

DOCUMENTING OUR MINISTRIES

MINISTRY: CHILD AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

DATE OF THIS DOCUMENTATION UPDATE: 28JAN2009

Ministry Description:

At St. Michael & All Angels Church, everyone, including children of all ages is encouraged to participate fully in all aspects of the life of the community, including Worship, Education, Service (Outreach & Justice) and Parish Life. The St. Michael's community is enriched, challenged and renewed by its children, and the opportunity to minister to and with young people and their families.

St. Michael's strives to honor the best of the Episcopal tradition in worship, to give children an experience of sacred place and belonging, and to nurture a respect for the individual balanced with an ever growing awareness of our call to be good stewards of the earth concerned with the well being of our neighbors, near and far. All childcare providers are expected to attend the SAFE Church Training offered through the diocese to help prevent sexual abuse and to create the safest environment possible for children and their care providers.

Particular offerings in support of these goals include:

- **Childcare** which is provided for infants, toddlers and pre-school age children during the 9 and 11 o'clock Sunday morning worship services, during the 10 o'clock education hour and for special liturgies and community gatherings throughout the year. Childcare providers are parish members, active at St. Michael's for at least six months before beginning their once monthly rotation in the Childcare Room.
- **Children's Liturgy of the Word**, a program for school age children offered during the Sunday morning services while the congregation engages in the lectionary readings and the sermon for the day. An adult leader from the community invites the children to the mural space on the lower level where child-appropriate versions of the scripture are read and discussed. Children are encouraged to share their insights, questions and prayers. The group returns to the church to join their families and the gathered community for Holy Eucharist.
- **Sunday School & Godly Play**
 - **Sunday School** classes for children in Pre-K through the fifth grade are located on the lower level and occur during the 10 o'clock hour, between the 9 and 11 o'clock liturgies. Sunday School is a time for children to practice building a beloved community that respects the dignity and value of every person, while helping them recognize their own distinctive gifts, given by God, to be shared with one another. Children engage in seasonal art projects, scripture reflection and parish related outreach projects.

- **Godly Play** is offered for children in Pre-kindergarten through the 1st grade. A religious education program created by Episcopal priest Jerome Berryman, Godly Play shares stories from sacred scripture as well as exploring the traditions of Episcopal liturgical practices and the seasons of the church year. Central to the Godly Play experience is the telling of a sacred story, followed by an opportunity for the children to ponder “wondering questions” that lead them deeper into the beauty and mystery of the story and their relationship with God. The Godly Play classroom is treated as sacred space and the Godly Play program mirrors the structure of the Episcopal liturgy.