

*Nurturing Your Child's Spiritual Growth:
A Parent's Guide*

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest responsibilities of the Church of Jesus Christ is to support, encourage, and enable parents to “raise up their children in the way they should go,” (Proverbs 22:6) and help them to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This booklet, Nurturing Your Child’s Spiritual Growth: A Parent’s Guide was developed in the hopes that it would be one way the Avon Lake Presbyterian Church could be helpful.

The Booklet has four sections. The first section includes basic theological information and Bible knowledge that is age appropriate. The information is not repeated for each age level so you will want to start from the beginning. Many of the scripture verses listed would be good for memorization. God speaks to us through the Word that we’ve already put in our minds.

The second section contains all of the materials that are referred to in the first section. The third section includes some ideas and suggestions on sharing your faith with your children. And the fourth section is a list of resources that might be helpful. All of the resources listed are in our church library. We hope to update the fourth section on a regular basis as you share with us those resources that you have found helpful.

Much of the material in the first section of this booklet was acquired from several documents other churches have prepared for their congregations. These documents are Stepping Stones on the Journey of Faith from Peachtree Presbyterian Church; Mile Markers Along the Journey of Faith from Parma-South Presbyterian Church; and BPC Church School Curriculum Guide from Bay Presbyterian Church. It’s a great joy to know that the larger church family is always there to support us and share any resources that might be helpful.

As Nurturing Your Child’s Spiritual Growth is used we are certain it will continue to be revised and updated. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated by the Christian Education Committee. If you have any other ideas on how we can be more helpful to you as a parent please share them with us. We are here to serve.

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TWO AND THREE YEAR OLDS

There is only one true God. (Deut. 6:4)

God is alive. (Rev. 1:4, Deut. 33:27, I Tim. 1:17, Romans 11:33)

God loves us all the time, whether we act good or bad. (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)

God is good (Matt 19:17, Psalm 34:8, I Chronicles 16:34)

God is everywhere. He sees everything. (Psalm 139:7-10)

God is all powerful. God can do anything. (Acts 2:16-21)

God created all things. (Genesis 1)

We are wonderfully made by God. (Genesis 1:26, Psalm 139:14)

God created us to be His sons and daughters. (Eph. 1:5)

We are part of God's family. (I John 3:1, Romans 8:15-17)

God takes care of us and meets all of our needs. (Matt. 6:33, Acts 17:24, 25)

Jesus is God's only Son. (John 3:16)

Jesus came to show us how much God loves us. (John 15:15)

Jesus loves children. (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17)

"Jesus Loves Me" (See page 14)

Jesus never did anything wrong. (Hebrews 7 and 8, Hebrews 4:14-16)

Mary is Jesus' mother (Luke 1:35)

Jesus came from God to be born as a baby. He lived on earth. "He was a child like you."

He grew up in a family (Luke 1 and 2 – The story of Jesus birth – CHRISTMAS)

Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead. Jesus is ALIVE

(Acts 1:11, I Corinthians 15:3-4)

The Bible is God's Word written to us. (Romans 15:4, I Th. 2:13, Jr. 1:2, Ezekiel 1:3)

The Bible, God's Word, will last forever. (Psalm 119:89, 152, I Peter 1:23, Matt. 24:35)

The Bible gives us direction and tells us the best way to live.

(James 1:22, Deut. 29:29, Joshua 1:8)

Prayer is talking to God and listening to God. (see page 39)

We can pray anytime, anywhere. (I Thessalonians 5:17-18)

God wants us to pray. (Luke 18:1, Psalm 32:6)

We pray to thank God. (Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2)

We pray for others. (Jeremiah 29:7)

We pray for God's creation. (Genesis 1:26)

We pray in Jesus' name. (John 14:13-14, II Corinthians 5:21)

God always listens to our prayer.

(Psalms 65:2, Jeremiah 33:3, II Chronicles 30:27, Acts 10:31, I Peter 3:12)

FOUR AND FIVE YEAR OLDS

We celebrate the two sacraments – **Baptism** and **The Lord’s Supper**. (see page 15)

God loves us and wants us to love Him. (Mark 12:30)

Bringing an offering is a way to say thank you to God and to serve God. We sing the
“Doxology” to praise God. (see page 14)

We learn to know and love God through reading the Bible, especially reading about Jesus, and
praying. (Rev. 3:20, Luke 18:1, James 4:8)

God is Eternal. God always was and always will be. (Rev. 1:4, I Tim. 1:17)

God is a Spirit. God is invisible, not a man or a woman. (John 4:24)

God does not change. (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17)

God is Perfect. (Matt. 5:48, Deut. 32:4, Psalm 18:30)

God is Holy and cannot fail. (Lev. 11:44-45, 20:26, Rev. 4:8)

God is Righteous. (Psalm 119:137, 145:17)

God forgives us when we say we’re sorry. (Psalm 103:8, Deut. 4:31, I John 1:9)

God is Patient. (II Peter 3:9)

God is Faithful. God is a promise maker and a promise keeper. (Deut. 7:9, I John 1:9,
II Thessalonians 3:3)

God has a plan for our lives. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

God gives us each new day. (Psalm 118:24)

God sent Jesus to die for sin. (John 3:16, Rev. 1:5)

Jesus was born on Christmas day. “Joy to the World,” “Away in a Manger,” “Silent Night.” (see
Hymnal pages 40, 24, 60)

Jesus teaches us the Golden Rule. (Matthew 7:12)

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. (Psalm 23, Luke 15:3-6, John 10:2-4)

Jesus is the Light. (John 8:12, Isaiah 9:2)

Jesus is God and Man. (Hebrews 2:14, Col. 2:9, Romans 1:3-4)

Jesus is our Savior; he saves us. (Acts 4:12, Luke 2:11)

Jesus is our Lord; we worship Him. (Rev. 5:7-14, Phil. 2:10, Matt 2:11)

We obey Him (John 14:15, John 15:14)

Jesus is the ONLY way to salvation. (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 10:9-10)

The Bible has two parts;

Old Testament – The Old Testament contains stories about an old agreement between
God and the Hebrews, as revealed to the first patriarch Abraham and the Israelite leader Moses.
It also tells how this agreement worked out.

New Testament – The New Testament contains stories and teachings about a new
agreement between God and people based on the teachings and life of Jesus.

The Bible never changes. The Bible is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

(Isaiah 40:8)

The Bible is to be:

Heard (Romans 10:17, Luke 8:15)

Read (II Peter 1:19, Deut. 17:19)

Memorized (Psalms 119:11)

Shared (II Timothy 2:2, Deut. 11:19, Matt. 28:2)

Loved, Desired, and a Blessing (Psalms 119:140, Joshua 1:8, I Peter 2:2)

The Bible is meant to teach us, train us, and correct us so that we can work for God.

(II Tim. 3:16-17)

Sometimes we do not do what God wants; this is what the Bible calls sin. Sin is doing, saying, and thinking wrong things. (I John 3:4, James 4:17, Romans 3:23)

Sin entered the world through Adam; because we are his descendants we inherited sin.

(Genesis 3)

God knows all sin. (Psalm 44:20-21, Psalm 69:5)

God hates sin. (Psalm 45:7, Proverbs 6:16, Habakkuk 1:13)

Sin separates us from God. (Isaiah 59:2, Hebrews 12:14)

Because we are all sinners, (Romans 3:23) we all need a Savior.

Jesus Christ is that Savior.

When we tell God we have sinned, say we are sorry, and ask Him to forgive us, He will.

(I John 1:8-10, Col. 2:13-14, Psalm 78:38, 85:2, 103:12, Micah 7:19)

Jesus prepares a place for us in Heaven. (John 14:2) (see page 16)

The three Christian Holidays:

Christmas – Jesus is born.

Easter – Jesus is risen from the dead. Jesus is ALIVE

Pentecost – The Birthday of the church. God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower us.

FIRST AND SECOND GRADES

God is one in 3 distinct persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19)

TRINITY – God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are the trinity – the triune God.

We respond to God's love by loving God and loving others.

The Two Greatest Commandments (Mt. 22:37-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-28)

(see page 30)

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity.

God is Gracious. God gives us gifts we don't deserve. (Titus 3:7, II Cor.12:9)

God knew us before we were born; chose us and made us just as He wanted. (Eph. 1:5)

Jesus' birth is celebrated on Christmas – “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “The First Noel,”

(see Hymnal pages 29, 31, 43, 56)

Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. (Matthew 28:19) Jesus is the Son.

Jesus is eternal. He was – before He became incarnate (flesh). (I John 5:20, I Tim. 1:17)

Jesus chose 12 disciples. (see page 18)

Jesus healed all who had faith. (Matthew 8-9, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 9:37-43, John 5:1-18)

Jesus used parables to teach us about God and God's Kingdom. (see page 20)

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. (Matthew 28:19)

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit at work in the world.

The Holy Spirit lives in us. (I Cor.3:16, John 14:17, II Cor.1:22)

The Holy Spirit helps us know when we have sinned and helps us repent. (John 16:8-11)

The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Counselor (John 14:16)

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter (Acts 9:31)

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher (John 14:26, I Cor.2:13)

The Holy Spirit is our Leader/Guide (Romans 8:14)

The Holy Spirit is our Source of power/Strength (Acts 1:8, II Timothy 1:7)

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. (Galatians 5:22-23)

The Holy Spirit inspired the people who wrote the Bible. (II Peter 1:20-21, II Tim. 3:16)

The Holy Spirit is our Illuminator – makes Scripture clear (I Cor.2:14)

The Bible has 66 books:

39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. (see page 21)

God uses the Bible to help us know Jesus and learn to be like Him.

(James 1:18, Psalm 19:7, Romans, 10:17, 15:4, I Peter 1:23, 2:2, John 17:17)

The Bible is God's perfect guide for our lives. It is trustworthy.

(Psalms 19:7, Proverbs 30:5-6, John 17:17)

The Bible is complete. (Deut. 4:2, 12:32, Rev. 22:18-19, Matt. 5:18-19, I Cor.4:2)

The Bible is powerful and effective. God uses His word to change lives. (Hebrews 4:12)

The first 4 books of the New Testament are called the Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

Gospel means “Good news.” The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. (see page 25)

All Sin has consequences; but not all “bad things” that happen are because of sin.

(John 9:1-3)

(6)

We are to be faithful stewards of all things. To manage all things faithfully means giving and using all according to God's will and purposes. (Genesis 2:15)

We are to give our gifts and talents. (Matt. 25:14-30, I Peter 4:10)

We are to give our bodies. (Romans 12:1-2, I Cor.6:19-20)

We are to give our time. (Psalm 90:12, Eph. 5:15-16)

We are to care for the created world. (Genesis 2:15, Psalm 50:10)

We are to take full advantage of all opportunities. (Colossians 4:5)

When we give we are to give our first fruits. (I Cor.16:1-2, Malachi 3:10)

We are to give with a cheerful heart. (II Cor.9:7)

We are to give generously and freely. (Matt. 10:8, Psalm 37:16, Proverbs 21:26)

We are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27)

We are created as distinctly different from all the rest of creation. (Genesis 1)

We are created with a body, soul, and spirit. (I Th. 5:23; Matt. 10:28, Hebrews 4:12)

The Holy Spirit lives in us so we are not the same as we were before. (II Cor.5:17)

We are created to worship and glorify God. (I Peter 2:9)

We are to work with God for His good purposes. (Gen. 2:15, Ex. 23:12, I Cor.10:31)

God tells us to honor and obey our parents. (Ex. 20:12) To honor means to respect parents even when they make mistakes. (Col. 3:20, Eph. 6:1-4, Proverbs 23:22)

Jesus taught us to pray – The Lords' Prayer – (Matt. 6:9-13) (see page 28)

We pray to ask God for the things we need. This reminds us that we need God.

(James 5:13, Matt. 7:7, Luke 11:10)

We pray to confess our sin and ask forgiveness. (I John 1:9)

We pray according to God's will. (I John 5:14, Romans 8:27)

We pray confidently and expectantly, (I John 5:14-15, Mark 11:24)

We pray with respect (reverently). (Hebrews 12:28-29)

We pray specifically for people by name and for specific needs.

(Example – Gen. 18:23-33)

We pray in all circumstances without ceasing. (I Thessalonians 5:17-18)

The Church Calendar: (we spend time with this in the Worship Center.)

Begins with ADVENT: 4 Sundays before Dec. 25th –The time the church gets ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas (Color is purple.)

CHRISTMAS – The 25th of December – Jesus is born. (Color is white).

CHRISTMASTIDE – 2 or 3 Sundays after Christmas day. (Color is green).

EPIPHANY – Begins January 6th and lasts until Lent. The number varies but can be no more than 9 Sundays (Color is green).

LENT – 6 Sundays – the time the church gets ready to celebrate the mystery of Easter. (Color is purple).

EASTER - 7 Sundays - Jesus is Risen from the dead. Jesus is ALIVE. (Color is white)

The first Sunday of Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

PENTECOST – 1 Sunday – The Birthday of the Church. (Color is red).

SEASON OF PENTECOST – All Sundays from Pentecost to Advent. (Color is green).

THIRD AND FOURTH GRADES

God is Omnipotent – all powerful. (Gen. 18:14, Luke 1:37, Job 42:2)

God is Omnipresent – present everywhere. (Psalm 139:7-10)

God is Omniscient - all knowing. (Psalm 139:1-4)

God desires a personal relationship with us. (John 15:13-14)

God is All-sufficient (Acts 17:24-28)

Jesus was born on Christmas – “It came Upon a Midnight Clear,” “O Come All Ye Faithful,” “What Child is This?” (see Hymnal pages 38, 41, 53)

Jesus is our mediator (bridge) to God. (I Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 9:15, I John 2:1)

Jesus taught us what God is like. He showed us by word and example. (Acts 7:37, John 15:15, Deut. 18:15-16)

Jesus taught us how to love one another. “Sermon on the Mount” (See page 29)

Jesus is the Head and Savior of His Church. (Eph. 4:15)

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Luke 1:35)

Jesus tells us that we are to treat others as we would treat Him. (Matthew 25:40)

The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, drawing us to God so that we can understand the Gospel and will accept Christ. (Titus 3:5, John 3:6, 6:63, I Cor. 12:3, 2:10, II Th. 2:13)

The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier who makes us holy like God (II Th. 2:13, Rom. 8:12-17)

The Holy Spirit preserves us so that we can persevere and be faithful to the end. We will not lose our salvation. (I Th. 5:23-24, John 6:39, Phil 1:6)

The Holy Spirit helps us pray. The Holy Spirit prays for us. (Romans 8:26-27)

The Old Testament of the Bible contains the **10 Commandments**. (see page 30)

The Old Testament has the stories of the **Patriarchs**, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Moses led God’s people out of slavery in Egypt.

Moses came down the mountain with the 10 Commandments.

Joshua fought the battle of Jericho.

The **Judges**: Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, and others governed God’s people.

God’s people demanded a king. God gave them **Saul, David, and Solomon**.

The New Testament of the Bible contains **The 2 Greatest Commandments** (see pg. 30)

We are “adopted” children of God and heirs to His Kingdom. (I John 3:1, Ro. 8:15-17)

God sees us clothed in Christ’s righteousness – in right relationship with Him.

(Galatians 3:26, 27, Isaiah 61:10)

Our bodies are the temple of God and must be kept pure. (I Col. 6:18)

We have a lifelong relationship with our parents which involves a lifelong commitment to each other. (I Timothy 5:4-8)

We pray to worship, honor, and glorify God – give praise. (Acts 16:35, Ps. 104:33-34)

We pray to grow in our faith. (II Corinthians 13:9)

We can pray with the formula ACTS I. (see Page 28)

Conditions for effective prayer:

Obedience (I John 3:22)

We must ask according to God's will (I John 5:14)

We must have faith. (Mark 11:24, I Chronicles 5:20)

Hindrances to effective Prayer:

Known sin. (Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 28:13)

An unbelieving heart. (James 1:6-7, Hebrews 11:6)

Wrong motives. (James 4:2-3)

God commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations. (Mt. 28:19)

We are to go into the world to make a difference for Him.

(Luke 24:47, Romans 10:13-17, Isaiah 55:11)

We are to proclaim the salvation message by: (Col. 1:28-29, Jas. 1:18, I Peter 1:23)

Sharing the good news of the Bible. (Ps 71:15-16, 96:1-3)

Giving the reason for the hope that lives within us. (I Peter 3:15)

We confess our faith by reciting the "Apostles Creed," "Nicene Creed," (see page 32)

and the "Brief Statement of Faith" (see page 33)

We are to bear witness through the way we live our lives by: (Col.1:28-29, Ro. 10:13, 15)

Pointing others in the direction of the Kingdom by changed lives.

(Mt. 5:16, Tim. 4:12, I Peter 2:12)

Actively engaging in the work of Christ in the world.

(Jas 2:22-23, 1:22-23, Mt. 9:37-38)

(This section on mission helps the children see a purpose in their lives which is greater than themselves. It helps lay the groundwork for the child's development of a servant's heart so that they can begin to see the world as God sees it and to think and act like a servant of God. It also helps children respond to the needs of the world as if those needs were their own by praying and seeking to do something to make a difference.)

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

God chose us to be His sons/daughters before the foundations of the earth (election).
(Ephesians 1:5)

God is the Father of all believers because he adopted us as sons/daughters and heirs.
(I John 3:1)

As our Father, God disciplines us because He loves us. (Hebrews 12:7-11)

God loves us and sent His Son to die for us. Therefore, we are to love and obey Him.
(I John 4:8-10)

Jesus was born on Christmas – “O Come, O Come Emanuel,” “Angels We Have Heard
on High,” “Good Christian Friends Rejoice.” (see Hymnal pages 9, 23, 28)

Jesus is the Judge of the world. (Acts 17:31, Acts 10:42, II Tim. 4:1)

Jesus’ righteousness is transferred to us. (Romans 3:22-24, 4:5, 4:23-25)

Jesus teaches us to be responsible for all that God has given us. (Luke 12:48)

Jesus shows us we are to be servants. “Whoever wants to be first must place himself last
of all and be the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

The Bible reveals God’s plan of salvation for us. (see page 34)

The Bible has the following events:

OLD TESTAMENT:

1. Creation (Genesis)
2. Flood (Genesis)
3. Wanderings of the Patriarchs (Genesis)
4. Slavery in Egypt (Exodus)
5. Exodus (Exodus)
6. Ten Commandments (Exodus and Deuteronomy)
7. Settlement in Canaan (Joshua)
8. Rule of the Judges (Judges)
9. Time of the Kings (I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles)
10. Exile (II Chronicles)
11. Return to Jerusalem (Ezra and Nehemiah)

NEW TESTAMENT:

1. Birth of Christ (Matthew, Luke)
2. Life, Crucifixion, Resurrection of Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
3. Pentecost (Acts)
4. Beginning of the Christian Church (Acts and the Epistles – Romans through
Jude)

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

God is a personal God and wants a personal relationship with us.

A two-way relationship involves:

(a) Listening (studying His word).

(b) Talking (through prayer).

This is how we get to know God better (Rev. 3:20, Luke 18:1, James 4:8)

God is ruling and governing His creation. (Daniel 4:35)

Everything that happens has been ordained or allowed by God. (Isaiah 46:10, 11, 14:24, Job 1:7-12, Luke 22:31)

Jesus has three “Offices”:

A. **Prophet** – Jesus revealed the truth of God by word and example.

B. **Priest** – God sent Jesus who died on the cross as a sacrifice to take the penalty of our sin (atonement). (Hebrews 2:17)

He now intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34, I John 2:1)

He was the perfect sacrifice because He was without sin (He. 4:14-16, 7, 9)

C. **King** – Jesus will reign through eternity.

(Psalm 2:6, 8, 9, Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:33)

Adam’s sin brought death to all mankind (Isaiah 53:6, Galatians 3:22, Romans 3:23):

Physical death - separation of body and soul (Genesis 3:19)

Eternal death – separation from God in hell (Revelations 14:11)

Spiritual death – separation from God (Ephesians 2:1)

There are earthly consequences of our sin. (Ps. 32:3-4, 73, Ro. 6:21, I Co. 6:11, Pr. 1:31)

There are eternal consequences of a believer’s sin (He. 4:13, II Co. 5:10, Rev. 22:12)

The eternal consequence of sin is separation from God unless we are redeemed through Christ. (Rev. 20:15, II Th. 1:9, Luke 16:19-24, Mt. 25:41, 46)

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Confession must involve repentance.

(I John. 1:9, Col. 2:13-14, Ps. 78:38, 103:12, Micah 7:19)

We sing the “Gloria Patri” after confession to praise God for His mercy. (see page 14)

The Old Testament has 5 Books of Law (see page 22)

The Old Testament has 12 Books of History. (see page 23)

The Old Testament has 5 Books of Poetry. (see page 23)

The Old Testament has 5 Major Prophets and 12 Minor Prophets. (see pages 23 and 24)

The New Testament has 4 Gospels (see page 25)

The New Testament has 1 Book of History (see page 25)

The New Testament has 21 Letters. (see pages 25 & 26)

Paul wrote 13 of these Letters:

I Corinthians 12 – The Body of Christ

I Corinthians 13 – Love is . . .

The New Testament has a Book of Vision. (see page 26)

There is a basic Time Line of the events in the Bible.

There are Ten Major Doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. (see page 36)

Presbyterian Creeds and Confessions are important in stating the beliefs of the Presbyterian Church. (see pages 31)

The Church has a Democratic form of Government. (see page 37)

SENIOR HIGH

During High School the young person should be exploring, questioning, and responding to the great theological themes:

Kingdom of God vs. other loyalties,	Suffering/repentance,
The Body of Christ,	Covenant,
The Grace of God,	Faith,
The Providence of God,	The Gospel,
Sin and forgiveness,	Salvation
Temptation,	

The young person should be exploring decision-making studies on valuing vocational guidance, partnership, marriage, and friendships, all in the light of our understanding of God's concern for our faithful stewardship of life.

The young person should be involved in a variety of service activities and church activities.

The young person should be struggling with the question of good versus evil.

The young person should be prayerfully deciding on a percentage of income to give to the Church, and exploring ways to demonstrate God's will in the use of all of their money.

The young person should be able to articulate how God is present in their lives, and how their faith impacts their choices and decisions.

They young person should know the history of our Faith. (Basic events of the Reformation)

As the young person grows in their faith maturity these are the eight core dimensions:

1. Trusts in God' saving grace; believes firmly in the humanity/divinity of Jesus.
2. Experiences a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace.
3. Integrates faith and life, seeing work, family, social relationships, and political choices as part of one's religious life.
4. Seeks spiritual growth through study, reflection, prayer, and discussion.
5. Seeks to be part of a community of believers in which people give witness to their faith and support and nourish one another.
6. Holds life-affirming values, including commitment to racial and gender equality, affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, and a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others;
7. Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice.
8. Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be
World without end. Amen, Amen.

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.

REFRAIN:

Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves Me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago.
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to me."

WORSHIP AND THE SACRAMENTS

The Presbyterian Church has Two Sacraments:

Baptism

The Lord's Supper (also called The Last Supper, Communion, and the Eucharist)

A **sacrament** is "something sacred" or "holy." During the reformation, the reformers limited the number of sacraments to two: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These sacraments were recognized as the only two sacraments instituted by Christ. References in Scripture can be found in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38 for Baptism and in Matthew 26:26-29 for The Lord's Supper. Sacraments are signs and seals of the promises of God. They show and remind us of the grace of God. On their own, the sacraments do nothing for our salvation. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that fills the sacraments with power.

Baptism is an act of faith, whether it is the faith of adults who bring their children, or the faith of persons who come to the font.

Baptism is symbolic of the dying and rising of Christ. It is the mark of "New Life" in Jesus Christ.

Through the Holy Spirit, God assures us at baptism of:

1. Forgiveness of sins: Sinless himself, Jesus paid for our sins with his life. He did this so that all people may live as one according to God's will. At baptism, the Holy Spirit marks us as God's own and enables us to accept God's forgiveness through repentance.

2. Victory over death: Jesus' baptism was a kind of burial by water that foreshadowed his death on the cross. At our own baptism, each of us also dies with Christ. But Jesus conquered death. So his victory over death is our victory, too.

3. New Birth: We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at our baptism, and enter a new life, new family, and new love based on Christ. Death and darkness are left behind. We become a part of God's Kingdom.

Baptism is administered by a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the community of faith with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Lord's Supper involves remembering the gracious activity of God through history, which comes to focus in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is often referred to as Communion because it is a coming together of the body of Christ to share a special bond with the Lord Jesus Christ. Every time Christians observe Communion and accept the cup they partake of 'the New Covenant' in his blood. The Lord's Supper is celebrated with bread and wine or grape juice. A Minister of the Word and Sacrament reads the words of institution from Scripture and Elders in the church share the bread and wine with the congregation. At Avon Lake Presbyterian Church we celebrate Communion on the first Sunday of the month, Christmas Eve, and during our Maundy Thursday service.

HEAVEN

“A Story is only as good as its ending. Without a happy ending that draws us on in eager anticipation, our journey becomes a nightmare of endless struggle.”

From The Sacred Romance by Brent Curtis and John Eldredge

“Hope is one of the theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on the Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth “thrown in”: aim at earth and you will get neither.”

From Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

It’s difficult to talk about heaven because we know so little about it. However, it’s very important to our faith journey. Below are some scriptures that tell us about heaven with a few excerpts from The Sacred Romance.

Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven. (John 14:1-7)

“Our longing for intimacy gives us the greatest scent of the joys that lie ahead. Being left out is one of life’s most painful experiences. . . Throughout our lives, each one of us lives with a constant nagging that we never quite fit in, we never truly belong. . . Christ promises that he is saving a place in heaven especially for each of us. We’ll be welcome to the table by our Lover himself. No one will have to scramble to find another chair, to make room for us at the end of the table, or rustle up a place setting. There will be a seat with our name on it, held open at Jesus’ command for us and no other.”

There is great beauty beyond what we experience here on earth. (Revelation 4:3, 6; 22:2)

“There is so much more to the human soul and so much more to the riches God has prepared for those who love him. In the same way that life sharpens our yearning to be welcomed into the sacred circle of intimacy, so it awakens another ache from deep within – our longing for beauty.”

In heaven, we will have new “glorified” bodies. (Philippians 3:20-21)

“We will have glorified bodies with which to partake of all the beauty of heaven. As Edwards wrote, “Every faculty will be an inlet of delight.” We will eat freely the fruit of the tree of life and drink deeply from the river of life that flows through the city. And the food will satisfy not just our body but our soul.”

When we get to heaven we will be worshipping God. (Revelation 4:8, Isaiah 6:2-3)

We will have unbroken fellowship with God; this will be the fullness of joy (I John 3:2)

“We will worship God in heaven, meaning all of life will finally be worship, not round after round of “Amazing Grace.” The parable of the coins in Luke 19 and the talents in Matthew 25 foreshadows a day when we shall exercise our real place in God’s economy, the role we have

been preparing for on earth. He who has been faithful in the small things will be given even greater adventures in heaven. We long for adventure, to be caught up in something larger than ourselves, a drama of heroic proportions.”

In heaven there is no sin, death, crying, mourning, or darkness. (Revelation 21:4)
Heaven is eternal, everlasting. (John 3:16, II Peter 1:11)

We have several children’s books on the subject of Heaven:

Grandma, I’ll Miss You by Kathryn Slattery

“Yes Katy, sometimes I am afraid. I know so much more about life on earth than I do about the new life waiting for me in heaven. But it’s perfectly normal to be afraid about things we don’t fully understand. It helps when I try to remember that death, in its way, is as natural a part of life as birth. In fact, there’s a lot we can learn about death from birth. . . Think for a moment about this baby here, all cozy and warm, safe and snug in the darkness of your mother’s womb. Pretend for a moment that this baby can talk. And pretend that you’ve just told this baby that whether he liked it or not a mysterious experience called birth was about to happen to him, and that when it did happen, he would be entering a world unlike anything he could ever imagine. Well, I think this baby would probably say something like ‘What? Leave my safe, warm world that I love and know so well, and have spent my whole life in, for some bright, noisy place I know nothing about? No way! Angry and scared. That’s how the baby would most likely feel. Crazy as it may seem, the unborn baby might even have the mistaken idea that what was about to happen to him wasn’t birth at all, but death – in the sense that everything about life as he knew it was going to come to an abrupt end.”

What Happened When Grandma Died? by Peggy Barker

“When Grandma died she left behind three things – her body, her house, and her old life. God promises three new things – a new body, a new place to live, and a new life.

Badger’s Parting Gifts by Susan Varley

“As the last of the snow melted, so did the animals’ sadness. Whenever Badger’s name was mentioned, someone remembered another story that made them all smile. One warm spring day as Mole was walking on the hillside where he’d last seen Badger, he wanted to thank his friend for his parting gift. “Thank you, Badger, “he said softly, believing that Badger would hear him. And . . .somehow. . .Badger did.”

Someday Heaven by Larry Libby

Answers to lots of questions lie – Where is Heaven? How do I get to Heaven? Who lives in Heaven? How long will I be in Heaven? If Heaven is so good, why are people afraid to die?

How Far to Heaven by Chara M. Curtis

A little girl and her Nana go looking for heaven.

For Heaven’s Sake by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

“I think, Isaiah, we can get close to heaven and to God in a place in our hearts. I feel there is a part of Grandpa in all the places and people we visited today, and a little bit of heaven, too.”

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

(Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:12-16)

Simon Peter	Philip	James son of Alphaeus
James	Bartholomew	Thaddaeus
John	Matthew	Simon the Patriot
Andrew	Thomas	Judas Iscariot

Mark 3:16-19

These are the twelve Jesus appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Simon Peter - He is the most prominent of Jesus' twelve apostles. The New Testament gives a more complete picture of Peter than of any other disciple. Peter is often considered to be a big, blundering fisherman. But this is a shallow portrayal. The picture of his personality portrayed in the New Testament is rich and many-sided. A more fitting appraisal of Peter is that he was a pioneer among the twelve apostles and the early church, breaking ground that the church would later follow.

James - James is never mentioned apart from his brother John in the New Testament, even at his death. When the brothers are mentioned, James is always mentioned first, probably because he was the elder. After the Resurrection, however, John became the more prominent, probably because of his association with Peter. James was killed by Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, sometime between A.D. 42-44. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be put to death and the only one whose martyrdom is mentioned in the New Testament.

John - Before his call by Jesus, John was a fisherman, along with his father and brother. His mother was probably Salome, who may have been a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Zebedee family apparently lived in Capernaum on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. The family must have been prosperous, because the father owned a boat and hired servants. The brothers Zebedee were called by Jesus after His baptism immediately after the call of two other brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, with whom they may have been in partnership. James and John must have contributed a headstrong element to Jesus' band of followers, because Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder."

Andrew - According to the Gospel of John, Andrew and an unnamed friend were among the followers of John the Baptist. When John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, both Andrew and the unnamed friend followed Jesus. Andrew then brought his brother Simon to meet the Messiah - an action that continues to be a model for all who bring others to Christ. According to tradition, Andrew was martyred at Patrae in Achaia by crucifixion on an X-shaped cross. According to Eusebius, Andrew's field of labor was Scythia, the region north of the Black Sea. For this reason he became the patron saint of Russia. He is also considered the patron saint of Scotland.

Philip - He was a native of Bethsaida in Galilee. He met Jesus beyond the Jordan River during John the Baptist's ministry. Jesus called Philip to become His disciple. Philip responded and brought to Jesus another disciple, named Nathanael or Bartholomew. Philip is usually mentioned with Nathanael.

Bartholomew - Many scholars equate Bartholomew with Nathanael but no proof of this identification exists, except by inference. According to church tradition, Bartholomew was a missionary to various countries, such as Armenia and India. He is reported to have preached the gospel along with Philip and Thomas. According to another tradition, he was crucified upside down after being flayed alive.

Matthew - He was a tax collector who worked in or around Capernaum under the authority of Herod Antipas. The Jewish people hated tax collectors not only for their corruption, but also because they worked with the despised Romans. Tax collectors were ranked with murderers and robbers, harlots and sinners, and a Jew was permitted to lie to them if necessary. They were excluded from the people of God. Following his call by Jesus, Matthew is not mentioned again in the New Testament. It is probable that the Matthew mentioned in Matthew 9:9-13 is identical with the Levi of Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32, the stories obviously refer to the same person and event

Thomas - He is probably best known for his inability to believe that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. For that inability to believe, he forever earned the name "doubting Thomas." According to tradition, Thomas spread the gospel in Parthia and Persia, where he died. Later tradition places Thomas in India, where he was martyred. The Mar Thoma church in India traces its origins to Thomas.

James, the son of Alphaeus - Not much is known about this apostle except that he was the son of Alphaeus. In each list of the apostles he is mentioned in ninth position.

Thaddeus - He is also called Lebbaeus and Judas the son of James. He is carefully distinguished from Judas Iscariot. Nothing else is known about this most obscure of the apostles, but some scholars attribute the Epistle of Jude to him.

Simon the Patriot - He is called the Canaanite to distinguish him from Simon Peter. The name may also indicate he was a member of a fanatical Jewish sect, the Zealots. Members of this group were fanatical opponents of Roman rule in Palestine. As a Zealot, Simon would have hated any foreign domination or interference.

Judas Iscariot - He was the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Judas was the son of Simon, or of Simon Iscariot. The term Iscariot, which is used to distinguish Judas from the other disciple named Judas, refers to his hometown of Kerioth, in southern Judah. Thus, Judas was a Judean, the only one of the Twelve who was not from Galilee. It is difficult to understand why Judas betrayed Jesus. Since he had access to the disciples' treasury, it seems unlikely that he did it for the money only, 30 pieces of silver is a relatively small amount. Some have suggested that Judas thought that his betrayal would force Jesus into asserting His true power and overthrowing the Romans. Others have suggested that Judas might have become convinced that Jesus was a false messiah, and the true Messiah was yet to come, or that he was upset over Jesus' apparent indifference to the law and His association with sinners and His violation of the Sabbath. Whatever the reason, Judas' motive remains shrouded in mystery. Matthew reports that, realizing what he had done, Judas attempted to return the money to the priests. When the priests refused to take it, Judas threw the money on the Temple floor, went out, and hanged himself.

The Great Commission **Matthew 28:16-20**

"The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee' where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

JESUS TAUGHT BY USING PARABLES

Then the disciples came to Jesus and asked him. “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?” Jesus answered, “The knowledge about the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. For the person who has something will be given more, so that he will have more than enough; but the person who has nothing will have taken away from him even the little he has. The reason I use parables in talking to them is that they look, but do not see, and they listen, but do not hear or understand. So the prophecy of Isaiah applies to them: ‘This people will listen and listen, but not understand; they will look and look, but not see, because their minds are dull, and they have stopped up their ears and have closed their eyes. Otherwise, their eyes would see, their ears would hear, their minds would understand, and they would turn to me, says God and I would heal them.’ “As for you, how fortunate you are! Your eyes see and your ears hear. I assure you that many prophets and many of God’s people wanted very much to see what you see, but they could not, and to hear what you hear, but they could not.

Matthew 13:10-17

Parables we tell in the Worship Centers:

Parable of the Sower	Mt. 13:3-8, Mk. 4:3-8, Luke 8:5-8
Parable of the Mustard Seed	Mt. 13:31-32, Mk 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19
Parable of the Leaven (Yeast)	Mt. 13:33, Luke 13:20-21
Parable of the Hidden Treasure	Mt. 13:44
Parable of the Great Pearl	Mt. 13:45-46
Parable of the Net	Mt. 13:47-50
Parable of the Lost Sheep	Mt. 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7
Parable of the Two Sons	Mt. 21:28-32
Parable of the Growing Seed	Mark 4:26-29
Parable of the Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
Parable of the Great Banquet	Luke 14:15-24

More Parables:

Parable of the Two House Builders	Mt. 7:24-26, Luke 6:47-49
Parable of the Weeds	Mt. 13:24-30
Parable of the Unforgiving Servant	Mt. 18:21-35
Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard	Mt. 20:1-16
Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard	Mt. 21:33-46, Mk. 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19
Parable of the Wedding Feast	Mt. 22:1-14
Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servant	Mt. 24:45-51, Luke 12:41-48
Parable of the Ten Girls	Mt. 25:1-13
Parable of the Three Servants	Mt. 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27
Parable of the Rich Fool	Luke 12:13-21
Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree	Luke 13:6-9
Parable of the Lost Coin	Luke 15:8-10
Parable of the Lost Son (or Prodigal Son)	Luke 15:11-32
Parable of the Shrewd Manager	Luke 16:1-13
Parable of the Widow and the Judge	Luke 18:1-8
Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18:9-14
Parable of the Good Shepherd	John 10:1-18

THE BIBLE

The Books and their abbreviations

The Old Testament:

LAW:	Genesis	Gn
	Exodus	Ex
	Leviticus	Lv
	Numbers	Nu
	Deuteronomy	Dt
HISTORY:	Joshua	Js
	Judges	Jg
	Ruth	Ru
	I Samuel	I S
	II Samuel	II S
	I Kings	I K
	II Kings	II K
	I Chronicles	I Ch
	II Chronicles	II Ch
	Ezra	Ezra
	Nehemiah	Ne
POETRY:	Esther	Es
	Job	Job
	Psalms	Ps
	Proverbs	Pr
	Ecclesiastes	Ec
	Song of Solomon	
	Or	
	Song of Songs	Sgs
MAJOR PROPHETS	Isaiah	Is
	Jeremiah	Jr
	Lamentations	Lm
	Ezekiel	Ez
MINOR PROPHETS	Daniel	Dn
	Hosea	Ho
	Joel	Jl
	Amos	Am
	Obadiah	Ob
	Johah	Jon
	Micah	Mic
	Nahum	Nh
	Habakkuk	Hb
	Zephaniah	Zep
	Haggai	Hg
	Zechariah	Zec
	Malachi	Ml

The New Testament:

GOSPELS:	Matthew	Mt
	Mark	Mk
	Luke	Lk
	John	Jn
LETTERS/ EPISTLES:	Romans	Ro
	I Corinthians	I Co
	II Corinthians	II Co
	Galatians	Ga
	Ephesians	Eph
	Philippians	Phil
	Colossians	Col
	I Thessalonians	I Th
	II Thessalonians	II Th
	I Timothy	I Ti
	II Timothy	II Ti
	Titus	Tit
	Philemon	Phm
	Hebrews	He
	James	Jas
	I Peter	I P
II Peter	II P	
I John	I Jn	
II John	II Jn	
III John	III Jn	
Jude	Jd	

APOCALYPSE: Revelation Rev

A WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

If you would like a more thorough walk use the Good News Bible and read the introduction to each Book and look up each story as you go.

The word "BIBLE" comes from the Greek word "biblia" meaning "Books."

The Bible is a collection of ancient writings about God written over approximately 1,100 years from 1,000 B.C. to 100 A.D.

The Bible has 2 parts:

The Old Testament

The Old Testament contains stories about an old agreement between God and the Hebrews, as revealed to their leader Moses. It also tells how this agreement worked out.

"Testament"
means
"agreement"

The New Testament

The New Testament contains stories and teachings about a new agreement between God and people based on the teachings and life of Jesus.

The Bible is not a book of INFORMATION. It is not a history textbook though it is full of historical events. It is not a science handbook-though it talks of subjects studied by scientists. It is not a philosophical work -though questions of philosophy are introduced. It is not a literary masterpiece-though it contains some beautiful writing. The Bible is a Book about God. It is a book meant for TRANSFORMATION. We read the Bible so that we may hear God speak to us; so that we may come to know God and understand God's love and mercy; so that we may welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives and be transformed from mere mortals into children of God.

The Old Testament has 39 books

(* Denotes one story on the wall)

5 Books of the Law

Genesis - God created the world * - Beliefs about the origins of the human race* * *

Origin of the Hebrews and their place as the "Chosen People" * * * *

Exodus - God heard His people cry and brought them out of bondage * *

The laws God's people swore to observe when they made their covenant with Yahweh at Mt. Sinai * *

Leviticus - More laws - Regulations for sacrifices - How to observe Holy Days

Numbers - Census of people - Story of Israelites wandering in the wilderness *

This generation never entered the Promised land for they were afraid and did not trust God.

Deuteronomy - Story of Moses' last speeches - Repeats laws.

12 Books of History

- Joshua - Story of Joshua, successor of Moses as leader of Israelites - Conquest of Canaan * - The land is divided into 12 tribes *
- Judges - Troubles in the Promised Land - Fortunes of Israel depended on obedience to God's law - Rule of tribal chiefs *
- Ruth - A pastoral story - How a Moabite became a daughter of Israel and the ancestress of King David and of Jesus Christ *
- I and II Samuel - The Israelites demand that God gives them a king- Samuel anoints Saul - Samuel anoints David after Saul*
- I Kings - Solomon reigns as king after David and builds the temple*
- II Kings - The Kingdom is divided into two kingdoms. Israel is the northern kingdom, Judah is the southern kingdom * -Elijah and Elisha speak for God *-Events leading to captivity' of both Kingdoms *
- I Chronicles - History from Adam through David
- II Chronicles - History from Solomon through the Babylonian exile.
- Ezra - Story of the return of exiles from Babylon to Judea in 536 B.C.
- Nehemiah - Story of how a great leader left the Persian Court to help returned exiles rebuild Jerusalem and their lives *
- Esther - Story of a Jewish girl who became Queen of Persia and saved her people from destruction *

5 - Books of Poetry

- Job - A narrative drama that deals with the question - "Why do bad things happen to good people?" *
- Psalms - 150 songs of prayer and praise - many traditionally ascribed to King David, but authorship of most is unknown *
- Proverbs - A collection of wise sayings-religious and worldly-by Solomon and others*
- Ecclesiastes - An account of divine wisdom reflected in nature, sovereign and independent of humankind *
- Song of Songs - A love lyric which many feel is an allegory of God's love for Israel and Christ's love for the church *

5 Major Prophets

- Isaiah - (Proto Isaiah-chapters 1 through 39)-speeches of the prophet Isaiah on many subjects and occasions* (Deutero Isaiah-chapters 40 through 66)- prophecies of the Messiah
- Jeremiah - Prophecies to a nation in crisis during 40 turbulent years * - Talked about the New Covenant
- Lamentations - A book of dirges on the fall of Jerusalem with its consequent chaos and oppression. It reflects the spirit and style of Jeremiah.
- Ezekiel - Reproaches Israel for her sins * - Speaks of the promise of salvation in a New Covenant and explains the conditions of this New Covenant.
- Daniel - Story of a young Jew, taken captive to Babylon, who rose to become governor *-He gives an interpretation of history and hope for a new order.

12 Minor Prophets

- Hosea - First of 12 minor prophets - preached that Yahweh was a God of love and would forgive those who repented.
- Joel - Call to repentance through fasting and prayer - promise of the outpouring of the Spirit.
- Amos - Earliest recorded sermons of a prophet - preached to northern Kingdom that Yahweh would destroy Israel for its sins.
- Obadiah - Sermons denouncing Edom for joining Judah's enemies.
- Jonah - A parable of mercy which shows that God loves all, not just Jews.
- Micah - Judgment of Judah for infidelity - predictions of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.
- Nahum - Sermons against Nineveh soon after Nineveh had terrorized Judah in the late 7th century B.C.
- Habakkuk - A prophet in Judah shortly after Nahum explaining that God used Babylon as a rod of chastisement for Judah.
- Zephaniah - Sermons against idolatry and foreign ways. He prophesied during the reign of Josiah.
- Haggai - He preached to Jews returning to Jerusalem after exile in Babylonia. His message was to rebuild the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem.
- Zechariah - He was a partner of Haggai in an effort to rebuild the Temple. He had a messianic vision of a Prince of Peace.
- Malachi - Means "My Messenger" - He preached against abuses and indifference.

Between the Testaments

There was a gap of 400 years from the time when the last book of the Old Testament was written until the time when Jesus was born. It was a time when no prophets arose to speak God's message to his people. During this time, the Jews were constantly under pressure from two empires - from the Seleucids who ruled Syria, and from the Ptolemies who ruled Egypt in the south.

The New Testament has 27 books

4 Gospels - "Gospel" means "Good news." - The story of Jesus.

Matthew - Written to Jewish Christians as a manual of membership. Matthew emphasizes the moral requirements in Jesus' teachings and reminds them of Christ's forgiveness and mercy. It presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and is full of Old Testament prophecies.

Mark - A short action packed account which presents Jesus as a person of action and authority. Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. Mark's audience was Gentile Christians who were facing persecution and the possibility of being martyred.

Luke - Written by a Gentile Christian to someone named Theophilus, meaning "Friend of God." The writer presents Jesus as God's love that breaks through all the barriers between people. It is written especially for the neglected and the outcasts of society. Luke has chosen stories about the ways Jesus shows love to people.

These first 3 Gospels are called the "Synoptics," meaning "seen with the same eye." They cover the same events.

John - Written for cultured, sophisticated Christians, many of whom were influenced by Greek philosophy. The events are not presented chronologically. Instead, John has grouped stories and teachings into clusters, each summarized by an "I am" statement of Jesus. He heavily emphasizes doctrine and appears to be writing to Christians faced with various differences among believers, as well as controversies with others outside the faith. He presents Jesus as the eternal Word of God who descended from heaven and became man.

1 Book of History

Acts - Covers the first 30 years after Jesus' death. It's the only early account of the Christian community and tells how Christianity spread from Palestine to Rome, the capital of the world. It is a sequel to Luke, the 3rd Gospel, and written by the same author.

21 Epistles (letters)

13 Epistles written by Paul

Romans - Written from Corinth to the Roman Church to prepare the church for his visit. The principal theme is the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

I Corinthians - Advice to the Corinthian Church on insubordination, chastity, and marriage. Discussed the Resurrection.

II Corinthians - Paul writes about his suffering and consolation. He warns he will get after evildoers on his next visit. He asked for a collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Galatians - Paul is concerned about the Galatian converts to Christianity who were backsliding to strict Jewish laws. He writes about the true nature of Justification by faith.

Ephesians - A letter to a city in Asia Minor. Paul discusses the mystery of salvation and the mystery of the church.

Philippians - Written when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Paul warns against false teachings and pleads for unity.

Colossians - Written to the church at Colloassae in highly developed Christology.

I Thessalonians - Written from Corinth. Paul praises the people and tells of Jesus' second coming.

II Thessalonians - A follow up to his first letter to Thesslonica. Paul is concerned about their attitude expecting a second coming of Jesus too soon.

I Timothy - Written after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome. He gives advice to Timothy about handling wrong ideas of some Ephesians.

II Timothy - Written during the time of Paul's second imprisonment in Rome. Paul asks Timothy to protect the community against false teachings and expresses great love for him.

Titus - Written before the letters to Timothy. Paul gives advice to young co-workers to help them in Christianizing the social world.

Philemon - Paul writes this letter to the Christian whose slave Onesimus had run away, been converted, and was ready to return. Paul asks Philemon to be merciful and practice Christian brotherhood.

8 Epistles written by others

Hebrews - Author unknown. Written to a group of Christians who, faced with increasing opposition, were in danger of abandoning the Christian faith. The writer encourages them in their faith primarily by showing that Jesus Christ is the true and final revelation of God.

James - Probably written by a relative of Jesus who became head of the Church at Jerusalem although authorship is not certain. This letter stresses the importance of good works accompanying faith. "Faith without works is dead."

I Peter - Peter wrote this letter from Rome to Christian churches in Asia Minor. Peter writes of the value of Jesus' death and resurrection.

II Peter - Peter exhorts readers to be faithful and blameless. He also helps build hope for a second coming and warns against false teachers.

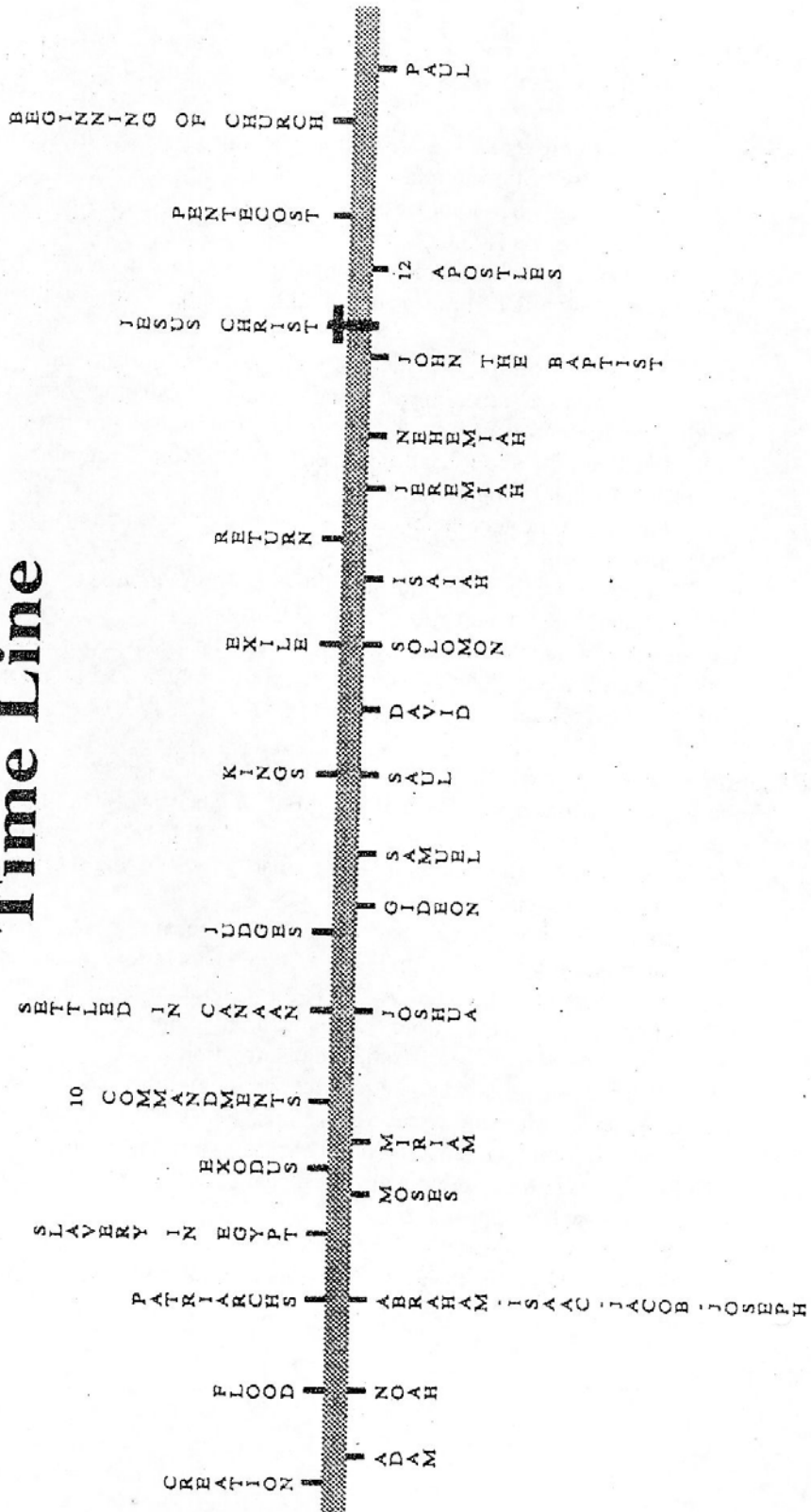
I, II, III John - Written to encourage the reader to live in fellowship with God and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and to warn them against following false teaching that would destroy this fellowship.

Jude - Written to warn against false teachers who claimed to be believers and encourage "to fight for the faith which once and for all God has given to his people."

A Vision

Revelation - A series of revelations and visions.

Time Line



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts (sins or trespasses),
as we forgive our debtors (those who sin or trespass against us).
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever.
AMEN

A FORMULA FOR PRAYER

Prayer should embrace the following elements:

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication
Intercession

One way to remember this is through the acronym **ACTS I**.

In **Adoration** we offer praise and adoration to God.

In **Confession** we acknowledge our sinful nature and ask God to forgive our sins through Jesus Christ. We confess with the affirming words of assurance that our sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ.

In **Thanksgiving** we offer thanks, gratitude, and praise to God for all that God has done for us.

In **Supplication** we offer prayers, seeking God's help for ourselves,

In **Intercession** we offer prayers, seeking God's help for others.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5-7

The Beatitudes

(Matthew 5:3-11, Luke 6:20-23)

Good News Bible translation:

Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor,
the Kingdom belongs to them;
Happy are those who mourn;
God will comfort them!
Happy are those who are humble;
they will receive what God has promised!
Happy are those whose greatest desire is to
do what God requires;
God will satisfy them fully!
Happy are those who are merciful to others;
God will be merciful to them!
Happy are the pure in heart;
they will see God!
Happy are those who work for peace;
God will call them his children!
Happy are those who are persecuted because they
do what God requires;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!
Happy are you when people insult you and persecute
you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because
you are my followers. Be happy and glad, for a great
reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the
prophets who lived before you were persecuted.

New International Version:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult
you, persecute you and falsely say
all kinds of evil against you because
of me. Rejoice and be glad, because
great is your reward in heaven, for
in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.

Other Teachings in the Sermon on the Mount

Salt and Light	Mt 4:13-16, Mark 9:50, Luke 14:34-35
Jesus teaches about the Law	Matthew 5:17-20
Jesus teaches about Anger	Matthew 5:21-26
Jesus teaches about Adultery	Matthew 5:27-30
Jesus teaches about Divorce	Mt 5:31, 32, Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18
Jesus teaches about Vows	Matthew 5:33-37
Jesus teaches about Revenge	Matthew 5:38-42, Luke 6:29-30
Jesus teaches about Love for Enemies	Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-28, 32-36
Jesus teaches about Charity	Matthew 6:1-4
Jesus teaches about Prayer	Mt 6:5-15 / Ask, Seek, Knock - Mt 7:7-12
Jesus teaches about Fasting	Matthew 6:16-18
Jesus teaches about Judging others	Matthew 7:1-6

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:3-17 Deuteronomy 5:1-21

1. Worship no god but me.
2. Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the Lord your God and I tolerate no rivals.
3. Do not use my name for evil purposes.
4. Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me.
5. Respect your father and your mother so that *you* may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.
6. Do not commit murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not accuse anyone falsely.
10. Do not desire another man's house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.

THE TWO GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

Matthew 22:34-40 Mark 12:28-34 Luke 10:25-28

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself. The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.

PRSBYTERIAN CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

The Book of Order states:

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the Book of Confessions. In these confessional statements the Church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, what it resolves to do.” G-2.0100

Contained in the Book of Confessions are the following creeds or confessions:

Name	Date	Purpose
Nicene Creed	325	to settle controversy about the nature and meaning of Jesus Christ.
Apostle’s Creed	evolved by 500	to unify the early church with one statement of faith all could accept.
Scots Confession	1560	to proclaim Protestant faith in Scotland and England.
Heidelberg Catechism	1563	to explain the differences between the Presbyterians and the Lutherans and Catholics.
Second Helvetic Confession	1566	to describe the experience of the Christian life.
Westminster Confession of Faith	1646	to state Protestant beliefs in a way that would help protestant groups in England get along.
Shorter Catechism	1647	to teach Protestant children the Westminster Confession of Faith.
Larger Catechism	1647	to provide a longer, more detailed version of the Shorter Catechism.
Declaration of Barmen	1934	to protest the rise of Hitler and Nazism
Confession of 1967	1967	to state the faith in today’s words; a call for reconciliation.
Brief Statement of Faith	1991	In 1983 the two largest Presbyterian churches in the United States reunited. The Plan for Reunion called for the preparation of a brief statement of the Reformed faith for possible inclusion in the Book of Confessions

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

AMEN.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

1991

In life and death we belong to God.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world.

God raised Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.

We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.

Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage.

Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.

Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing,

to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,

to unmask idolatries in church and culture,

to hear the voices of people long silenced

and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying. Come, Lord Jesus!

With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ABOUT SALVATION

1. Salvation is an act of God's grace by which He rescues us from the power, the presence, and the consequences of our sin. (Matt. 1:21b, 1 John 3:9, 1 John 5:11-13) Salvation is by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ, ALONE.
2. We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Our sin separates us from God (Habakkuk 1:13). Because we are "spiritually dead" we have no desire for God nor can we choose to come to Him on our own. (Romans 3:10-18, Ephesians 2:1)
3. All three persons of the Trinity were involved in our salvation.
 - A. God the Father loved us and chose us before the foundations of the earth to be His children (Ephesians 1:5). He planned our salvation (Ephesians 1:11).
 - God the Father sent His Son to die for us. (John 3:16, Romans 6:23)
 - God the Father redeemed us. **Redemption** is the act of God in Christ by which we are "bought out" of the bondage of sin and given spiritual freedom.
 - B. God the Son was obedient to the Father and gave His life so that we could come to the Father. (Philippians 2:8, John 14:6)
 - God the Son atoned for our sins. On the cross His blood was shed. This shed blood was the **atonement** making our redemption possible. (1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews 2:17, Romans 3:25)
 - God the Son was the **propitiation** for our sins. Jesus' death appeased God's justice. Jesus died as a substitute for us.
 - C. God the Holy Spirit applies the plan of the Father and the work of the SON to our lives.
 - God the Holy Spirit draws us to God. (John 6:44, Jeremiah 31:3)
 - God the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and moves us to repentance. (Jn 16)
 - God the Holy Spirit gives us new birth. (Titus 3:5, John 3:3)

4. Our salvation is purely a matter of God's grace. It is a gift. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
Grace is the unmerited favor of God toward guilty and depraved sinners. There is nothing that we could ever do to earn our salvation. We did not even have the desire to be saved (Romans 3:11). Our salvation is comprised of several saving graces:
- A. **Election** - God chose us to be part of His family before the foundations of the earth were laid. (Ephesians 1:4, 5, Romans 9:11-24, Revelation 17:8)
 - B. **Regeneration** - The act by which the Holy Spirit imparts new spiritual life to those whom God has chosen, and they are "born again" or "converted." When we are regenerated, God also graciously gives us two other gifts. (Mark 1:15)
 - Faith** - (Acts 16:31) A turning to God, believing, and trusting in what God has revealed about Himself regarding sin and salvation. (Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 11:1)
 - Repentance** - (Acts 3:19) A turning from sin. Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for and then a turning from sin to God. (Job 42:6, Ezekiel 36:31)
 - C. **Justification** - The act by which God imputes the righteousness of Christ to believing sinners, and then the righteous judge declares the believing sinners "not guilty." When we are justified, our sins (past, present, and future) are forgiven. We are justified by faith only, not by works. (Romans 8:30, Romans 3:22-26, 2 Corinthians 5:19)
 - D. **Adoption** - The act of God by which He places us into His family as sons/daughters and joint-heirs with Christ. (1 John 3:1, John 1:12, 13, Romans 8:15-17, 23, Galatians 4:4-7, Ephesians 1:4-6)
 - E. **Sanctification** - The process by which the Holy Spirit makes us holy. It is a lifelong process whereby He continues to change us to be more like Christ. We also are involved in the sanctification process. We can choose to obey and separate ourselves from sin. We can choose how much time we spend studying God's word and in prayer. As we read, apply, and get to know God's will through His word, we grow in our faith. (Philippians 1:6, John 17:17, Psalm 119:9-11)
 - F. **Glorification** - When we become like Christ in heaven (1 John 3:2) we will once more be conformed to the image of Christ in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10).

TEN MAJOR DOCTRINES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SHARED WITH THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL:

1. **The Mystery of the Trinity** - One God manifest in three persons:
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
2. **The Incarnation** of the eternal Word of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

SHARED WITH ALL PROTESTANT CHURCHES:

3. **Justification** by grace through Faith - We are made right with God by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
4. **Scripture** as the Final Authority for Salvation and the Life of Faith.
Scripture alone is our guide.

FAITH OF THE REFORMED TRADITION:

5. God's **Sovereignty** - The Book of Order states that God's sovereignty includes "the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love."
6. God's Choosing (**Election**) of the People of God for Salvation and Service.
We are children of God - special and chosen for a life of service.
7. The **Covenant** Life of the Church - Ordering of the church according to the Word of God.
8. A Faithful **Stewardship** of all of God's Creation - A response to God's gifts that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of those gifts.
9. The **Sin of Idolatry** - The making of anything created ultimate instead of worshipping only God the creator.
10. The importance of **Obedience** to the Word of God - Obedience that challenges and calls us to work for justice seeking the transformation of society

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

THE SESSION

The local church is ruled by the elected Elders and the Ministers who serve as the Session. Our Session has three rotating classes of 5 Elders each making a Session of 15 Elders and the Minister. Elections are held once a year, and all men and women who are members of Avon Lake Presbyterian Church are eligible to be nominated. The Session is responsible for the decisions related to mission and government of the church.

THE PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery is made up of all the churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within a certain geographical area. Avon Lake Presbyterian church is a member of the Presbytery of Western Reserve consisting of 56 churches in the Metro Cleveland area.

THE SYNOD

The Synod is a group of Presbyteries gathered together in a specific geographical region. Avon Lake Presbyterian Church is a member of the Synod of the Covenant, which includes 31 Presbyteries and 825 churches in Ohio and Michigan. The major responsibility of the Synod is for the mission of the Church in these states.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church. Each Presbytery sends equal numbers of Elders and Ministers once a year to a meeting to make decisions for the larger church. The General Assembly is responsible for mission directives and programming across the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

KEY FIGURES IN THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT

Martin Luther

Key leader in the beginning of the Reformation Movement in Germany. He nailed ninety-five issues (theses) to the door of his church which began the Reformation movement back to Scripture as our authority. (See Exploring Christian Thought - pg 127 - in our Church Library)

John Calvin

He wrote the famous Institutes of the Christian Religion which was an explanation of the Christian faith. He is known as the leader of the Reformation in Geneva. (See Exploring Christian Thought - pg 141)

John Knox

Knox is recognized as the founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland which is the Mother Church of Presbyterianism. His major work was his History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland. He also took part in preparing the Book of Common Prayer. (See Exploring Christian Thought - pg 157)

A B C 's of Parenting

Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you." Ask God for help with every situation. The Bible is the best parenting book ever written and God knows your child better than any expert. (Mt. 7:7)

Believe that God created your child and God loves your child even more than you do, because God's love is perfect. God has blessed you with the opportunity to love and nurture this child but your child ultimately belongs to Him. (Psalm. 139:13)

Concentrate on the positive. When your child is causing you pain and frustration, focus on the joy your child brings to you and look for what God can teach you through the painful experiences. (I Thessalonians. 5:16-18)

Discipline with love. We are responsible to teach our children, not punish them. Be sure the consequence teaches the child and is appropriate. (Ephesians 6:4)

Encourage your child. Never criticize unless it is constructive instruction. Speak words of encouragement every chance you get!! (I Thessalonians. 5:11)

Forgive, forget, and start fresh every day. A child who experiences forgiveness from parents has a much easier time receiving God's mercy and grace. (Luke 15:11 -32)

Give your child all the time and attention you possibly can. And when you are with your child, be sure you are there mentally and spiritually and not just physically. (Mark 10:14-16)

Help your children to firmly grasp how special and unique they are. Help them to find their passion. Tell them daily how much God loves them. Make sure they understand that God made them exactly how God wants them to be regardless of what "The World" tells them. (Psalm. 139:13-18)

Include God in all your activities. Help your children be aware of God's presence and understand how greatly God wishes to be included in all of our life; the ordinary times and the special times; the good times and the bad times. (I Cor. 10:31)

Jesus must come first!! Only when Jesus is Lord of your life are you free to love others. Our fear, guilt, and neediness all get in the way of healthy relationships. Jesus alone can show us the way to a healthy parent-child relationship. (Mt. 19:16-30)

Keep your sense of humor. Don't take yourself too seriously. Let Jesus free you to see the humor in life. (Luke 10:38-41)

Love your child unconditionally with no strings attached. Children who experience unconditional love from parents are better able to believe that God loves them unconditionally. (Romans 8:38) (38)

Model Christian behavior. Children learn from what they see modeled by others. Children are always watching and nothing goes unnoticed. (Romans 12:1-2)

Nature is a great reminder of God's goodness and power. Take every opportunity to point out God's creativity and the beauty of the world God has made for us to enjoy. (Romans 1:20)

Orders and routines are helpful. Order brings a sense of safety and security to families. (1 Cor 14:40)

Pray for your children daily. Ask God to help them grow "both in body and in wisdom, gaining favor with God and people." (Luke 2:52)

Quiet time is essential. Every parent needs daily quiet time to receive God's guidance and be nurtured with God's love. (Romans 8:14)

Remind your children whenever necessary that we are all equal. All human beings were created in the image of God and are equally loved by God. All have sinned and are in need of a Savior. No one is superior or inferior; no race, no body type, no specific talent; no kind of behavior; nothing makes anyone more important than anyone else. We are all equal! (Gal. 3:28-29)

Share your faith. Tell your children about your experiences with God. Share with them your relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit even if it is not as deep a relationship as you wish it were. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Teach your children to separate the sin from the sinner, the behavior from the person. God hates sin but He loves us sinners. We too must hate sin but love the sinner. (Luke 2:13-17)

"Unexpected" goes with parenthood. Expect the unexpected and be flexible. Don't let your own plans keep you from God's plans. (Romans 8:28-30)

Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." When someone has hurt your child turn to God. With His help you will be able to forgive the offender and repay evil with good. (Romans 12:19-21)

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Don't be afraid to admit your mistakes. Make sure your children know that you know God is not finished with you yet either. Children appreciate honesty. (Romans 3:23)

X-mas is a very special time. Focus on Jesus and let him help you make it truly magical. (Isaiah 9:2)

Yes instead of No. Always say yes unless you have a good reason for saying no. Children who always get no for an answer quit asking. (Ephesians 6:4)

Zestful living: Be joyful always and rejoice! Wake up each morning with the "Good News" of Jesus Christ and live each day with a smile on your lips and love in your hearts. (Galatians 5:22)

Learning to Pray

I Love You

God wants His children to know how much He loves them; how precious they are to him; how much he treasures them. We need to share this truth with our children often. A natural response to hearing about this love is to offer our love in return. It's never too early for children to begin expressing their love for God.

I'm Sorry

We learn from our mistakes but we don't learn if we can't admit that we made them. Help your children become comfortable with confession by reminding them continually that God's love is unconditional. He sees everything we do and knows all our thoughts and loves us anyway. He wants to free us from the grip evil has on our lives but He can't help us if we won't admit that we have a problem. I'm sorry; forgive me; and help me are words that lead to a new life with Jesus Christ.

Thank You

Whenever we experience God's goodness it's important to say thank you. An attitude of thankfulness creates a positive attitude. The act of thanking God focuses our mind on the lovely things in life. Modeling this practice is a good way to teach your child. Every time you enjoy something in life try to remember to thank God verbally.

God wants us to live in a right relationship with Him and each other. That is only possible if we trust Him to provide everything we need and help us with every problem. All we have to do is ask.

God also knows that praying for others is a wonderful way to love others. It helps us connect with each other and gives us the reassurance that if we are ever too sad to pray, someone else is praying for us.

THE GOSPEL: In Five Basic Steps

1. GOD is Holy.

God's love is perfect and complete. There is no evil in Him.

1 John 1:5 - "God is light; and there is no darkness at all in him. "

2. Humans are Sinful.

Our focus is on self. We count ourselves more important than God and others. We do what we want, ignoring God's law of love. Our preoccupation with self makes it impossible to have relationships. We are cut off from our Creator.

Romans 3:23 - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

3. JESUS Died for our Sin.

Jesus came to this world to fix our broken relationship - to reconcile us with God. The consequence of rejecting God is death - to be cut off from God forever. Jesus paid that consequence when he died on the cross and freed us to live with God forever.

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

4. We Receive God's Offer.

God's grace is sufficient for salvation. As we receive this grace our hearts are filled with gratitude and love. We repent, and desire to know our savior and learn from him. *John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*

5. God sends the HOLY SPIRIT to help us.

When we seek to follow Jesus; God fills us with His Holy Spirit. The Spirit is our counselor, our helper, and our guide. As the Spirit works with us we are transformed and filled with *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self control."* *Galatians 5:22* (41)

Family Faith Building Through Mission

Project Possibilities

Interfaith Hospitality Network - Three or four weeks a year we host families in Hart Hall who are temporarily without homes. They arrive on Sunday at 5:30 P.M. and leave the following Sunday at 7:30 A.M. We are responsible for feeding them breakfast, lunch, and dinner and providing recreation from 7:00 - 9:00 every evening. Families are encouraged to participate. If you are interested call Shirley Hook or Lyn Morway.

2 Cents a Meal - Families are encouraged to put 2 pennies in a coffee can for every meal they eat together as a family. Four times a year we collect the money during our worship service while we sing the 2nd hymn. The money goes to our Presbytery where it is combined with others and disbursed to hunger centers in northeast Ohio.

Fall and Spring Work Day - Twice a year the Property Committee asks for volunteers to come on a Saturday morning and help with special projects around the church such as raking leaves, cleaning gutters, and washing windows. It's a great way for a family to contribute together as there are always simple tasks for children to help with. The dates are posted in Saints Alive and the worship bulletins.

Sponsor a Child through World Vision by calling 1-800-777-5777 or write:
World Vision Child Sponsorship P.O. Box 70104 Tacoma, WA 98481-0104

Prepare a Meal - Presbyterian Women provide emergency meals throughout the year to members of the church family. If you're interested call the Church office.

Bake Cookies for the Christmas Cookie Walk - One of Presbyterian Women's mission projects. Check the Newsletter and worship bulletins for the date.

Rummage Sale - Twice a year in the fall and spring Presbyterian Women have a rummage sale. They can always use lots of help setting up Monday through Wednesday evening. The older children can help set out the clothes while the younger children help with the toys.

Stewardship - When we choose to follow Jesus we make Him Lord of our whole life including our pocketbook. Help your children understand that you seek God's guidance with all your material possessions including the pledge you make to help support His Church. Children need to be included in the stewardship process either as a family unit or individual members. Children's envelopes are available in the Sunday school classrooms if they would like their own box.

There are many different projects that the Deacons, Presbyterian Women, Youth, and Mission Committee on Session provide throughout the year. Be sure to read your worship bulletins and Saints Alive for regular updates.

A Personal Note From the Director of Christian Education

Several years ago I read an article written by Harry Wendt, entitled "Jesus taught adults and played with children. Why do we insist on doing the opposite?" The article stressed the importance of adult education pointing out that it's the adults who are called to respond to Jesus, not the children. Harry explained "During the first three hundred years of its history, the Church directed its preaching and teaching program towards adults, and demanded an adult response in faith and life. It made no provision for the instruction of children, not even for the children of Christians baptized as infants. The Church taught adults, and adults, in turn., were responsible for the instruction for their children."

This is just one article amidst a mountain of material which all relays the same message - "Effective Christian Education for children takes place in the home." Leaders in the Church are discovering that if children are not learning about Jesus on a daily basis in the home then they are probably not learning much about Jesus. Just imagine if students from 1st grade through high school spent only one hour a week (or in most cases one hour every 2 or 3 weeks) studying Language Arts. Would our graduating Seniors be prepared to go out into the world and communicate effectively? And yet many parents think that if they get their child to Sunday School for an hour every week or every other week they've provided a good foundation for their child's Christian faith. The sad truth is that children are leaving the church by droves as they reach adulthood. Many people say they are choosing to reject God. Leaders are now realizing that perhaps they were never properly introduced to God. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must be more than mere characters in a few stories they hear once a week. Children need to experience God daily and that can only happen in the home.

So what is the Church's responsibility to its children? **TEACH THE ADULTS!** I believe the best thing the church can do for its children is to enable, encourage, and empower the parents to grow in their faith so they are able to share the awesome **GOOD NEWS** of Jesus Christ with their children daily. God who loves unconditionally becomes real when a child experiences that unconditional love from a parent who tells her about God. Jesus as Savior becomes real when a child experiences forgiveness from a parent who tells him about Jesus. The Holy Spirit becomes real when a child experiences the hope and courage of a parent who tells her about the "Helper" - the Holy Spirit. Sharing our faith is really the only effective way to teach our children about God. The Church is here to provide a community of love and support and encouragement but the parent is the main teacher.

This booklet was created in the hopes that it might be a useful teaching tool - a concrete way to support and encourage our parents. We hope it will be helpful and would appreciate your feedback. We would also welcome any other ideas you may have on ways we could continue to support and encourage you.

God Bless and ENJOY!
Arlene Strauch
Director of Christian Education

RESOURCES

All of these resources can be found in the Church Library.

Exposing the Myths of Parenthood by David Jeremiah

Dr. David Jeremiah exposes the common myths of parenthood that have imposed unrealistic standards and unnecessary guilt on parents and grandparents alike.

Family as the Forming Center, A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation

by Marjorie Thompson

In a time when “family” is being redefined daily, Marjorie Thompson provides core theology behind the understanding of family – family in all its diversity. She speaks of ways to strengthen the spiritual bonding within the family so the family can enact the social witness to which it is called.

How Do Our Children Grow? Introducing Children to God, Jesus, the Bible, Prayer, and Church

by Delia Halverson

This book will help you to talk with your children and youth about faith and about God. It is not a book of theory, but rather a book to give you concrete handles on methods and opportunities to share your faith with your children and youth, so that they will grow in their own faith.

How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk

by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Internationally acclaimed experts on communication between parents and children designed this book to bring adults to the level of children and children to the level of adults so that this happy meeting ground can truly make for harmony in the home.

Let's Hide the Word by Gloria Gaither and Shirley Dobson

This book shares a wealth of how-to information on how to create within and without a home environment that is saturated with biblical principles. In short, they show you how to “hide the Word” in the hearts of your children.

Offering the Gospel to Children by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard

Gretchen Pritchard shows how to offer the essence of the gospel imaginatively to children. She challenges the tendency of adult teachers to stick with easy stories and conventional moralisms. Instead she offers ways to treat the hard parts of the Bible fortrightly and helpfully so that the entire gospel may make an impact on children.

Our Journey Home by Gary Bauer

Gary Bauer offers practical advice and encouragement as we strive to bring our children and families back into the forefront of our busy lives and begin Our Journey Home.

Parenting in the Pew by Robbie Castleman

Burning with an infectious passion for worship, Robbie has learned how to teach children to praise God. She shows us how important it is to take our children's worship seriously.

Parents and Grandparents as Spiritual Guides by Betty Shannon Cloyd

Betty Cloyd reminds us of the truth of Deuteronomy 6. From the beginning God has commanded us to be spiritual companions for our children and grandchildren. She invites parents and grandparents to intentionally guide their children and grandchildren to walk with God. . to talk with God. . and to make a place in their hearts for the presence of God.

“Rethinking Family Ministry” – 5th chapter of Rethinking Christian Education

by Merton P. Strommen

“Adults who can remember as a child (ages 5 to 12) doing something for others with their parents show significantly higher faith scores than those who cannot remember being involved in this way. . . Parents who both verbalize and live their faith establish a quality of family life that is encouraging.”

Siblings without Rivalry by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

This book challenges the idea that constant, unpleasant conflict is natural and unavoidable. In action-oriented, easy-to-understand anecdotes and stories you are shown many ways you can teach your children how to get along.

The Moral Intelligence of Children by Robert Coles

“. . . the most persuasive moral teaching we adults do is by example: the witness of our lives, our ways of being with others and speaking to them and getting on with them – all of that taken in slowly, cumulatively, by our sons and daughters, our students . . . in the long run of a child’s life, the unselfconscious moments that are what we think of simply as the unfolding events of the day and the week turn out to be the really powerful and persuasive times, morally.”

The Will of God by Leslie D. Weatherhead

Anyone ministering to those in grief may hear, “It’s the will of God,” used loosely by either the grieving or those attempting to console. It more often hinders than helps unless both persons involved have a better understanding of the meaning. The author discusses the intentional, the circumstantial, and the ultimate will of God.

Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions by George Barna

In the simplest terms, cultivating a biblical worldview means learning to think and act like Jesus. But how can parents teach children something their own parents didn’t know to teach them? Many parents have never had early spiritual training, so they look to the church to provide it for their children. George Barna says that churches must begin now to come alongside parents and equip them to provide their children with biblical precepts that will protect them from a barrage of worldly ideas and teaching that is hostile to the biblical worldview.