

Sunday Schedule Forums Outline

- I. Welcome
- II. Rationale
 - a. In her book, *Formational Children's Ministry*, author Ivy Beckwith identifies three characteristics of a spiritual formation model for the Christian nurture of children: story, ritual, and relationships.¹
 - i. Story: think discipleship. How and where do we learn God's story, and see God's action in our story as a part of God's larger story?
 - ii. Ritual: think worship. Worship is a series of rituals that cannot be experienced or learned outside of the worshiping community. Rituals are something we do over and over again as a way to remember or reinforce the values the ritual represents. Nothing is more consistently linked with mature faith than any other form of church participation.²
 - iii. Relationships. Plain and simple – children and youth who are known by name and feel they are valued members of the faith community.
 - b. "While Sunday School certainly has done much to help children learn about many aspects of faith, the Bible and Christian living – to mention just a few – it often segregates children from the wider faith community. By dropping children off at Sunday School classrooms while the rest of the congregation gathers for worship, churches send implicit messages to children that what matters most about being Christian is learning the right things. As Gretchen Wolf Pritchard bluntly states, Sunday school tends to assume that "Adults come to church on Sunday in order to worship [and] children come to Sunday school to acquire information."³
 - i. When children's ministry is based only (or largely) on the assumption that what matters most to the life of faith is one's ability to understand and articulate doctrine, the God-given agency, creativity, humanity and spirituality of children is undermined.⁴
 - c. Building on research and best practices⁵, First Lutheran committed to six practices in Teen Ministry for the sake of forming faith. A new Sunday schedule would help achieve three of those commitments, namely:

¹ Beckwith, Ivy, *Formational Children's Ministry*, ©2010 by Ivy Beckwith, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI page 20

² Powell, Kara, and Griffin, Brad, *The Vital Role of Intergenerational Relationships in Fostering Sticky Faith*, online article at <http://stickyfaith.org/articles/the-church-sticking-together>, adapted from *Sticky Faith, Youth Worker Edition*, accessed 3/17/2014.

³ Cisnos, David and Beckwith, Ivy, *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus*, ©2013 InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, page 54

⁴ Cisnos, David, and Beckwith, Ivy, *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus*, pages 54 and 55

⁵ Powell, Kara, and Griffin, Brad, *The Vital Role of Intergenerational Relationships in Fostering Sticky Faith*, online article at <http://stickyfaith.org/articles/the-church-sticking-together>, adapted from *Sticky Faith, Youth Worker Edition*, accessed 3/17/2014.

- i. the commitment to effective ministry where youth are integrated into the worship and mission life of the congregation.
 - ii. Recognition and welcome of youth into the life of the congregation by adults who know them by name, and
 - iii. Participation of youth in the weekly worship life of the congregation.
- III. “Teenagers naturally assume that the church’s story is not for them; if they do not know the church’s story and do not speak the church’s language—and if nobody bothers to teach it to them so they can participate in a gospel conversation—they understandably conclude: ‘I’m not part of this.’”⁶
 - a. Looking at the society today, we have a great opportunity which many organizations do not have, multiple generations under one roof at one time. There are a limited number of institutions which can claim this as a unique characteristic of their organization. The church is one of them. We call this intergenerational ministry. Worship is one of those places where we can claim a great opportunity and our Sunday morning schedule can support this. The new Sunday schedule will give our youth the opportunity to attend an education hour, provide meaningful leadership in KidZone and allow them to worship together. Including youth in worship is more than “requiring” them to acolyte or take worship notes. Including youth in worship gives youth the ability to learn the language of worship, whether in the traditional setting or contemporary setting, youth will experience worship connected to our tradition in a meaningful way. Creating a culture in which youth are valued participants in the congregational life of our church will build mature faith in our youth.
- IV. Recommendation
 - a. Sunday Morning Schedule
 - i. 9:00 a.m. Worship with organ
 - ii. 10:15 a.m. Sunday Morning Learning for all ages
 - iii. 11:15 a.m. Worship with Celebration Team
 - b. Saturday Evening
 - i. 5:00 p.m. Worship with piano
 - c. The most important way the church has formed Christians over the generations has been through worship. Worship forms a life. Children learn what it means to be a Christian through worship. Sunday learning is not a substitute for worship.
 - d. Sunday Morning Learning (SML) is not just for kids, but all ages. First Lutheran has had significant opportunities during the week, but many adults with children do not have time during the week anymore. Sunday morning provides a focused

⁶ Creasy Dean, Kenda, *OMG: A Youth Ministry Handbook*, ©2010 Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, page 45.

time for the whole congregation to be involved in learning that is important, significant, and of the highest quality.

- e. The goal is to provide a schedule for worship and learning to happen in as close to 2 hours as possible.
- f. Based on past experience, 9 a.m. seems to be the earliest time for those who attend 9:30. It has worked during the summer.
- g. The 11:15 worship would be 50-55 minutes.
- h. 15 minutes is the minimum time needed for brief fellowship and travel time from worship to an education time.
- i. 45 minutes is enough time for significant learning.
- j. To facilitate fellowship, more stations for donut and coffee would need to be made available in narthex, and in the Sunday school areas.
- k. A much more robust offering for adult learning would be needed. Currently the team imagines three parallel offerings.
- l. High Quality Adult Forum with speakers, professors as current.
- m. Pastor led Bible Study
- n. Parent Support/Network groups (like the Sunday time currently, but maybe broken into groups of preschool, early/late primary, confirmation, high school)
- o. Recognize the presence of children, youth and families in worship.
- p. Use families for ushering, offering, acolyte in worship.

V. Narrative

- a. 9AM Traditional Worship
 - i. Organ/choir led
 - ii. Children's Chat for 3-8 year-olds during sermon
 - iii. Communion
 - iv. Traditional liturgy
- b. Sunday Morning Learning
 - i. Preschool Sunday school
 - ii. KidZone
 - iii. 4th/5th Program
 - iv. Middle School Ministry
 - v. High School Ministry
 - vi. Adult Education Forum
 - vii. Pastor-led Bible Study
 - viii. Parent Affinity Groups
 - ix. Book Studies
 - x. Small Group meetings
 - xi. Spiritual Transformation offerings
- c. 11AM Celebration Worship
 - i. 'Contemporary' style worship
 - ii. Band-led

- iii. Children's Chat for 3-8 year-olds during sermon
- iv. Communion
- v. 'Contemporary' liturgy

VI. Discussion

- a. What questions of clarification do you have?
- b. What concerns or comments do you think the Council should be aware of regarding this new schedule?
- c. What would help make this an outstanding experience for you and your children/youth?
 - i. For worship?
 - ii. For coffee/fellowship?
 - iii. For learning?
- d. Why do you think this is a good idea or not?