Faith Practices and Routines

**New Practices**

**Faith Talks**: planned weekly discussions and activities about a story in scripture

**God Sightings**: unplanned discussions about how God is acting in your life, making connections from your daily life and stories in scripture

**Prayer**: intentionally praying for a child

**Blessings**: opportunities to bless a child

**Preschool Routine Focus: Bedtime**

Each night follow a routine that creates faith practices.

**Bath time**: Bath time is a great time to tell Bible stories about water. Here are a few:

Creation- Genesis 1:6-13

Creation- Genesis 2:4b-14

Noah’s Ark- Genesis 6-9

Water into Blood- Exodus 7:14-25

Moses Parts the Sea- Exodus 14:1-30

Water from a Rock- Exodus 17:1-7

Jonah and the Whale- Jonah 1-4

Jesus’ Baptism- Matthew 3:13-17

House on the Rock- Matthew 7: 24-27

Jesus Calms the Storm- Matthew 8:23-27

Jesus Walking on Water- Matthew 14:22-33

Wedding at Cana- John 2: 1-12

Jesus Heals the Blind Man- John 9:1-41

Jesus Calls the Disciples- Luke 5: 1-11

**Story time**: For babies, buy a Bible board book with a few of your favorite stories. These Bibles taste great and have wonderful pictures. For Preschoolers, use *My First Hands-On Bible* published by Group. This Bible has a lot of stories, great picture, follow up activities and questions, and prayers.

**Prayer time:** At the end of tuck in time, say a prayer. There is no one way to pray. You can say the Lord’s Prayer. You can make up a prayer. It doesn’t need to be “churchy.” Here is an open ended prayer to help you get started: Dear God, Thank you for today. I am grateful that I got to (go outside for recess.) I hope tomorrow (Sara comes over to play.) Please God be with (my friend Sue who is sick.) Help me be a good girl/boy. Please help mom and dad be good and patient parents. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

**Elementary Routine Focus: Dinner Time**

**3 or 4 Times a Week**: Children in families that sit down to eat dinner together 3 or more times a week eat healthier, get better grades in school, are less stressed, and are less likely to use drugs. Parents are more likely to know what is going on in their children’s lives and be aware of serious problems. With all the good coming from these family dinners we think their spiritual lives will be better too.

**Prayer**: Begin each meal with prayer. Here is one to help you get started:

Creator God, Thank you for this meal. Thank you for all the people who helped grow, deliver, and make this meal. Help this food nourish my body so that I can serve you in all that I do. Amen.

**Talk Together:** No TV, radio, phones, tablets, etc. This is time for you to ask your children how they are doing, what they like, what their friends are talking about, what their greatest challenges are, or what type of person they want to be when they grow up. Ask open ended questions and follow up questions such as what did you enjoy about school today, why is brother bear your favorite character in the book, or what do you think made the math test so hard. Don’t stop there! Ask how they saw God working in their lives during the day. Share about your day and where you saw God working in your life.

**Taking Sabbath**

**Sabbath**

MC900128387[1]God Rests- Genesis 2:1-3

God Lets Us Rest- Exodus 20:8-11

**Adults vs. Children**

Adults- independent, intellectual, rational, productive

Children- dependent, pre-rational, non-productive

**Becoming Child-like** (Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 19:13-15, Luke 18:15-17)

We need to do things with our child in order for children to influence us, as we influence them.

Depend on God

Be non-productive

Be pre-rational, creative

Children, naturally, are non-productive. Spirituality is about being non-productive. Work will never have meaning or purpose unless we have meaningful leisure. Leisure is its own end. A holiday is Sabbath time; it is being – being with God, being with one another, being with yourself. It is the non-productive side of life. It is essential. Play should not be seen as a child’s work, but rather as just play. Depend on God, be non-productive, and create with the intent of making nothing, just create for the sake of creating. Take time to become child-like every week. You may encounter God. – from *The Church’s Contemporary Challenge: Assisting Adults to Mature Spiritually with Their Children* by John h. Westerhoff III

**Success**MC900287034[1]

Think about God’s view of success.

How would God define successful parenting?

How would you define successful parenting?

**Grace**

Parenting is challenging. Pray regularly and often. Find a way to pray that works for you. It may be in the morning, it may be in the car, it may be one line you repeat, it may be a song, and it may be a breath. It doesn’t matter how you do it, but do it often and do it with intentionality. God’s grace is with you throughout this process. Don’t be too hard on yourself. God knows you and has given you the gifts to do this. Extend God’s grace to others keeping in mind that God’s grace reaches into all families no matter the family make up or parenting style.

**Connect**

Parents are each other’s best resources. Connect with your church family to help one another throughout this journey. Here are a few ways to connect at SPUMC:

Moms Connect, YAG, Family Ministries Events and Classes, Cherub Choir, Elementary Choir, Adult Choirs, Bells, Sunday School, Mid-Week Classes, Heaven’s Kitchen, Fellowship Clubs, Scouts, Form Your Own Group, and ALL