

Parents' Handbook 2023/24



Our Vision:

Making Lifelong Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Dear parents,

Welcome to the updated St. John's Vancouver Youth Parent's Handbook for the 2023/24 year!

Enclosed are dates to help with planning the year ahead as well as top tips and resources to help in our partnership.

Every Wednesday during term time I send out a 'youth update' sharing what we have been up to and what is going on. We also have a monthly prayer letter to help you join us as we give thanks and pray for the youth ministry. Please ensure that you get the weekly update and pass on the information to your youth.

As a parent of 3 (two are still teenagers) I am very aware of the support and partnership that I need to encourage my youth to grow spiritually. At St John's we seek to support you as you nurture faith in your youth. Although every child is different, many face similar challenges and changes in their growth and faith journey. Feel free to email or grab me on Sundays at either service or Fridays and say hi, I would love to meet you and chat about your child, sharing top tips or hearing how we might help. I have a great team of

youth leaders who oversee age-related, single-sex groups on Fridays and another team on Sundays who long to see your youth thrive during their teenage years.

I trust that God will foster new life, encourage discipleship, and grow opportunities to serve others through St John's youth ministry. Please join me as we pray and proclaim Christ to our youth. More information can be found on the website.

Yours in gospel partnership,



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1. Youth Plan

We seek to provide your young person with biblically faithful and age relevant teaching, great fun, friendships, and a vibrant Christian community. We also seek to support and resource you and your whole family as we together teach and train them.

2022-23: A Year in Review

We saw a growth in music ministry and mission opportunities, youth attendance at the evening service grew and our teaching from Jonah and Genesis as well as big questions helped the youth to grow a missional heart and biblical worldview. This year we are hoping to build on this, taking a team overseas to Nepal and focussing on strengthening the work with our Senior Youth.

This year, please encourage the young people to practice these 5 healthy habits:



C Church
(regular attendance)

Encourage your youth to commit to church.

H Homegroup
(Fridays)

Youth Group on Friday evenings.

O Outreach
(Evangelism)

Sharing the gospel with others.

M Ministry
(Serving)

Serving the body of Christ on Sundays.

P Personal walk with Jesus
(Daily prayer and Bible reading)

This is the foundation of our friendship with Jesus. There are great resources online for free or to buy that can help in this area.



2. Sundays

At the heart of our discipleship is the Sunday morning and evening gatherings at St John's. Friday youth group is great for peer relationships, but Sundays foster multigenerational connections and corporate worship. Although we cater in part to the youth through smaller groups, the collective all age gathering is key in maturing our youth and forming fellowship and meaningful connections with all people. It is an important place for them to see you living out your faith for love for one another.



Sunday Morning

Junior Youth (grade 7–9) and Senior youth (grade 10–12) join the 10:00 am service and leave after the welcome time to gather in their groups. Junior Youth will have small group bible study three times a month. Senior Youth will gather twice a month and will typically follow the sermon series (see end of the booklet for fall term's teaching program). Senior Youth stay in the service on the first Sunday of the month for holy communion followed by lunch together around people's homes. On the third Sunday there will be a youth service downstairs with band and both groups together. We will be following the 1 Corinthians teaching at the beginning of the year.

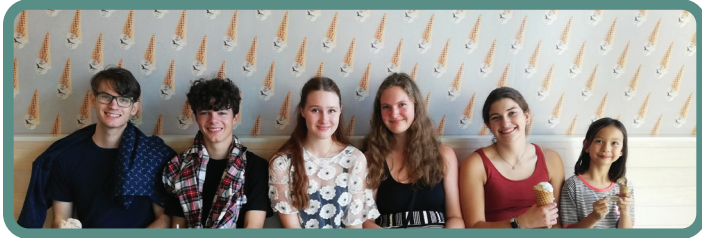
Sunday Evening

Sunday opportunities to lead services and fellowship after the service (7:00–7:45 pm) have encouraged numerical growth. During coffee hour after the service, 10-15 young people gather to reflect on the sermon or a BIG question, play games, have treats, and fellowship.

Please encourage your youth to attend church!

3. Fridays

Fun, Friendship, & Faithful Bible Teaching



On Fridays we see over 50 youth regularly join us from 6.30-8.30pm. Most Fridays we spend time having fun / games and catching up before splitting into small groups with specific leaders. Occasionally we have a BIG night where we feed the youth pizza and have a talk and band, termly we also have 'Chapel', where we join with other youth groups in the city, and other times we have socials and a chance to meet in homes for small groups.

See the back page of this booklet for the program. Friday night will be the primary connection youth have with their own peers.

What does a typical Friday look like?

6:00 pm – *Leaders' prayer*

6:15 pm – *Registration opens and set-up begins*

6:30 pm – **FUN**

Basketball, volleyball, foosball, table tennis, football, and more. This time could be split by Junior Youth and Senior Youth.

7:15 pm – **TOGETHER**

Notices, competitions, games, Bible reading, and a song.

7:30 pm – *Bible study in small groups and an activity led by leaders, followed by prayer.*

8:30 pm – *Finish. Pack down and leave 9:00 pm.*

There are **SPECIAL EVENTS** throughout the year:

YUnite Outside – November 17th, 2023

A fundraiser for homeless youth, sponsored by Greater Vancouver Youth Unlimited and One Night Out. St. John's Youth are participating as a team. This will happen right after Friday youth group on the 17th.

For more info, visit youthunlimited.com/yunite.

Summer Activities:

Beach party, Water Fight, Outdoor Cinema, Celebration of Light, Escape Room, Games in the Park, and a BBQ have all been planned.

See August Update for More Info.



4. Tips For Nurturing Faith

It's A Whole Life Thing...

1. Keep the Conversation Going

As you pray for your young people, keep the conversation going, talk about what they are studying on Fridays at youth group as well as who their friends and connections are. You are not being nosy but interested. Try to stay one step ahead of activities by reading the weekly youth update. Ask how activities went and what is happening next, there is always lots going on.

2. Encourage Them to Invite Friends.

Encourage them to see Friday as an opportunity to invite others from school and clubs to come and hear the gospel. We would love for Friday youth to grow in number and welcome new youth from outside our churches, Jesus is great news for everyone and our vibrant community is a great place to come to hear the gospel and meet him. Fridays are a safe place to ask questions and encourage a healthy balance of fun, fellowship, and faithful bible teaching.

3. Connect Them

Sundays are also key to establish a healthy interaction with other ages and a worshipping community. Statistics suggest that many of our children start dropping off in their late teens and early 20's (*Growing Young*, Barna 2019). Those that stay are resilient and have strong connections with multi generations, they also have started to put their faith into action serving and use their gifts in the body of the church.

3. Encourage Your Youth to Speak to Their Leaders When They Have Great Questions.

It is helpful for youth to have a community of faith that is nurturing and discipling. Feel free to email us if you need extra support. Get to know their friends and invite them (and their group) around on some of the small group nights where we need a family to host.

5. Understanding & Applying the Bible

Understanding & Applying the Bible

The bible can seem scary and complex for youth (and many adults). There are great resources to help us to see the BIG PICTURE and help us with the context and culture of the Ancient Near East. Mark produces a booklet every term to encourage the youth to read the Bible and to underline, highlight, and make notes. Feel free to use them or make use of complete Bibles. Biblical literacy is something we want to encourage. We particularly want youth to understand how the Bible is a whole revelation of God.

The Usefulness of Scripture

Help your youth to see that “all Scripture is living and active, sharper than a double edged sword” (Heb. 4:12) and “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training us in righteousness so that we are thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

The Bible Helps Us Learn and Grow in Wisdom

With the help of God’s Holy Spirit we see how many in the Bible story have walked with God, and many others wandered from God. Each story in the Bible is an opportunity to learn and grow in wisdom.

So encourage your youth to read the Bible!

On our retreats, there will be quiet times set apart for youth to practice reading Scripture and praying.

Reading Resources for Youth:

The Bible Project

bibleproject.com/explore

One Story that Leads to Jesus – YouVersion

A daily reading plan from The Bible Project that includes videos. Youth can sign up at bible.com/en/reading-plans/22273

New Testament In One Year

A one year devotional program for boys. Learn more at bible.com/r/3RR

Reading for Older Youth:

Incomparable by Andrew Wilson
Reading Between the Lines (Books 1 & 2) by Glen Scrivener

There are plenty more options out there!



6. Retreats & Missions

Retreats are an invaluable part of growing friendships and having fun with great teaching. We are aware that finances might be tight for some families so we provide financial support so that no youth misses out on these great weekends and ensure that leaders go for free. We are grateful for the sacrifice that youth leaders give, but know that those weekends are one of the highlights of the year.

Youth Retreats

Junior Youth Retreat (Grades 7-8)

September 22nd-24th, 2023

Camp Kawkawa
Hope, BC

Senior Youth Retreat (Grades 9-12)

October 27th-29th, 2023

Camp Kawkawa
Hope, BC

The All-In 2024

All grades join together for an amazing weekend of fun, fellowship, and faithful Bible teaching surrounded by the beauty of Howe Sound.

May 17th-20th, 2024
Daybreak Bible Camp
Anvil Island, BC

Mini Mission 2023

Over spring break, Mark took a team of 8 youth to Victoria, BC, to lead a Bible camp. Watch out for opportunities to do the same this year!

Overseas Mission: Senior Youth - Summer 2024

In 2024, there are plans underway to take a team of senior youth and adults to Nepal in the summer. More information to come.

Serving Opportunities

Many of our youth are growing through service, helping with production, children's groups, acolyte (up front at Communion), welcome team and 3 times a year the youth 'takeover'. At these services our youth pick the songs, lead the band, prayers, readings and often sharing what we have been doing at youth.

Youth Evening Service Takeovers

Nov 5th, 2023

Feb 4th, 2023

June 2nd, 2024

There are other opportunities to serve on Fridays and Sundays as well as missions that the youth can sign up for.

Volunteering Contact Info:

Youth Choir

David Poon (dpoon@sjvan.org)

Youth Band & Missions

Mark Ashworth (youth@sjvan.org)

Sunday School

Will Gray (will@sjvan.org)

Christine Huh (christine@sjvan.org)

Welcome Team, Scripture Reading, & Holy Communion Acolytes

Marion Maxwell (marion@sjvan.org)

7. Website & Resources

Tough Questions - *Christianity Explored*

Short answers to some questions including 'Has science disproved God? If God exists, why is there suffering, how can I trust what the bible says is true? To watch these videos, go to ceministries.org/Groups/276317/Home/CE_ORG/Tough_Questions/Tough_Questions.aspx

Darkroomfaith darkroomfaith.com

The Bible Project. bibleproject.com/explore

Great Reading:

10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask (and Answer) About Christianity by Rebecca McLaughlin

The Secular Creed: Engaging Five Contemporary Claims by Rebecca McLaughlin

Born Again This Way by Rachel Gilson
A rich portrayal of living faithfully and happily as a Christian with same-sex attraction that paints a compelling picture of discipleship for every believer.

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Timothy Keller

Little Black Books by Scott Perry

Amaze Them with God by Kevin DeYoung
Mark has free copies, so just ask (for parents).

The Air We Breathe by Glen Scrivener
A work of apologetics about equality, freedom, and more.

Being the Bad Guys by Steven McAlpine
Helping us to understand our culture.

Incomparable by Andrew Wilson
Bitesized biblical theology.

Sundays

We will follow the Sunday sermon series in 1 Corinthians. You can learn more at stjohnsvancouver.org/sermons-series

Check out the youth webpage to find more great youth resources curated by Mark.

⇒ stjohnsvancouver.org/youth



9. Teaching Program

Sundays *Follows the Sermon series in 1 Corinthians.*

Date	Sunday Service	Junior Youth	Senior Youth
September 10, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am Leaders' Lunch - 12:00 pm	Small Groups	Small Groups
September 17, 2023	Holy Communion - 10:00 am	Together Downstairs.	
September 24, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Junior Youth Retreat	Small Groups
October 1, 2023	Holy Communion - 10:00 am	Small Groups	In Church & Lunch After
October 8, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Small Groups
October 15, 2023	Holy Communion - 10:00 am	Together Downstairs.	
October 22, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Small Groups
October 29, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Senior Retreat
November 5, 2023	Holy Communion - Mark	Small Groups	10:00 am Church, Evening Supper, & 6:00 pm Youth Takeover
November 12, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Small Groups
November 19, 2023	Holy Communion - 10:00 am	Together Downstairs.	
November 26, 2023	Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Small Groups
December 3, 2023	<i>Advent</i> Holy Communion - 10:00 am	In Church	In Church
December 10, 2023	<i>Advent</i> Morning Prayer - 10:00 am	Small Groups	Small Groups
December 17, 2023	<i>Advent</i> Holy Communion - 10:00 am	Christmas Clues: Together Downstairs.	
December 24, 2023	Christmas Eve	All Ages	
December 25, 2023	Christmas Day	No Gathering.	

Next Page:
Fridays ⇒

Date	Friday Schedule (Meet at 6:15, Doors Open 6:30 – 8:30 pm)	
	Gathering:	Details:
September 8 th	Leaders meet at Mark's	<i>Both at 6:00 pm</i>
	Grade 12 Meal	
September 15 th	Small Group Topic: <i>Salt & Light</i>	<i>Matthew 5:1-16 (Beatitudes)</i>
September 22 nd	Junior Youth Retreat	<i>JY at Camp Kawkawa SY Lazer Tag Night</i>
	Senior Youth Social	
September 29 th	Big Issues	<i>Small groups gather in homes</i>
October 6 th	604 Chapel - Location TBC (Junior Youth + Senior Youth)	
October 13 th	Small Group Topic: <i>The Law</i>	<i>Matthew 5:17-20</i>
October 20 th	Small Group + Parents' Seminar Talk: <i>Relationships</i>	<i>Matthew 5:21-48</i>
October 27 th	Senior Youth Retreat	<i>SY at Camp Kawkawa JY Lazer Tag Night</i>
	Junior Youth Social	
November 3 rd	Small Group Topic: <i>Relationships</i>	<i>Matthew 6:1-18</i>
November 10 th	Small Group Topic: <i>Different</i>	<i>Matthew 6:19 – 7:12</i>
November 17 th	Small Group Topic: <i>Fruit & Foundations</i>	<i>Matthew 7:13-28 YUnite Outside (9:00 pm – 8:00am)</i>
November 24 th	604 Chapel - Location TBC (Junior Youth + Senior Youth)	
December 1 st	Big Group	<i>Pizza Night</i>
	(JY + SY TOGETHER)	
December 8 th	Christmas Party/Evening Service	<i>Small groups gather in homes</i>
	(Small Groups)	
December 15 th – 29 th	<i>On break for the holidays.</i>	
January 5 th , 2024	Leaders' Meeting	<i>No Youth gathering.</i>
January 12 th , 2024	<i>New Series Begins...</i>	

Notes:

Notes:

O God, from my youth you have taught me,
And I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and grey hairs,
O God, do not forsake me,
Until I proclaim your might to another generation,
Your power to all those to come.

- Psalm 71:17-18

