

Our Church Family Values ~ A Work in Progress

(Report from the Family Retreat on Aug. 20th)

On Saturday, August 20th, some of our parents gathered during our Family Retreat to begin a conversation about how we want to raise our children together. This is the beginning of a formulation of what our shared Church Family Values are. We welcome your input into the conversation!

The Most Important Things We Want Our Children to Know about God...

...that God loves everyone and does not discriminate ...that God loves everyone, no matter who they are ...that God is forgiving and understanding ...God's grace ...the importance of service in God's name ...that God is forgiving ...that God is All in All.

How We Want Our Children to Describe Our Church...

...warm ...caring ...welcoming ...open minded ...enjoyable ...open and accepting of all God's children; friends of everyone – all faiths, people, etc. ...a place that values your personal faith journey ...inclusive ...where everyone knows your name ...multigenerational ...open ...values freedom of interpretation ...conscious of issues that directly affect the community ...puts its faith into action.

The Faith Values that We Want to Influence Our Parenting...

...no labels ...be uplifting ... help others, don't ignore ...acceptance of those who are different than ourselves ...loving others as God loves us ...we demonstrate our love by serving others in our community and beyond ...OK to ask why, and not just on issues of faith ...patience with others ...respectful to self and others ...consequences – for negative actions and disobedience ...love of all – acceptance of differences ...forgiveness ...prayer ...generosity ...we believe in second chances ...humor ...respect ...affection.

Some Rules for Our Children and How You Can Help Teach Them*

- Children should not be on the chancel (up front) or in the Children's Worship Center unless invited by an adult. These are worship spaces. Anyone may remind the children of this rule.
- No running or skipping. Walking is safe and good. We don't want to knock anyone over. Anyone may remind children of this rule.
- Children should be taught to respect the purpose of the prayer and mission room, as should we all. The Prayer Bears are not toys; they are reminders that people need our prayers.
- Fellowship Time is a chance to teach our kids respectful independence. * *They should be allowed to get their own food, but encouraged to help make sure there is enough for everyone. "Please take just one or two." * If a child has grabbed a handful before you can stop them – "Would you please share those with your parents?"*
- Our children are still learning appropriate ways to interact in the complex social situation that is Fellowship Time. * *They can learn appropriate ways to interrupt more easily if we make a point of paying attention to them when they try.*
- Children should not go outside without adult supervision. Everyone should help make sure this happens.
- We trust that everyone will treat our children with respect, by helping to teach these rules with love. Our parents will intervene if they feel their child is not being treated fairly or respectfully. We are grateful for all the support in raising our children in our church family, and we believe that communication about these shared values will make it easier.

About What We Expect from Our Children in Relation to Adults

- "Ma'am", "Ms.", "Mr.", and "Sir" are titles of respect, not hierarchy or superiority.
- They should respond when spoken to. They should only interrupt when necessary and in an appropriate manner. (See above.)
- They should use "please", "thank you", and "excuse me" appropriately.

About What We Expect from Our Children in Relation to One Another

...respectful of everyone ...no meanness ...no bullying ... no cliques ... love everyone even if they don't like everyone equally ... help those in need of a friend ... turn the other cheek ...healthy boundaries – self-respect ... welcome new-comers ...sharing birthdays helps build relationships across school and geographic barriers.

2 Other Things to Remember: 1) They are kids! 2) They are watching us!