
Child in our Hands

By Leslie Foxworth

In 2003 the SALM churches sponsored a Child in Our Hands Conference. The subtitle for the conference was “Congregations and families as partners in nurturing the faith.” The emphasis was on the home-centered faith development of children with a family-friendly congregation providing support.

That philosophy has been guiding many of the decisions about family worship, Children’s Church, and activities planned for the congregation. The presenters acknowledged that having kids in church gets somewhat “messy.” But they also told the story of the second grader who was asked, “What is better about being an adult and what is better about being a child?” She responded, “What’s better about being an adult is that adults get to be with God. When we go to church, mom and dad go upstairs, and we go downstairs.” That certainly wasn’t the message the church wanted to give to the child, but it was her interpretation of being sent downstairs.



We are fortunate to have a verity of services at Zion. The 9:15 services started as a contemporary service, but has developed into a family oriented service. Pastor has included the children as worship leaders and emphasized having them bring their offering forward. Having children’s songs as part of the worship was a conscious effort to make them feel apart of what is happening. As we return to our fall schedule, we will continue many of those practices.

Another part of the Child in Our Hands philosophy is to mark milestones on a

growing child’s faith journey. That is how **Blessing the Book bags** became a part of a worship service. The purpose is to remind the children that Christ goes with them everywhere. As they begin a new year of school, they are also beginning a new period of growing in faith. As adults, we are to encourage the children to be eager to learn and grow. **All children are encouraged to bring their book bags on Sunday, August 19th so that they can receive a special blessing.**



Another milestone that we celebrate is giving **second grade children their own Bibles**. The Bibles are given to the parents ahead of time so that they can personalize them by marking favorite passages and verses and writing notes in the margins of the pages of these Bibles. Parents are encouraged to have grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends also inscribe the



Bibles. How special it will be when the child is looking up a passage and finds it is one of mom or dads favorites. **We will be presenting Bible on August 26th.**

As the children return to the fall schedule, help them start their day and end their day with a simple prayer. Send words of encouragement with them in their book bags or lunch boxes and let them know you are praying for them and Jesus is with them.