Dear Hope Parents, Aug 4, 2021

The new ministry starts September 1st and Hope’s Kids Ministry is heading into an exciting new chapter with a refined focus on things that are both *simple* and *important* for helping children grow in their knowledge of and experience with the Lord. As you have heard, I am stepping out of my staff position to devote more of my energy to my kids at home. While we wait and pray for God to bring the next Kids leader, I am thrilled to say that we have a solid team of volunteers stepping up to not only keep Sunday mornings running smoothly for our kids, but who are also ready and equipped to lead our kids through a simple, yet powerful approach to exploring the Scriptures and encountering the Lord!

We also have a clarified vision for the role of Family Discipleship throughout the week and we have several resources coming your way that will equip you, as parents, to nurture your own abiding relationship with the Lord while doing the important work of training and guiding your children.

As a parent of a child at Hope, we see you as the primary spiritual influence in your child’s life, and we see Hope’s Kids Ministry as a source of support to you and your family. So, the teaching time on Sunday mornings and the Family Discipleship Resources are designed to work hand-in-hand and help us all explore the Scriptures in a way that can lead to deeper, more meaningful discussions between parents and children all throughout the week.

**HERE IS THE BIG PICTURE**

* **The Vision:** Two Foundational Scriptures for Hope’s Kids Ministry
	+ **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**- This passage paints a beautiful picture of parents teaching their children to know and love God in the midst of everyday life. We know that our lives are exceedingly busy, yet, as parents, it is our highest privilege and responsibility to teach our children *diligently* about the Lord. It is in the family setting that most of a child’s spiritual growth will take place, so we pray for you, as parents, that as you abide in their own relationship with the Lord, you will teach your children “when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise.”
	+ **2 Timothy 3:12-16**- This inspiring passage tells us that even though this world is corrupt and we will face persecution, we can hold firmly to what we have learned and that it is a powerful gift to be acquainted with God’s Word from childhood. This highlights the strength that comes from being “acquainted from childhood with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.” What a precious gift we can give to our children, that they be so acquainted with God’s Word that they become wise unto salvation and take all that they learn with them, long into the future, no matter what trials they may face.
* **The Values:**
	+ **Family Discipleship**- is the primary place for a child’s spiritual growth
	+ **First-hand Knowledge of and Experience with the Lord**- We don’t just study the Bible, we seek to know and experience the *God of the Bible*.
	+ **Kids are an Integral Part of the Hope community**- Kids are welcome to participate at Hope and build relationships with people all throughout the church body.
	+ **Cohesive and Simple**- Kids Ministry will teach the same Scripture that the adults are hearing in the sermon. Our classrooms, our routines, and our teaching methods are kept simple so that we remain focused on what matters most during our Kids Ministry time.
* **Sunday Morning Gathering** for Kids (3 times per month): Our Kids Gathering will be centered around gaining first-hand knowledge of and experience with the Lord through his written Word. Kids will explore the same passage that the sermon is based on and will use the *Head, Heart, Hands Method* of exploring the scriptures.
* **Family Discipleship Resources**
	+ **Family Discipleship Tools**- Parents will receive the Scripture schedule for the upcoming sermon series plus a simple framework for engaging the whole family in meaningful discussions about what God is revealing through his Scriptures.
	+ **Family Lending Library**- We have lots of new additions to our lending library, located near the water fountain. Please stop by and take advantage of any resources that interest you at any time!
	+ **Parenting Mentors**- Hope is blessed by many brothers and sisters in Christ who are further down the road in their parenting journey. Many of them are eager to lend a listening ear or a word of encouragement to younger parents who are still in the child rearing years. Do not hesitate to ask for input or encouragement from these wise mentors or ask any of our pastors to help connect you with someone who can mentor you in the area of parenting.

**A FEW IMPORTANT DETAILS**

* **The Schedule:** A Kids Gathering (Sunday School) will be offered on the first, second and third week of every month for ages 2 years – 5th grade. Kid activity pages and sermon notebooks are available to kids on 4th and 5th Sundays to engage in the sermon alongside their parents. (Kids age groups are subject to change based on who is in attendance and how many volunteers we have.)
* **Weekly online resources:** These resources for families viewing the service from home will no longer be provided.
* **COVID-19 Protocol:** All ministry areas at Hope, including Kids Ministry, will honor and submit to the civil authorities God has placed over us, specifically our mayor and governor, while also allowing individual freedom for each person at Hope to take whatever precautions they personally want to take for themselves and their children within the government’s guidelines.
	+ Based on the current government guidance for houses of worship, all COVID requirements are lifted for our church gatherings, therefore we will phase out the additional (voluntary) precautions that we had in place for Kids Ministry this summer. Our pre-registration process, our health check-ins and our mask requirements will be gradually phasing out throughout August and will be fully lifted starting on Sept 1, 2021.

As I transition out of my staff position and devote myself to the bigger job of parenting my children, I am filled with excited and joy to see all that God has in store for the kids at Hope in the coming year! I sense God calling each of us at Hope, adults and children alike, into a more intimate and personal relationship with him as we seek to not only study the Bible, but fall more and more in love with the *God of the Bible*, who sustains us and guides us!

It’s been a joy to lead Hope’s Kids Ministry and I’m excited to continue learning alongside of you as a fellow parent at Hope.

I love each of you and your children! See you all soon!

In Christ,

Anna