

**A Guide
to Children's Programs
2007-2008**



*Strive
for the greater gifts.*

1 Corinthians 12:31

Hyde Park Union Church
5600 S. Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60637
www.hpuc.org

Welcome

to a new year of Children's Programs
at Hyde Park Union Church!

Children are gifts from God, loved by God! We take this to heart as we help your children worship, play, learn, sing, and create. They are an integral part of the life of our church.

The Christian Education Committee coordinates a variety of activities for children. We look forward to serving your family through our Children's Programs. Our basic goals are:

- To acquaint them with the Christian faith, Bible stories, and ethical principles;
- To give them a sense of their spiritual worth before God and in this community;
- To instill in them feelings of sympathy and compassion for others;
- To nurture their faith development.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Ray Curry, Chair	773/324-0671
Sabine Charles	773/363-0723
Nan Pickens	773/955-5541
Sarah Lesniewski	773/667-0162
Rich Landers, <i>ex officio</i>	773/548-1339
Nicole Urbach, <i>ex officio</i>	773/573-6561

*Please do not hesitate to call committee members
if you have any questions or suggestions.*

SCHEDULE FOR SUNDAY MORNINGS

- 9:00 am ***Children's Choir*** Rehearsal
Stephen Baker, director
- 10:00 am Morning Worship
After the Children's Sermon (10:20 am)
Religious education through story, art and service
Godly Play (PreK- 2nd Grade)
led by Georgia Lubben
GIFTS (3rd-6th Grade)
led by pastoral staff and lay volunteers
- 11:00 am Refreshments
- 11:30 am Second Hour Programming
Generations Youth Group (GYG)
Monthly Chili-Making, Letter-Writing
Adult Education with Supervised Children's Activities

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Religious Education at Hyde Park Union Church is designed to help children learn about the Christian faith and how it applies to their lives. Children from Pre-K to 6th grade participate in worship each Sunday and are dismissed after the Children's Sermon for religious education that is appropriate to their developmental levels (**Godly Play** and **GIFTS**). Children and their families attend worship each Sunday at 10 am. (**Children's Choir** rehearses at 9 am.) On Family Worship Sundays children participate in worship in its entirety. Through activities and stories, children learn about the Bible, about the good news of Jesus Christ, and about how other children and adults near and far live their faith.

Godly Play, a children's worship program led by Georgia Lubben, provides a space for our youngest children to worship (PreK-2nd grade). Together they pray, sing, hear the Word and respond to it, learning all the parts of worship in ways that are natural and compelling to them as children. Dr. Lubben employs a curricular approach that emphasizes creativity through art and Bible storytelling using the best methods of early childhood education.

GIFTS offers religious education through story, art and service for students from 3rd to 6th grade. Students will learn the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in a three-year cycle in sessions led by pastoral staff and lay volunteers. Leaders will tell Bible stories with a method that is creative, dramatic, and interactive. **GIFTS** will follow *Bible Stories for Children*, with its artful retellings and elegant illustrations of 63 Bible stories published by Simon & Schuster/MacMillan.

Thought questions and discussion will bring students into the life of the text in a way that exposes them to major characters and central biblical themes. Sessions will include worship elements such as prayer and song that reflect themes of the liturgical year. Each session will deepen faith and understanding through art and service activities related to our work with the Food Pantry, Heifer International, Jackson Park Hospital, and St. Martin de Porres Shelter. **GIFTS** transmits the values and skills of leadership, worship, mission and service, and hospitality that are hallmarks of mature faith. **GIFTS** is short for Grace, Inspiration, Faith, Tradition, Service.

Children's Choir is open to children in the 3rd-8th grades and rehearses on Sundays at 9 a.m. Directed by Stephen Baker, the Children's Choir is a place to learn traditional and contemporary sacred music. To join this choir, come to a rehearsal and speak to the choir director. The Children's Choir sings the introit in worship on most Sundays during the school year, and has six of their own anthem performances. Mr. Baker may be reached at (773) 955-9448; email: s-baker@uchicago.edu.

Generations (Youth Group) meets regularly for religious study and discussion, social events, service projects, and group outings. This year, in addition to worship and religious education leadership, the Youth Group will explore, express, and deepen their understanding of their own Christian faith tradition through engagement with various religious communities in the Chicago area.

Special Events for Children and Youth

2007-2008

Sun, 9/9

Opening Day, *Godly Play* and *GIFTS* 10:20 am
Children's Choir Rehearsal 9 am

Sun, 10/7

Justin Roberts Concert 3 pm

Sun, 11/18

Thanksgiving Service 10 am
Offering for St. Martin de Porres Shelter

Sat, 12/8

Christmas Pageant Dress Rehearsal 1-2:30 pm
Advent Afternoon 2:30-4 pm

Sun, 12/9

Christmas Pageant: *Service of Lessons & Carols* 10 am

Sun, 1/13

Ice Skating Day 2-4:15 pm (Midway rink)

Friday, 2/9

Valentine's Night (Card-Making) 6:30-8 pm

Sun, 3/16

Palm Sunday Pageant 10 am

Sun, 5/18

Animal Poetry Reading for Heifer International *after worship*

Sun, 6/10

Children's Sunday: Graduate and Teacher Recognition 10 am

Join us for these special seasonal events,
that also include Pop-up Thanksgiving Cards,
Take-home Cookie-Making kits with Advent Prayers,
as so much more.

Seasonal Activities

Thanksgiving collection for St. Martin DePorres Shelter: In November children make Thanksgiving cards and pictures for the residents of this shelter for women and children. On Thanksgiving Sunday, the children receive donations of food and money brought by the congregation and arrange them around the altar, climaxed by a joyous celebration. After church, the older children deliver the food to the Shelter.

Christmas Pageant: HPUC children, Children's Choir, and the Adult Choir present the story of Christ's birth during our *Service of Lessons and Carols*. Pageant rehearsals for children PreK-2nd are held during the religious education time following the Children's Sermon.

Ice Skating on the Midway: If you like ice skating and cold weather, and want to get out of the house for a winter afternoon, join us for skating on the Midway. Then back to the social hall for hot cocoa and a game of charades.

Valentines for Senior Church Members: Each year the children make and deliver Valentines for the older members of the church and our community.

Palm Sunday Pageant: This combination of readings and scene enactments tells the story of Jesus's entry to Jerusalem and prepares the congregation for the observance of Holy Week.

Heifer International: Children raise money for Heifer International, a non-profit ministry that helps to provide a means of sustenance for the poor throughout the world. During the spring, the children present an animal poetry reading for the congregation. Preparation for this happens during Children's Worship and Choir.

The year concludes with Children's Sunday, a Teacher Appreciation Worship Service and Graduation ceremony for the children.

A Successful Learning Experience:

The most successful learning programs are those in which parents and teachers partner together. We believe that by our working together children will learn more quickly and strongly the values we hold dear as a community of faith.

What can parents do to partner with teachers?

Ask your children regularly about their religious education experience in *Godly Play*, *GIFTS* and *Children's Choir*. Talk with them about what they did, what they learned, what they enjoyed and did not enjoy.

Spend time in family devotions. You can use themes and activity sheets from our religious education programs to complement your family devotional life. If you are looking for family devotional material, talk with one of the pastors or a member of the Christian Education Committee. We are happy to give suggestions.

Give feedback and encouragement to your children's teachers so that they can hear what is working for your child and what is not. Feel free to let your children's teachers know about any special needs your child may have, or any talents the child may wish to share with the class.

Become involved and volunteer to help with religious education at Hyde Park Union Church. In addition to *Godly Play* and *GIFTS*, volunteers are needed for the Christmas Pageant, Valentine's Night, the Palm Sunday Pageant, as well as our service projects with Jackson Park Hospital and the Food Pantry. The more excitement and investment you show your children around religious education, the more your children will invest in and be excited about the programs of the church! If you would like to volunteer, feel free to call any of the members of the Christian Education Committee.