



DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION

Scope and Sequence for Children (Birth-Fifth Grade)
2011-2015

First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, Texas

Amy Parker, Director of Children's Ministries
Rev. Robyn Michalove, Associate Pastor
Rev. Joshua Stewart, Associate Pastor for Youth
Rev. Dr. Michael Waschevski, Associate Pastor





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INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28.19-20)

Baptizing in the name of our Triune God. Teaching obedience to all that Jesus commands. Remembering and relating to Christ present with us. For nearly two millennia the Church has taken Jesus’ words to heart, seeking in each generation to live *The Great Commission*. In our own day and time, Jesus’ words challenge us to seek a faithful response for those whose journey’s God merges with the ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth – whether for a life time or for a season of life.

Long obsessed with schooling models for education, the church now recognizes the need for creatively and imaginatively engaging children, youth and adults in intentional and diverse ways of living our Christian faith. *The Great Commission* finds its fulfillment in the fullest range of experiences as disciples of Jesus Christ. As members of the household of God through Baptism, worship with the community of faith is central to our Christian identity. As we gather around God’s Word read, proclaimed, and enacted in the Sacraments, we are lifted into the very heart of God.

With worship as the center of our Christian experience in the community of faith, we are sent out to engage the world with the love, mercy, justice and peace of Jesus Christ. The dual command of Jesus to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, can be expressed in every relationship and interaction with the world around us. Through word and deed the people of God live out their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ, remembering all that Jesus commands.

Disciples of Jesus engaged in the world around them, supported by the community of faith, and grounded in Scripture and the theological resources of the Church, know that ultimately we are powerless on our own. It is only by the power and presence of our Risen Lord that we can awaken each day and seek to be faithful. Gifted by the Holy Spirit, we are provided for individually and as the gathered Body of Christ. Engaging in Christian practices brings us into deeper relationship with the One who promises to be with us always.

Worship, mission, Scripture, theological reflection, Christian practices, the community of faith...all a part of what shapes, forms and sustains us as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the very life of the Church itself that is our “curriculum.” In the pages that follow a Scope and Sequence Plan for First Presbyterian Church guides how discipleship is nurtured for all ages (children, youth and adults) through Worship and Sacraments; the Bible, Theology and Faithful Living; Vocational Identity as a Disciple; and Spiritual Formation through Christian Disciplines.



THE BIBLE, THEOLOGY AND FAITHFUL LIVING

The ability to engage in theological reflection is a part of the life of mature Christian faith. Theological Reflection fosters the ability to consider with intentionality tradition, experience and culture in the living out of one's faith commitments. In many ways the image of conversation is most useful for describing theological reflection. Theological reflection involves individual and communal dialogue with Christian tradition, our experiences and the world around us.

Curricular goals broadly stated seek to equip and engage children, youth and adults for *participation in the conversations* that comprise theological reflection. To be equipped for such a conversation, general skills to be developed include:

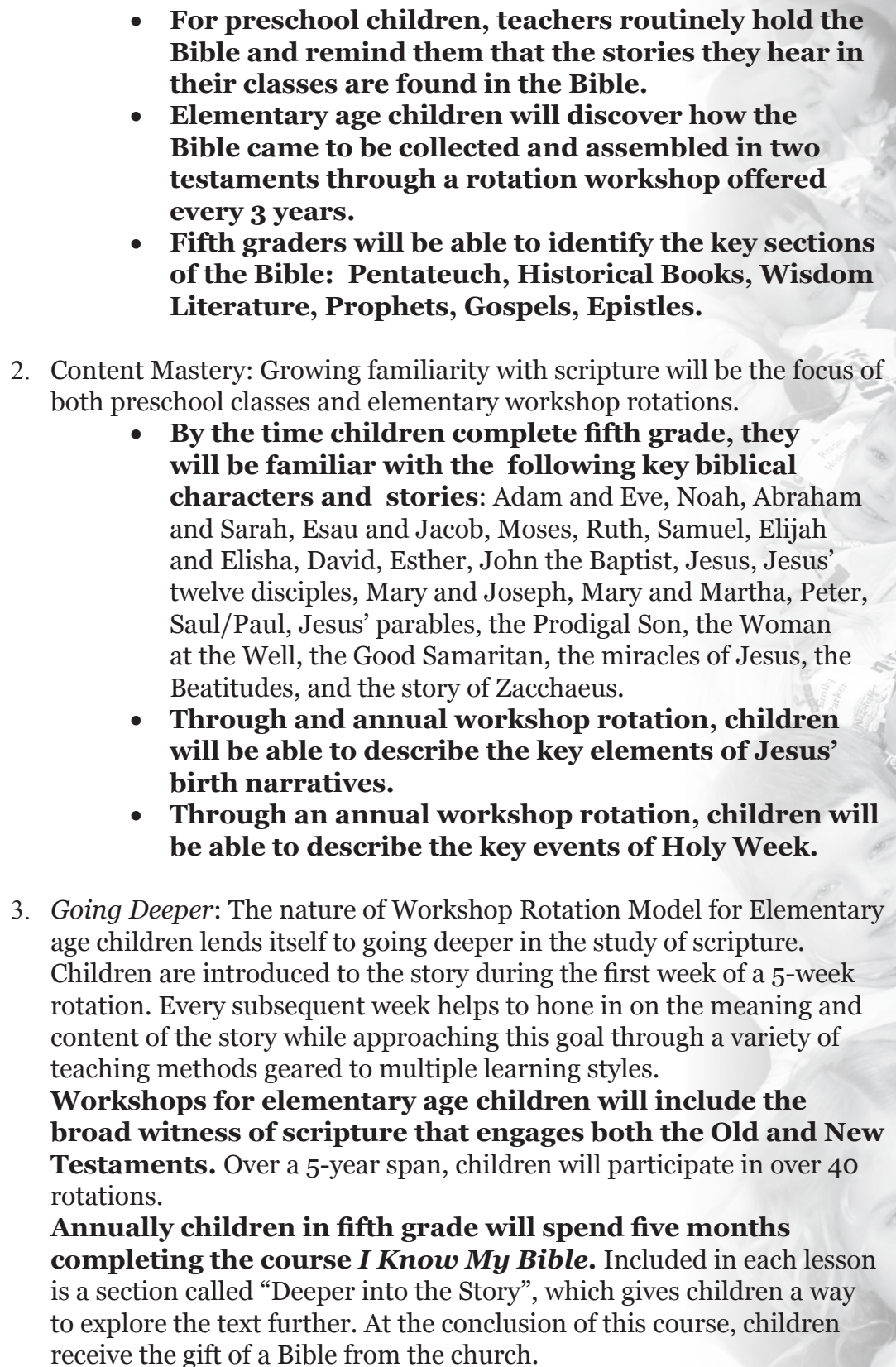
1. *Befriending* the Christian tradition through an ever deepening familiarity with the content and interpretation of the Bible, the theological tradition of the Church (with special emphasis on the Reformed tradition), and Christian/Church history.
2. *Telling* one's story of faith and *Listening* with respect to the faith stories and witness of others. This includes being able to articulate individual experiences of God in authentic and intelligible ways that can be shared with others. A common biblical and theological vocabulary will enhance the ability to both share and listen.
3. *Observing and analyzing* the world around us. How Christian faith is lived in the midst of daily living, current events and cultural influences will be regularly examined and explored.
4. *Exhibiting* an integrated witness of faith in action through participation in mission and ministry in a variety of shapes and forms.



Befriending the Christian Tradition requires a basic introduction to the stories of scripture and the tools used in interpreting scripture as the core of the children's curriculum.

Content of Scripture

1. Orientation to the Bible: Intentional connections will be made between the story we are telling and the origin of the story in the Bible.

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- **For preschool children, teachers routinely hold the Bible and remind them that the stories they hear in their classes are found in the Bible.**
 - **Elementary age children will discover how the Bible came to be collected and assembled in two testaments through a rotation workshop offered every 3 years.**
 - **Fifth graders will be able to identify the key sections of the Bible: Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles.**
2. **Content Mastery:** Growing familiarity with scripture will be the focus of both preschool classes and elementary workshop rotations.
- **By the time children complete fifth grade, they will be familiar with the following key biblical characters and stories:** Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Esau and Jacob, Moses, Ruth, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, David, Esther, John the Baptist, Jesus, Jesus' twelve disciples, Mary and Joseph, Mary and Martha, Peter, Saul/Paul, Jesus' parables, the Prodigal Son, the Woman at the Well, the Good Samaritan, the miracles of Jesus, the Beatitudes, and the story of Zacchaeus.
 - **Through an annual workshop rotation, children will be able to describe the key elements of Jesus' birth narratives.**
 - **Through an annual workshop rotation, children will be able to describe the key events of Holy Week.**
3. *Going Deeper:* The nature of Workshop Rotation Model for Elementary age children lends itself to going deeper in the study of scripture. Children are introduced to the story during the first week of a 5-week rotation. Every subsequent week helps to hone in on the meaning and content of the story while approaching this goal through a variety of teaching methods geared to multiple learning styles.
- Workshops for elementary age children will include the broad witness of scripture that engages both the Old and New Testaments.** Over a 5-year span, children will participate in over 40 rotations.
- Annually children in fifth grade will spend five months completing the course *I Know My Bible*.** Included in each lesson is a section called "Deeper into the Story", which gives children a way to explore the text further. At the conclusion of this course, children receive the gift of a Bible from the church.



Interpretation of Scripture

- **Beginning with first grade children, whenever possible, maps will be used as an aid in locating the stories of scripture in their setting.**
- **Third grade children will be introduced to a Bible Concordance and Bible Dictionary.** Through regular incorporation of these tools in their rotations, third through fifth grade children will be able to demonstrate a basic use of these resources as they study scripture.
- **Through an annual orientation to the church library, fifth grade children will be able to access the interpretive tools that are readily available to them at First Presbyterian Church.**

Telling One's Story of Faith and Listening with respect to the faith stories and witness of others.

Telling:

Annually, children and their families will be given an opportunity to create a family statement of faith.

Listening:

On-going introductions during church school classes to many different members in the congregation who are given the opportunity to share their faith journeys provide opportunities for children to learn to appreciate the faith stories of other people.

Observing and analyzing the world around us:

- **Preschool through Kindergarten age children will explore ways to take their faith with them into the world through regular engagement in the “Depart: God Sends Us Into the World” portion of their lessons.**
- **Elementary age children are engaged in observing and analyzing the world around them in the context of their faith as they regularly visit the “Faith Today” workshop rotation.**

Exhibiting an integrated witness of faith in action (See Vocational Identity as Disciples)

WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world. (W-1.1000, The Book of Order)

The Worship and Music Committee engages, encourages and supports the gifts, talents, and resources of God's people in encounters of the Holy Spirit as we gather together in the rhythm of worship and ministry.
(Worship and Music Committee Statement of Purpose)

As Christians, all that we are and all that we do flows out of our worship of God. Through worship we are equipped to lead a Christian life through mission, education, stewardship, congregational care and so on.

“Through Scripture, proclamation, and the Sacraments, God in Christ is present by the Holy Spirit acting to transform, empower, and sustain human lives. In Christian worship the people of God”

1. Hear the Word proclaimed,
2. Received the Word enacted in Sacrament
3. Discover the Word in the world, and
4. Are sent to follow the Word into the world. (W-1.1005 The Book of Order)

At First Presbyterian Church worship is at the heart of all that we do. Our corporate worship engages people of all ages to gather together, praise God, receive the Word and go out into the world to follow Christ.



Children are welcome in worship at any age. It is vital that children see the worship of God modeled for them and that they be given a chance to offer their own thanks and praise to God. Children begin to develop their own faith as they join their parents and the community of believers in worshipping God with liturgies, offerings, songs, and prayers. Beginning in Kindergarten children are encouraged to remain with their parents throughout the worship service.

1. Worship Leadership:
 - **Older Elementary children will be prepared to be fully engaged**



in the acts of Christian worship by participating in the annual Children's Sabbath Worship service and by assisting as ushers.

- Fifth grade children will be given opportunity to participate in worship as occasional liturgists to read Scripture.
- Children will be given the opportunity to praise God through the gift of music with our children's vocal and bell choirs.

2. Presbyterian Understanding of Worship:

- Children in Kindergarten through fifth grades, along with their parents, will be invited to participate in the annual worship and sacraments class. **Upon completion children will be able to provide a developmentally appropriate understanding of Communion and Baptism as participation in the family of God.**
- **Beginning in Kindergarten, with continuing reinforcement in first and second grades, children will be able to recite from memory the Lord's Prayer, sing the Doxology, and name the two sacraments (Baptism and Communion.)**
- **Beginning in third grade and continuing in fourth grade, children will be able to name the major parts of worship (Gathering in God's Name, Encountering God's Word, Responding to God's Word, Going in God's Name.)**
- **Third and fourth grade children will be able to define worship vocabulary words: Chancel, Nave, Font, Table, Sanctuary, Pulpit, and Lectern.**
- **Following the completion of the "I Know My Bible" class, fifth graders will be able to recite the Apostles' Creed by memory.**

3. Special Worship Opportunities:

- **During the annual family mission trip, children will participate in a Lord's Day service.**
- **Daily worship opportunities will be available during Vacation Bible School.**
- **Children will be experience a variety of special worship services through their participation in Presbytery events such as KidQuake, Presbyterian summer camps, and the Choristers Guild concert.**
- **Children in the after school Kids' Connection program will attend chapel weekly where they will be taught key Bible stories and memorize related Bible verses.**

VOCATIONAL IDENTITY AS A DISCIPLE

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. *“Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever.*

I Peter 4:10-11

“Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God’s creatures.”
(W-5.5005, The Book of Order)

As we seek to follow Christ together as a congregation, we remember and teach the central understanding of our vocational identity as disciples: we are all children of God, created in God’s image, and are invited to follow Christ in our daily lives through a variety of experiences and opportunities. Because we claim our identity as disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize that all of our life is a response to God’s grace – our response becomes our vocation, where our deep passions rise to meet the world’s greatest need.¹ So, in living out our faith, we are called to be good stewards of caring for God’s people and God’s world through our active discipleship. At the heart of stewardship in a mature disciple lies a radical trust in God who alone is the source of our life and who calls us into genuine community with the earth and God’s people. We acknowledge that we are, created by God, as interdependent as Christ’s body on earth (I Corinthians 12). We who have been given much are required to share generously and extravagantly (Luke 12:48).

Our vocational identity can be seen in three lenses: stewardship, outreach, and congregational care and compassion. Of course, all of these categories overlap and are all integral to what it means to respond to God’s grace in our lives. Vocational identity is not just one part of Christian discipleship; it involves every aspect of life in all the stages of life.

(1) Stewardship of our Resources and of the Environment: God has entrusted God’s people to be the caregivers of this earth and the managers of God’s money and talents. We respond to God with faithfulness and generosity, joyfully proclaiming our need to give, rather than merely the church’s need to receive. The Book of Order says, “The ways in which a believer uses God’s gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God’s self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ’s call to minister to and share with others in the world”

1 Paraphrase of Frederick Buechner.



(W-5.5004). Therefore, the mark of a mature disciple is generosity in participating as God's stewards of money and creation.

(2) **Mission Outreach:** We are called to serve others and to extend hospitality and care for the "least of these." Mission and Outreach is a broad description covering many approaches to achieving these ends. Whether in the form of disaster relief, justice advocacy, direct aid, sustainability and development assistance, mission and outreach is a call to respond domestically and globally to the pain and poverty of our world.

Currently, our congregation is involved in talking about the variety of paradigms for mercy and justice: *working for*, *working with*, and *being with* as defined by the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells in the Nazareth Manifesto. The first one assumes an effort to do ministry on the behalf of another (colloquially, fishing for another person); the second places the mission giver and receiver together to alleviate deficiencies (teaching a person how to fish) and the latter is a model of mission that presupposes all parties are giving and receiving in relationship with one another (going fishing together!). Our present mission commitments and opportunities span these three models of outreach, and we are committed to continue these conversations as we engage in mission together.

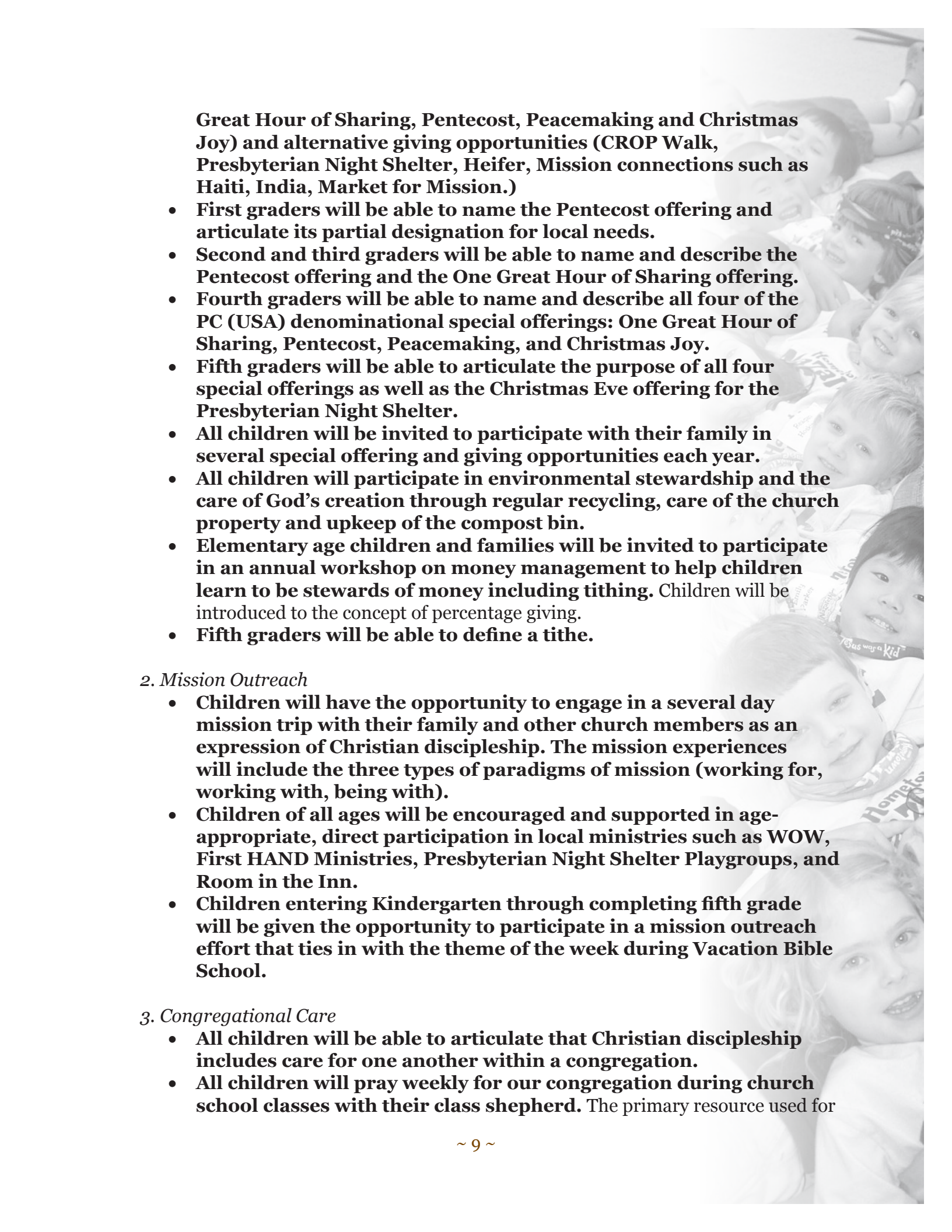
(3) **Congregational Care:** As we have been created in the divine image, so we are to affirm that very truth in the lives of others. Congregational Care speaks to the ways we minister to the needs of our church community by providing care of mind, body and spirit, nurturing our congregation's efforts to live the second greatest commandment to love one another. Congregational care upholds the ministry of presence, showing in tangible ways how to embody compassion and care.



Children will learn that how we choose to live our life is an expression of our discipleship. Children will be introduced to youth and adults in the congregation who model discipleship through visits to a variety of children's settings.

1. *Stewardship*

- **Preschool children through fifth grade children will experience a minimum of one lesson (pre-school) or one rotation (elementary school) annually on aspects of Christian stewardship.**
- **By second grade, children will be equipped to participate in offerings of time, talent and resources in appropriate ways during worship (financial, worship leadership, singing, prayer, etc.).**
- **By third grade, children will be able to name at least three acts of offering appropriate for worship (financial, worship leadership and prayer).**
- **Children will become familiar with at least six special giving opportunities per year, denominational special offerings (One**


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- Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peacemaking and Christmas Joy) and alternative giving opportunities (CROP Walk, Presbyterian Night Shelter, Heifer, Mission connections such as Haiti, India, Market for Mission.)**
- **First graders will be able to name the Pentecost offering and articulate its partial designation for local needs.**
 - **Second and third graders will be able to name and describe the Pentecost offering and the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.**
 - **Fourth graders will be able to name and describe all four of the PC (USA) denominational special offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peacemaking, and Christmas Joy.**
 - **Fifth graders will be able to articulate the purpose of all four special offerings as well as the Christmas Eve offering for the Presbyterian Night Shelter.**
 - **All children will be invited to participate with their family in several special offering and giving opportunities each year.**
 - **All children will participate in environmental stewardship and the care of God's creation through regular recycling, care of the church property and upkeep of the compost bin.**
 - **Elementary age children and families will be invited to participate in an annual workshop on money management to help children learn to be stewards of money including tithing.** Children will be introduced to the concept of percentage giving.
 - **Fifth graders will be able to define a tithe.**

2. Mission Outreach

- **Children will have the opportunity to engage in a several day mission trip with their family and other church members as an expression of Christian discipleship. The mission experiences will include the three types of paradigms of mission (working for, working with, being with).**
- **Children of all ages will be encouraged and supported in age-appropriate, direct participation in local ministries such as WOW, First HAND Ministries, Presbyterian Night Shelter Playgroups, and Room in the Inn.**
- **Children entering Kindergarten through completing fifth grade will be given the opportunity to participate in a mission outreach effort that ties in with the theme of the week during Vacation Bible School.**

3. Congregational Care

- **All children will be able to articulate that Christian discipleship includes care for one another within a congregation.**
- **All children will pray weekly for our congregation during church school classes with their class shepherd.** The primary resource used for



teaching this intercessory prayer will be *Teaching Prayer in the Classroom* by Delia Halverson.

- **All children will participate in the Presbyterian Women outreach to Honorary Members through the making of cards and special gifts.**

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

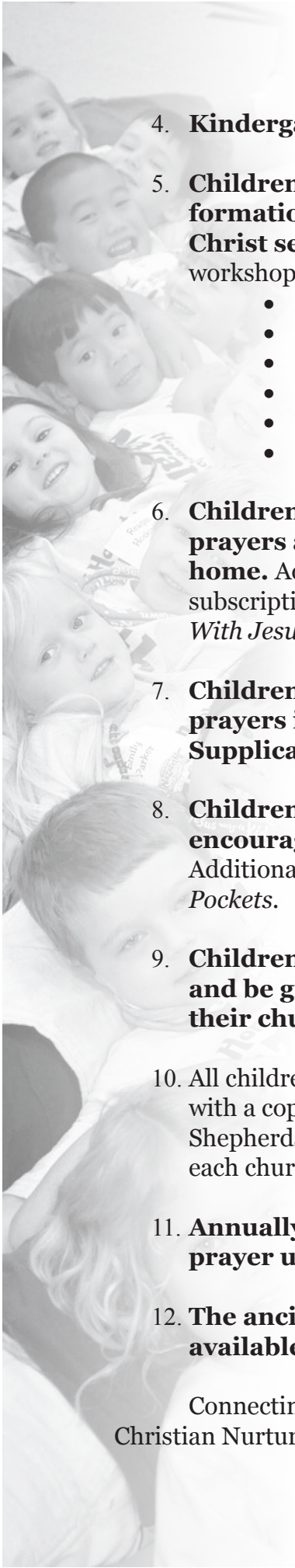
“*Spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit that molds our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals, but also in the church, shaping it into the body of Christ. We cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make us more open and responsive to the Spirit’s touch. Disciplines such as Sabbath keeping, works of compassion and justice, discernment, worship, Scripture study, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and contemplative silence.*” (Hungry Hearts, PC (USA) Office of Spiritual Formation, Spring 2010, p. 10)

The Christian tradition has engaged certain practices throughout its history that have proven to be effective ways to grow in Christian discipleship. Worship, study of Scripture, and Vocational Identity as a Disciple (works of compassion and justice/mission and cultivation of generosity/stewardship of resources) have been addressed in detail in previous sections of this Scope and Sequence plan. The practices that will now be addressed include: forms of prayer and contemplation (labyrinth, *lectio divina*, silence, breath prayer, body prayer, prayer with others), discernment, and spiritual friendships.



Our children’s ministry program will include intentional opportunities to encourage the innate ability of children to practice spiritual disciplines. In order to strengthen and deepen their faith in Jesus Christ we will seek to:

- Take seriously and joyfully children’s spiritual capacities and deep needs
 - Lead children into a deeper relationship with God
 - Instill in children spiritual practices
 - Encourage children to respond to God in awe
 - Help children embrace all of life
 - Provide an experience of community
1. **Two-year-old children will be given a copy of *A Child’s First Book of Prayers* by Lois Rock.** This book will be used routinely in their church school class as well as singing prayers that are easy for children to memorize.
 2. **Three- and four-year-old children will be able to participate in singing prayers that can be used at key times of the day such as rising in the morning, eating meals, and going to bed at night.**
 3. **Kindergarten children will experience the spiritual practice of breath prayers.**

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4. **Kindergarten children will memorize the Lord's Prayer.**
 5. **Children in first through fifth grade will attend a spiritual formation workshop every 5 weeks using the Companions In Christ series called *The Way of the Child* by Wynn McGregor.** In this workshop they will learn the following spiritual practices:
 - Breath Prayers
 - Lectio Divina
 - Journaling
 - Praying for the World
 - Prayers using a different art mediums
 - Guided Meditation
 6. **Children in first and second grade will begin to write their own prayers and litanies for use in their church school classes and at home.** Additionally, first grade children will be provided with a monthly subscription to the personal devotional publication *Spark Family: Walking With Jesus*.
 7. **Children in third grade will learn to write and pray ACTS prayers incorporating Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.**
 8. **Children in fourth grade will make a prayer calendar and be encouraged to maintain the spiritual practice of daily prayer.** Additionally, they will be provided with the personal devotional material *Pockets*.
 9. **Children in fifth grade will be introduced to Journaling prayers and be given the opportunity to journal on a weekly basis during their church school class.**
 10. All children's church school teachers and Trinity Trail Shepherds are provided with a copy of *Teaching Prayer in the Classroom* by Delia Halverson. Shepherds, in particular, use this resource during the opening 10 minutes of each church school class.
 11. **Annually, elementary age children will be taught a creative form of prayer using the resource *Praying in Color* by Sybil MacBeth.**
 12. **The ancient spiritual practice of walking a Labyrinth will be made available to elementary age children twice a year.**

Connecting spiritual formation to mission is a primary goal of Children's Christian Nurture. Children will have the following opportunities to translate their

spiritual practices into ways in which they may be God's hands and feet in the world.

1. **During the quarterly service project opportunities for families, children will be equipped to practice works of service to the community in age appropriate ways.**
2. **On the annual Family Mission Trip, children and their families will be engaged in daily devotionals in order to be open and aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of their mission experience.**
3. **Annually children will have the opportunity to prepare Gift of the Heart kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.**

