

Church of the Ascension

Christian Education Report for 2011

SUNDAY SCHOOL – Sarah Chen

Overview:

The Sunday School program at Church of the Ascension is in a state of transition. We combined the younger classes into one class to make better use of our manpower. We are using a new Godly Play curriculum, and are considering additional changes for the Middle School/High School kids.

In the Nursery, Ms. Dement, continues to provide our littlest students a safe, healthy place to play during the service. She was joined this fall by her assistant, Ms. Gilliland. (average attendance: 3)

In the Pre-K -4th grade class, we are using Godly Play. The sessions have been led by numerous storytellers from the congregation, and are facilitated by Mrs. Rogerson and myself. We have seen an increase in overall attendance, though we still have a problem with consistency. We added 3 year olds to our group this fall, and they have adjusted well to the transition. We have had 30 different kids attend one or more sessions. (average attendance: 6-10)

In the “Tween” class (5th Grade/Middle School) we started the fall with the Workshop Cycle, “The Body of Christ”. Led by Mrs. Coughlan, the program is designed to introduce the kids to the many ministries in our church, and helps them find their own personal gifts. They take this knowledge, and find a way for these gifts to be used to serve the Lord. Due to low attendance, and acolyte needs, Mrs. Coughlan has only been able to hold 3 sessions.

The children created Japanese fish kites in the spring to aid the Tsunami victims. The kites were a beautiful decoration in our Family room, and raised \$339. The funds were sent to Episcopal Relief and Development, earmarked to help the Tsunami victims.

We held a Prayer Pots Fundraiser to raise money for classroom materials. The Pots were sold during the Craft Fair, and added \$250 towards our new materials.

Celebrations:

The Church has enthusiastically supported our new curriculum. We have recruited numerous members or the congregation to act as storytellers. Individuals, as well as groups, have donated their time to help us make the many supplies needed in our new program. Financial contributions from individuals have led to the purchase of new materials. Many people deserve thanks, but I would like to highlight a few:

Rev. Page, for purchasing the Holy Family and Church Calendar materials
Sarah Houde, for donating materials and talent for our Prayer Pots Fundraiser

Marsha Merchant, for purchasing and painting the World Communion set
Kae Clarke, for creating Bethlehem (if you haven't seen it, you need to)
Godly Play could not have been successful without all of you; I thank you for your support.

Future Needs:

1. Financial support. Even with personal donations and fundraising, we are in need of additional funds. We have materials through Easter, but an additional \$250 is needed to finish lessons through June. We are also in need of adequate storage for these materials. Purchase of materials to create bookshelves, or actual bookshelves will require additional finances. We will also need funds to support a Vacation Bible School. Our hope is to have a budget this year to absorb some of these costs. Additional fundraising programs, such as sponsoring a lesson or storytelling item as a dedication, have also been discussed.

2. Volunteers. We have had many people willing to act as Storytellers. In addition to this role, we need additional people to act as helpers during the class. The majority of our kids are 6 and under; many young bodies lead to the need for additional willing hands. A sign up sheet is posted outside the classroom; please consider signing up for one or more weeks. We have discussed using Middle/High School students in this role.

3. Storage. As we gain more materials, we have found that the current classroom storage is inadequate. The shelves are too narrow to hold many of the materials, and the shelves are quickly filling up to capacity. We are working with AMEN to see if we can build new shelves or re-use the current ones. Purchasing shelves has also been discussed.

4. Middle School/High School group. The church is not meeting the needs of these kids. We would like to have a discussion with Middle School (and High School students), and their families, to see how we can better serve the needs/interests of these age groups. It has been proposed that we create a group that meets on a monthly basis, and completes service projects and other activities. Due to acolyte responsibilities and outside activities, we have had very poor attendance for the Tweens Sunday School.

5. Sunday School Committee. I have met informally with a few members of the congregation to discuss ideas for Sunday School. In moving forward, I would like to propose the creation of a Christian Education, or Sunday School, committee. This group would meet quarterly, or as needed, to discuss schedules, ideas for special projects, Vacation Bible School, youth services, etc.

6. Youth Services. We would like to find more ways to get the children involved in the church service. We also would like to make plans/schedule a Sunday for the distribution of bible and end of the year items. The option of creating a Youth Service or Family Service is also being discussed.

7. Vacation Bible School. We did not hold VBS last summer due to the transition. This year we would like to consider combining efforts with other churches. Stay tuned for more ways you can help make this happen this summer!