

GRACE CHURCH SEATTLE

Vision for Children's and Youth Discipleship

February 2017

Goal

To raise children and youth of our congregation to become lifelong followers of Jesus who are able to relate their faith to every part of life and to create a context where children and youth not currently connected to the church can "come and see" the life Christ is inviting them into.

Our approach

Partnering with Jesus

We are not alone in the discipleship of the children of our congregation. As we seek to shepherd our children and youth, we are partnering with Jesus, who is their Chief Shepherd. God desires that our children would walk with him every day of their lives. He is at work in their lives guiding them, leading them, and nurturing their faith.

Our work is based on God's work.

We can do this only as we abide in Christ

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

Partnering with parents

Parents play the most important role in the discipleship of our congregation's children. A child could be part of a very good youth group or Christian Formation class, but if her parents are not living out their faith at home and discipling her, it will undermine her spiritual formation. We need to be directing a lot of our attention to coming alongside of families and marriages and helping them grow. We want to help parents actively grow in their own faith and provide support as they seek to be faithful spiritual guides to their children.

Help equip parents to shepherd well.

Help marriages to flourish.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when

you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

Encouraging cross-generational relationships to form

There is also a very important opportunity here for other adults in the congregation to come alongside of families. In addition to their parents, children need “Aunts” and “Uncles” in the faith. They can be people who serve as volunteers in children and youth ministry, family friends, or extended family. This is a great challenge for our congregation to develop relationships outside of our normal boundaries. Families need to be welcoming single adults and couples without children of their own into their lives, and single adults and couples without children of their own need to be embracing families in the congregation.

And [Jesus'] mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Mark 3:31-35

Ministering directly to children and youth

In addition to working to develop a healthy relational infrastructure in the church, we will also continue to minister directly to children and youth in our congregation. Through Grace Kids classes and our growing youth ministry (Youth Community Group, or YCG), we will continue to create age-appropriate learning and discussion environments for the younger people of the congregation.

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew 19:13-15

Making room for children not connected to the church

The vast majority of children and youth in Seattle do not walk with Christ. We desire for our church to be a place where they may encounter the warmth of a congregation walking with the Lord and be drawn to faith in him.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:47

Key Pieces to the Puzzle

Our approach to the spiritual formation of children and youth is holistic. Simply put, children and youth grow spiritually through a variety of means, including teaching, relationships, and experiences.

Sunday Worship

The focal point of our congregational life and nurture is our gathered worship each Sunday. Children, adults, and youth benefit from worshipping together because the body of Christ is comprised of diverse parts that only function properly as an interdependent whole.

Adult Community

Children learn to follow Christ by watching how adults follow Christ, making the spiritual nurture of adults a critical component to a child's spiritual formation.

Peer Community

We help children and youth build genuine, refining, Christ-centered community with their peers.

Age-Appropriate Teaching

Children and youth benefit from intentional teaching, uniquely geared towards the challenges of various stages of growth and development.

Personal Study & Communion with God

We seek to cultivate in children and youth a personal love for God's word and also give them the tools to help foster a lifetime of a deep and rich prayer life.

Faith in action

By participating in acts of compassion and justice, children and youth play an active role in Jesus' ongoing work of redeeming his world.

The person needed

Passionate, experienced and gifted in the holistic spiritual formation of children and youth

The person in this position should be excited to help develop people, practices and structures that will seek to faithfully shepherd children and youth.

Leader of leaders

The person in this position be working with Children & Youth volunteers. They will need to have expertise in the field of ministering to young people and be able to build effective teams that will teach and shepherd children and youth.

Collaborative ministry innovator

This person in this position will be blazing a new trail here. The thinking behind this new position is new and evolving, so not a lot of churches have begun to intentionally

implement these principles. We need someone who can come and creatively build something here along with other gifted and creative staff members. The person in this position will need to work closely and joyfully with the Senior Pastor and the Director of Community Formation as part of the overall discipleship ministry of the church.

Spiritual Formation of Adults

The person in this position will need to be able to help parents grow as shepherds of their children and help other adults come alongside of parents and families and assist with the Christian nurture of children and youth.

Program Administration

The person in this position will be ultimately responsible for all administrative and logistical support for children's and youth ministry at Grace (volunteer management, background checks, supplies, curriculum, etc.). This person will not need to personally administrate our volunteer scheduling program, but will be responsible to ensure that it is done.

Able to preach and lead in worship

As the second ordained minister on our staff, the person in this position will preach approximately 10 times per year. In addition, this person will regularly lead in worship and the Lord's Supper.

Applications

To apply for this position, please email us (john@graceseatle.org). In your email, please provide brief answers (1-2 paragraphs per answer) to the following questions:

How does the vision of this role tie in with your own ministry calling and views?

Which role responsibility best matches your current capability, prior experience and interest? (ie...leader of leaders)