

Welcome to . . .

# The Neighborhood

Portland United Methodist Church Children's Ministry

"Helping Families and Children to Grow Spiritually"



## Kids Need Parents Who Try

by David Staal, 5/29/2009

Last night my family enjoyed a lively conversation about God's love. Guided by the workbook "Experiencing God" (Blackaby), each person engaged the topic during the week and then shared what they learned on Sunday night.

This morning I thanked God for the discussion because my son (age 15) and daughter (age 12) offered several good thoughts. I thanked God for revealing himself to them in ways they understand. And I thanked him for helping my wife and I keep going through years of attempts at family discussions about God that went nowhere. You read that right—years of attempts.

What motivates a parent to try, try, and try again? Here's my reason:

Nine years ago, my wife and I spent Valentine's Day meeting with oncologists, a visit that included my first C.T. scan. Seven days earlier a doctor had found an advanced melanoma tumor on my arm.

Needless to say, I didn't sleep well that night. Previously unthinkable questions raced through my mind. None were the "Why me?" type; rather, I mostly wondered and prayed about my (then) six- and three-year old children.

"If I'm not around, who will teach Scott how to shoot a jump shot? Who will coach him into manhood? Who will hold onto Erin as she learns to ride a bike? And who will walk her down the aisle one day?" Yet all of those questions seemed trivial next to my biggest concern. "Who will talk to them about God and Jesus?" I queried and pleaded with God early into the morning hours until exhaustion arrived to carry me off to sleep.

Fortunately I'm approaching the decade point of my cancer adventure, but I frequently re-visit that big question. And I always come up with the same answer: "Me." I believe that February sleepless night—spent wrestling with questions that lacked clear answers—filled me with a resolve that provided me oft-needed strength along my journey to good health (which I fully enjoy today).

Along the way I learned that when you believe your days are numbered, you determine to make them count.

In practical terms, every time my wife or I have a spiritual conversation with our children, we do so with a deep determination to make the most of the opportunity. We start by deliberately talking with Scott and Erin in a manner they'll understand, using concepts I write about in books or copy from great parents we know—and always giving it our best. Of course we make our share of goofs, but we genuinely believe every discussion counts.

## Kids Kalendar: November 2009

- Nov 1-Sun Sunday School Small Groups —10:15-11:05 am  
Families Worship Together at Church
- Nov 3-Tue Sunshine Singers—3:45-4:45 pm & 4:10-4:55 pm  
Joybells—5:00-6:00 pm
- Nov 8-Sun Sunday School Small Groups —10:15-11:05 am  
Children's Worship—during Contemporary Service
- Nov 10-Tue Sunshine Singers—3:45-4:45 pm & 4:10-4:55 pm  
Joybells—5:00-6:00 pm
- Nov 15-Sun Sunday School Small Groups —10:15-11:05 am  
Children's Worship—during Contemporary Service
- Nov 17-Tue Sunshine Singers—3:45-4:45 pm & 4:10-4:55 pm  
Joybells—5:00-6:00 pm
- Nov 22-Sun Sunday School Small Groups —10:15-11:05 am  
Children's Worship—during Contemporary Service
- Nov 24-Tue Sunshine Singers—3:45-4:45 pm & 4:10-4:55 pm  
Joybells—5:00-6:00 pm
- Nov 26-Thu THANKSGIVING DAY
- Nov 29-Sun Sunday School Small Groups —10:15-11:05 am  
Children's Worship—during Contemporary Service

Nursery provided during Sunday Worship Services



## CHILDREN'S MUSIC MINISTRY -

### "SUNSHINE SINGERS"

Every Tuesday in the Children's Music Room (upstairs)  
Choir #1: 4 yrs—2nd graders meet 3:45—4:45 p.m.  
Choir #2: 3rd graders—5th graders meet 4:10—4:55 p.m.  
If you would like more information contact  
Sherry Miller at (517)647-7030



### "JOYBELLS"

Every Tuesday in the Church Balcony  
2nd graders and up meet 5:00—6:00 p.m.  
If you would like more information contact  
Sharon Wittkopp at (517)647-7459

Bring your children's faces to mind for a moment. I believe that you, and every parent, face the same question as I did: Who will talk with your children about God and Jesus? Easy question, right? Okay, maybe not. So learn what you must, copy what you can, go have a conversation, and give it your best. Because the answer your children need—and the person God has selected to step up to the task—is you.

\*Adapted from *Leading Your Child to Jesus*  
(Zondervan, 2006)

