

## HEY THERE!

We are so excited that you and your kid(s) will be joining us for Grace Place this 2018-19 school year. In this booklet you will find lot of helpful information to help you and your kids(s) get connect with us here at Grace Place.

Grace Place is our version of Sunday School! Children will experience a safe, fun, learning environment where they can meet Jesus in unexpected and exciting ways. We have large group time, an activity that relates to the scripture passage for the day.

Thanks for sharing your kids with us. It is an honor and privilege to partner with you in helping these kids discover who Jesus is and why He matters. We are excited to see what this year's journey has in store for all of us and to see where God shows up.

Jason Roton  
Sharry Hosfield

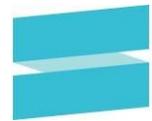
## OUR STAFF

### **JASON ROTON**

Children, Youth & Family  
Ministries Pastor  
jroton@calvary.org  
763.231.2962

### **SHARRY HOSFIELD**

Children's Ministries Director  
shosfield@calvary.org  
763.231.2969



# WHY

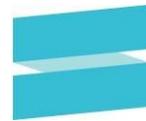
**The mission of Calvary Lutheran Church is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.**

## **CYF CORE VALUES:**

We believe that...

- Every person is created in the image of God.
- Every person needs to know they are loved, they belong, and they are not alone.
- Every person needs to know the life-changing truth of the Bible.
- Families have the greatest influence in a kid's life.
- Every person needs to know they can trust Jesus no matter what.

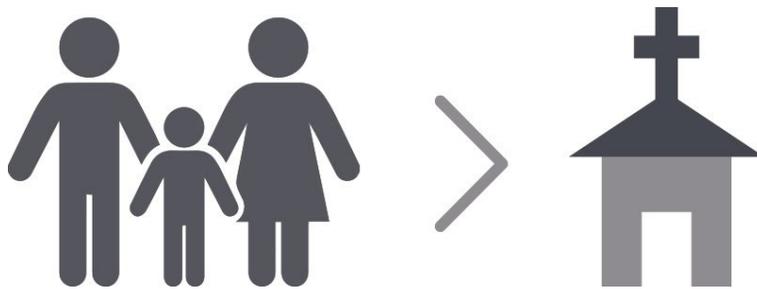
Our mission statement and these five core values are the “**WHY**” behind everything we do in Children, Youth, and Family Ministries at Calvary. Our hope is that you will embrace these core values and make them a part of your ministry role in every way possible as we seek to lead kids and families into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.



# PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

Getting involved in a church is a really important part of growing in faith. But you know what? (Now, don't freak out.) **Church isn't the most important part of ministry.**

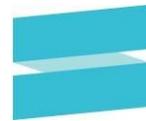
Before we explain any more about what our ministry is all about, we want to make sure one thing is super clear. (We even drew a picture to help you remember it.) We believe that, in every student's life, this is true: in a kid's life, **the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.**



Here's another way to phrase it, from the smart people at Orange, who help churches everywhere better partner with parents:

**“What happens at home is more important than what happens at church.”**  
- Reggie Joiner

No matter what, a kid's family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives. So doesn't it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in our students' lives in order to influence their faith? We use the term “partner” for a reason: parents and the church need each other. **We need to team up with parents** because they're ultimately the biggest influence on their own kids' spirituality. **And parents need to team up with the local church** because their kids need to see faith in Jesus and missional living modeled from a whole community of believers! We need each other!



# A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Do you know the last thing that Jesus said to His followers while He was on earth? “Go and make disciples.” Duplicate yourselves. Go and make more of you. Take your faith and pass it on to someone else.

When we talk about helping students begin to own and affirm the faith of their baptism and enter into a relationship with Jesus, we’re really just talking about discipleship. So what is discipleship? Here are three thoughts...

## **DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT LEARNING**

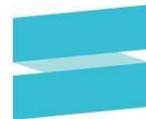
Rather than asking, “What can I teach a kid about God?” try asking, “How can I help a kid live out their faith?” It’s not just about teaching them about Jesus, it’s about modeling what faith in Jesus looks like. That’s why our small groups spend time together outside of church. Discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom, it’s modeled in everyday life.

## **DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY**

In the Gospels, you don’t really see Jesus doing one-on-one discipleship. That’s because discipleship happens best in a community of people. That’s why we focus so much energy on getting students plugged into consistent small groups, why we emphasize that parents are the primary disciplers of their own kids, and why we surround students with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

## **DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS**

Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. Confirmation is just the beginning. And because we know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of students who are in it for the long haul. That’s why our small group leaders don’t bail on their students after a few months, but stick with them for several years when possible because it’s a process.



# HOW

## **GRACE PLACE**

**AGE 2 - GRADE 5 | THURSDAYS 6:30 P.M. & SUNDAYS 9 & 10:30 A.M.**

Our kids ministry meets weekly for games, worship, teaching, and small groups.

## **FAMILY WORSHIP**

Families play the most important part in how kids come to know, love and follow Jesus. A kid will never feel like the church is a place where they belong if we never intentionally welcome them into the worship life of our church family. Thus, we want welcome more kids into the experience of singing our praises to God, learning from Scripture and engaging with the Holy Spirit as a faith community.

## **OUR ENVIRONMENTS**

There are three kinds of environments for kids in our ministry. Each one is designed strategically to invite kids on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders and Jesus, and each one is designed with every kid in mind including the kid who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too.

**SMALL GROUP TIME:** Small groups are the most important part of what we do. They happen every week in our programs, but the relationships built in small groups extend outside the walls of our church. They're designed to connect every student with a consistent adult and a community where they can get to know Jesus better. In Grace Place this is also where our kids will hear the Bible story.

**LARGE GROUP TIME:** This is designed to help kids see how the Bible story relates to their lives today. We will also engage in age appropriate worship and games.

**SPECIAL EVENTS & RETREATS:** Throughout the year, we'll host several big events designed to help kids connect with their peers and small group leaders. Retreats and special events are often the place where kids will walk into our ministry for the very first time.



# THE ROLE OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

Kids need other adults who ...

- Believe in God.
- Believe in them.
- Give them a place to belong.

Being a small group leader (SGL) is an opportunity to walk alongside 5-8 kids and meet with them weekly. Each SGL must embrace Calvary's mission and priorities, and be passionate about creating an environment where all kids experience love, belonging and a Jesus-focused community. We believe that circles are better than rows and that spiritual growth happens best in small groups.

**SMALL GROUP LEADERS WIN WHEN  
THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH  
STUDENTS AND HELP STUDENTS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH  
EACH OTHER**

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a student's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for small group leaders to build strong relationships with the students they lead. You can't make a student own their faith. You can't make a student join God on His mission. **But you can build a relationship with that student that allows you to love them and influence their faith.**

So a small group leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the students that God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their relationship to lead students, rather than relying on their position. **They win when students see their small group leader not as just an authority figure they have to obey, but someone they trust and want to follow.**



# ROLE & EXPECTATIONS OF GE TEAM

We already talked about the big win for our ministry: seeing students take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here's what we think the win looks like for our **Guest Experience (GE) Team**...

## **GUEST EXPERIENCE TEAM MEMBERS WIN WHEN THEY MAKE A STUDENT FEEL WELCOME AND A SENSE OF BELONGING**

Our GE Team members are the first people students meet when they arrive and the last people they see before they leave, so they've got a pretty big responsibility!

Our GE Team has the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have when they walk through our doors. **It's not just about signing students in. It's about making students feel seen, cared for and liked.** An awesome GE Team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders and to connect with God.

### **THE QUALIFICATIONS**

- Love students.
- Love smiling.

### **THE SPECIFICS**

- Be present when you are scheduled to be there.
- Make sure every student is greeted with a smile.
- Make sure every student signs in.
- Identify first-time guests and introduce them to a small group leader for their grade. Make sure they receive registration information as needed.
- Attend all events, meetings and gatherings for the GE Team.



# ROLE & EXPECTATIONS OF SE TEAM

We already talked about the big win for our ministry: seeing students take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here's what we think the win looks like for our **Special Events (SE) Team**...

## **SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM MEMBERS WIN WHEN THEY HELP STUDENTS HAVE FUN AND CONNECT WITH A COMMUNITY OF FAITH**

Our SE Team members have an important role in making sure kids experience how much fun it can be to follow Jesus. Fun doesn't trivialize our mission. We are called to celebrate, fellowship and live life to the fullest.

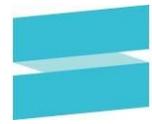
Our SE Team has the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have. **It's not just about hosting a fun event. It's about helping students experience Jesus through having fun together.** An awesome SE Team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders, and to connect with God.

### **THE QUALIFICATIONS**

- Love students.
- Love planning and organizing fun events.

### **THE SPECIFICS**

- Be present when you are scheduled to be there.
- Make sure every student is greeted with a smile, and create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Make sure the event is set up and cleaned up on time.
- Pay attention to details and remain flexible.
- Attend all events, meetings and gatherings for SE Team.



# SPECIAL EVENT DATES

## **GRACE PLACE:**

September 9: Kick-Off

October 26: Fall Costume Carnival

November 11: Pre-K My Faith Journey: My Church

November 18: Gym Day: All About Sheep (David)

December 23: Sing in Worship Service

January 20/24: Feed My Starving Children

February 10: Grace Place Gym Day: Valentine's Day

February 24: First Grade My Faith Journey: Celebrating Baptism

March 16: Celebrate Spring

April 14: Palm Parade & Walk Through Holy Week



# KID EXPECTATIONS

We want Grace Place to be a place where everyone knows they are loved, they belong and they are not alone. We expect kids to...

## HAVE FUN:

“At the risk of oversimplifying... If we played, laughed, danced and smiled a little more at church and at home, kids and teenagers might grow up with a healthier perspective on their family and Christian community.”

From *Playing for Keeps* by Reggie Joiner

## WORK HARD & BE KIND:

- Welcome new people and be aware of people who are not as connected.
- Listen to the adults who are there to support them.
- Participate in the music or the game, being respectful of the leader and the others who want to participate, even if they do not.
- Use words that encourage, not tear down

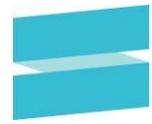
*“Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you’re serving is Christ..” (Colossians 3:23)*

## BE LIKE JESUS:

While we don’t expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect everyone to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God with their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day.

*“Watch what God does, and then do it.” (Ephesians 5:1)*

**Our small group leaders are there to build relationships, not to be the behavior management police.** That said, it is important for kids to know the boundaries and to know that there are consequences if they choose not to follow the expectations.



# GRACE PLACE TEACHING CALENDAR

## First weekend of every month: Family Worship

### September

- 16 Jesus and the Kids
- 23 Creation
- 30 Creation

### October

- 14 Abraham & Sarah
- 21 Abraham & Sarah
- 28 Isaac & Rebekah

### November

- 11 David (shepherd boy and king)
- 18 David (shepherd boy and king)
- 25 Thanksgiving

### December

- 9 Bethlehem
- 16 Bethlehem
- 23 John the Baptist
- 30 No programming

### January

- 13 Calling Disciples
- 20 FMSC
- 27 Calling Disciples

### February

- 10 Jesus Teaches
- 17 Jesus Teaches
- 24 Jesus Teaches

### March

- 10 Parable of the Mustard Seed
- 17 Miracles
- 24 Miracles
- 31 Holy Week and Easter

### April

- 14 Holy Week and Easter
- 21 No programming (Easter)
- 28 Thomas

### May

- 12 Prayer
- 19 Prayer
- 26 No programming



# FAMILY COVENANT

## FAMILY COVENANT - Calvary Staff

### **Calvary staff, pastors and youth directors covenant to the following:**

- Praying regularly for the children, youth and families in our community.
- Provide clear, consistent and regular avenues of communication to parents and teenagers.
- Prepare events and experiences that enrich the faith development of teenagers and adults.
- Grow in our own personal walk with Jesus through regular times of prayer, worship and community-building as we seek to set an example for the next generation.
- Create an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe where teenagers share openly, invite friends, wrestle with questions of faith and build meaningful relationships with significant adults.
- Be good stewards of the time, money and resources with which God has entrusted us.

**We understand the significance of this covenant and will be authentic with teenagers and adults in the event we are unable to follow through with aspects of our commitment. We understand that this is a process and the goal is not perfection, but faithfulness to the work to which God has invited us.**

Sharry Hosfield, Children's Ministries Director

Jason Roton, Children, Youth & Family Ministries Pastor



# IMPORTANT DATES

## September

- 22 Calvary Block Party
- 23 ethos groups start (HS only)

## October

- 4 & 7 Third Grade Bibles Presented
- 5-7 Middle School Retreat
- 14 Third Grade Bible Class #1
- 15 Deadline for Senior Mission Trip
- 26 Costume Carnival
- 27 Affirmation of Baptism Brunch & Rehearsal
- 28 Affirmation of Baptism Service

## November

- 2-4 High School Retreat

## December

- 9 Third Grade Bible Class #2
- 12 Community Christmas Party

## January

- 6 Mid-Year Lead Small Training
- 15 Deadline WNL & NEXT Mission Trip
- 18-20 Winter Wapo Family Weekend

## February

- 10 Third Grade Bible Class #3
- 15-17 Fourth & Fifth Grade Retreat
- 24 Lenten Mentor Training

## March

- 8-9 Freshman Retreat
- 16 Celebrate Spring
- 17 First Communion Instruction
- 31 First Communion Instruction

## April

- 14 Third Grade Bible Class #4
- 18 First Communion Service
- 27 Serve-a-Thon

## May

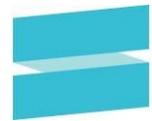
- 1 WNL & NEXT Parent Preview Night

## June

- 2 Baccalaureate Brunch and Service
- 3-7 VBS Week #1
- 10-14 VBS Week #2
- 10-14 VBS+
- 22-29 WNL & NEXT Mission Trip

## July

- 12-14 SEEDS at Wapo
- 14-19 Camp Wapo



# THREE REASONS GP IS CANCELLED

Aug 3, 2017 | Ministry Leaders, Orange Leaders

“You’re telling me my child has to sit in church with me?”

“He’s going to be bored out of his mind!”

“But Pete is preaching through the book of DANIEL!”

“I drove 30 minutes here just for you to tell me there is no Kids Ministry? This is unacceptable.”

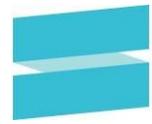
These are all real, actual statements I’ve heard from exhausted, well-meaning parents at my church when they find out that their kid has to go to church with them. For some, it seems to be the bane of their existence.

To be honest, I don’t blame them. I have a third-grader and first-grader who both weep at the thought of not being able to hang with their small group leader and peers on Sunday mornings and instead have to sit next to me while I weep during “What A Beautiful Name.”

Drippy-nosed, irritable children are the last ones I want following me into a service to get my worship on. Even Kids Pastors need a break from their own kids, okay?

It’s also clear that parents who respond like those above never caught the vision behind these seemingly unusual days, which is a failure on our part as leaders. We have to be willing to acknowledge and constantly re-evaluate our communication strategy for the steady flow of new families who are joining our ministries each month.

So what do they need to know exactly? Every year at Bent Tree, we choose a handful of weekends to celebrate what we call Family Sundays. In short, they are an opportunity for parents to worship with their first- to eighth-grade children. These Sundays typically fall on holiday weekends and days we have special



# THREE REASONS GP IS CANCELLED

programming, like Good Friday.

They have also become an important part of who we are as a church. Here's why:

## **Family Sundays are Strategic**

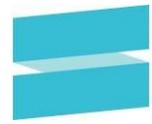
When we flash forward a few years, our team wants to see a generation of kids who not only experienced dynamic, intentional ministry in environments geared for their age and stage, but kids who have truly felt like members of the congregation—not just the kids of the members of the congregation.

When we visualize our kids as adults, we want them to have memories of watching their parents surrendered in worship during a difficult season of life, hearing stories of life-change during baptism, experiencing the generosity of their church family as they give their offering, and soaking in biblical teaching that will inform them of the type of church they will choose to take their family to one day.

We want kids to say: “I had a place in the body of my church. I was welcome.”

Research has shown that about half of high school students who grow up in church will likely leave their faith after graduation. It turns out that two of the keys to building lasting faith in students are intergenerational relationships and intergenerational worship experiences. In their study of nearly 500 youth group graduates from around the country, Fuller Youth Institute revealed the following important insight about the power of intergenerational relationships in building sticky faith.

Involvement in all-church worship during high school is more consistently linked with mature faith in both high school and college than any other form of church participation.



## THREE REASONS GP IS CANCELLED

Furthermore, by far, the number-one way that churches made students in our survey feel welcomed and valued was when adults in the congregation showed interest in them.

This should come as no surprise since we are well aware of how often Jesus made kids feel welcome and valued. Outside of the research, there are countless places in Scripture that honor kids, reminding our giant, adult selves of the innocence, humility, and faith we all too often forget as we age and desperately need to hold onto.

For example, in Matthew 19:13, when the disciples try to keep parents from bringing their kids to Him as He taught, Jesus drops facts. Some translations say Jesus was indignant, saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Jesus intervenes. He reprimands.

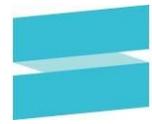
In that moment, He becomes their advocate.

### **Family Sundays Give Permission**

Many have asked over the years if Family Sundays are “kiddie services.” Will the preacher “dumb down” the message or will every worship song feature fantastical hand motions set to electro-pop beats? I wish, but no.

Family Sunday services are still geared toward adults, but they are kid-friendly in the sense that kids in the room are given permission to be kids. We have to acknowledge that they will not always use an inside voice. They will wiggle and complain and spill and fall and laugh a little louder than everyone else. And we think that’s awesome.

We want kids to be who they are and know they are accepted.



## THREE REASONS GP IS CANCELLED

If they get tired, kids have permission to rest on their parent's shoulder or lap. If they can't see, kids have permission to stand on top of the chair during worship. If they have questions, kids have permission to ask their parents in the moment.

It is just as important for parents to know their kids are welcome as it is for kids to know it. We try to make sure there is at least one element in each service that helps everyone know beyond a shadow of a doubt that kids are in the right place.

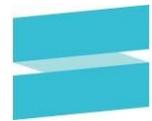
These elements can include things like activity pages with crayons, a kid-friendly video, opportunities for kids to serve within the service, a kid reading a scripture passage or an illustration in a sermon that would apply to their elementary world.

We'd say no more than one or two of these elements should happen within a single service. But these "value-communicators" can be both powerful reminders and stress relievers for parents who are feeling uneasy about the squirmy second-grader beside them.

My favorite blog on this topic was written by fellow family ministry ninja and fellow Wesley Seminary alum, Christina Embree, who focuses not so much on what actually happens programmatically in an adult service that has children in attendance but more on a "culture of welcome" that Jesus is creating. In it she says:

Even if we add in a cool new bulletin or some crayons for coloring, even if we sing some songs with motions or keep our sermons shorter, even if we offer booster seats and give grace when kids are loud, which are all fine and good strategies for making space for kids in worship. . . .

"If we don't do it from a place of genuine belief in the absolute importance of the



## THREE REASONS GP IS CANCELLED

community of faith being one, regardless of age, and a place that specifically answers Jesus' command to "welcome the little children and not hinder them," than I don't think it will make the impact we want it to."

– Excerpt from "Do Not Hinder" from RefocusMinistry.org

Yes. Christina. Yes. More of that, please.

Let's strive to be a Church that gives kids permission to be who they are. And not just on their side of the building.

### **Family Sundays are a Catalyst**

We believe one of the very best things that can come out of a Family Sunday is the opportunity for a parent to share with their child how God may have spoken to them. It is a chance for parents to model what it looks like to grow in their faith. To celebrate answered prayer together. To process doubts and questions.

We want these days to be about what might be caught, rather than what might be taught.

In a culture where sports, schedules, and activities dominate the lives of most families, Family Sundays could be, in its simplest form, a gift of time. A handful of minutes to have an intentional faith conversation that may otherwise not happen given they spend another day segregated like they do the rest of the week.

If my daughter's faith is stickier because she grows up in a church where she is known, welcome, and given permission to be who she is, then I will gladly drag her through the doors of the big room. If she is able to learn from my rollercoaster relationship with Jesus, then I say that's a win.