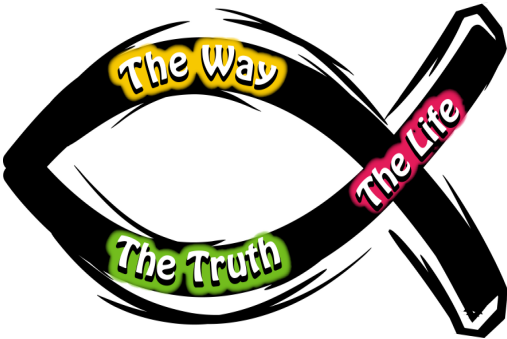




The Information Source for McKendree's
Children/Youth/Music Ministries
2011-2012

MCKENDREE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



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OR: All I Really
Need To Know I
Learned From This
Handbook

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Dear Youth, Kids, Musicians, Parents, Volunteers, Chaperones, Drivers, Friends, Etc.:

There is always so much going on here at McKendree and we are so glad that you are a part of this ministry. We want to take a few moments and say thank you for all of your support for all that we do. You may have heard that we have quite a few changes going on this year, and hopefully this guidebook will help you navigate these exciting new waters.

We decided that it was best to consolidate our policies and forms and try and have the Youth/Children/Music Ministries all on the same page. It is our hope that this guidebook will provide the answers to many of the frequently asked questions about all of these ministries. There is a lot of information that will be located in here, but we ALWAYS welcome your questions/comments/emails/phone calls. It is our desire for our ministries to be teams of youth, children adults, volunteers, parents (especially parents), and staff working together so our young people may develop their lives in the way and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have an awesome, amazing, and incredible year ahead. We know that the Spirit is moving and we cannot wait to see where exactly we are led over the next twelve months.

Blessings in Christ,

Shannon Nesbit, Joseph Palmer, and Susan Rowe



Chapter 1: General Information and Schedules

Why do we have a combined Handbook this year? Don't you think this is a little bit strange?

Well, this is different from the way it has been done previously, but do we think this is strange? Not at all! This year, Susan, Joe, and Shannon met for several hours to look at our ministries and try and find ways to enhance the programs we already have here at McKendree. One of the suggestions was to make sure that all youth/music/children ministries follow the same policies and guidelines to have some consistency between the ministries. This combined handbook is our first attempt at that.

Are there any other changes that came out of the meeting that the three of you had?

Indeed there are! And we are very excited to share them with you! Full details of the children/music/youth ministries will be found throughout the rest of the handbook, but we would like to share the basics with you now.

Flight 56 has been an amazing part of our Children's Ministry. Upon looking at the current research and findings it is suggested that Flight 56 could benefit from having things such as small groups, their own retreats, etc. These are events and things that are done in the youth ministry, so the first transition point is that Flight 56 will now be part of the youth ministry, but will maintain its own standing as its own separate entity. There will be some times during the year where it will combine with WTL (for example, 3rd Sunday worship), but will maintain its autonomy, while it expands as a ministry.

On the music side of things, we are looking to transition the youth choir. There will now be a Middle School Choir (5th-8th grades) and a High School Choir (9th-12th grades) that will meet on Sunday afternoons at 3:30-4:15 and 4:15-5:00, respectively. There will also be a Middle School Handbells group that will meet from 4:15-5:00pm.

At 5:00, everybody will be invited to a Sunday Night Dinner hosted in the Fellowship Hall. This will be provided by parent and adult volunteers at no weekly cost to the students.

WTL and Flight 56 will meet from 5:30-7:00pm on Sunday evenings. Fun Fourth, will also meet during this time.

Wait, what is this Sunday Night Dinner you're talking about?

Every Sunday evening that church programming is held we will be having a Sunday Night Dinner. Volunteers/Parents from the different ministry areas will sign up to provide the meal each week. The food will be on a rotational basis, but will be family friendly. This will allow our youth/children/parents/volunteers a chance to take a break and eat in the midst of the busy Sunday, as well as giving people a chance to come together and fellowship with their family and friends. Dinner will be from 5:00-5:30pm.

Some of these changes will impact my child and change things from the way they were used to doing them. Can you help me understand why you decided to make these changes at this time?

We believe that McKendree is and should be known as a family-friendly church. We decided to make these changes in order to better support the schedules and times of the families that we are serving with in ministry. We know that some students were used to a previous schedule; however, we feel that these changes will enhance all of our ministries and need to occur. We foresee very few issues arising and hope that these changes will not cause much stress or worry; rather, we believe that they will help us fulfill our goal of being a family-friendly church. If you have any questions, please contact, Shannon, Susan or Joe.

Chapter 2: Staff

Who are the McKendree staff members that will be working with our youth and children?

The main staff members that will be working with the youth this year are Joe Palmer, Susan Rowe, Shannon Nesbit, Lisa Engberg, Paula Anderson, Kim Steinke, a new Director of Middle School Ministries and a new Assistant Director of Music.

What does Joe Palmer do?

Joe is our Director of High School Ministries at McKendree UMC. He is in charge of planning all activities and events for the youth in grades 9-12. He is also in charge of planning events, retreats, activities and mission trips for all of the students in the ministry along with Paula, our Director of Middle School Ministries and Susan. He is in the youth office Monday-Thursday from 10am-5pm.

What does the Director of MS Ministries do?

We are currently in the process of hiring our new Director of MS Ministries. This person is in charge of planning all activities and events for the youth in grades 7-8. The MS Director also helps plan events, retreats, activities and mission trips for all of the students in the ministry along with Joe and Susan.

What does Paula Anderson do?

There would be no youth group events if Paula were not here. She coordinates all paperwork, emails, phone calls, data entry, and all other administrative tasks that are necessary for WTL to happen. She has a huge caring and loving heart for teenagers, McKendree, her family, and WTL. She is a huge blessing and is the glue that holds us all together. She is in the office M-Th 1:30-5:30 and Friday 9:00-1:00.

Where can I find the youth office?

The youth office is located in the main church building, two doors to the left of the door to the main church office. It is a large lime green room where Joe, the Director of Middle School Ministries and Paula all work in ministry together.

What does Susan do?

Susan is the Director of Family Ministries at McKendree UMC. She oversees all programming for children and youth at the church, including VBS, Sunday School, Fun Fourth, etc. She also serves as Joe, Paula, and the new Director of Middle School Ministries' direct supervisor. She welcomes questions and comments about the ministry and is working hard to make sure that McKendree has the most outstanding Children and Youth programs that can be offered in Gwinnett County. Her office is the sunshine yellow office one door to the right of the Youth Office. Susan is in the office Tuesday-Friday.

What does Lisa Engberg do?

Lisa is the Director of Children's Programs at McKendree UMC. She primarily works with the Preschool and Nursery staff but does work with Susan on all other Children's Events throughout the year. Lisa knows the answer to about any question regarding kids programming 4th grade and under. She will gladly help you find the answer to anything else! Her office is located across from the copy machine on the hallway leading to the Fellowship Hall. Her goal is to make sure kids love coming and learning about the Lord. She is in the office during the school year Sunday - Friday and in the summer Sunday-Thursday.

What does Shannon Nesbit do?

Shannon is the Director of Music Ministries at McKendree UMC. She oversees all the planning and scheduling of all of the musical group (we have a BUNCH!). She also is the direct supervisor for the Assistant Music Director and the Administrative Assistant. She welcomes your questions and comments about how to make the Music at McKendree the best it can be! Her office is by the Music Room and she's in the office Sunday-Thursday.

What does Kim Steinke do?

Other than keep Shannon straight? Well, Kim handles the scheduling for all of the audio and video needs for the worship services and special events. Kim helps with all of the fund-raising and keeping track of the monies that are generated. She will also send out the reminders and notices for events. Kim's office is in the Music Office with Shannon. Kim will be there Monday-Thursday from 9:00-3:00.

What does the new Assistant Music Director do?

This position is in the process of being filled with the person that God wants to have at McKendree. At this time, this position will be a back-up help to Shannon. Other things will fall into place once that person is here!

Chapter 3: Teenaged General Information

What exactly does WTL stand for and why do you use it so much?

WTL stands for “The Way, The Truth, and the Life.” This is the name of the youth ministry here at McKendree United Methodist Church. Many people may be more familiar with the term UMYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship). Instead of calling our youth activities UMYF, we have the name WTL, because our number one desire is for our students to develop a life in the way and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who can attend WTL?

WTL and most of its events are open to all students who are in grades 7-12, regardless of whether or not they attend McKendree or are active participants in our youth ministry programs. We welcome all students and try our best to provide an environment where youth are not judged, where youth are surrounded and accepted by the love and grace of God, where youth can experience forgiveness and second chances, and can find a place to connect with God and God’s children in worship, fellowship and service. However, there are certain events, such as mission trips, that have different requirements for attendance (please see the section on Missions).

Why do other churches include 6th graders in their youth programs but McKendree does not?

While it is true that Middle School here in Gwinnett County (and our surrounding counties as well) is defined as students in 6th-8th grades, WTL defines Middle School a bit differently. We believe that the transition from elementary school to middle school is very challenging due to transitions, differing responsibilities, levels of school work, etc. There is research that suggests that keeping these youngest middle school students in their familiar spiritual surroundings will actually benefit them more in their spiritual growth. So that is why McKendree created Flight 56 as a “tween” program for our students in 5th-6th grades. This provides them with a youth group experience before they enter WTL. However, this year we are moving Flight 56 under the youth umbrella. This will allow the Flight 56 youth more opportunities to connect with God and each other. Through this transition we hope to provide more opportunities focused specifically for each of the youth age groups that we are tasked with shepherding: 5th and 6th Graders, 7th and 8th Graders, and 9th-12th Graders.

Is WTL separate from McKendree United Methodist Church?

Absolutely not! WTL is a ministry of the church that is fully integrated with the other ministries at McKendree. We encourage our youth to be involved in all aspects of the general church as a whole (music ministries, volunteering with children's ministry, Walk Through Bethlehem, attending an intergenerational worship experience, etc.). We also encourage and welcome all members, visitors, and participants in the life of McKendree UMC to participate with our youth in their activities (but please remember you must first go through our Safe Sanctuary Training Program, see the section on volunteering for more information on this program).

How will you communicate with us during the year?

The majority of our communication with parents, youth, and volunteers comes through email (yes youth, this means you have to check your email and not just your Facebook accounts and texts). A midweek update is sent out every week and contains detailed information, announcements, sign-up information and more. Information can also be found in the weekly church bulletin and the monthly church newsletter and on the Youth website www.mckendreewtl.org

You used to send out more things in the mail, what happened?

The expenses for us to send out mass mailings are great. So it is much more cost effective and faster to send out the information via email and postings on the church website. Occasional mailings still go out (e.g. Confirmation, VBS), but these mailings are quite rare.

What things does WTL do every week?

The main activities that we do every week at WTL are: Sunday School, Confirmation (September-March), WTL, Small Groups, Youth Disciple, and Kidz Klub.

Why is there not Sunday School for the youth during the 9:30 service?

This is actually a very good question. We have tried many times to have Sunday School during this service, but it has never worked out. A large portion of our active youth attend the 9:30 worship service and sit together in the front few pews. The attendance during the 9:30 Sunday School was averaging about 2, which we determined was not enough to sustain the many volunteers that were needed to help with this class.

Does my youth have to attend Sunday School?

No, we do not force any of the teenagers to do attend any of our programs. However, your child must be somewhere during the 11:00 hour. If they are not in Sunday School or Confirmation they must be in worship in the Sanctuary, volunteering with another ministry, with their parents/guardians, or leave the church property. Your child may not be on church grounds if they are not in one of these locations. Your child is not allowed to wander the halls, be in the Fellowship Hall, in the Education Building lobby, hanging out in the church narthex, etc.

What is a typical WTL like?

I'm not sure there is a typical WTL. Unless you consider worship, reflection, games, videos, prayer time, and chaos typical in the life of a teenager. Each week begins with fellowship, snacks, and play time from 4:30-5:00pm. At 5:00pm we will join together for a weekly dinner. At 5:30 all students enter the Lockridge Chapel for announcements, worship music, videos, etc. At 6:00pm, the Middle School students and the High School students separate; the Middle School students go over to the Lockridge Fellowship Hall and the High School students remain in the Lockridge Chapel. At this point in time age-appropriate lessons, sermons, games, videos, etc are done with each of the groups. The High School students conclude each week with a time of thoughtful prayer and reflection on the topic at hand and have a time for more worship through music. The Middle School students conclude with small group discussions held in groups that are grade and gender specific.

So the High School students and the Middle School students don't spend much time together on Sunday nights?

They spend the first hour together in play time and worship. It is often helpful to have the groups split into grade divisions to cover the topics because some topics will hit one specific group more than another. Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers also learn differently, so having the split helps with that as well. However, several times a year the groups will remain together for the entire night. We will also have one night a month (most likely the 3rd Sunday of the month) where Flight 56 will join the rest of WTL for the opening worship set.

What does a typical Flight 56 meeting look like?

I am not sure if there is a "typical" Flight 56 meeting, but we always have a fun game or two and either an active, small group lesson or worship with WTL (3rd Sundays). The topics we cover with our 5th and 6th graders are Peer Pressure, What is God's Purpose in My Life, Succeeding in School and other relevant topics. We also have announcements and sign-ups in the beginning of the meeting and Prayer Circle at the end right before we leave. Every other year we do an extended lesson called "Created by God", which is subtitled "Tweens, Faith and Human Sexuality". It is all about what God has to say about sex and its role in our lives. The kids are free to ask whatever questions might pop into their heads and we do not "sugarcoat" the answers! We know the children are hearing more information than we want them to know, and most of it is inaccurate. "Created by God" at Flight 56 is a safe place to get the true story. We will offer the class again in 2013.

So tell me more about weekly small groups?

Our weekly small groups are held outside of Sunday evenings. Most of our offerings are on Wednesday evenings from 7:15pm-8:15pm, with the high school guys' small group lasting until 9:00pm. There is also a high school girls' small group that meets on Monday evenings. This year we will also begin offering a Flight 56 Small Group on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:00. We offer small groups that are specific by gender and high school/middle school. These groups are a time for the youth to come together for study, prayer, accountability, etc. These groups are the "deepest" portion of our youth ministry as the relationships between the members and the leaders are the closest, and this is where we dive the deepest into study and our relationships with God.

What is Confirmation?

According to our Confirmation curriculum, *Claim the Name*, "Confirmation is about the gift God has given us in Jesus Christ. It is about how God has loved us. It is about what we do to receive the gift and make it our own. It is a time of claiming the name of Jesus Christ – of Christian – for ourselves." This is a huge step in an individual's adult faith journey. Confirmation is about making your own decision to be a Christian, and to make an adult decision about whether or not you want to become a member of the Church. This is one of the first adult decisions you will be making in your faith life. Confirmation will begin on Sunday, August 14, 2011, with a meeting for the Confirmation Students and their parents at 10:30AM. The parent's meeting will last 30 minutes and then we will have our first class together. Confirmation classes will meet throughout the fall and winter; Confirmation will also include the yearly Wesley Retreat to St. Simons on October 8-10. The students will be confirmed on Confirmation Sunday, January 8th, 2012.

What kind of musical things can I do as a Youth?

Well, if you like to sing, you can join the **High School Choir** (grades 9-12) that will meet Sunday afternoons from 4:15-5:00 in the Music Room during the school year. This group sings about four (4) times a year during the worship services, during special services (like Christmas at McKendree, Mission Impact and Graduation Celebrations). There may be a musical in the Spring. Other things may pop up....

If you're not in 9th grade, but want to sing, we have the **Middle School Choir** (grades 5-8) that will meet Sunday afternoons from 3:30-4:15 in the Music Room. This group will sing about four (4) times a year during worship and special services (like Christmas at McKendree, Mission Impact Celebration). Other activities may include a musical...who knows????

If you're a girl, you can join our **Women of Worship** group which is open to all girls (and women too!) from 7th grade through adult. This group rehearses on Sunday afternoons from 3:00—3:30 in the Music Room during the school year. This group will also sing about four (4) times a year during worship services and special services (like Christmas at McKendree, Mission Impact and Graduation Celebrations).

What if I don't want to sing, what else can I do?

If you like to play an instrument, you can join the **McKendree Orchestra** that meets Sunday evenings from 7:00-8:00 in the sanctuary. The orchestra plays about once a month in worship services in addition to special services (Christmas at McKendree, Easter, Mission Impact Celebration). You'll need to be in 9th grade with at least two (2) years playing experience to join.

Righteous Ringers which meets on Wednesday evenings from 7:00—8:00 in Room 318. This is a beginners (well, almost) group for grades 7-adult. They ring in worship services and special services throughout the school year.

McKendree Bells is the advanced handbell group and rehearses Sunday evenings from 6:00-7:00 in Room 318. This group also rings in worship services and special services throughout the school year.

Super Ringers of God is open for grades 5th-8th. This group rings in worship and special services throughout the school year. They rehearse in Room 318 from 4:15—5:00 on Sunday afternoons.



Chapter 4: Trips, Retreats & Events

What are Retreats and why should my youth go on them?

Retreats are special trips that we take several times a year. Usually these events are off the McKendree campus. It is a time for the youth to get away with their peers, adult mentors, and other volunteers for a time of fellowship, worship, small groups, reflection, and general growth in their relationships with each other and with God. Your youth should attend our retreats because a lot of powerful things happen on these trips. It helps our youth to bond as a group and helps the youth individually connect with God and deepen their relationship with the Creator.

Are these events free?

Unfortunately, these trips are not free. There is a cost involved, but we try and keep the costs as low as possible. The cost for a trip will cover your child's housing, food, admissions, etc. We do offer several fund raising opportunities throughout the year. Scholarships are also available. Please see Chapter 7 on Finances for more information.

Okay so you said these things are awesome, what retreats are you doing this year?

We will be kicking off the year with a High School Retreat on September 16th-18th. We follow that with our yearly Wesley Retreat to St. Simons Island on Saturday, October 8th-Monday, October 10th. This is part of the Confirmation curriculum that you read about earlier in the guidebook. Not too long after that we will pack up for our annual Fall Retreat at the Covington FFA Camp on November 4th-6th. **January 14th-15th we will be hosting a new Retreat specifically for our students in Flight 56.** The WTL Winter Retreat will follow on February 17th-20th. And our 7th and 8th Grade Students will enjoy their own retreat on March 9th-11th. Our Annual Summer Retreat and Senior Send-off will be a Summer Beach Retreat scheduled for May 29th-June 2nd, 2012.

Are there any trips for my youth involved in music?

Please stay tuned for more information on this question. As we are working on scheduling and hiring the new Assistant Music Director, we will have more details in the future.

What happens if my child signs up and later cannot go on the trip?

We hate it when our youth end up not being able to go, but definitely understand that situations arise and this may happen. One of two things will happen. If there is a waitlist, or we can find another youth to take your child's spot, then your money will be refunded to your child's youth account. However, if the deadline has passed and nobody can be found to take your child's spot, then the monies collected will be needed to defray the expense, and the money will not be refunded to you.

What happens if I miss a very important deadline?

Deadlines are important. They really help us keep in contact with the places we are going and help us keep the ministry running smoothly. However, it is possible that we may be able to accept late registrations. However, some trips have a firm number of spots and certain deadlines that are not set by us. If that is the case, and a registration is late (or if your child meets the deadline but all spots have previously been filled) then we will not be able to take your child with us on an event.

Do you monitor every action of my youth on your trips/events?

It would be awesome if we were able to, but our group is so large that this is not totally feasible. On Retreats and Events your youth must be in a group of no less than three people, and with the permission of a chaperone. Any child found not to be following these rules may be sent home from the event at the parents' expense.

What other rules do you have for these events?

No boys are allowed in the sleeping quarters or rooms of the girls and vice versa. The genders should only be mixing when they are in big group activities or in the general meeting areas. The youth must also respect and listen to the adults who are chaperoning them. They should not backtalk or argue. The words/actions/behaviors of the youth should also reflect Christ, our youth group, and McKendree. Any youth found in violation of these rules may be sent home at the parents' expense.

What other events are you doing this year?

We have lock-ins scheduled, Christmas parties, a basketball game, talent show, Friday Night Lives, Fun Fourth activities, worship participation, Christmas at McKendree and more. Please check out the attached Calendar for a current listing of all of our events. Please note: This Calendar is subject to change!

Chapter 5: Permission Slips

Does my child have to have a permission slip and insurance card on file?

Yes, it is imperative that your student have a current permission slip on file with the Youth Office before going on any McKendree Music/Youth/Childrens sponsored event. Not only does your student have to have a permission slip on file, but it must be fully completed as well. We must also have a copy of your student's insurance card (the front and back of it). If your child does not have an insurance card, we need a dated letter stating that you as the parent/guardian will assume all costs that arise.

What if I do not want to give my youth's social security number?

We understand that many families may not be comfortable giving their youth's social security number to McKendree. Please know that we respect the importance of this number and that it is either locked up in a safe location or kept on the staff's persons at all times. This number must be filled in for your child to be able to participate on McKendree events. We have had instances where not having a SSN has prevented youth from receiving treatment at hospitals on retreats/mission trips/events/etc. We do not want our youth to not receive treatment, and that is why we require this information.

Do I have to go somewhere and pay to have the permission slip notarized?

No. We have several notaries on staff at the church who will take care of notarizing the permission slip for you. **But please do not sign your permission slip unless in the presence of the person notarizing your form.**

There's a lot of fine print on the back of the permission slip, what does it really say?

The first paragraph is an acknowledgement that there is an inherent risk on many of our activities. If something were to occur, you are authorizing us to take your youth for treatment. The second paragraph releases McKendree, its staff, and volunteers from the responsibility of any accidental injury, death or illness that may occur. The third paragraph is optional, and this is the media release, that we may photograph and use your child's likeness around the church, in fliers, etc. The final paragraph is a covenant that reminds parents that youth may be sent home, at parental expense, for various reasons should the need arise during a McKendree event.

Chapter 6: Missions

Can my child go on any mission trip that they want to?

We encourage our youth to be involved in living in the way of Jesus by serving their neighbors. These service and mission opportunities occur locally, nationally, and internationally. However, there are some guidelines that must be followed for attending a WTL sponsored mission trip, and these may differ from the guidelines set forth by the McKendree Missions Council. Also, please note that all WTL Mission trips are in accordance with the Safe Sanctuary policy of The United Methodist Church.

So what are these guidelines?

In order to attend a WTL mission trip/event a youth must be currently active within the Youth Ministry program (small groups/WTL/retreats/etc). We encourage all students in 7th-12th grade to participate in our mission opportunities. However, there are some mission organizations and locations that place age restrictions on participation, and that will be communicated ahead of time. All students must have a completed Permission Slip on file, as well as complete all waivers and paperwork provided by the organization with which we will be serving on a mission trip. We also believe that local, national and international mission experiences provide individuals with varying and equally important experiences. We require that a youth going on a national mission experience first complete a local mission experience. We then require that a student going on an international mission experience have completed both a national and local mission experience. This is not to prevent anybody from going, but allowing youth to experience mission in its various forms and realize that missions is not just “here” locally, or “there” internationally. If your child has completed these experiences somewhere other than McKendree, that is fine, but please just let us know.

So my child is eligible to go on the Dominican Republic mission trip over Spring Break?

Maybe. This is dependent on the last portion of our WTL Mission Policy. If your child has completed a local and national mission experience prior to Spring Break, they will be eligible to go. There will be opportunities through WTL to accomplish both of these tasks before Spring Break, so 7th graders will be eligible to go. Also, your child will need a passport for this experience.

Chapter 7: Finances

What forms of payment do you accept for events/retreats/etc?

McKendree UMC accepts cash, checks, online payments from your checking account, or paying from a church youth account. We're sorry, but we do not accept credit card payments.

What is a youth account and how can I get one?

Every youth, 5th grade and higher, who attends WTL or any of its events/activities/etc is eligible for a youth account. This is money that is held by the church but set aside for use by the individual whose name it is attached to. Paula, Joe, and Ashley are responsible for maintaining the accounts and are able to let you know how much your youth has in their account.

How does money get placed in my youth account?

Monies raised from the various fund raisers that we do throughout the year is placed in your youth account. These fund raisers include the donut table, the pumpkin patch, the youth yard sale, and others. Refunds are usually given into a youth account as well. If you paid with cash or check, a check refund may be requested. However, if you paid by a youth account, you may not receive a check refund.

Can I use my youth account to pay for non-WTL church related events or non-church events?

Unfortunately, you may not. The funds raised through these fund raisers are for WTL sponsored events only. When we tell others what we are raising funds for, we always tell them that these are to help support the youth on the youth trips that we take. It is not fair to use that money in other ways when people may be helping us raise money only for that particular purpose.

What happens to the money in a youth account when a student graduates or moves?

The monies that are left in an account revert back to the youth group restricted fund. If the graduating student has younger siblings, the money will be transferred to the siblings account or held until the sibling has a youth account.

Are there scholarships available?

Scholarships are available. If an individual is in need they should contact Joe. Scholarships are determined by need and participation in fund raising opportunities. Payment plans may also be set up to help with the costs, again, please talk with Joe.

What fundraisers do you do?

Well, let us first share that we are no longer participating in Pumpkin Patch. It has been a fundraiser that has been costing us money, rather than helping us earn money. In its place the youth group will be doing at least four fundraisers a year, one per quarter. The Music Department also has their own fundraisers including Cookies By the Pound at Christmastime and Desserts 2 Die For, around the Easter Holiday.

Is a youth account the only type of account that exists?

No, youth accounts are designated for events, retreats, lock-ins, and mission experiences for students in Flight 56 and WTL. Students involved in Musical Offerings may also have a Music Account where funds raised from Music Department Fundraisers will be kept for trips and events through the Music Department.

What about the money I earn in my music account? Can I use that money toward WTL events and can I use my WTL money for Music trips and events?

There may be times when you need to talk to Joe or Shannon about switching monies from one account to another. This is **not** a common practice, but if the need arises, please talk to us.

Chapter 8: Volunteering

This sounds like an awesome experience, how do I volunteer to hang out with these awesome staff members and amazing students?

First, thank you for thinking we as staff are awesome. The affirmation is important. As for how you volunteer, one of the first steps is to let Joe, Shannon, Paula, Lisa, Kim, or Susan know that you are interested in volunteering and also where you would like to help within the ministry.

So anybody can just walk right in and volunteer?

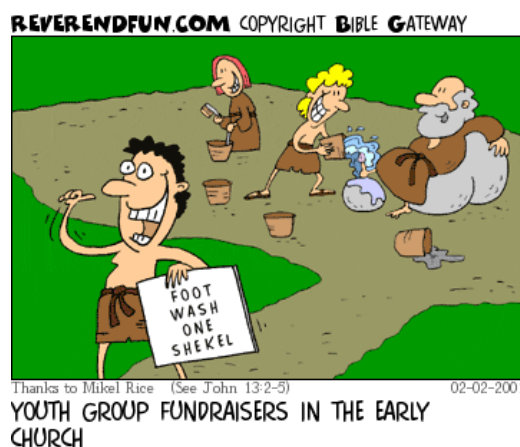
No. There are some requirements as well. An individual must attend McKendree UMC for a period of at least six months before volunteering with youth or children. They also need to complete a Volunteer Application, submit to a criminal background check, supply Susan with the names of two references, attend a Safe Sanctuaries training, and abide by the rules of Safe Sanctuaries.

What is Safe Sanctuaries?

It is a policy put in place by The United Methodist Church. It is a list of rules that must be followed to help protect our children and to protect our volunteers. Some of the rules include: that youth should not be alone in a room with one adult, that the two adults should not be related, that youth and adults should not share hotel rooms, etc. For more information on Safe Sanctuaries please see Susan Rowe.

What areas can I volunteer with?

Any ministry covered under Children/Youth/Music needs volunteers. Whenever you feel like the gifts and talents that God has given you best fit within the ministry, please let us know. Whether that's teaching, leading small groups, leading a musical group, being an accompanist, driving to and from an event, etc. **WE NEED YOU!!!** Please let Joe, Shannon, Lisa or Susan know how you would like to volunteer.



Chapter 9: Miscellaneous

Are there opportunities for Student Leadership within the youth group?

Yes, there are currently two ways that youth can help lead within WTL. The first way is to be an apprentice. Apprentices are seniors who come in during the week, as part of the work-based learning program through the Gwinnett School System. Apprentices do a lot of behind the scenes work, and really help propel our ministry forward. The second leadership position is an Intern. All students in 7th-12th Grades are eligible to be interns and must attend intern meetings every two weeks. These students help plan events, provide leadership at WTL, mission trips, etc. They are led by our Apprentices and our staff to help develop their leadership ability and to make our youth group a better place to be.

Does WTL have cliques?

WTL has teenagers, so yes, cliques occasionally arise. We try our best to eliminate them, but this is a very difficult task. The youth often feel united with one another as a group and love coming to worship and fellowship with their brothers and sisters in Christ. However, there are often key people in their lives that they enjoy spending the most amount of time with, and this may happen at church as well.

My child is graduating high school this year, how are they able to participate in the graduation festivities at the church in May?

First of all, congratulations. Graduation is a major accomplishment. McKendree recognizes this and welcomes all graduates to participate in Graduation Sunday which is held in late May. There is a Graduation Bulletin for that Sunday which includes pictures and biographies of the graduates. WTL has its own Graduation Banquet and Worship Service; however, this event is only open to seniors who are currently active within the Youth Ministry.

I have heard that WTL has an amazing worship band. How can my child participate in that?

“The Way” is the name of the WTL praise band. Auditions are held for all positions (singing and instruments) in the Spring of each year. All youth 9th grade and higher are encouraged to try out for a position within the band. Some years, younger musicians who are interested in being in the band may be given “apprentice” positions where they can start learning the music and worship leading skills before they would be eligible to lead worship with the praise band on Sunday nights. The Way also plays at the 9:30 worship service occasionally during the year, on some retreats, and other venues during the year.

What happens if my child has to go to the hospital while on a McKendree event?

Your child will be accompanied by a McKendree staff member of the same sex to the hospital/Urgent Care Center. Parents will be notified as soon as possible, usually before leaving for the hospital, to alert them of the situation. In cases where parents cannot be notified, we will use the information that has been provided on the permission slip and insurance card and seek treatment for your youth.

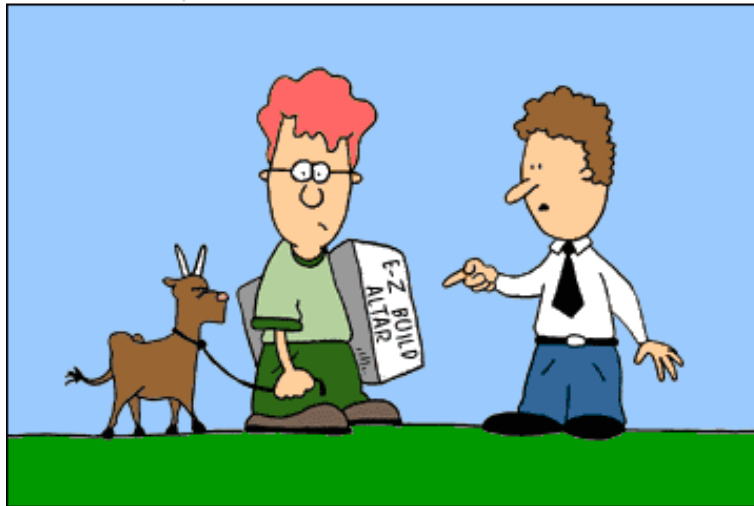
Are hospital trips common?

They are not really common, but they do happen. Most injuries are very minor and are taken care of quite quickly. Please know that we realize that is stressful to be away from your youth, especially when they are being taken to a hospital, but they are in good hands and we will take care of them very well.

What do I do if I still have questions?

Please feel free to email Joe, Lisa, Shannon, Kim, Paula or Susan at any time with any further questions/comments/concerns that you may have. We want to partner with families to make sure that your youth are connecting with God, growing in their faith, and are able to find a safe place to feel welcome.

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03-27-2001

I APPRECIATE YOUR ENTHUSIASM WITH THE YOUTH GROUP, BUT I THINK THAT THIS IS TAKING IT JUST A LITTLE TOO FAR

Chapter 10: Children's General Age Information

What age group is covered under "Children's Ministries?"

Children ages 3 (on or before 9/1) through 4th graders are served by Children's Ministries at McKendree. We keep the children with their "school-aged" groups. For example, if your child 6 and you decided to start him a year later in Kindergarten, we would ask that you keep him in the Kindergarten classes here at church.

My child will turn 3 on November 12th. Should I move him out of the nursery right away?

It is best for you to keep your child with his class. This will be his class in Sunday School and Children's Church, and in Fun Fourth, Flight 56 and WTL going forward. Also, we plan for a certain number of kids each week and it would not be efficient to move kids over from the nursery to the preschool rooms each week as they age up. The teachers get to know the kids in their classes and we promote them only once each year; in June for Kindergarten through 4th graders and in September for 2's, 3's and 4's.

My child turned 3 on July 20, but she is not potty trained yet. Can she go to the 3's classes?

In order for your child to go to the 3's Sunday School or Children's Church classes, she must be potty trained. We realize kids have accidents sometimes and we can work with those, but as a rule, a child should not be brought to their 3's classroom with a diaper bag. If your child is 3 and is not yet trained, we ask that they stay in the nursery until they are trained.

My child is 7 years old and is homeschooled. She reads and performs on a 4th or 5th grade level on most academic tasks. Why can't she be in the 4th grade class?

Although many children who are (or are not) homeschooled perform at a level above (or below) their grade level, the maturity level, both emotionally and spiritually, is what is important here at church. In order to ensure that the kids feel comfortable with their peers and are growing in their walk with Christ, we find that using the Gwinnett County Public School calendar model works best in this case.

What if my child skips a grade or is held back?

Again, we suggest keeping your child in the same grade as he or she is in at school.

Do you make any exceptions to the age rules?

Yes, we will evaluate children with Special Needs and place those children in classes that fit their maturity level. For example, a child with Down's Syndrome may be 12 years old but may function both socially and academically as a 2nd or 3rd grader. As long as it works for that child and the group, we will place that child in the group that "fits" for everyone involved.

Chapter 11: Children's Sunday Morning Programming

We come to the 9:30 service and attend an adult Sunday School class at 11:00. What do our 4-year old, 1st grader and 3rd grader do during both services?

While your children are welcome to be in church with you at 9:30 or 11:00, if they find that they are more comfortable in an age-appropriate class, we have you covered at both services! 3-year olds, 4-year olds and Kindergartners have Sunday School at 9:30 and Children's Church at 11:00 in the same classrooms. 1st through 4th graders also have Sunday School at 9:30, and 1st through 3rd graders may attend Children's Worship at 11:00. In the fall we also offer "Learning to Use My Bible", which is an 8-week class, at 11:00 for 3rd graders. 4th graders also have a Sunday School class at 11:00. We ask that you please pick your children up (except 3-year olds) in between services, however, in order to give the teachers transition time.

What is "Touch the Water, Taste the Bread"?

Touch the Water, Taste the Bread is a class we offer each January at 11:00 for our 3's, 4's and Kindergartners. It is an age appropriate study of Baptism and Communion. The culmination of the class is the 4's and Kindergartners taking communion in "big church" the first Sunday in February.

So, my 3-year old will not take communion in "big church"?

No, we wait until the children have had this class twice before they go into big church for communion, which is when they are 4-years old. When they are 3-years old, they will have communion in their classroom to "practice".

Why do only 3rd graders take the "Learning to Use My Bible" class?

McKendree presents all of our 3rd graders with a New Adventure, age-appropriate Bible the last Sunday in August and we typically begin the class the Sunday after Labor Day. The class is mostly made up of 3rd graders, but we can definitely accommodate an older child if he or she is interested. The class is simply a logical step for the children to take after receiving their Bibles.

Why do we not have Children's Worship on the 5th Sunday of the month?

This happens 4 times per year and this is a good way for the kids to "practice" what they have learned in Children's Worship and to get a feel for what worship is in the corporate setting.

Chapter 12: Special Needs Children

Our last church was not very “friendly” when it came to our child who falls on the Autism Spectrum. What is McKendree’s policy with regards to special needs children?

Our children’s and youth ministries have many children with special needs. We celebrate all of God’s kids! They are welcome to come to all of our programs. We just ask that you give us whatever information we need in order to ensure the best experience possible for everyone involved, especially your child.

Do you have a “special needs” class?

No. Our philosophy is that it is best for all the kids to be integrated with each other. We simply have extra volunteers, many with special needs backgrounds, whenever there is a special needs child in the classroom.

What about Vacation Bible School?

Again, we welcome all children to all of our ministries! When you sign your child up for VBS, please indicate to us on the “Allergies/Special Needs/ Medical Conditions” line what your child’s specific needs are. By you filling this out, we can make sure we are offering the best possible support and placement for your child.

My special needs child is 11, but definitely not ready for Flight 56 and other “tween” ministries. Where will he fit in?

We will work with you and your child to determine the best possible placement for him. We want him to grow in his walk with Christ at his pace, and if he needs to be with younger children or with those his age, we will make that work with support from an extra volunteer assigned specifically to his class.

Do you ever deny a child access to your programs?

Absolutely not! If we feel that we need assistance from you, we may ask that you spend some time in your child’s group if it is really necessary, but we will never, ever, deny a special needs child access to our ministries.

Chapter 13: Children's Special Events

Does McKendree have one-time annual events?

Yes, we have numerous special events for children and families throughout the year.

Are all of your events free of charge?

Many events are free of charge, such as the Fall Festival and the Children's Christmas Eve Service. A few events have costs associated with them that are above and beyond our slim budget, and for those we are forced to charge a nominal fee.

What special events do you have planned this year?

Beginning in August, we have our 3rd Grade Bible Presentation during both services (no charge)

In October we have our Fall Festival, which this year will be on a Sunday and will be church-wide (no charge)

In December we have our Birthday Party for Jesus (no charge) and our Children's Christmas Eve Service with participation by all ages of kids (no charge)

In March or April, depending on the year, we have our Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch for all kids 4th grade and under (charge is \$2 per child, family max of \$5 to cover costs only)

In June we have Vacation Bible School (\$20 per child, family max of \$50, includes a t-shirt and CD of the music)

In June or July we have a Family Night at the Gwinnett Braves (\$6 per ticket)

I know of a Christian Theater Troup that would come to McKendree and perform for free. Would you investigate having them come?

Absolutely! We have had a Puppet Troup come over the past couple of summers; we have offered Parent Training Classes, Family Movie nights, concerts and much more. The above events are the ones we offer every year.

Chapter 14: Fun Fourth

Why do you have a special group for 4th graders?

We look at the move towards our WTL program as a process. Instead of going from “Children’s Ministries” one day to “Youth Ministries” the next, we offer a “bridge” that lasts 3 years, preparing kids for their youth group in Fun Fourth and Flight 56 (5th and 6th graders). Children in 4th grade are ready to dig a little deeper into God’s Word, and they are excited by the prospect of belonging to a group of peers. This program has been very successful and will begin its 9th year in the fall of 2011.

How often does Fun Fourth meet?

Since this is just the first step towards youth ministries, 4th graders will meet only once per month, typically on the 4th Sunday of the month.

What do the kids do at Fun Fourth?

4th graders meet from 5:30 – 7:00. They have a snack supper, a game and an active lesson where they study issues that affect them now and learn what God has to say about how to handle those issues.

What about months in which the 4th Sunday falls on a holiday or a holiday weekend?

On those occasions we will meet on the 3rd Sunday or another time that works for our kids. For example, in December our 4th graders join Flight 56 in caroling at a local assisted living residence on a Friday night, since the 4th Sunday is always over Christmas Break.

How do the 4th graders transition into Flight 56?

In the spring, usually March, we have a date each month in which the 4th graders visit Flight 56 to get a taste of the large group and how it flows. In May the 4th graders are invited to the big end of school year lock-in and party (which is the Sunday after the lock-in). After the lock-in the 4th graders are “officially” part of Flight 56 and are invited to all summer events for the group.

Chapter 15: Wednesday Night Programming

Does McKendree offer a program for children on Wednesday night?

Yes! We offer Kidz Klub during the school year from 6:30-7:00. All kids in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade are invited. We charge a nominal \$10 fee per semester to cover the cost of curriculum and supplies.

What does Kidz Klub entail?

Each semester we use a different curriculum, but it is always a rotational program that includes games, crafts, Bible and Missions, among other interests. We try to incorporate a missions or service project into every lesson block.

Is my Kindergartner going to be with those big 4th graders the whole time?

Since we use rotational curriculum we are able to tailor the sessions to the age group. For example, the games will be much simpler for K/1st grade than for the 4th graders. We make sure everything we do is age appropriate. However, there may be a large group project or worship experience that includes all the kids together, but usually we have them broken down into smaller age-driven groups.

Do I have to volunteer every week with this program? I am in a Bible study and I don't want to miss it!

No, but we will ask you to help out once or twice during the year.

Who runs Kidz Klub?

Joe, Paula, Lisa and Susan are there every week, and they organize, facilitate and supervise our youth volunteers as they lead each area. We keep in close contact with the youth volunteers to make sure they are prepared for their lessons and there are always 2 adults in each room with the kids at all times per our Safe Sanctuaries policy.

Chapter 16: Vacation Bible School

Why do you have 3 different Vacation Bible School sessions?

We have a morning session (9-12), and evening session (5:30-8:30) and Extreme, which is during the morning session for rising 5th and 6th graders only. We have 3 because as the daytime fills up and we run out of room, we can offer the evening session. Also, many people are working during the day and want to be involved and this way they can! Extreme was born when we realized that many kids in this age range felt that they were too “cool” for VBS, and it also fit well with our 5th and 6th grade ministry, Flight 56. It has been a very popular program and fills up quickly every year.

When is VBS?

VBS is always the last full week of June.

Why do you have VBS evening begin on Father’s Day?

The summer is remarkably busy and short, and the church calendar is always full. Couple these challenges with vacations and we have to take the best week we can, and it has always been the last full week of June. In 2012 it won’t be attached to Father’s Day, but it will be the week before 4th of July weekend. As you can see, there is not a perfect week in the summer to do it!

Why do you charge for your VBS?

We not only offer a t-shirt and CD of the music along with your VBS registration, but we also make sure we have only the highest quality crafts, snacks, drama and other items that contribute to the overall VBS experience. We charge \$20 with a family max of \$50, which ends up totaling no more than \$1.33 per hour for an experience that is so much more valuable than your average day care! However, we will deny no one access to VBS due to financial issues, so please let us know if you are unable to pay the fee and we will scholarship your child(ren).

Do you need volunteers for VBS?

Yes! We need many, many volunteers to keep our VBS up to the standard of excellence that people in our church and community have come to expect! There are many ways you can serve, from leading an area, being a shepherd, helping in an area, decorating, assisting with the luncheon, etc. Contact Susan Rowe to volunteer anytime!

Chapter 17: Children's Music

I have a child that is preschool through 4th grade. What Musical opportunities are there?

McKendree has several opportunities for your children to praise God with their musical gifts and talents! Please take a look and prayerfully consider how your child may be involved. Registration begins in the summer, but is open throughout the year! We do rely on children's attendance for the success of these ministries, so please consider all commitments carefully. Please contact either Shannon or Kim in the Music Department with any questions! Looking forward to seeing you all in the Fall!!!

Praise'ntations© (Preschool ages 3 & 4)

Let your preschooler learn to sing Praises to God! This is for preschoolers ages 3 & 4. We will meet Wednesday evenings from 6:00- 6:30pm during the school year. Praise'ntations will sing in worship services throughout the school year.

Kindergarten – 4th grade choir

This/these group(s) will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 – 6:30pm during the school year. This group of children will sing in worship services throughout the school year. This group will also be involved in the Children's Christmas Eve service as well as a Spring Musical.

3rd – 4th Grade Chimes

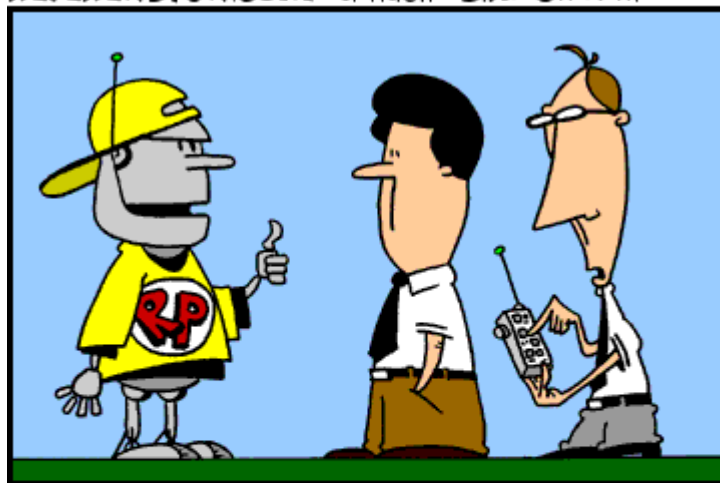
This group will meet Wednesday from 5:30 – 6:00 during the school year. This group is a beginning handchime group that will learn basic musical skills. This group will be involved in worship services throughout the school year. There is limited space for enrollment in this group.



CHAPTER 18:

2011-2012 CALENDAR

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03-24-1998

YOUR ROBO-PASTOR ISN'T DEFECTIVE AFTER ALL ... IT JUST SEEMS THAT SOMEBODY PUT IT ON ITS "YOUTH PASTOR" SETTING WHICH TRIGGERS A "TEENAGER IDENTIFICATION" PROGRAM