

1ST-4TH GRADE

SANTA BARBARA COMMUNITY CHURCH



The main goal for elementary grades can be summed up in one word: CURIOSITY. We seek to direct children's natural curiosity towards God and a relationship with Christ. Through warm relationships with faith-filled adults and opportunities to learn and interact with God through faith formation practices (prayer, Bible study, worship) we work to engage children's spiritual curiosity.

WHAT WILL MY 1ST-4TH GRADER EXPERIENCE?

- We include them each week in the first part of the service (15-20 minutes). We want the faith of the whole church family to be shared with children.
- Children will be part of a small group whose leader will shepherd them through the different Sunday components with the goal of building relationships and engaging their spiritual curiosity.
- Children will also participate in a large group time of worship, story, and games to help them learn and interact with the lesson each week.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HAVING 1ST-4TH GRADERS IN THE MAIN WORSHIP SERVICE?

- We intentionally have children remain in the main worship service about six times a year in order to grow in understanding that they are part of a larger church body and to lay the foundation for them to be a part of a church body as an adult.
- We believe that God is working in the hearts of children as well as adults. We also believe it is healthy for our church family to experience multi-generational worship.
- There are many topics and activities that are of interest and value to children and so we have them stay longer at times to take advantage of teachable moments.
- We reinforce the primary role of parents in nurturing faith by giving them an opportunity to assist their

children during the service as they worship together. This also gives parents one more springboard for conversations and spiritual formation.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

- We believe parents are the primary nurturers of their child's faith and therefore we provide resources for families to use in their home discipleship each week.
- Since we have a familial church model, the larger church is involved in the care of the children. We depend on your participation. We encourage you to consider serving as a Sunday small group leader or storyteller.
- If you are in a Homegroup you will be scheduled to serve in childcare 3-4 times a year. If you are not in a Homegroup, you may be contacted to serve as a Sunday childcare substitute. If you prefer, you are welcome to serve with a different age group.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUNDAY LEADERS?

- Our primary qualification is they have a relationship with Jesus Christ and continue to nurture their faith.
- We ask leaders to take the responsibility of shepherding their small group seriously.
- Leaders must complete a screening process that includes a legal background check and interview.
- Leaders supervise Homegroup helpers who assist in childcare and ensure they are following our Children's Ministry policies and standards.

HOW ARE SMALL GROUPS DETERMINED?

We do two groupings each year coinciding with the academic calendar in June and September. Children remain in a large group during our summer sessions but are placed in a small group with designated leaders from Sept-June each year. These small

groups provide a venue for children to build relationships within the group. We strongly encourage parents to commit to a specific service so that this consistency will enable children to feel the love we desire this age group to experience. The groups are based on birthdates and are balanced according to many factors including gender, attendance, and parent involvement. We do want to take into consideration individual needs so please contact **Donna Sugano** (donna@sbcommunity.org) or **Paige Chase** (paige@sbcommunity.org) if you have questions about your child's placement.

HOW ARE BEHAVIORAL ISSUES HANDLED?

Intervention with a child who is having difficulty participating is informed by our desire to love the child well. We seek to involve parents in any plan to foster positive participation, seeing it as an opportunity to become partners in the spiritual nurturing of their children. Our three-step intervention policy is a window into learning from others how to better love your child. Our response to disruptive behavior is to:

1. Give the child a clear warning.
2. If the behavior does not stop, pull the child aside and give them time to regroup.
3. If the child is still struggling, we will get the parent or guardian from church and explain to them that we have reached an impasse with their child and need their help.