

Christ Church Cathedral

Vision Statement for Children, Youth and Family Ministries

The vision for Children's Youth and Family ministries (CYFM) at the Cathedral is grounded in the wider Cathedral vision/values of *Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds*. Our aim is to help children and youth embrace those values in age-appropriate ways, and grow into that more deeply over time.

Children are spiritual creatures who experience God directly. Every life is a unique and unrepeatable grace. Children have much to teach us and much to learn from and with us. The core of our vision is to help children and youth to know they are full members of the community, and grow in Christian faith and relationships with others through:

- open and affirming education, grounded in scripture, tradition, reason and experience
- intelligent discourse that can encompass a broad spectrum of ideas
- developing their capacity for informed reflection
- acts of compassion
- opportunities for service within and beyond the community
- understanding of justice
- exposure to and engagement with the arts (including music)
- participation in meaningful worship.
- opportunities for play

The components of CYFM are

- Formal educational/formatational programming
 - Godly Play. The Theology and values expressed by Godly Play principles form the core of how we choose to engage and educate children from 5-12. It is not the sole resource for faith formation, but is the core of it.
We commit to continuing to develop the cathedral as a centre of excellence in the practice of Godly Play.
 - Youth Groups. Opportunity for youth to gather, worship, learn, reflect, build community and develop their own fluency with theology and spirituality with peers and caring adult mentors
 - Diocesan Youth Ministry. Participation in and support of Diocesan Youth Ministry and BCYAYM (Young Sojourners, Fall weekend, Winter Retreat, Sorrento Programs, Diocesan youth programs). Supporting our youth to access national youth programs where possible.
 - Confirmation preparation programs for young teens
 - Safe and welcoming space for toddlers and preschoolers during worship and special church events.
 - Educating and inspiring the wider congregation to take their part in living out this vision
 - Other opportunities for formation/education within the congregation and diocese.

- Community activities
 - Activities for families to participate in together. These are both social (dinners, fun nights, family weekends, picnic, after church pot-luck meals etc.), and spiritual (advent/lent programs, special days).
 - Presence of children and youth is celebrated and affirmed in the wider church community, and mindful space is made for them.

- Worship
 - Participation in the worship life of the community and especially family services, recognition that each family's pattern of attendance is unique and celebrated. Consistently engaging children and youth in liturgical leadership in age-appropriate ways. Again, the presence of children and youth is celebrated and affirmed, and mindful space is made for them in the context of worship.
 - Sunday morning educational programs (Children's Church) should follow the arc of liturgy (gathering, hearing, responding, prayer) and normally include rejoining the whole community for Eucharist.

Markers:

We want our children and youth to comfortably claim and be proud of their Christian identity while also valuing diversity in a multi-cultural/multi-faith society.

We want to encourage our children and youth to ask deep questions, to develop skills in critical thinking and be open to ideas. We want them to know that there is no subject that one 'shouldn't' talk about in the faith community.

A guiding philosophy of faith formation is that children should not have to 'un-learn' things learned in childhood faith development when they are older. Education and faith formation should build upon itself, not contradict itself.

We want our children and youth to develop theological understanding and language.

We want our community to be a place where children and youth feel loved, accepted, welcomed, and affirmed for who they are.

An essential foundation of CYFM is the development of healthy and supportive relationships: with significant adults, with peers, with clergy and amongst families.

We want our children to develop a sense of responsibility for and within their community, and attitudes of care, compassion and inclusion.

We support sustainability in our programming, including limiting the amount of pre-fabricated 'craft' materials, consumption of disposable products and food waste. We try to minimize these things as much as possible.

We want our community to be a place where families can feel supported and encouraged in the life of faith. We acknowledge that the structure and composition of families is diverse and that 'family' is defined by the individuals living in it.

We recognize that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to supporting children and youth in their faith development. Families have the wisdom and discernment to know what their own needs are, and are free to choose their own levels of engagement, including their own capacities to volunteer.

CYFM at Christ Church Cathedral is not the sole job of the Coordinator. The implementation of this vision is not possible without a strong, committed volunteer base, clergy, staff and wider congregation.

We support and implement the safe-church policies of the Diocese.

We acknowledge that participation in events, programs or activities that undermines any of the core values of our vision statement will not be done without consultation and reflection.

April 22, 2017