



CHRIST CHURCH BELLS CORNERS
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Welcome to our Children's Sunday Morning Program for 2024–2025!

Where did the summer go? I am sure you are already planning activities, sports, and school for your little (and growing) ones.

At Christ Church Bells Corners, we are very excited to once again offer creative learning opportunities for our church school families and their friends. This year, our Spirit-filled fun and active Sunday morning program, coupled with our seasonal activity days, youth gatherings, and junior choir, are designed to help us grow in faith together as a vibrant Christian community. This mission is central to life at Christ Church Bells Corners.

Included with this letter is a list of important CCBC Children's Ministry dates for your planning needs. Please make a note in your calendars of these activities. While this list is not exhaustive, it is a good place to start. We also encourage you to check our website regularly for information and updates (www.christchurchbellsorners.ca) on upcoming events. It is also helpful to be on our parish E-Newsletter list that you can sign up for on our website or by sending Susan an email at the office at ccbc.churchoffice@gmail.com.

We are blessed with an energetic team of church school teachers who, under the leadership of Megan Sproule-Jones, Director of Children's Ministries, enthusiastically build relationships with our school-aged parishioners, share the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, and inspire everyone to walk with Christ in their day to day lives. Our team is ready to welcome your children on Sunday, September 8th during the 10:00 am service. This will be a fun **Welcome Back Sunday** and all of the children are invited to bring their school backpacks with them for a blessing. There will also be an opportunity to make some backpack tags and enjoy special cupcakes at coffee hour! We hope you can be there!

As we begin another year full of great promise and possibility, we remember always that when children and adults explore their faith together, each receives gifts of wonder, laughter, wisdom, and discovery.

Below you will find an article that crossed my path when I still had younger children who I tried to get out the door on Sunday mornings. I thought I would share it with you and do hope you like it. Parenting is a ministry of patience and joy to be sure; sending you prayers and blessings as your parenting journey continues.

God Bless,
The Venerable Monique Stone

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH?

I thought I wasn't going to have to answer that snarly question for a few more years. Maybe even a decade before you started stomping around with teenage eye rolls of disgust when I ask you to get dressed on Sunday morning, and not in those ratty jeans with the holes in the knees, either. But here we are today, already five minutes late and you're standing at the back door whining in protest, coat clenched in your fist and your stubborn stocking feet kicking the mud-caked boots you refuse to put on so we can scramble into the car. Do you want my answer? Ok. This is why you have to go to church.

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It's good for you to go to church.

Here's part of what church means: faith, ritual, music, art, and community. Experts agree those are good things for growing kids, healthy like tall glasses of milk and long nights of sleep. But I don't need an expert to tell me what I see on Sundays. You leafing carefully through the hymnal pages, pointing when you find what we're singing. You leaning quietly into my side as we listen to the readings. You lunging across the pew to shake hands with everyone at the sign of peace. You like church. Even when you claim it's only because of the donuts afterwards.

Here's another part of what church means: it's a place where you aren't in charge. And neither are your parents, the ones who usually get to call the shots. Church is not about you or me. It's about God. It's about believing in something bigger than yourself. It's about the amazing and aggravating people that come together under one big tent. Life, you will find, is also like this. Church is good practice. So it's good for you to be there.

It's good for the rest of the community to see you in church.

To remember that you're part of the Body of Christ, too, even if you're the antsy legs that can't sit still in the pew. Even if you're the dancing feet that are itching to run up to the choir and clap while they sing. Even if you're the loud voice that asks WHY WHY WHY a hundred times during the homily.

It's good for the frazzled mom with lanky teenagers to remember when her kids were that small. It's good for the gentle grandparents to watch the hard work that they did as parents. It's good for the single friends to remind us how to see you in a fresh light as your own person. It's good for the young couple in the back pew to fast-forward a few years and wonder what it might be like to wrangle their own restless kids in the front row. It's good for all the grown-ups to remember that you belong there, too. That you are beloved and baptized like the rest of us. So it's good for the congregation to have you there.

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It's good for our priests to have you at church.

They see children in a keen way – a bright-eyed, hey-guys, gimme-five way that makes me think the Jesus of slow-down-I'm-just-going-to-play-with-these-kids-for-a-minute would grin, too. You give them hope, and they give you someone tall and important and not-your-parents to look up to. We need more priests like them, and maybe you might be one, so it's good for you to see each other across the altar on Sundays. So it's good for our ministers to have you there.

...

It's good for our family that you go to church.

We only have a few years to set this rhythm before school and sports and schedules for every extracurricular on God's green earth begin to pull at the fabric that holds our early years together right now. And before all those activities and enrichments and after-schools start to trickle into every gap of free time on weeknight and weekend, I want to be sure we've carved out space for what your dad and I think matters most...which includes: God, silence, song, beauty, service, community, and the inner life. (See also: church.)

So it's good for your mother that you go to church. You make it harder to concentrate and easier to remember why I'm there. It's good for your father that you go to church. You let him show you what it means to be a man who can tear up at aching hymns or fist-pump at zinging sermons. It's good for your little brother that you go to church. You

are his two-sizes-bigger role model, and when you pester me again about when you can be an altar server or when you can start taking communion, he listens, too. So it's good for all of us to have you there.

...

Why do you have to go to church, oh sharp-eyed, stubborn-cheeked, wild-haired four-year-old of my heart? Because? Because you have to? Because I said so? Because that's just what we do?

No.

Because you are church, too.

Because you are asking questions and growing into answers and challenging the status quo and making me wonder about God. And you deserve a place that is safe and warm and welcoming for your big, hard, important questions. A place where we will sing and pray and laugh and think and thank together. A place where we remember, again and always, what we are to do and who we are to be. A place like our church.

And we are now ten minutes late. So let's go. Shall we?