

Connecting in Faith



Sunday School Handbook - 2019-2020

First UCC of Milford, CT

Sunday School Mission Statement

The mission of Sunday School at First UCC of Milford is to provide a meaningful intergenerational time for faith formation, practice, and expression for each individual in a safe, supportive Christ-centered and Spirit-led community.

Our Hope

Our hope is to equip God's children for faithful living, and that they know they are welcome at God's Table!

Curriculum/Lessons

Our Sunday School Lessons and Children's Worship are based on themed units as well as the Lectionary, which is a pre-selected collection of scriptural readings from the Bible that can be used for worship and study. Typically our worship services are based on the lectionary. We hope that Sunday School is an extension of the worship experience and an opportunity for youth to learn and grow in their faith!

Our Curricula for Sunday School Classes for Kindergarten through 7th grade has been developed by our Minister of Faith Formation using a unit-style format as well as selections from Sparkhouse's re:form Ancestors program. We use another curriculum for our Pre-K class that shares with them foundational Bible Stories to make God's word and Jesus' teachings accessible and interesting.

For all levels, we aim to make the Bible relevant and inspirational for our children and youth as well as to the adults who guide them in their formation. Kelsey DeCarlo, Faith Formation Leadership and this year's teaching slate are crafting additional materials for this program year. These are some of the online resources that we use:

www.textweek.com; www.ministrytochildren.com; www.faithformationjourneys.blogspot.com

Sunday Morning Information

Children gather in the Sanctuary each Sunday by 10AM with parents. Children leave for Sunday School at a designated time indicated in the bulletin and usually announced. Children in 3rd grade and younger leave through the chancel for their classrooms downstairs. Children in 4th-7th grades leave through the chancel for their classes in the Parlor or Library.

After worship, guardians of all youth should meet youth in their classroom **before** going to coffee hour **immediately** following worship.

Part of deepening our faith involves stewardship of our **resources**. Each Sunday, children will participate in *keeping their classrooms tidy*. They will have a chance *to give a monetary offering* during class. And they will have several opportunities to share in their time and service.

Volunteers

Each of our ministries always welcomes and needs your help. Speak with the nursery attendants, Mark Byers and Wendy Gilbert about helping with those sweet little ones in the nursery. Speak with Kelsey or Tracy about helping with Sunday School. Speak with Kelsey about helping with Junior Pilgrim Fellowship and Rev. Ashley about Senior Pilgrim Fellowship.

Attendance & Interdependence

The educational and spiritual benefits of our Sunday School program are dependent on the **Presence** of the student for continuity of instruction, participation and fluidity of formation. We understand that there are many demands of our time even on Sundays, but we hope to realize a substantial commitment to attend Sunday School as regularly as possible. We find that the Sunday School experience is one of **Interdependence** because teachers (faith formers) create lessons dependent on their particular students, and the students help bring the lessons and application to fruition for the whole body, which then informs the next step in their formative lessons.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

If your child participates in an activity that takes her or him away from church on Sunday mornings, then find their grade-level goals (in this handbook) and visit the church website (www.firstchurchofmilford.org) to help them continue along their faith journey outside of church. When they finish their “season of activity,” then know that **you are welcome** to jump back into Sunday School for a season of Sabbath for your child’s body and mind. Children are always welcome to Sunday School, even in their sport or dance uniforms! **We encourage kids to bring a friend to Sunday School!**

The Sunday School Ministry Team has compiled a list of age-appropriate learning goals for the students to work on during the year. The teachers will incorporate some of these goals into their classes, but the students are also encouraged to study them on their own. The achievement of these goals each year will help to provide the basic building blocks for a faith-filled foundation in life.

Teachers and families are encouraged to support the faith formation of the children in our community through the Sunday School ministry by striving toward these learning goals:

Nursery	Sharing & Using loving/kind words Nurturing a sense of welcome & safety Taking care of our space
Pre-K	Nurturing a sense of welcome & belonging Prayers, Songs & Bible Stories Sunday School is a creative place
Kindergarten	The Lord's Prayer Worship—prayers, songs, behavior, etc.
First Grade	Offering Communion
Second Grade	Basic Bible Skills Doxology Church is Fun
Third Grade	Baptism Psalm 23 Faith Timeline
Fourth Grade	Bible Skills Know first 5 books of the Old & New Testaments
Fifth Grade	Parables & Miracles The Beatitudes
Sixth Grade	Psalm 139 Holy Week Spiritual Gifts
Seventh Grade	Favorite Bible Story Order of Worship Liturgical Seasons
8th Gr & older	Confirmation 1
9 th Gr & older	Confirmation 2



Mission/Service Projects—Faith in Practice

Each year the entire Sunday School participates in a Mission project. Teachers/leaders may also provide other service opportunities to their classes on an individual basis. Families, as well as youth, are always welcome to participate in other activities led by the Youth Groups or other Ministries throughout the year, such as the Lenten Project and the Christmas Giving Tree.

Sharing Our Gifts

Throughout the year there are many opportunities for you and your child to share and hone your special gifts for the good of the gathered community. There are spaces in our registration form for you to indicate what your child is eager to share: playing an instrument, reading during worship, dance, art, videography, team building, mediation, etc. We ask that parents also indicate the gifts that they have or are willing to share for the sake of our ministries: **building, painting, organizing, chaperoning, putting together bulletin boards, playing an instrument, substituting for a teacher, etc.** Thank you for all of the ways that you will share in ministry.

Sunday School Expectations

The approach to classroom management and discipline at First UCC of Milford is guided by an overall objective of showing youth how to work together in Christian community, supporting and respecting each other in our faith journey. How can we all come to the table, and not start a food fight or fuss over who sits where?

Students are expected to:

- † Be respectful of others in class, both peers and leaders.
- † Speak in turn so that only one person talks at a time and listen when others speak.
- † Participate in class.
- † Maintain safe behavior, keeping members of the group physically and emotionally safe.
- † Be respectful of classroom materials.

Leaders are expected to:

- † Prepare lessons carefully (for example practice any games or crafts ahead of time).
- † Alter lessons weekly (with the help of the teacher and/or members of the Faith Formation Ministry) to be appropriate to the ages and stages of students.
- † Model for the students an ability to focus on the lesson and resolve conflicts peacefully.
- † Be clear and consistent about expected behavior.
- † Assist the Special Leaders.
- † Make use of covenants, rituals, activities, or other devices which help the students open/close the class.
- † Accompany students Grade 1 and under to boys/girls room (wait outside) and any student dismissed from class for disciplinary reasons to their parents or appropriate Faith Formation Ministry representative available.

Helpers are expected to:

- † Be friendly to everyone in class.
- † Be ready to observe, participate or assist as the Leader directs.
- † Accompany students Grade 1 and under to boys/girls room (wait outside).
- † Accompany any student dismissed from class for disciplinary reasons to their parents or appropriate Faith Formation Ministry representative available.

Guardians are expected to:

- † Make sure youth understand what is expected of them at Church.
- † Encourage youth to attend consistently by example.
- † Pick up all youth in classrooms at dismissal of worship.
- † Volunteer to assist the Sunday School on some level (Leader/Teacher, [share special talents like music, building, cooking, sewing, photography, art, drama, cooking, etc.], Assistant, organize special events, etc.)
- † Check in with teacher to see if she or he needs help.

Discipline Plan

Limit setting is directed toward maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and the individuals within it. If a youth has difficulty maintaining appropriate behavior in class or any church group activity, the adult leader will be empathetic, but firm about the need to resolve the problem.

- † Positive reinforcement is the major tool of appropriate disciplining. Verbalize to the student when they are behaving in an appropriate manner.
- † Redirect the student in a positive manner when necessary.
- † Give a quiet reminder, specific to the offender, noting the unfairness of disruption to the group and requesting an apology/resolution of the problem.
- † If a student is repeatedly displaying inappropriate behavior, and both redirecting and talking to the student has not worked, then they may be in need of a "time-out" period.
- † They will be asked to sit out of activity for 3 minutes. The teacher will talk to the student after 3 minutes to explain appropriate behavior.
- † The teacher may dismiss a student from class only if they are out of control, threatening the safety of others or if all of the above tactics have been used and the student is still unwilling to cooperate in a manner that will allow the class to learn and the teachers to teach in a positive atmosphere.
- † If a child is dismissed from class, they will be escorted by the teacher's assistant to their parents or, if parents are not accessible, to the Faith Formation Ministry representative.

Nursery/Childcare

Wendy Gilbert and Mark Byers are our nursery attendants on Sunday mornings. During the program year, childcare is available from 8:45 AM to 11:45 AM, allowing parents the opportunity to host coffee hour, sing in the choir, teach or help with Sunday School or participate in educational events. Young children feel most comfortable and safe if they can associate a parent with their space, which is why we ask parents to volunteer time in the nursery. Moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, etc. are welcome to volunteer! Occasional supplies are needed. Check with Wendy or Mark to see what is needed or to schedule your volunteer time.

Material in this booklet is provided for your information and convenience by the Minister of Faith Formation & Faith Formation Ministry.

FAITH FORMATION MINISTER

Kelsey DeCarlo

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY CHAIR

Tracy Hoppock

MINISTRY MEMBERS SUPPORTING FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES

Mary Altieri

Andrea Blackwood

Jennifer Brothers

Stephanie Buehler

Joanna DeSimone

Ken Kienzle

Barry Kresen

Kyrah Moran

Melissa Schwartz

Lori Stein

Sunday School Teaching Teams (and growing!)

Nursery: Wendy Gilbert, Mark Byers

Pre-K: Taylor Frissora, Jasmine Gilbert

K & 1st Grade: Jennifer Bihary, Tina Cerrone

2nd & 3rd Grade: Wendy Bragaw, Abby Smith

4th & 5th Grade: Christine Koval, Jennipher Israelite

6th & 7th Grade: Angela Arpino, Susan Diamantis

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First UCC of Milford
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