

FIRST PRES

May 2019



Dear First Pres,

I love to see kids in worship on Sunday mornings! I love to hear them call out an answer when I ask a question during the sermon—even more when the question was meant to be rhetorical. I love to watch them gather on the steps during the children's sermon. I love to see kids in worship because we know that young adults with a strong faith in Christ often report having grown up worshiping beside their parents, grandparents and other adults who care about them. Worshiping together makes a difference.

Friends, First Pres is full of gifts we can give to surround our young people with tangible love and walking examples of vibrant faith. It is a blessing to be a five-generation church and to have the privilege of giving ourselves away to the next generation. And it doesn't just happen in worship. Our Family Ministries team strives to create environments where the church and the family can partner to raise kids in the faith. Where parents and grandparents have tools to carry on spiritual conversations with kids. Where families can grow together in Christ. Where staff and volunteer leaders pour themselves out in love because they are passionate about seeing faith formed in children and students.

These pages convey just a part of the investment we're making as a church to pass the faith along. Whether you are a young person, have been a young person, have a young person in your home, or have something important to share with a young person, I trust you'll find an outlet here to unleash your gifts for the good of the whole church.

Yours in Christ,



Tim McConnell, Lead Pastor



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Think Orange Tom Pipkin
6	Surrounded by Love and Care Jennifer Holz
8	Mealtime, Drive Time, Morning Time, Bedtime Making the Most of Our Time with Our Kids
12	When Technology Helps Heather Houston
14	Growing in Christ through MOPS Barb Kiger's Story
16	50 Years of Get Set Preschool
18	Giving Ourselves Away Family Ministries Volunteer Stories

FIRST PRES MAGAZINE

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FAMILY
MINISTRIES
FIRST PRES

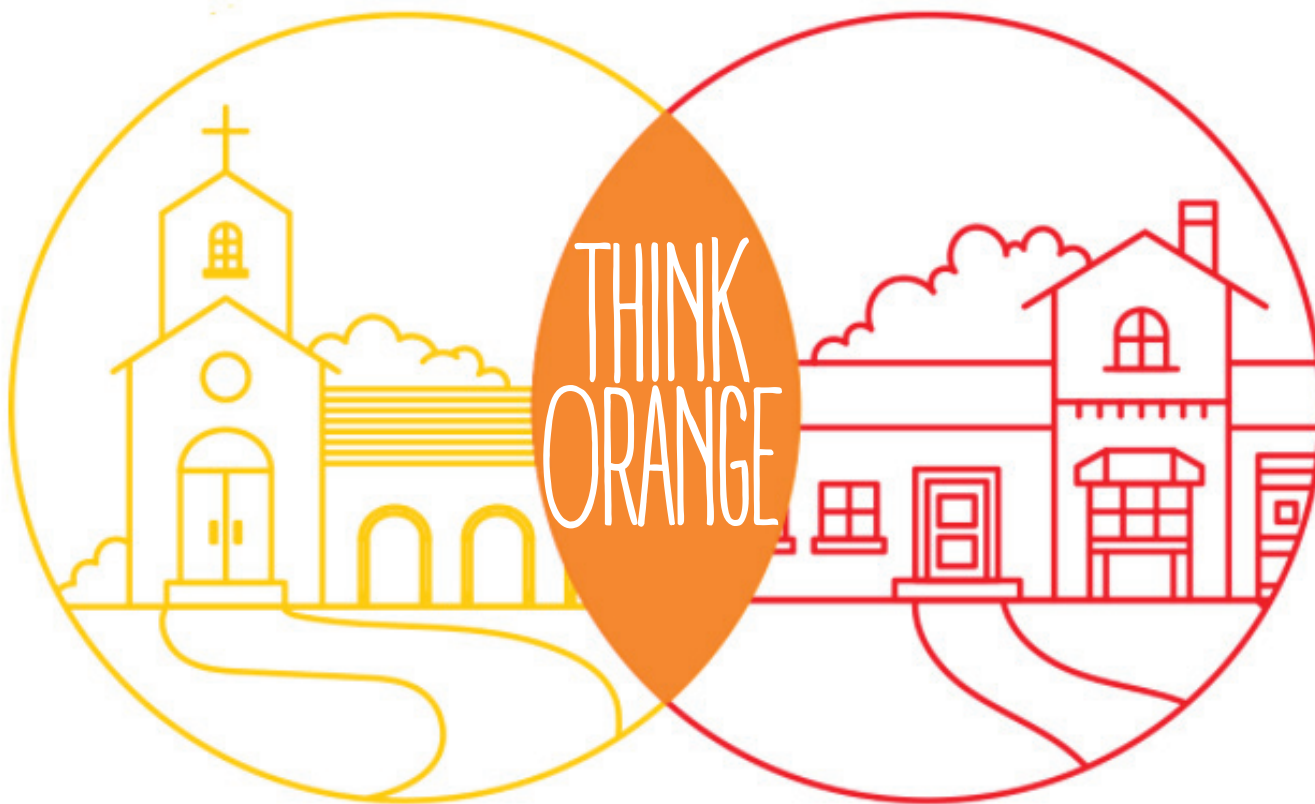
FAMILY MINISTRIES SUNDAY May 19, 2019

Celebrate our young people, families and leaders in all worship services.

**Come together for a picnic and games for all ages
on the Weber Street Center Lawn from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Don't miss it!





Great Things Happen when Church and Family Partner Together

How much time do you have with your kids in the morning before school or in the evening at bedtime? How much time do you spend in the car driving your kids to school, sports, band or other events? How much time do you have with your kids at mealtimes? And, this is the biggest question of them all: how do you *spend* those times with your kids?

These questions—especially the last one—make many of our stomachs tighten as less-than-ideal answers come to our minds. When we are honest with ourselves, we admit we’re usually not making the best use of our time. Many mornings are spent scurrying to get ready, grabbing a quick bite and rushing out the door. And don’t even ask about our bedtime routines! Many of our mealtimes are done on the run, or in front of the television or are crowded out by technology. And many of our times in the car are either spent keeping little ones from bickering, listening to the radio or riding in total silence with our teens.

The Bible instructs us to live otherwise. In Deuteronomy 11:18–19, God gives parents specific instructions regarding how we should

Rev. Tom Pipkin
Pastor of Family Ministries



spend our time with our kids:

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.”

While over the decades churches have done a lot of things well regarding teaching children and discipling parents, one of the places we have fallen short is in the area of *equipping parents* to do the things that God has instructed them to do. Recently in our culture, church programs and classes have been set up to make time for teachers and youth leaders to do the work of connecting kids to Jesus and helping them grow as disciples. Too few of our programs are designed with the idea that the church’s job is to equip parents to take the lead role in developing kids

into followers of Christ. So it's no wonder that many parents feel ill-equipped to make the most of their time with their kids.

That is why at First Pres we are going all in on "Orange" as an approach to ministry that endeavors to connect parents and church leaders for the sake of our kids. Knowing that God designed the family to nurture the hearts of children and that God designed the church to shine the light of Jesus, Orange strategy combines these two influences into a partnership that is effective in shaping the lives of children and students.

The church has an average of only 40 hours each year to invest in a child or student's heart and life. Our time with them is limited, so we need to maximize it. Parents have an average of 3,000 hours to invest in their children each year, and they are looking to the church for help in the important work of leading their kids to Christ and helping them to grow in their faith. Knowing that the family has the most potential to influence their children's relationship with God, it makes sense for the church to spend more of its energy and resources influencing families by partnering with parents in this all-important work.

Reggie Joiner, one of the founders of the Orange approach, breaks down Deuteronomy 11 and helps us to consider how we parents might spend our mealtimes, drive times, morning times and bedtimes intentionally leading our kids to Christ and in Christ:

MEALTIME "When You Sit at Home"
Focused discussion as a teacher to establish core values.

DRIVE TIME "When You Walk along the Road"
Informal dialogue as a friend to help your child interpret life.

MORNING TIME "When You Get Up"
Encouraging words as a coach who gives a sense of value and instills purpose.

BEDTIME "When You Lie Down"
Intimate conversation as a counselor to listen to the heart of your child.

(On pages 8–11, you can find some great

ideas from First Pres parents and grandparents on how to make the most of these times.)

Whether these thoughts sound intimidating or inspiring to you, know that the entire Family Ministries Team is dedicated to partnering with families in the vital work of raising kids to love and follow Jesus, not only for a season, but for their entire lives. From the Nursery to our Preschools to Children's and Student Ministries to MOPS, may God richly bless our labor together as we link arms on behalf of families in our church and our community.



**God made the church to
shine the light of Jesus.**



**God made the family
to nurture the hearts of children.**



**The space where they
collide is a great place
for kids to grow in Christ.**



**FAMILY
MINISTRIES**
FIRST PRES



Jennifer Holz,
Executive Pastor

*One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*
Psalm 145: 4-7

Faith is passed on one generation to the next. In real time. Day by day. Story by story. Prayer by prayer. Older to younger. Every time we baptize a young one into our midst, the gathered congregation promises to be a

part of the child's spiritual growth and care. We promise to order our congregational lives so that our children are surrounded by generations of faith. As they grow up, our children need to hear the generations telling the story of faith, praising the Lord for the



The Simpich family and friends surround Sydney at her baptism.

ways He has worked over their lifetimes and celebrating God's goodness. They need to be immersed in joyful singing and learn the rhythm of hearing God's Word.

What a privilege for all of us to live out Psalm 145 together with our younger ones. Our promise to each other in baptism is that no one is alone in raising their kids. While a parent or guardian or grandparent provides the primary spiritual guidance for their children, a healthy spiritual development for our young ones requires many adults pouring into their lives over time. So, when the baptizing pastor asks the congregation, **"Do we promise to so order our individual and congregational lives that this child will be continually surrounded by Christian love and care?"** Our answer is hopefully a resounding "yes," followed quickly by an ordering of our steps that we each might walk intentionally with the children God has placed in our paths.



Pastor Tom Pipkin baptizes Ellie Lark at her confirmation.

Pray

May God raise us up and equip us as leaders, teachers and parents to train our children in the way they should go. May we rely on Him and receive our power from Him. May we do everything in His strength and not our own.



MEALTIME



DRIVE TIME



MORNING TIME



BEDTIME

Ideas from First Pres Parents and Grandparents for Making the Most of Our Time with Our Kids

It has been said many times that when you're raising children, "The days are long, but the years are short." Yet at the end of those illogically long days, it's easy to wonder if any time was spent on the things that count for eternity. Between feeding, clothing, bathing, cleaning up after and keeping the small people from injuring themselves or one another, it's easy to feel we haven't had time for anything else. Parents who connect with their children on a spiritual level often find that mealtime, drive time, morning time and bedtime are the prime slots for the conversations that matter most. Here are some practical ideas First Pres parents and grandparents have landed on for making the most of those times.



MEALTIME

We often do a “Rose and Thorn” sharing time during dinnertime where each person shares a joy and a challenge from the day. It provides a safe opportunity to be honest about things that are both challenging and joyful and then to discuss how both show us ways the Lord cares for us. – *Audrey, mom to kids ages 8, 6 and 3*

Three meals a day with three young kids can be a challenge. I find that having a focus for discussion around the table helps. Some weeks we memorize a verse together during meal times. I post the verse on the refrigerator so it is easy to grab and reference. My kids love to remind me to practice our verse and usually learn it quite quickly. It is amazing what even a 3-year-old can memorize when you review for just a few minutes three times a day. We can also use our verse as a conversation guide, both in thinking of ways we can live it out and remembering ways we lived it or others lived it out in examples from our day. – *Alyssa, mom to kids ages 6, 4 and 3*

In a world where the pace is non-stop and people are grasping for rest in unsatisfying ways, we long for our family to learn to find rest in their relationship with Jesus. One way we do this is through our Sabbath night dinner. We make the night different from other nights in the week by lighting a candle, making a special dinner (by which I mean not spaghetti or tacos!), and by having intentional conversation around the table.

The conversation looks slightly different from week to week, but it centers around what it looks like biblically and practically to find our rest in Jesus.

We also often have a time of encouraging one another through words of specific encouragement and meaningful touch. After dinner we blow out the candles, turn on the lights, eat dessert and play a game!

– *Leigh Ann and Mark, parents to kids ages 13, 10 and 7*

Jennifer Ellis

Nursery Coordinator
shares a favorite verse:



Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” – Mark 10:27



DRIVE TIME

Getting everyone out the door in the morning is such a task, and we were often arriving at school feeling frenzied and frustrated with each other. I didn't want my kids to start their days that way, so I started a routine of taking a moment while waiting in the drop-off line to bless them and say, "Go and be salt and light today." It's a good reminder to them of their identity as they go out in God's world and a great reminder to me that calming myself and sending them off with an encouraging word is so important.

– Andrea, mom to kids ages 13, 10 and 9

Teaching my granddaughter to drive was not only a privilege, but also a pleasure. We drove together on several trips for 4–5 hours at a time—interstate, highways, winding mountain roads. We stopped for lunches all over the state, from Salida to Divide. On those trips, we had each others' undivided attention and uninterrupted conversation. The benefit of these one-on-one conversations is that my granddaughter and I have bonded so much and have a close relationship with each other. – Dave, grandpa to kids ages 16, 12, 12 and 11

I leave for my job at school earlier than my kiddos, so it made my day one morning when my son called and left this message, repeating back to me what he's heard so many times: "Hey Mom, I hope you have a great day and don't forget our family motto: 'Be kind, love Jesus, have courage and speak truth.'" – Meg, mom to kids ages 8, 8 and 5



MORNING TIME



BEDTIME

Since our oldest daughter was very small, our family's bedtime prayers have included words from Deuteronomy 6: **"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."** We always add the words from Leviticus 19:18 that Jesus paired with this Scripture: **"Love your neighbor as yourself."** It takes less than a minute to recite these words together, but in making them a part of our bedtime routine, we're giving ourselves a daily reminder of what Christ Himself called the core of our faith—love God and love people. No matter what else has happened during the day, we get to end it remembering what's most important. – *Lindy and Josh, parents to kids 9, 7, and 5*

One of my favorite spiritual practices at bedtime helps our kids release their anxiety and calm down a bit at night. We do a simple prayer from Psalm 46:10. We start out by saying the whole verse out loud, **"Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted in the nations. I will be exalted in the earth."** Then we repeat this verse, removing a part of it each time. The second time we say, "Be still and know that I am God." The next to last time, the only thing we say is "be." In between each repetition, we allow 10–15 seconds of silence. We end with the whole verse. Our youngest, who is 7, really struggles to calm down and let go of fear at night. Although we are still struggling with a long bedtime, this prayer seems to calm her little soul. – *Leigh Ann and Mark, parents to kids ages 13, 10 and 7*

Pray

Does your child's name have a special meaning—a story, character trait or namesake behind it? Pray that he or she will grow into the meaning of his or her name. Pray—within the child's hearing—that the character qualities that inspired the name will grow in your child.



**Allen
Hunter**

Lead Associate of
Children's Ministries

One summer in college I spent a lot of time studying Colossians. Colossians 3:1–17 has become my life passage. I continue to especially meditate on how to get my mind and my heart aligned with Jesus.

WHEN TECHNOLOGY HELPS

Heather Houston

Millennials (now ages 22 to 38) may be the first generation to have their middle school and high school years significantly shaped by smartphones and social media. But generation Z—those 21 and younger—have been shaped by personal mobile technology since they were in diapers. We often lament that our phones distract and disconnect us, but what if technology could actually help us connect with the teens in our lives?

Devotional App One amazing feature of our Student Ministries curriculum is a daily devotion that is connected to each series. Students and families can download the Bible App and search for the name of the series we are starting to follow that devotion plan.

Each devotion dives deeper into the lessons students learn each week and teaches daily spiritual practices of Scripture reading and prayer. This devotion plan can be done by families as a way to connect with the content taught each week.

Parent Cue App Have you ever wondered how to take your conversations with your students to the next level after they leave a Sunday or Wednesday program at church? Join the Parent Cue app! Downloading this app and connecting to our church by name within the app gives you the opportunity to create a profile for your child that will link to our weekly curriculum, provide talking points for families and also give information about the developmental phase of your child.



Heather Houston

Associate of
Middle School
Ministry

When I was in sixth grade, I was invited to attend a youth group at a church in my hometown. Prior to that, I'd characterized attending church as a "check off the to-do list" item rather than something that sparked a lasting faith in my family or in my life outside of church. Youth group changed everything for me. It was a fun and safe place to explore faith with leaders who cared deeply about me. They allowed me to bring my questions and my brokenness to church—a place I had thought was only for perfect people.

What surprised me most were the unexpected ways the leaders showed up for me. They came to my volleyball games, sent me letters in the mail, took me out for ice cream to get to know me and even visited me in college. One of my leaders, months before his passing, sent me his Bible with his notes throughout. Those are the moments in my faith I have never forgotten—times when they walked alongside me in the everyday, ordinary places of life. They entered into my world, rather than just expecting me to show up to theirs. They gave me a concrete example of how Jesus walked with His disciples, answered their questions and poured Himself into their everyday lives.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 8 - 12

9 A.M. - 12 NOON

Bethany Hanson

Associate of Children's Ministries
shares a favorite verse:



And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. – Ephesians 3:17–19

We want all of our kids to grasp this truth, to know how richly they are loved by God. Then as the storms of life come, they have that knowledge to anchor them.

POWER UP

RAISE YOUR GAME

For potty-trained 3-year-olds through 5th graders.

Register kids and sign up to serve at firstprescos.org/vbs.

Raise your game, because knowing God and trusting in Jesus fills each of us with the fruit of the Spirit!

Growing in Christ through MOPS

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) is a place where the partnership between church and home plays out in multiple dimensions. Seasoned moms with empty nests encourage and teach young moms who are at various places on the journey to and with Christ. Those moms, in turn, encourage one another and gain tools to raise their kids in the Lord.

Barb Kiger was a recently renewed believer with a 3-month-old when she started attending MOPS two years ago. This spring she wrote:

This Easter weekend was one of the most exciting times in my life! I made the decision to take the next step forward in my faith journey and be baptized! I was baptized as a baby and raised Catholic. For a long time

I've had questions about whether adult baptism was right for me.

After

talking to a pastor, doing some research and praying to God, I came to the conclusion that this was definitely something I wanted to do. Before, I could tell you all about sacraments, colors, church seasons and Bible stories, but I could not tell you very much about my personal relationship with God.

Over the last few years my relationship with God has grown closer and stronger than ever. I have now found the personal relationship with Jesus that I had been missing for so long. The Lord is actively working in my life in amazing ways every single day. When my husband and I married two years ago, as part of my vows I promised to build a Christian home and to build a life that honors God. It's a promise I hold very close to my heart and will forever continue taking steps to keep.

I chose to be baptized because I want to be a strong Christian example for my family,



Angela McKibben

Family Ministries
Coordinator

As a new mom (more than 20 years ago), joining MOPS led me to build relationships with Christian women and be mentored by amazing women of faith. The spiritual lessons I learned from them and the guidance they provided deepened my faith and fueled my desire to serve God in new ways.



children and friends. I wanted to be baptized to both reaffirm and publicly declare my faith in the Lord. I want to be baptized as a symbol of my commitment and love for Jesus, that I will continue to grow deeper in my relationship with Him, and that I will always follow and walk with Him. I want everyone to know Jesus is my Lord and Savior! I am a child of God!

Ruth Zschoche

MOPS

My prayer for the women who attend MOPS and MOMSnext is that they will see Jesus in a new way and know His love and grace in their lives.



MOPS has been life-changing for me. I've made many close friends and I've grown in my relationship with God through Ministry Team Bible Study. I've become a stronger and better mom. Being on Ministry Team has allowed me to gain more confidence in myself. It has helped me blossom and get out of my shell.

Be part of a MOPS Summer Book Study!
Learn more at firstprescos.org/MOPS.



50 YEARS OF Get Set PRESCHOOL

Get Set, founded in 1969, was the vision of June Pauline Gardner, Director of Christian Education and Director of Children's Ministry at First Pres from 1952 to 1981. From the outset, Get Set was revolutionary, providing free preschool for vulnerable families before such a thing was widely available. Get Set, a mission and ministry of First Pres, offers a faith-based early-learning program giving kids a great foundation for kindergarten.



June Pauline Gardner

Get Set graduate Dane McKrey now serves in the U.S. Navy. His high test scores upon enlistment qualified him to be part of the Navy's Nuclear Program.



Bernice Brister was the founding director of Get Set. This former Head Start teacher led Get Set for its first two decades.

In the past 50 Years, Get Set has

- 🎯 Prepared 1,700 children for kindergarten
- 🎯 Served 280,500 hot meals
- 🎯 Shared the Easter story 700 times
- 🎯 Given 1,190 children's Bibles to Get Set children
- 🎯 Heard countless stories of Get Set Children going to college.
- 🎯 Been blessed by volunteers filling 50,000 service shifts
- 🎯 Driven 90,000 miles to bring children to school

Earlier this month, we celebrated Get Set Sunday during morning worship. Get Set provides our congregation with an ongoing opportunity to serve our community as readers, cooks and bus riders are needed each day. Contact Helen Hazelton at 719-884-6130 with questions or to serve.



Get Set children receive a hot meal each day they attend school. Hundreds of volunteers throughout the years have made mealtime possible for the students.



Installing the preschool playground



Delma Cliett (pink shirt) led Get Set as its director from 1990 to 2018.

Helen Hazelton

Get Set Director

When thinking about the Get Set children, I am often drawn to this verse. I believe what it says with all of my heart. I know that God has special plans for each of the children that have come through Get Set Preschool all of these many years!

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. – Jeremiah 29:11



GIVING *Ourselves* AWAY



Family Ministries Volunteer Stories

Nursery Volunteer Judy Bosin (in cover photo)

Years ago when my sons were young, there was a popular children's song which said: "I am a promise. I am a possibility. I am a promise with a capital P. I am a great big bundle of potentiality. And I am learning to hear God's voice, and I am trying to make the right choice. I am a promise to be anything God wants me to be."

When I walk into our First Pres Nursery and see the bright, sweet faces of the children entrusted to our care, this song often plays in my mind. What joy it brings to my heart to enfold them in my arms. Each child is unique in their level of trust when separating from mom. Many transition without a second thought and others do so tearfully. To welcome the child to our rooms full of potential friends and to watch their personality blossom warms my heart. Our role is to provide a safe and loving environment where the child may encounter God's love through interaction with us temporary caregivers.

As long as I can remember, I've always adored children and particularly this age group. My grandchildren are growing up much too fast with two on the threshold of becoming teenagers. The time volunteering in the Nursery helps fill a void between visits with them. I've watched some of the little ones grow from infants not even crawling to all-out bundles of energy running about with ever-expanding vocabularies. It is affirming

to see them thrive and to know God has given us the opportunity to show His love for them through our words and actions. As I am entrusted with their care, my prayer is to help them grow into their future secure in the knowledge that they can trust God's love partly because of the love we've given to them.

Knowing how difficult it can be to gain respite from the rigors of motherhood, I take personal pleasure in seeing our efforts provide this renewal opportunity for these young families. There are also moments for us to talk with the mothers when children are brought or picked up. It's an opportunity to ease their concerns, discuss the children and to impart God's love to them as well.

When I leave my nursery shift, I am usually very tired and a nap sounds wonderful. Though my body is weary, my heart is full and etched with memories to savor at leisure. My husband loves the stories I share of the day. It has given me such happiness even when life has threatened darkness. I just recall the love of these little ones and I believe I know how Jesus must have felt as the children sat at His feet. So blessed, so overwhelmed with the importance of each tiny soul, so thankful for God's creations and my opportunity to serve them and Him!

Middle School Ministries Volunteer Art Butterfield

Working with my "peer group" (middle school students) surrounds me with 50 to 60 examples

of the way God has blessed me. Three months out from birthday number 88, I am astounded by the faith of the kids with whom I interact. Old people, it has been said, tend to forget stuff. The First Pres middle schoolers don't let this old guy forget that he needs to "keep on keeping on."

**Children's and Middle School Ministries Volunteer
Victoria Dziezawiec**

I have volunteered as a teacher, group leader and mentor for about 10 years, starting in the Connection (K–5th grades) and now in Middle School Ministries. God even graced me with braces this year so I can better connect with my 7th grade group! I have been blessed by my students and can only pray that my actions and teachings will bring our youth closer to God, one seed at time. My relationship with Christ has also deepened during my journey with our Middle Schoolers! They teach me about life and love from a different angle.

**Are you called to invest in the
lives of First Pres babies,
children and students?**

Opportunities are available for every personality and commitment level—from bringing



a snack for a single event to shepherding a "flock" of children all the way through elementary school. Contact Angela McKibben at 719-884-6126 or visit firstprescos.org/servefamilymin to find your place.



**Nathan
Richards**

Associate of
High School Ministry



I grew up in Kansas City and during late elementary and middle school attended a Nazarene church. I remember a lot of things about my time there, but what stood out the most were the volunteers in the student ministry and the feel of family in the church at large. My parents went through a divorce during my time there, and I remember being surrounded by love from people I didn't know, and yet it was genuine love. Knowing people who loved me and who loved Jesus made a huge impact during that season and for years after that.

Pray

May First Pres parents
fall so in love with Jesus
that they can't help but
tell their kids about Him,
and may those kids fall
so in love with Jesus that
they can't help but tell the
world about Him.



FIRST
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First Pres PRESCHOOL

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firstprescos.org/preschool
to learn more!



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