

Children's Ministry at Idlewild Presbyterian Church

Frequently Asked Questions

What ages are included in the Children's Ministry?

The Children's Ministry at Idlewild Presbyterian serves children from birth through 5th grade.

Are children expected to stay in worship?

Idlewild welcomes children of all ages and encourages them to participate in our entire worship service. Children's worship packets can be found at all entrances to the church sanctuary. With that said, we do offer nursery care for children two years of age and under, and Children's Church Continued after the *Time with the Younger Church* for children in PK (pre-kindergarten) and JK (junior kindergarten). Children in SK (senior kindergarten) and older are welcome to come up for the *Time with the Younger Church*, but they stay in the sanctuary for the entirety of the worship service.

What is the Time with the Younger Church?

The *Time with the Younger Church* is the time in the worship service after the passing of the peace when parents are invited to bring or send their children up to the front of the church to hear a short children's sermon from Caitlin C. Bomar, the Director of Children's Ministry, or one of the clergy members. The congregation is invited to pass quarters to children as the children walk up front. The quarters are placed in tubes by the children, and then collected at the end of the service to go towards helping girls around the world get an education.

The *Time with the Younger Church* usually last about four minutes, unless there is a baptism. On Sundays when we have a child getting baptized, the baptism is part of the *Time with the Younger Church*. This way, the children get an up close view to the holy sacrament taking place at the baptismal font. The *Time with the Younger Church* ends with a recital of the Lord's Prayer together.

What do kids do in Children's Church Continued?

Children's Church Continued is offered in the former Library for children in PK and JK following the *Time with the Younger Church* that takes place during the 11:00 worship service. Parents should escort their children to the hallway outside of the sanctuary by the T.K. Young Room, sign them in with C3 helpers, and pick them up and sign them out immediately following the service.

Children's Church Continued is led by UofM student, Dannon Eubanks, who uses a Cokesbury curriculum to prepare a lesson and craft for the children centered around God's love. The structure of C3 is usually as follows: lesson, snack time, craft time, free time. In accordance with our two-adult policy, there is always at least one other adult assisting Dannon and often one of the church youth members as well.

My preschooler has a birthday mid-year. Should they stay in the nursery for the two-year-old Sunday School class all year, or move to the PK/JK class in the library?

The nursery is set up to be for two-year-olds and under. If your child turns three mid-year and is potty-trained, you are welcome to have him or her transition to the PK/JK class. Simply let Caitlin know so that she can give the teachers a heads up and adjust the class rosters accordingly.

What about Children's Church Continued (C3)? The bulletin says it is for PK and JK children, but what if my three year old is not yet in PK but wants to go to C3?

If your child is potty-trained and you feel C3 is a better fit for him or her than staying in the nursery, simply let Caitlin know and we will gladly accommodate this transition so that your child is where they fit best.

Can children participate in communion?

The communion table at Idlewild Presbyterian is an open table. This means that people of all ages, creeds, and backgrounds are welcome. This is because we believe that participation in the Lord's Supper is not a right conferred on the worthy, but a gift given to reflect God's abundant grace. We offer a Communion Worship for SK and 1st grade children and their parents in the Fall. This workshop is led by Pastor Steve and Caitlin in an effort to explain the significance of communion to children that makes their participation in it less intimidating and more exciting. The workshop is also held in an effort to better equip parents with language to use when talking with their children about communion.

What if my child has an allergy?

Parents are asked to fill out a registration form at the beginning of every school year on which there is a space to indicate any allergies or other medical conditions your child has that the church should be aware of. It certainly doesn't hurt to also verbally communicate any conditions to the Director of Children's Ministry who will then relay the information to your child's teachers and church caregivers.

Is childcare provided during things I might want to attend as an adult?

Whenever there is a foreseeable need for childcare, the church makes every effort to provide it. We typically ask for parents to let the Director of Children's Ministry know in advance if your family is going to be utilizing the provided childcare for any given event outside of Sunday mornings. If we get no RSVPs, we sometimes cancel the childcare, so as to prevent paying childcare workers to come when there are no children to look after. If there is a particular event you're wondering about, please speak with Caitlin.

Who's watching my kids anyway?

Every volunteer and paid staff person in both children's and youth ministry is required to complete a background check and sign a covenant agreement in accordance with Idlewild's Child Protection Policy. If you ever have *any* concern about your child's safety under the supervision of one of our volunteers or staff members, you should bring this to the attention of the Director of Children's Ministry or one of the clergy members *immediately*. Your child's safety and wellbeing are our first priority.

Am I expected to help out in the children's ministry if my child is involved?

While there are certainly no requirements from parents in the way of volunteerism, any help you can offer is always greatly appreciated. Here are some ways to get involved:

- Be a Sunday School Teacher, Shepherd, or Activity Helper for a class throughout the school year
- Be a rotating volunteer in the Nursery or for Children's Church Continued
- Be on call as a sub for a Sunday School Teacher, Nursery volunteer, or C3 volunteer when needed
- Serve for two years on the Children's Ministry Committee starting January 2018
- Open up your home for a JK and Under, or SK-5th Grade Monthly Fellowship Gathering
- Help decorate for Rally Day, the Advent Sunday School Party, or the End-of-Year Sunday School Party
- Encourage children's participation in the Family Christmas Eve Service and attend the service to show your support
- Come to 11 o'clock worship prepared with quarters to give children as they come up for *Time with the Younger Church*. These quarters go towards helping girls around the world receive an education.
- Welcome children's participation in church service events like More Than A Meal
- Help get children involved in the worship service by encouraging them to be a greeter that passes out bulletins on a first Sunday (an opportunity for SK-5th graders), an usher on a third Sunday (an opportunity for 3rd-5th graders), or a liturgist at an infant baptism (an opportunity for 4th and 5th graders).
- Help with summer programming either as a Sunday School Teacher or VBS volunteer
- Pray regularly for the children of our church.

What happens when children age out of children's ministry?

Children who have completed fifth grade do not age out of children's ministry until the following fall, when they begin sixth grade. The summer in between the two grades is a summer in which they will still participate in children's ministry Sunday School and are welcome to continue attending the monthly fellowship gatherings. They will be invited to a couple youth ministry events that summer, but will not officially become a part of Q.U.E.S.T. until Rally Day, which is typically held mid to late August.

Q.U.E.S.T (Questioning, Understanding, Exploring, Sharing Together) is Idlewild's youth group for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders led by Frank Kelly, Director of Youth Ministry, and Dara Bigger, Assistant Director of Youth Ministry.

What if I still have questions?

Caitlin will gladly address any further questions that you have. The best way to reach her is via email at cbomar@idlewildchurch.org or via her cell phone at (540) 471-4825. She will happily meet for coffee or lunch in an effort to get to know you and your family better. We are so very excited that your child is a part of Idlewild's Children's Ministry! Children play a crucial role in the vitality of this church family, and we pray that your child's experience here is one that points them closer to the extravagant love God has for them.

We are looking forward to a great year of growing together on this journey of life and faith.