

PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN

In the United Methodist Church we share the Christian faith in the hope that people will claim this faith and live as disciples of Jesus Christ. We live God's love

- in relationship with God
- in relationship with self and others
- in relationship with creation

Young children (birth–age 5) are forming the foundations for faith development. Children need:

Ages 0-2

- to have attractive, safe space that encourages personal development and awareness of others
- to have loving, caring adults who help them experience trust
- to be guided in respecting others' rights and in being friends
- to have basic love expressed through gentleness blended with sufficient firmness

Ages 3-5

- to be with adults with Christian attitudes and behaviors that children can imitate
- to have their feelings and actions accepted and to be forgiven when they do not meet adult expectations
- to develop and express their own identity as individuals and in relation to others
- to be guided in playing cooperatively with other children
- to practice decision making through optional activities

Adapted from "Helping Children Grow in Faith", Leaflet no. 756243