

St. John's Children and Youth Ministries
2024-25 PROGRAM YEAR HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2024-25 Program Year at St. John's! This handbook should serve as a guide for you and your family to enter into a year of Whole-Hearted Community at SJC.

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Building Whole-Hearted Community: Formation Year 2024-25

Building Whole-Hearted Community is about fostering a deep sense of belonging, inclusivity, and mutual support reflecting Christ's teachings of love and compassion. Throughout the 2024/25 program year we will offer worship, formation, and mission/service opportunities that encourage active participation among all members, strive for intergenerational engagement, and celebrate diversity, with the hope of creating a unified and spiritually enriched St. John's Community.

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." Romans 12:9-13

Why this Scripture:

Romans 12:9-13 encourages the development of a Christ-centered community by emphasizing love in action, mutual honor, and enthusiastic service. It calls for a commitment to empathy and hospitality, urging members to support each other in times of joy and hardship. By fostering a spirit of unity and selflessness, this passage can help guide us towards whole-hearted community and allows us to celebrate the things SJC does well, while also calling us into our growing edges in the year ahead.

What does *Whole-Hearted Community* look like?

1. **Emotional Connection:** Encouraging genuine relationships where members care for and empathize with each other.
2. **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that all members, regardless of age, background, or status, feel welcome and valued.
3. **Active Participation:** Fostering an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute their talents, time, and energy.
4. **Supportive Environment:** Creating a culture of mutual support where members help each other grow and thrive.
5. **Shared Values:** Promoting common values such as kindness, respect, and integrity that bind the community together.
6. **Collaboration:** Working together on projects, events, and initiatives that benefit the entire community.
7. **Personal Growth:** Supporting each member's journey of self-improvement and spiritual development.
8. **Intergenerational Engagement:** Bridging generational gaps to ensure that wisdom and experiences are shared across ages.
9. **Celebration of Diversity:** Valuing and celebrating the unique contributions of each individual.
10. **Open Communication:** Encouraging honest, transparent, and respectful communication among all members.



Program Outline: What It Is and How to Participate

Classes and leadership:

PLAY classroom (toddler through PreK / age 3) with Nina Little: Our youngest children will join Nina in the spirit of PLAY.

WONDER classroom (PreK / age 4 through 1st grade) with Sarah Duddy-Vaillancourt and Ella Luke: With a spirit of wonder and friendship, students will encounter the stories of our faith and delight in God's creation.

EXPLORE classroom (2nd & 3rd grade) with Christine Hudson and Travis Downs: This class will be on a quest to seek God through adventure and exploration.

LEARN classroom (4th & 5th grade) with Brad Lown, Tom Gruen, and Joe Weir: Biblical scholars get ready to learn and play with the building blocks of our faith.

YOUTH GROUP in the Philbrick Room (6th grade and up) with Sara Marchessault and Allison Dudas: A safe space to question, wonder, and grow in your faith.

How to participate:

- Volunteer leaders arrive between 9-9:15AM to set up.
- Student drop off is 9:30-9:40. Please do not drop off any students before 9:25 as our volunteers and staff will be setting up and preparing for the morning.
- Arriving Late: If you arrive later than 9:45 please plan to have your children join you in the sanctuary for worship, where all ages are always welcome! Late arrivals can be challenging to the group dynamics, and hard for new students to transition. Exception for nursery care, toddlers to 3 years old.
- Sunday morning formation programs run for one hour. Children are accompanied with their groups back to church around the time of the Peace (around 10:30). It can be helpful to sit in the same location each week and let your kids know where you will be. Families will be invited to celebrate Communion together.

All family members should be [registered in Realm](#), our online database. New students are welcome to fill out a quick-enrollment form in person, too. Please refer to the St. John's Website pages for [youth](#) and [children's](#) ministries to access the most recent updates and communications. Seasonal newsletters will be sent via email and archived on the formation site pages.

St. John's Youth & Children's Music on Sunday Mornings

All Ages 'Warm Up' in the Choir Room on Sunday, September 8th from 11:00-11:30

Come raise your voice and make some noise with friends this program year! All children, age 3 and up, are welcome to join our first Youth and Children's Choir 'warm up' on Kickoff Sunday. This is a great moment to come see church friends, old and new, of all ages, have a snack, ask questions, and dust the cobwebs off our singing voices together!!

Leadership: Ashley Wade, Christina DeMaio, and Maggie O'Neill

All St. John's Cherub and Junior Choir rehearsals will take place on Sunday mornings, immediately following our worship services. This will include theatrical endeavors like the Christmas Pageant.

Sunday Choir Rehearsals

In the Choir Room; Beginning September 15th

- **Cherub Choir: 11:00-11:30**
- **Junior Choir: 11:30-12:15**

MARK THE CALENDAR:

Fall Performance Sundays: 9/29, 10/27, 11/24

Christmas Pageant Dates: 12/22 at 10AM (*dress rehearsal 12/21 from 10AM-12PM*)

Christmas Eve: 12/24 at 4PM Family Service

Youth Cooking Ministry

Middle and High School Youth (6th-12th grade) are invited to participate in the Youth Cooking Ministry. All food is donated to CrossRoads House and Dover Children's Home.

Director: Allison Dudas, youth@stjohnsnh.org

Fall Dates: 9/25, 10/30, 12/4

Time: 3:00-5:00PM

Interest Form: [Sign Up By Date](#)

Full Year Thematic Outline with Key Dates

CREATION SEASON, September 7-October 6

- Kickoff Weekend Festivities, September 7-8
- Waterkeeper Program, September 15
- All-Parish Day, September 29

STEWARDSHIP & THANKSGIVING SEASON, October 6-November 17

- Blessing of the Stuffedies / Acolyte Training, October 6
- Costume Sunday, October 27
- All Parish Thanksgiving Dinner, November 17 at 5PM

ADVENT SEASON, November 24-December 22

- Pageant Family Dinner, December 4 (Wednesday) at 5PM
- Christmas Pageant, December 22
- Christmas Eve, December 24 (Tuesday)

EPIPHANY SEASON, January 5-February 16

- Star Festival, January 5, All Parish Worship
- Candlemas, February 2

LENT SEASON, March 2-April 6

- Burning & Blessing the Ashes, March 2
- Holy Week & Easter, April 13-20

COMMUNITY SEASON, May 4-June 8

- *May the 4th be with you*, May 4
- Rite 13 Ceremony, May 18
- Pentecost, June 8