Rethinking Children's Ministry at

The Church of St. John the Evangelist (Hamilton)

in Light of the *Missio Dei*


by

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## Background, Rationale, and Research Question

The Church of St. John the Evangelist (SJE) in Hamilton, Ontario is an Anglican parish with a long tradition of excellence in ministry to children. At one time the parish ran an extensive residential camping ministry for children and offered an extensive Sunday School and choral music program for children. Within the past ten years or so there was a decline in the number of children that attended SJE with their families on Sunday mornings and SJE's Sunday morning children's programming was reduced to one multi-age class at two of the three Sunday morning services. For a number of years one very dedicated volunteer did most of the teaching of that class. Church leadership has been increasingly aware of the need to reimagine what could be done with children's ministry.

In 2012, after a process of missional discernment, the congregation embarked on an experiment with Messy Church, a "Fresh Expression" of church that was shaped in the United Kingdom.[1] Messy Church was an immediate success in gathering families from the neighborhood, together with families that also attended Sunday worship at SJE, for a new worship experience that was designed for the entire family, young and old, together.

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[1] For more information see http://www.rockonlocke.ca/messy-church or see Lucy Moore and Bible Reading Fellowship., *Messy Church: Fresh Ideas for Building a Christ-Centred Community* (Abingdon, UK: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2006).

At about the same time, SJE saw an influx of families with young children attending its Discovery Service[2] and a number of the young couples who had already been attending welcomed their first children into the world. The parish experienced its own little baby-boom. It was becoming clear that the presence of children with us on Sunday mornings was going to present an opportunity for discovery, learning and growth.

An early innovation was to create something of a children's area in the nave of the church by removing one pew and turning two others. By moving these pews a space was created where small children could have floor-space to crawl, walk and play, surrounded by their parents or other caring adults. This innovation was received by parents as an indication that SJE was committed to being a child and family-friendly church. While the first reaction of every parishioner to the change in the nave was not necessarily positive, most were convinced quickly when these changes were explained.

With the influx of young families also came some parents who were experienced, willing and eager Sunday School teachers. These new teachers augmented the teaching staff in the one-room classroom style of Sunday School.

These changes and renewed interest in children's ministry, together with the active missional conversation and discernment at SJE over the past years, has brought some issues around children's ministry to the fore for discussion. How important is it for children to have some program of Christian education during the corporate worship time? Should children be included in corporate worship? What does it mean if they are

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[2] SJE offers three worship services on a Sunday. "The Early Service" is at 8:15 a.m. and is a said service in traditional form. "The Discovery Service" is at 9:30 a.m. and is a less formal service with a worship band. "The Choral Service" is at 11 a.m. and is again more formal and in the classic Anglican tradition with a choir and organ. All three services routinely have children in attendance. Most families with children currently attend the Discovery Service.

excluded? Does the current practice of having children present for some, but not all of the worship service, allow sufficient time for a children's program? What sorts of curriculum are best?

Behind many of these questions are unspoken assumptions about the nature of the church and the place of children within it. Parish leaders at SJE will want to facilitate a missional and theological approach to such questions. What is God doing with children, their parents and others in the church? What does it mean for us to be the household or family of God?

As one place to continue this conversation, I wanted to learn more about what the people of SJE were thinking and feeling about these issues. My research question for this project was this: *What are some of the values, attitudes and concerns that exist among the people of SJE that might shape our Sunday children's ministry?*

**Literature Review, Theoretical Perspectives**

Childhood Development or Christian Formation for the Household of God:

"Mission in the First Third of Life" by Nancy Going

It is sometimes said that "children are the *future* of the church?" While we certainly hope that the adults our children become will be part of the church, it is vital that we recognize that children are also part of the *present* of the church. Young and old together, we are the church today.

The Missional Church conversation helps us to see that there is more at stake when we think about the place of children in the church than matters of logistics, curriculum or the concern about whether they will disturb adult worshippers. As Nancy S. Going observes, "The very missionality of the church is compromised and even

stymied by the approaches that we continue to take in the faith formation of the next generation."[3] She observes,

> It appears that the church's approach to children and youth has been waylaid by our fondness for goals other than spiritual formation (such as education or safety) instead of claiming a missional (and thus formational approach) to ministry with young people.[4]

We are often concerned that when young people grow up they will leave the church. Going argues that the church should however have a deeper concern. What if they stay but are never really formed as followers of Jesus?[5] Such a process of formation is essential to ministry at all stages of life and people at various stages and places of formation need one another.

> Children, whatever the age, are not only active participants in the unfolding story but are also essential for a true reading of the Gospel, understanding the identity and person of Jesus Christ, modeling the way of the cross, and representing the radical nature of ecclesial community.[6]

While it has been the norm to think of adult and children's Christian Education or spiritual formation as discreet activities, there is now recognition that Christians of all ages need each other in order to be formed as a people who engage in the mission of God.

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[3] Nancy S. Going, "Mission in the First Third of Life: Human Development or Missional Formation?," in *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*, ed. Dwight J. Zscheile (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 124.

[4] Ibid., 128.

[5] Ibid., 141.

[6] Marcia J. Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Child in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 364; Quoted in Going, "Mission in the First Third of Life: Human Development or Missional Formation?," 143.

Program Participation to Formation for Mission:

*Missional Renaissance* by Reggie McNeal

Within the paradigm of the "program church" it was considered enough that church-goers attended and supported the programs offered by the church. Sunday School attendance, like worship attendance, was stressed to a degree that these were sometimes thought as ends in themselves. To be sure, thought was given to the quality of Christian education received in Sunday School and consideration given to appropriate curriculum.

The Missional Church conversation has suggested a shift from a church with emphasis on participation in programs, to a church that participates in Christian formation for the sake of engaging with God in God's mission. Or as Reggie McNeal says,

> This shift just calls for a clarification of the role of programs in the development of people and the adoption of a new scorecard built around people's successes, not program successes. The key idea is moving away from a program-driven church culture, meaning that the church takes its measure from the quality of its programs rather than the quality of its people.[7]

Programmatic approaches tend to rely on the assumption of standardization. This assumption holds that people of the same age, gender or life situation have identical needs. Such an assumption is no longer widely accepted in these postmodern times. Because this is the case, many are no longer attracted to programs built on assumptions regarding demographics. As McNeal observes,

> Postmoderns do not know why they should have to search for God on church time and church real estate. Nor do people automatically believe that other people

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[7] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*, 1st ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 94.

know what's best for them or that one organization can meet all their spiritual needs.[8]

Lucy Moore agrees. "There are several problems with Sunday church. Here are a few."

> It's on Sunday. For many people who don't come to church, Sunday is now a day for family, sport, and shopping. It may be the only day that families have together. It may be the day we visit Grandma. It may be when separated parents send the children off to the other parent at the other end of the country for the weekend. Rugby trials, football practice, netball tournaments, swimming competitions—children will be involved in all sorts of leisure activities on a Sunday, and church will have to be on a par with Disneyland to compete if the adults in the family aren't already committed Christians.[9]

One-sized-fits-all programs, whether it is Sunday worship, Sunday School, or the entire constellation of the church's traditional offerings, are no longer viewed as attractive or needful. None of this means that people are no longer interested in formation for themselves or for their children. But what it does mean is that they are far more interested in a relationship that takes seriously the real life situation and concerns that come into that relationship.

When it comes to thinking about Children's ministry at SJE, the shift that McNeal is speaking about would imply that there should be a shift from thinking about finding enough volunteers and children to attend programs, from concern about how to fill the time on Sunday mornings, to thinking about the families, children and volunteers and their needs for spiritual formation, the opportunities that arise when these people are together, and what it takes to help these people grow as followers of Jesus. [10]

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[8] Ibid., 97.

[9] Moore and Bible Reading Fellowship., *Messy Church: Fresh Ideas for Building a Christ-Centred Community,* 17.

[10] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church,* 99.

Formation in God's Story and Practices of the Faith:

*The Agile Church* by Dwight Zscheile

The Missional Church conversation has brought attention again upon the ways in which the biblical narrative informs and shapes an imagination for the realities of the reign or kingdom of God. If it is God's mission to restore the world and its people to the wholeness and flourishing which was God's intention in creation, the biblical narrative informs our understanding of God, God's intentions and the direction towards which God's mission is moving. The biblical shorthand for this renewed state of affairs is the "reign" or "kingdom of God."

While the biblical narrative shapes the church's imagination, the practices of the Christian faith that are described and embodied within that narrative shape the church as an embodied sign of the kingdom of God for the sake of the world. As such, both the biblical narratives and Christian practices are at the heart of Christian formation.

The fact that many parents do not know the biblical narrative or Christian practices places a greater importance upon the church gathered to partner with them in passing them along to children. It can be argued that neither the legacy of the Sunday School movement, nor regular Sunday worship attendance, has sufficiently schooled generations of Christians in either the biblical narrative or Christian practice. Dwight Zscheile observes,

> We assume parents teach their children the Christian story and practices at home, which Sunday school reinforces. Yet many parents don't know the story or practices very well themselves. Worship is often organized with the assumption that people can place the fragments of Scripture that we offer them (for instance,

in the lectionary) into the wider narrative arcs of the Bible in order to make sense of them. Yet the church often hasn't taught those narratives effectively.[11]

Learning the Christian story and its practices are crucial for the Christian formation of both adults and children. It cannot be assumed that either Sunday School or Sunday worship have been sufficient to the task alone.

Many of the older parishioners at SJE speak fondly of the days in the 1950's and earlier when the Sunday School was full of children. In some ways these are understood to have been the "glory days" of Sunday School. There was a strong emphasis on learning Bible stories. It should be noted however, that the generation that were the recipients of these programs are largely missing from our churches. If they know the Christian story it is not clear that they are living it. The generation that received education in these high days for Sunday School are now, many of them, grandparents. Their children do not necessarily know the biblical narrative as they do even if they desire Christian formation for themselves and their children. This highlights the need for grandparents and those of that generation to see themselves as active and welcome participants in the Christian formation of persons younger than themselves. The generation of grandparents also needs those of lesser years to help them to learn to practice the faith.

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[11] Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age*, Kindle ed. (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), loc. 224-227.

"He Called a Child Whom He Put Among Them":[12]

*In the Midst of Chaos*, by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore

Another issue with respect to the place of children within the church is the romanticized vision we have of children and of faith. Bonnie Miller-McLemore argues that the perception that faith is a somewhat juvenile and feminine is an enduring image. "It is something we know when we are little and lovable but that disappears as we lose our prepubescent charm and innocence."[13] Such sentimentalization of children is sometimes encouraged by the congregational practice of the "children's time" in Sunday worship services. Such a practice tends to focus on the children in a way that makes the adults curious observers rather than participants in worship with their children. This can have the unfortunate effect of sustaining this romanticized vision both of children and of the faith.

A troubling result of this sentimentalization is marginalization. Miller-McLemore observes the fact that people's sentimentalization of their own children is inversely related to their willingness to care about the well-being being of other people's children and that "in spite of intense lip service to their importance, children occupy an ever-shrinking place in our society."[14]

On the other hand, children have much to teach adults when they are participants with them in worship. At SJE children often dance in the aisles or wave banners during worship songs. There exuberance in worship has something to say to those who feel more

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[12] Matthew 18:2 (NRSV).

[13] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *In the Midst of Chaos: Caring for Children as Spiritual Practice*, Kindle ed., The Practices of Faith Series (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), loc. 857.

[14] Ibid., loc. 885-886, 896-898.

constrained by adult sensibilities. Miller-McLemore tells the story of a child who came

home from Sunday School to tell his father,

> "God is bigger than our whole house and bigger than our whole yard." The father responded, "Yes, that's true." Unable to resist a little adult theological correction, he added, "You know, God also lives in our hearts." The child thought a moment, and then asked, "If that's true, then why aren't our hearts bursting?"[15]

Such stories of the profundity of children abound in the church. But they are more than

cute or frivolous. They tend to open our eyes or ears to realities that we have long

forgotten or ignored. "For 'those who have ears to hear,' children often correct and edify

us."[16]

*Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*

by Scottie May, Beth Posterski, et al.

Scottie May, Beth Posterski and their colleagues have suggested a number of

elements of a "family-friendly" church that might be adapted to help children in worship.

- Welcome and show respect to children of all ages;

- Model love and care for children as part of the worshiping community;

- See church life as similar to life in a large family;

- Emphasize children's ability to worship God more than programs that will engage them;

- Empower people to create their own ways of including children in worship; and,

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[15] Ibid., loc. 927-928.

[16] Ibid., loc. 926-927.

- Allow children to be present for every aspect of church life at least some of the time, so that they may be formed by all the ways the faith community members relate to each other.[17]

## Biblical and Theological Perspectives

In the section above I have already touched upon a number of the key biblical and theological perspectives that inform this research. It will be helpful to briefly expand upon some of these here.

### Missio Dei

The *missio Dei* is a key concept in the renewal of the church through the Missional Church conversation. *Missio Dei* recalls that the primary agency at work in the world, to bring forth the kingdom or reign of God, is God's. God is at work to restore all things. This understanding of God's agency is summarized by the memorable saying, "It is not the Church of God that has a mission to the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world.[18] The *missio Dei* gives important cues to the church as to how to engage with God in mission. Because the church engages in God's mission, its participation should be shaped by what it knows about the way that God acts. Rather than the subject to object relationships that are often typical in church programs, God relates

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[17] Scottie May et al., *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2005), 244.

[18] The General Synod of the Church of England, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004). See also, "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church." Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution of Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 64.

in subject to subject relationships. The priority the missional church places on biblical

narrative and Christian practice are all related to this key concept of *missio Dei.*

<div align="center">Baptism and Belonging in the Household of God</div>

Within the Canadian Anglican tradition the sacrament of baptism is the sign of

our adoption into the household of God and full membership in the church.[19] Other

sacramental rites such as Confirmation, Reception or Renewal are understood only as

responses to our baptism. Children are as much members of the church as adults. As such

we must question why children are not considered legitimate participants in many aspects

of the life of the church. Part of this may have to do with the fact that baptism has not

always been considered full membership in the church. At one time within the memory of

most Anglicans Confirmation was considered a requirement for full membership.

Ambivalence regarding the status of children in the church has had a relationship

to the marginalization of children. If we are not sure that they belong as worship

participants and communicants, then we will want to have them cared for in some

convenient place, so that adults can get on with the serious business of worship.

<div align="center">Discipleship</div>

Almost as soon as Jesus announced the good news of God's reign, he began to

call people to follow him. We refer to these first followers of Jesus as his disciples.

Christians today speak about themselves as disciples and about what it means to be a

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[19] I am not certain how much variation there is in this understanding within the Anglican Communion, but the understanding of baptism is a key understanding among those Christian traditions that participated in the liturgical renewal of the late 20th century and in the creation of the influential document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* See World Council of Churches. Commission on Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, 1st Canadian ed., Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Toronto, ON: Anglican Book Centre, 1983).

disciple, that is, disciple-*ship*.  Disciples are students, or better, apprentices.[20] Dwight

Zscheile speaks about the church as a community of learners.

> Learning is also necessary for our growth. … To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a
> student, learner, or apprentice in a community of mutual growth in love. It means
> collaborating together, using all the spiritual gifts with which God has equipped
> us. It also involves mutual support, accountability, and encouragement.[21]

As a community of learners adults and children need each other. To "use all the

spiritual gifts with which God has equipped us," as Zscheile suggests, means that the gifts

of both children and adults will be taken seriously as gifts for the entire community. Jesus

acknowledged the value of the presence of the child among adults in Matthew 18:2-6,

> He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless
> you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of
> heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of
> heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If any of
> you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it
> would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and
> you were drowned in the depth of the sea. (NRSV)

It is not only, as we normally assume, that children need adults to apprentice them in the

practices of the faith and in living the biblical story, but as Jesus says, adults need

children to instruct them in the way of Jesus.

## Methodology

In order to learn the values, attitudes and concerns that exist among the people of

SJE that might shape our Sunday children's ministry, this project employed the method

of simple explanatory research. Simple explanatory research involves the construction of

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[20] I am indebted to John P. Bowen for the insight of thinking of discipleship as apprenticeship. John is a member of SJE and has spoken of apprenticing in the school of Jesus in preaching. See also John P. Bowen, *Green Shoots out of Dry Ground: Growing a New Future for the Church in Canada*, Kindle ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), loc. 299-420.

[21] Zscheile, *The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age,* loc. 309-313.

a primary research question. Following an initial review of literature related to the topic and  identification of key concepts related to the question, a survey is designed that seeks to explore the question by means of measurable information. The survey is then administered to a sample of the population in question and the quantitative data analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics.[22]

The purpose of my research was to learn what values, attitudes and concerns parishioners at SJE might have concerning Sunday children's ministry that might shape how this ministry is developed in the future. While this inquiry might have lent itself to simple exploratory research, involving the interviewing of a smaller number of people, to get at greater depth of detail, by employing simple explanatory research I was to be able gain an understanding of what a greater cross section of parishioners are thinking about children's ministry.

Once I had clarified my research question I developed a 40 question survey with three sections. An additional section with three additional questions was added, but kept strictly separate from the survey data and asked related, but identifying questions of the respondents for the parish's information. The three sections asked questions broadly about (1) respondent's attitudes regarding current Children's ministry practice at SJE, the inclusion of children in the worship life of the congregation, and support for children's ministry; (2) demographic information; and (3) further inquiry into values and options for change in the way Sunday's children's ministry is done at SJE.

The survey was field tested with colleagues from Luther Seminary and with a parishioner who is an experienced social science researcher.

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[22] This methodology is explained and outlined in depth in Peter M. Nardi, *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*, Third Edition. ed. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

The survey was made available in both paper and online versions. The online version was entrusted to Survey Monkey. The paper version was available on an information table and through the church office. All parishioners at SJE were invited to participate in the survey by means of the regular parish news e-mail, bulletin announcement and verbal announcements at all worship services for two weeks. Surveys were received from February 1 to March 10, 2015.

A total of 33 responses were received with data from the paper versions entered into Survey Monkey in order to assist with analysis. Average Sunday worship attendance at SJE in 2014 was 117 and there are 153 adults active in the parish according to up-to-date parish records. Thirty-three responses out of a possible 153 represent a participation rate of 22%. Respondents were of a variety of ages. See Figure 1 below.
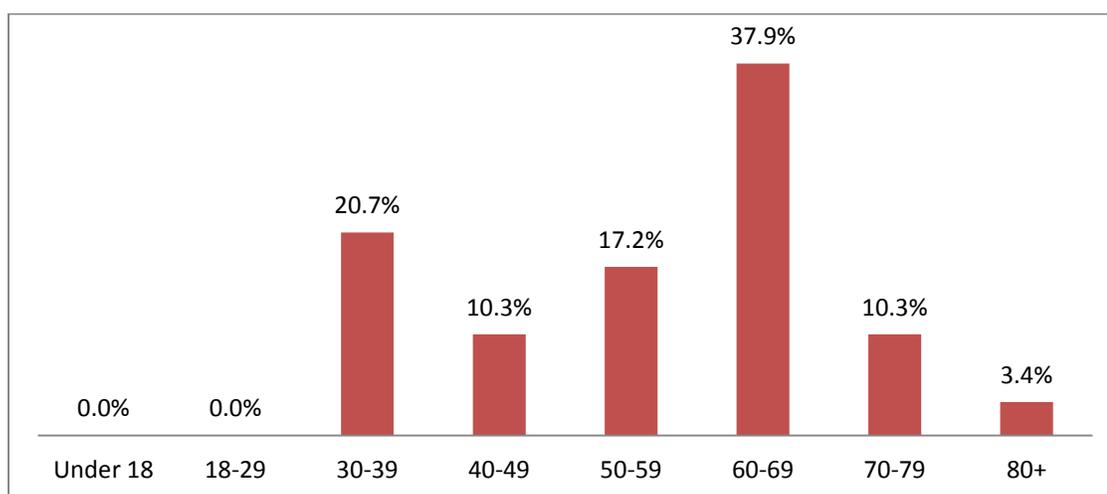


**Figure 1:** Respondents by age.

Twenty-four percent of respondents had children who were currently participating in SJE's Sunday Children's Ministry and 50% of respondents had a personal connection with SJE Sunday Children's Ministry with their children participating currently or in the past.
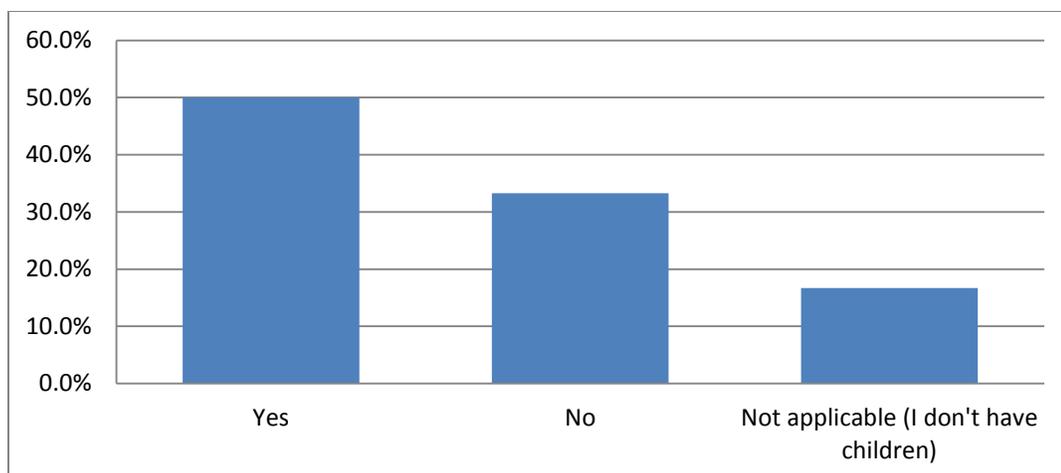
**Figure 2.** Respondents having children participated in SJE children's programs in the past and present.

For the sake of analysis the responses to the survey questions were organized around various themes including, (1) children's presence in worship with adults; (2) issues pertaining directly to Sunday children's programming; (3) issues pertaining to invitation, welcome and evangelism; and finally, (4) various specific Children's programming curriculum options. The research findings around these themes will be discussed below.

## Research Findings and Descriptive Results

### The Worshipping Community: Adults and Children Together?

A majority of respondents (65.63%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I believe that children should attend worship with adults" with just 15.63% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Q1).[23] When asked about the importance of children's participation in the Eucharist in Sunday worship (Q2), those supporting children's

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[23] In this paper the letter "Q" followed by a number will indicate the question number in the survey. For example, "Q1" refers to question number one in the survey.

participation significantly increased: 78.13% agreeing or strongly agreeing and only

6.26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. When asked if worship should be a multi-

generational experience (Q13), 83.34% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with

only two respondents, or 6.67%, disagreeing.

Respondents were also asked about the innovation that created a children's area in

the nave of the church for the use of children during worship (Q15). A majority of

respondents, or 54.84% agreed or strongly agreed that this area is "working well", with

16.13% in disagreement.

In another question respondents were asked to rank values in order of their

priority (Q35). The values with their weighted scores are shown in Table 1.

| Value | Weighted Score |
|---|---|
| Children are included with adults. | 2.76 |
| Children feel that they belong. | 5.69 |
| Children receive age-appropriate programming. | 5.00 |
| Children receive Bible-teaching. | 4.45 |
| Children have Christian community modeled. | 4.69 |
| Children learn how to practice the faith. | 3.45 |
| Children are evangelized. | 1.97 |

**Table 1.** Ranking of values concerning Children's ministry at SJE.

While the inclusion of children with adults received a weighted score of only

2.76, ranking it only sixth out of seven, the value stressing the importance of the

belonging of children was ranked highest, with a score of 5.69. More than seventy-two

percent (72.41%) of respondents ranked, "Children feel that they belong," either first or

second among the other values.

Question 36 asked respondents to rank options for the future of Sunday children's

ministry at SJE. While the option of children being included with adults in the entire

worship service was ranked lowest (weighted score of 1.45), the highest ranking choices

included the idea that children be included with adults for at least part of the worship

service (combined weighted score of 6.34). See Table 2 below.

| Option | Weighted Score |
|---|---:|
| Children are included with adults for the entire worship service. | 1.45 |
| Children attend an age-appropriate program instead of the worship service. | 2.21 |
| Children attend the worship service for the beginning music and then are dismissed to attend an age-appropriate program and return to share in the Eucharist, remaining for the conclusion of the worship service. | 3.17 |
| Children begin in an age-appropriate program and join adults in the worship service at the Eucharist, remaining for the conclusion of the worship service. | 3.17 |

**Table 2.** Ranking of values concerning preference for options for Sunday.

Children's Ministry at SJE.


Children's Programming during Worship: Current Practice and Future Possibilities

The survey asked a number of questions regarding values and beliefs having to do

with programming for Children during the Sunday morning worship service. A full 90%

of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "it is important for children to have a

program separate from the worship service during Sunday worship times" (Q3).

It does not appear that a concern that children might disrupt the worship

experience for adults was significant for most of the respondents (Q19). Only 21.88% of

respondents agreed with the statement, "I think that it is important for children to be

cared for outside of the worship space so that they don't disrupt the worship service,"

with just half disagreeing (50%). There were 28.13% of respondents who neither agreed

nor disagreed.

The concern about any disruption that children might cause was more acute

however among the parents that responded. Among parents with children currently

participating in SJE's Children's programs, 28.57% strongly agreed with the statement, "I am concerned that people may get upset if *my* children make noise in worship," (Q10)[24] 42.86% agreed, with only 14.29% in disagreement. These numbers were fairly similar among parents whose children do not (and no longer) attend Sunday children's programming at SJE.

At SJE there has been some question regarding whether a children's program should be offered at both the Discovery Service (where the majority of children are in attendance) and the Choral Service (where the number of children is very small). When asked if "it is important to offer a children's program during a worship service only if there are a certain minimum number of children who attend" (Q6), 70% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Another question has been about whether there is sufficient time for a children's program in the current practices of Sunday morning where, at the Discovery Service children leave the worship service for their program following the opening songs to return at the Eucharist, and at the Choral Service, children begin the morning in their program but join adults at the Eucharist. There were differences in the responses from those who currently have children in the Sunday program, those who have had children in the program in the past and those without children. Among the small sample of respondents with children in the program (7 in total), three (or 42.86%) agreed that there is sufficient time, while only one respondent indicated for each of the responses, "neither agree or disagree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree". Those who had children in the

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[24] Emphasis included in the survey.

program in the past were less in agreement regarding the sufficiency of time, while those

without children mostly agreed that there is sufficient time. See Table 3 below.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Children in the Program** | 0.00% 0 | 42.86% 3 | 14.29% 1 | 14.29% 1 | 14.29% 1 | 14.29% 1 | 24.14% 7 |
| **Children not in the program** | 17.65% 3 | 29.41% 5 | 0.00% 0 | 35.29% 6 | 11.76% 2 | 5.88% 1 | 58.62% 17 |
| **No children** | 0.00% 0 | 80.00% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 20.00% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 17.24% 5 |
| **Total Respondents** | 3 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 29 |

**Table 3.** Cross-tabulation of Q29 and Q4: respondents with and without children

in SJE's Sunday children's program views on sufficiency of time available for the

program.

While overall most respondents agreed that there is sufficient time for the

children's program, those with the experience of having children in the program, either

currently or in the past more frequently indicated that they disagreed that there is

sufficient time.

When offered the suggestion that more time could be created by having children's

ministry begin before the worship service (Q12), there was disagreement. Disagreeing or

strongly disagreeing with the proposal was 40.63%, while in agreement or strong

agreement was 29.51%, with 9.38% neither agreeing or disagreeing and 12.50%

indicating "don't know." Question 11 asked a similar question with similar ambivalence

in the responses.

Respondents mostly agreed (65.63%) that "SJE does a good job caring for our
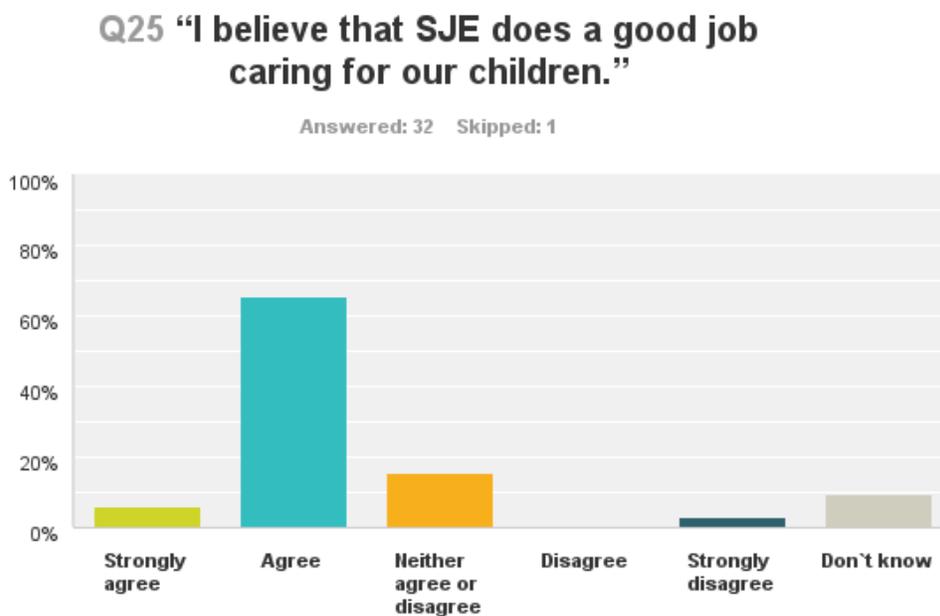
children" (Q25). See Figure 3.

Q25 "I believe that SJE does a good job caring for our children."

Answered: 32   Skipped: 1

**Figure 3.** Response to statement, "I believe that SJE does a good job caring for our children."[25]

Respondents also indicated that they feel that "the leaders of our church are supportive of children's ministry at SJE" (Q16), with 77.42 % either strongly agreeing or agreeing, 6.45% neither agreeing or disagreeing, 6.46% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 9.68% saying "don't know."

While these may be considered relatively positive numbers there is obviously plenty of room for improvement. Responses to Q14 show openness to more child-friendly worship services, although some uncertainty may exist around the idea. See Figure 4.

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[25] The graphics in Figure 3 and following were created by the researcher in Survey Monkey.
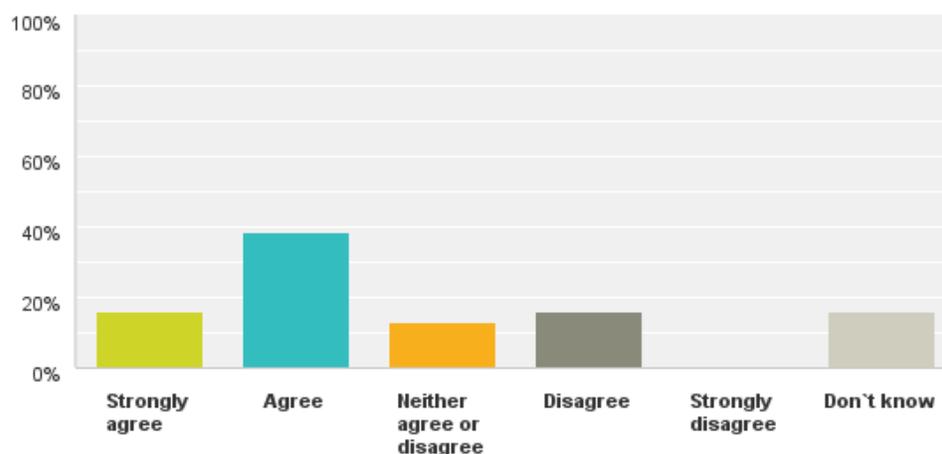
**Figure 4.** Response to statement, "I would be happy if changes were made to our worship services in order to make them more child-friendly."

Responses to Q19 show that the screening policy for volunteers for children's ministry are not universally known and understood. There was an indication that the parish could do more to support children's ministry volunteers (Q21) and that the parish could do more to highlight the importance of children's ministry (Q22). Most respondents indicated openness to a ministry budget increase to support children's ministry (Q23).

Issues Pertaining to Invitation, Welcome and Evangelism

Three questions were asked in the survey that touched on issues related to invitation, welcome and evangelism. Question 20 asked about agreement with the statement, "SJE needs an attractive Sunday children's ministry in order to attract and

retain newcomers to our worship services." While 3.13% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 81.76% either agreed or strongly agreed.

When asked, "How likely is it that you would recommend SJE's Sunday children's ministry to a friend" (Q24), only 43.75% said that it was likely or very likely; 25% said that it was neither likely nor unlikely, 21.88% that it was unlikely or very unlikely, and 9.38% said that they didn't know. When these answers are cross-tabulated with the answers to Q29, we see that the parents of children reported that they were more likely to recommend SJE's children's ministry. See Figure 5 below where the first column, with the label "Q29: Yes" represents the answers of persons with children engaged in SJE children's ministry at the present time; "Q29: No", persons who do not have children engaged in the ministry at the present time; and, "Q29: Not applicable", which represents the answers of those who do not have children.



How likely is it that you would recommend SJE's Sunday children's ministry to a friend?
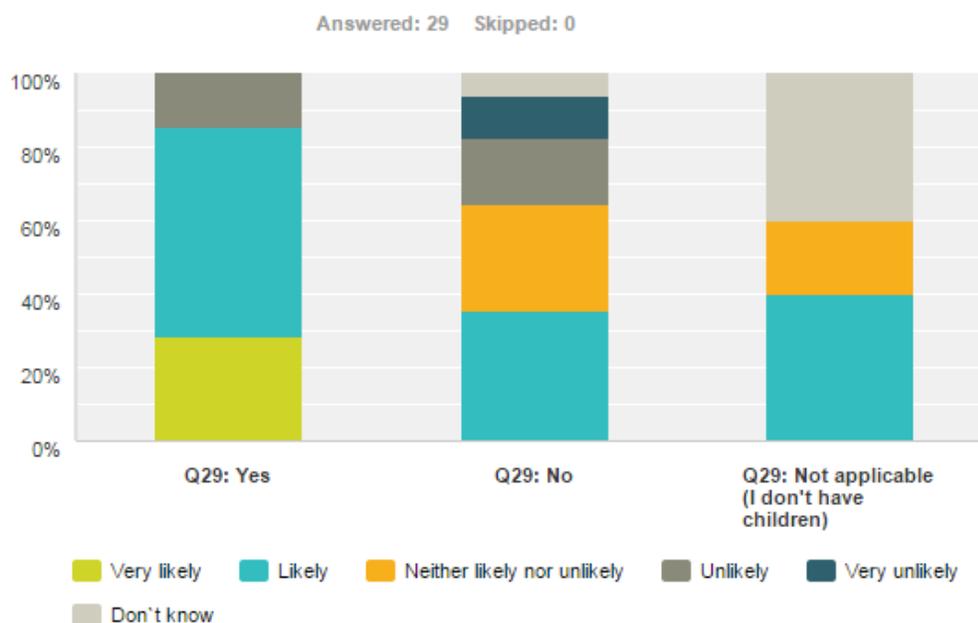
Answered: 29   Skipped: 0

**Figure 5.** Response to Q4, "How likely is it that you would recommend SJE's Sunday children's ministry to a friend?" cross-tabulated with Q29, respondents with and without children in SJE's Sunday children's program.

Answers to Q35 revealed that in comparison with other values surrounding children's ministry at SJE, the evangelization of children ranked lowest. In this ranking question, the value that stated "children are evangelized" had a weighted score of 1.97. The scores for this question were outlined in Table 1, above.

<div align="center">Children's Program Curriculum Options</div>

Q38 asked respondents which types of children's ministry they were familiar with. See Table 4, below.

| Option | Responses |
|---|---|
| Lectionary-based curriculum. | 42.86% |
| Bible story-based curriculum. | 85.71% |
| Workshop rotation model. | 14.29% |
| Godly play. | 21.43% |
| Arts-based learning. | 35.71% |
| Faith practice learning | 17.86% |
| None | 10.71% |
| Other (Text answers as follows: "Leader's choice." "Topic-based curriculum." "Orange program.") | 10.71% |

**Table 4.** Responses to Q38: "Which of the following types of children's ministry are you familiar with? (Check all that apply.)"

When Q38 is cross-tabulated with Q29 it reveals that parents of children in SJE's children's ministry program are much more familiar with "Arts-based learning" (66.7%). This becomes important when reading responses to Q39, "Of the following types of children's ministry, what do you believe deserve consideration for use at SJE?" When looking at all respondents, the data resembles Q38 shown in Table 4, above. See Table 5.

| Option | Responses |
|---|---|
| Lectionary-based curriculum. | 38.46% |
| Bible story-based curriculum. | 69.23% |
| Workshop rotation model. | 19.23% |
| Godly play. | 38.46% |
| Arts-based learning. | 34.62% |
| Faith practice learning | 30.77% |
| Other | 10.71% |

**Table 5.** Responses to Q39: "Of the following types of children's ministry, what do you believe deserve consideration for use at SJE? (Check all that apply.)"

Again, when cross-tabulating this question with Q29 we see that "Arts-based learning" is recommended more frequently by parents with children in the program. See Table 6.

| | Lection-ary-based | Bible story-based | Work-shop Ro-tation | Godly Play | Arts Based Learn-ing | Faith Practice Learn-ing | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Children in the Program** | 33.33% 2 | 50.00% 3 | 0.00% 0 | 50.00% 3 | 66.67% 4 | 50.00% 3 | 33.33% 2 | 24.14% 7 |
| **Children not in the program** | 33.33% 4 | 58.33% 7 | 16.67% 2 | 16.67% 2 | 25.00% 3 | 16.67% 2 | 25.00% 3 | 58.62% 17 |
| **No children** | 40.00% 2 | 100.00% 5 | 40.00% 2 | 80.00% 4 | 20.00% 1 | 40.00% 2 | 40.00% 2 | 17.24% 5 |
| **Total Respond ents** | 8 | 15 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 23 |

**Table 6.** Cross-tabulation of Q29 and Q4: respondents with and without children in SJE's Sunday children's program recommendations regarding what types of curriculum deserve consideration for use at SJE.

Where "Bible-story based curriculum" is the top recommendation overall and specifically among persons who do not have children in the program, "Arts-based curriculum" was more highly recommended than others by parents with children in the program.

**Conclusions**

On the whole respondents seemed to take the view that children and adults belong together in worship. While there was not a preference for adults and children to be together for the entire worship service, there was a high value placed upon children belonging in the household of faith and therefore towards children participating with adults in at least part of the worship service, and especially in the Eucharist itself. All of this is in keeping with our understanding of our baptismal identity as learners and worshippers together.

While generally there was not a great concern about the disruption the presence of children might become for adult worshippers, some parents did indicate that this was a concern for them. Text comments from one respondent to Q40, ("Is there anything else you would like to tell us as we think about the values, attitudes and concerns that might shape Sunday morning children's ministry at SJE?"), suggest that a developing a shared vision regarding inclusivity towards children might be important for SJE. The respondent suggests that norms "must be agreed upon by the church community and be communicated by church leadership and then reinforced by parents." By sharing these values, adults are given the opportunity to learn that the presence of children is not a distraction from something more important, but actually a sign of what is more important.

While there was an indication that some respondents believe there is not sufficient time for a children's program, there was no agreement on whether time could be added by starting the children's program before the worship service.

Overall, respondents seemed to be positive about the current practices around Children's ministry at SJE, allowing that there is room for improvement in various areas.

Areas for improvement include openness to more child-friendly worship elements in the

worship service. Some of the open text comments suggested children's songs and special

stories or prayers with the children before they make their way to their program. Care

must be taken, however, not to allow attention on children to be co-opted by the

unfortunate tendency towards the sentimentalization and trivialization of children that

was discussed above in the light of work of Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore. What would be

the reason for such a "children's time"? Is it for the mutual building up of the body of

Christ, or is it to provide a moment of cute entertainment?

Other areas for improvement concern the provision of resources for program

leaders, better communication of the priority of these ministries, and clarity around the

screening policy for volunteers.

Perhaps part of the motivation for making improvements to SJE's children's

ministry has to do with issues of welcome, invitation and evangelism. While evangelism

itself was not revealed as a high priority for most respondents, most did agree that SJE

needs an attractive Sunday children's ministry to attract and retain newcomers.

Parents with children in SJE's Sunday children's program were more enthusiastic

than others to recommend SJE's Sunday children's ministry to a friend. This may partly

be because they are more likely to have an opportunity. It may also be because they have

a more positive view of the ministry from the inside. Both of these reasons would be

supported by the data.

A better motivation for excellence in children's ministry is perhaps more straight-

forward. As Christians we are called together to be disciples of Jesus, which involves

engagement with one another in culture of learning, a school that trains the followers of

Jesus for participation in the mission of God. As such, curriculum concerns could be viewed from the perspective of what adults and children can learn together. Lectionary and Bible-based curriculum share the benefit of providing formation in the biblical narrative, however they may not adequately provide for formation in the practices of the Christian faith. Children have a role with adults in learning and practicing such virtues as hospitality, honoring the body, household economics, Sabbath-keeping, and others.[26] Arts-based curriculum, which was recommended by a number of parents, offers possibilities for adults and children to work together in mutual learning as occurs in Messy Church.

Parents, grandparents, children, sisters and brothers in Christ, must all see themselves as part of a learning community of Jesus' apprentices. There would be value in reflecting upon Jesus' own teaching methods. Not only did he tell stories, but he engaged with them personally in subject to subject relationship, and in experiential learning that had them engaging in the very mission for which he was preparing them.

Separate from this research, parish leaders have also conducted a number of interviews with parents and children's ministry volunteers in order to understand these issues more deeply. It is hoped that the research that I have done here will help to shed light on those conversations and assist with the discernment of the congregation.

SJE has many people who are passionate about the need to care for and teach the children in our midst. A passionate concern for children, however, can sometimes be used as a screen to hide our adult avoidance in looking after our own discipleship issues. I firmly believe that in our missional journey God is calling all of us, young and old, to

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[26] See Dorothy C. Bass, ed. *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, 2nd ed. Kindle ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

deepen our commitment to be a community of learners, a band of disciples, schooled in the church and in the church's story and practices so that people are equipped to engage with God in God's mission in the world.

## Reflection

This research project was undertaken as a learning experience for me as a researcher, not only in terms of my understanding around issues of the research question itself, but in terms of the processes of simple explanatory research.

In retrospect I wish that I had done more to encourage prospective respondents to complete surveys. My survey size was quite small and as such it is difficult to predict how reliably, if at all, the research results can be said to be representative of the parish at large.

I know that Parish Council and those involved in making decisions around the Sunday children's ministry at SJE will find this research helpful and I look forward to sharing these learnings with them.

All of this brings me back full circle to the central theme of the course in which this research project was an assignment: "Theological Foundations for Congregational Vitalization." As we recommit to be a community of learners, disciples of Jesus, together, young and old, we trust that the Holy Spirit is at work to build the church, to bring life and new vitality.

APPENDIX A

**Survey: Sunday Children's Ministry at SJE (2015)**

**Introduction**

This survey can be completed online by following the link at www.rockonlocke.ca.
This survey is aimed at discovering some of the values, attitudes and concerns that might shape our Sunday children's ministry at the Church of St John the Evangelist (SJE). All responses are anonymous except as described below.

A final question does provide an opportunity to add your name to the questionnaire in case you are interested in volunteering in children's ministry or in being part of this ongoing conversation. These responses will be kept separate from other data which will be kept confidential.

David Anderson will be using some of the data collected in a research paper being written as a partial requirement of his doctoral studies at Luther Seminary. Again, your anonymity as a respondent is assured.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability and as honestly as possible. Please contact David Anderson if you have any questions about this survey at 905-522-0602, anderson@rockonlocke.ca or danderson002@luthersem.edu.

**Section One**

Please consider each of the following statements and indicate your level of agreement with each.

1. "I believe that children should attend worship with adults." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

2. "I believe that it is important for children to participate in the Eucharist in Sunday worship." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

3. "I believe that it is important for children to have a program separate from the worship service during Sunday worship times." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

4. "I believe that there is sufficient time for the children's program between from when the children are dismissed from the worship service until they return for the Eucharist." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

5. "SJE should offer both children's and adult education programs on Sunday morning in addition to (and at a different time from) the worship services." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

6. "I believe that it is important to offer a children's program during a worship service only if there are a certain minimum number of children who attend." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

7. "I would like my child to be cared for during worship so that I can focus on the service." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

8. "I believe that it is important to offer a children's program during both the Discovery and Choral Services." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

9. "I think that it is important for children to be cared for outside of the worship space so that they don't disrupt the worship service." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

10. "I am concerned that people may get upset if MY children make noise in worship." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

11. "I feel that it is important for children to be present at the beginning of the worship service." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

12. "In order to allow more time for the children's program, I think that the children's ministry time could begin before the worship service begins." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

13. "I feel that worship should be a multi-generational experience." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

14. "I would be happy if changes were made to our worship services in order to make them more child-friendly." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

15. "I believe that the children's area in our worship space is working well." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

16. "I feel that the leaders of our church are supportive of children's ministry at SJE." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| O | O | O | O | O | O |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

17. "I find the children's ministry space(s) (downstairs) at SJE to be welcoming and inviting." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

18. "I believe that children are safe and secure when participating in Sunday morning children's programs." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

19. "The screening policy for children's ministry volunteers is well-known and understood." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

20. "SJE needs an attractive Sunday children's ministry in order to attract and retain newcomers to our worship services." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

21. "SJE should do more to support children's ministry volunteers."

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

22. "SJE needs to communicate the importance of children's ministry to the congregation more often."

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

23. "I would support increasing the church budget in order to provide more resources for children's ministry if it were necessary." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

24. How likely is it that you would recommend SJE's Sunday children's ministry to a friend? *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

25. "I believe that SJE does a good job caring for our children." *(Choose one.)*

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 |

**Section Two**
Now, if you don't mind, a few facts about yourself.

26. What was your age at your last birthday? *(Choose one.)*
- O  Under 18  1
- O  18-29  2
- O  30-39  3
- O  40-49  4
- O  50-59  5
- O  60-69  6
- O  70-79  7
- O  80+  8

27. How many children do you have (including adult children)? *(Enter number.)*

_____

28. If you have children, how old were they on their last birthday? *(Enter number for each child as applicable.)*

    a.  Child 1

| < 2 yrs. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-5 yrs. | 6-8 yrs. | 9-11 yrs. | 12-16 yrs. | > 16 yrs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O<br>1 | O<br>2 | O<br>3 | O<br>4 | O<br>5 | O<br>6 | O<br>7 |

    b.  Child 2

| < 2 yrs. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-5 yrs. | 6-8 yrs. | 9-11 yrs. | 12-16 yrs. | > 16 yrs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O<br>1 | O<br>2 | O<br>3 | O<br>4 | O<br>5 | O<br>6 | O<br>7 |

    c.  Child 3

| < 2 yrs. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-5 yrs. | 6-8 yrs. | 9-11 yrs. | 12-16 yrs. | > 16 yrs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O<br>1 | O<br>2 | O<br>3 | O<br>4 | O<br>5 | O<br>6 | O<br>7 |

    d.  Child 4

| < 2 yrs. | 2-3 yrs. | 4-5 yrs. | 6-8 yrs. | 9-11 yrs. | 12-16 yrs. | > 16 yrs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O<br>1 | O<br>2 | O<br>3 | O<br>4 | O<br>5 | O<br>6 | O<br>7 |

    e.  More  *(Please describe below, if applicable.)*

29. Do your children currently participate in SJE's Sunday morning children's program? *(Choose one.)*
      O  Yes    1
      O  No    2
      O  Not applicable (I don't have children)    9

30. Have your children (including any who may now be adults) participated in SJE's Sunday morning children's program in the past? *(Choose one.)*
      O  Yes    1
      O  No    2
      O  Not applicable (I don't have children)    9

31. Have your children (including any who may now be adults) participated in a Sunday morning children's program at another church in the past?
      O  Yes    1
      O  No    2
      O  Not applicable (I don't have children)    9

32. Which worship service do you (and your family, if applicable) attend?
    *(Select all that apply.)*
    - ❏ Early Service 1
    - ❏ Discovery Service 2
    - ❏ Choral Service 3
    - ❏ Messy Church 4
    - ❏ Other 5

33. Do you presently volunteer with Sunday children's ministry at SJE? *(Choose one.)*
    - ○ Yes 1
    - ○ No 2

**Section Three**
We're almost done. Just a few more questions and an opportunity for comments and suggestions.

34. If your adult children participated in children's ministry at SJE or somewhere else, but no longer attend church, do you think that there are changes that could be made to the way that we do children's ministry that might have made a difference? *(Please comment below.)*

35. Please rank the following values in terms of their priority.
    *(Please write a number 1 through 7 beside each, 1 being the highest priority. No ties please.)*
    - a. Children are included with adults. _____
    - b. Children feel that they belong. _____
    - c. Children receive age-appropriate programming. _____
    - d. Children receive Bible teaching. _____
    - e. Children have Christian community modeled. _____
    - f. Children learn how to practice the faith. _____
    - g. Children are evangelized. _____

36. Please rank the following options in terms of your preference. *(Please write a number 1 through 4 beside each, 1 being the highest priority. No ties please.)*

      a.    Children are included with adults in the entire worship service.     \_\_\_\_\_

      b.    Children attend an age-appropriate program instead of the worship service.     \_\_\_\_\_

      c.    Children attend the worship service for the beginning music and then are dismissed to attend an age-appropriate program and return to share in the Eucharist, remaining for the conclusion of the worship service.     \_\_\_\_\_

      d.    Children begin in an age-appropriate program only to join adults in the worship service at the Eucharist, remaining for the conclusion of the worship service.     \_\_\_\_\_

37. What changes, if any, would you suggest for the children's area in the worship space (church proper).  *(Provide comments below.)*

38. Which of the following types of children's ministry are you familiar with? *(Check all that apply.)*
   - ❑ Lectionary-based curriculum. [1]
   - ❑ Bible story-based curriculum. [2]
   - ❑ Workshop Rotation Model. [3]
   - ❑ Godly Play. [4]
   - ❑ Arts-based learning [5]
   - ❑ Faith practice learning [6]
   - ❑ None [8]
   - ❑ Other _____ *(Describe.)* [6]

39. Of the following types of children's ministry what do you believe deserve consideration for use at SJE? *(Check all that apply.)*
   - ❑ Lectionary-based curriculum. [1]
   - ❑ Bible story-based curriculum. [2]
   - ❑ Workshop Rotation Model. [3]
   - ❑ Godly Play. [4]
   - ❑ Arts-based learning [5]
   - ❑ Faith practice learning [6]
   - ❑ Other _____ *(Describe.)* [6]

40. Is there anything else you would like to tell us as we think about the values, attitudes and concerns that might shape Sunday morning Children's ministry at SJE? *(Provide comments below.)*

**Section Four**
Finally! This section asks for personal information that will be passed separately from the information above to those recruiting and discussing the future of children's ministry.

41. Would you like to be contacted about volunteering with Sunday children's ministry at SJE? *(Choose one.)*
    - ○ Yes    [1]
    - ○ No    [2]

42. Would you be interested in serving on a task force that will further discern how we will shape Sunday children's ministry at SJE in the future? *(Choose one.)*
    - ○ Yes    [1]
    - ○ No    [2]

43. If you answered "yes" to either of the last two questions above, please enter your name below. (Names entered here will not be compared with answers to survey questions 1-48).

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