



PRESBYTERIANS ORGANIZED IN
Nurture & Teaching



New children's curriculum for fall 2015

Introductory workshops available

Key principles and features

Network News

Winter 2014–2015

Excitement Is Growing!

Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP) is excited to introduce *Growing in Grace & Gratitude*, a new curriculum for children's ministry, at workshops and events around the country beginning January 2015. See the "Coming Events" section on page 3 for first-quarter events.

POINT representatives will want to attend a workshop or event in the coming year and to review the basic information about the curriculum.

The curriculum will be available to preorder in spring, download or ship in July, and use beginning with the 2015 fall quarter. A sample booklet,



with complete session plans for all age groups, will be available soon.

Talking points for the curriculum are available at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/growinggracegratitude. Send this web address to people who are interested in exploring the curriculum with their congregations.

If you are attending the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) 2015 Annual Event in Baltimore, you can sign up for the *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* workshop for a hands-on experience. Register for the POINT Topic Forum and Congregational Ministries Publishing/Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Publishers' Breakfast for information about the curriculum and other resources from CMP and PPC.

Catch the excitement of *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* with children!

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Letter from the Coordinator

Are you receiving the HTML POINT Network News or the e-blast POINT Network News and other denominational information that you need? Please remember to subscribe to POINT and other e-newsletters through the Presbyterian Mission Agency at this link: pages03.net/presbyterianchurch/Presbyterian_Church_Newsletter_Subscriptions2/. Unless you complete the subscription process, you will not receive electronic communications through POINT even as a member of the network on the database. Thanks for checking your subscription status.

Candace C. Hill, coordinator, Educational Ministries

The Magic Age

Questions about the magic age for church membership come at least once or twice a year. What is the right age for children to reaffirm their baptism and join the church? Does the *Book of Order* set the standard age for confirmation and membership? Is there a correct age for full participation?

The answers provided are much the same:

- The *Book of Order* does not mandate an age for communicant members.
- Parents and congregations establish guidelines for families and faith communities.
- Median ages for confirmation are 13, 14, and 15.
- Thoughts about ages for confirmation and the membership process are changing.
- Full participation is encouraged at any age.

The sense of belonging that develops in early childhood is leading people familiar with faith formation to consider full participation for children at an earlier age instead of waiting for adolescence. Some advocate for children to join the church as preteens of 10, 11, and 12 years of age. Those who advocate for younger ages offer a variety of reasons:

- The teen years, with the intense focus on self and struggles with identity, make it difficult for teens to make a decision about membership and full participation.
- Teens may make the decision to join the church to please their parents and sometimes leave with a sense of “graduating from church.”
- Children who are more invested in the faith community when they are a bit idealistic, instead of when adults are no longer the center of their worlds, drift away less often and, if they do leave, come back into the fold more easily.
- Children who are welcomed as equals in faith become well grounded, building strong feelings that they can make a difference in the world through their churches.

There is also some movement to bring children into full membership by profession of faith or reaffirmation of baptism, much as adults are, instead of a confirmation or initiation experience.

Shifting to younger ages does not answer deep questions about when children grasp a greater understanding of faith or develop the higher-level abstract reasoning that is important for continued faith development. These answers, like much of the faith

experience, remain a mystery. Children still are developing those skills, but they relate to belonging to a community or group. A confirmation experience, or a designated rite of passage, is important to the covenant relationship. Congregations can help children of any age claim, “With God at the core, this is my church and these are my people.”

The magic age for church membership remains elusive, and people continue to ask important questions about nurturing faith for a lifetime. If you want to join the conversation about faith formation and membership for children and teens or share your congregation’s innovative approach to confirmation, contact a member of The Confirmation Project at theconfirmationproject.com.



Stay in Touch

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800-728-7228, ext. 5768

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Curriculum Helpline
800-728-7228, ext. 8100

Coming Events

January 11, 2015*

E3 = Educating • Equipping • Empowering

Providence Presbytery at Oak Avenue Presbyterian Church, 421 Oak Avenue, Rock Hill, South Carolina
Register through the presbytery website at: providencepres.org/e3_registration_2015.aspx

January 31, 2015**

Presbytery of Genesee Valley's Church Leadership Development

Perinton Presbyterian Church, 6551 Pittsford-Palmyra, Fairport, New York
Information at: pbygenval.org/events/2015-church-leadership-development-day

January 31, 2015*

Union Presbyterian Seminary, Paisley Hall, 1204 Palmyra Avenue, Richmond, Virginia; 10:00 a.m. to noon
Contact Ann Knox at: aknox@upsem.edu

February 4, 2015

POINT 2015 Topic Forum

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel; 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Register at: eventbrite.com/e/point-2015-topic-forum-tickets-422773527

February 4-7, 2015**

Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) Annual Event

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel
Fear Not! with Brian Blount and Carol Howard Merritt
Register at: apcenet.org

February 14, 2015*

Parish Resource Center, 919 Elmton Road, Valley Stream, New York; 10:00 a.m. to noon
Contact Karla McKenzie at: karla@prctr.org

February 28, 2015**

Leader-Ship 2015: Presbytery of Charlotte and Union Presbyterian Seminary Leader Development

Sharon Presbyterian Church, 5201 Sharon Road, Charlotte, North Carolina; 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.
Learn more at: presbyofcharlotte.org/communications/seminars

March 6, 2015*

Presbytery of the Cascades, First Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Holly Street, Medford, Oregon; 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Contact Mary Wright Gillespie at: mwgillespiervm@charter.net

March 14, 2015*

Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, 2236 Tower Grove Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri
Contact Barbi Smith at: stlbarbi99@gmail.com

March 18, 2015*

First Presbyterian Church, 1111 N. Virginia Street, Port Lavaca, Texas; 10:00 a.m. to noon
Contact Sheri Dittman at: sheri.dittman@gmail.com

March 19, 2015**

Presbytery of New Covenant, 1110 Lovett Boulevard, Houston, Texas; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Contact Mary Marcotte at: mmarcotte@pbyofnewcovenant.org

March 23, 2015*

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 8231 Callaghan Road, San Antonio, Texas; 10:00 a.m. to noon
Contact Sheri Dittman at: sheri.dittman@gmail.com

* **Growing in Grace & Gratitude curriculum workshop**

** **Growing in Grace & Gratitude curriculum workshop as part of another event, registration required**



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**Planning
Christian
education events
in your area?
Please tell us.**

Locate your POINT CMP regional representative or view the POINT network list at pcusa.org/point/directory. Contact one of these Christian education representatives for support of your educational ministry, especially for assistance with the interpretation and selection of resources.

Resource News

Awesome Adventures

Packed with kid-friendly lessons, take-home comics, and fun activities, *Awesome Adventures* is a broadly graded summer curriculum that encourages children to explore the stories of God's people. Now with five themes to choose from: *Paul's Amazing Quest*, *God's Amazing Son*, *God's Amazing Kids*, *God's People on Mountains and Seas*, and *God's People on the Move*.

\$44.95 each (full course descriptions available at webelieve.pcusa.org/awesome-adventures)

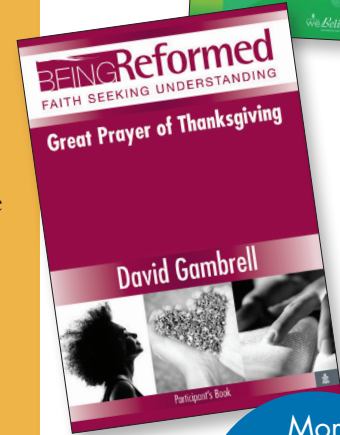
Being Reformed: Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving is a central feature of the liturgy for the Lord's Supper in Presbyterian and Reformed congregations. Through the exploration of the meanings that the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving points to in worship, this *Being Reformed* study will strengthen our faith in the God who has acted in history, who continues to lead and guide us, and who will bring us together in the joyful feast of the people of God!

Participant's Book • \$4.95 • 680726

Leader's Guide • \$8.95 • 680725

Order resources online at pcusastore.com, or call (800) 533-4371.



More information available at pcusa.org/curriculum

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