

For June and July the story and sermons will center on the book of Numbers. The People of God had been set free from slavery and entered the wilderness. Now that they were free how would they live? Their journey led to Mount Sinai where Moses came so close to God, and God came so close to Moses, that Moses knew the way. God gave the People the "10 Best Ways" to live in their freedom. Now they were ready to journey on to the Promise Land. However, the People didn't trust God which resulted in 37 years of wandering in the wilderness. Our stories and sermons take us from slavery to freedom, to wandering and then to the Promise Land!

## **Godly Play Language**

Here are a few terms we use in children's ministry that you can use to help guide your child's worship experience...and your own!

**Getting Ready:** Before the story, we get ready. We quiet our body and our minds. Being quiet helps us to hear God and helps our neighbors who are listening to God as well. Children know what it means to "be ready."

**Ponder it in Your Heart:** During the story we listen to the storyteller. If we have something to say we "ponder it in our heart" until it's time to share. You can use this language with your children during service, and make sure to make time to share after church and wonder about the worship service.

**I Wonder:** Use these questions after church to share about your worship experience....

I wonder what your favorite part of service (worship/story/communion) was? I wonder what part was most important? I wonder what part of the service/story was about you? Add on your own wondering questions, using open ended questions.