

# A new ministry is growing for 5th & 6th grade students at Fishers UMC!

It's an exciting time full of change at Fishers UMC this fall! I'm looking forward to developing the 5th & 6th grade ministry as my place on staff expanded to include preteens. There is fertile ground for much growth in this age group. If we haven't met yet, my name is Liz Simmonds and I have been the Junior High ministries director at Fishers UMC for just over 18 years. I have a passion for walking alongside young teens as they grow in faith. God loves me a bunch that He lets this be my calling in life! As the church seeks to develop disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world; preteens have a critical place in that plan.

As our church seeks to realign ministry, there is great opportunity for growth in the ministry to preteens. This age group has an amazing capacity to be world changes as they grow in their faith and seek to share their faith with others. Recent studies reveal that most followers of Christ make that commitment before age 14. That offers phenomenal insight into the reasons a strong preteen ministry is crucial for our church family. The 5th & 6th grade will remain under the Children's Ministry umbrella for now, yet we'll be doing ministry a little differently than before.

One way we're moving in a new direction includes offering a broadened Sunday morning experience—our hope is that your student will be involved in the 5/6th grade class at 9:45 and either the 8:30 or 11:00 worship service. (If you aren't already in an adult class, there are new ones forming and existing groups ready to welcome new members. The primary indicator of a child valuing Christian education is a parent modeling it for them. Worshipping together as the body of Christ isn't just for grownups...we seek to empower young people as they seek to connect with God and their church family. The 5/6th grade class will launch on September 2, 2018. I'll be teaching for a while this fall as we build the teaching team. I believe it's important for students to have a variety of adults speaking Truth into their lives. If teaching once a month and walking alongside preteens sounds like fun to you, let's talk soon! The curriculum used will align with the scope and sequence for the student ministry(7th-12th grade).

Outside of Sunday mornings, we'll be meeting on the 2nd Sunday of each month beginning in September. This Sunday afternoon time from 4-5:30 will include some fun, some food, & fellowship. Having a place to look deeper into what it means to follow Jesus in our everyday lives alongside our peers builds a spiritual foundation. Being able to ask questions and explore faith in a safe place allows preteens to begin to own their faith. This will be a great lead in to Confirmation in either 6th or 7th grade! As part of our time together we will spend some time exploring how as preteens your student can live a life following Jesus. As part of that time, we'll need some small group discussion leaders too--no worries, all you need to lead will be provided—so let me know if that sounds like a way you would like to serve students.

In the months where there's a 5th Friday, it'll be a family night. Any family with a 5/6th grade student is invited to be a part of an evening together at church. The first is on August 31st...bring your family's favorite board game! We can share our family's favorite game with others and learn some new games too. Snacks & drinks provided. Stop in any time from 6:30-9pm.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you, your student, and your family. If you have any insights, ideas, questions or concerns; please be in touch. I'll be in 203 at 9:45 or the 11:00 service starting in September. My email is [lsimmonds@fishersumc.org](mailto:lsimmonds@fishersumc.org). The church number is 317.849.1805 or my cell is 317.374.2010.

Blessings!  
Liz

