



2015-2016

Bridge & Oasis Handbook

First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth
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To find more information about this program, visit:

- *The FPCP webpage at www.fpcp.net/children/the-bridge*
- *The FPCP Bridge Facebook Page*
- *The FPCP Oasis Facebook Group*
- *Or contact Laura McHugh, Director, at lmchughmail@gmail.com*

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Leadership By Design

The Bridge leadership model includes the following Biblically-based affirmations in regards to the nature of God's children:

1. Because we are created in His own image, children deserve dignity, including rights and equality.
2. By belonging to God the Father, we understand the role of parental love.
3. Understanding that we live in a world with sin, we respect the need to protect the child.
4. We believe that the Holy Trinity drives social systems and community care.
5. The promise of His eternal love drives our understanding of the need to educate our children.
6. Being in fellowship ensures a place in the church family.
7. The act of mission drives outreach spirituality.

What is the BRIDGE Ministry?

The Bridge (Pre-K through 8th Grade) and Oasis (High School) are fellowship ministries designed for the entire family. It is a ministry born out of the idea that combining the influences of church and family is the best way to amplify God's message and for guiding youth into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Purpose: The Bridge is a midweek, multigenerational ministry where participants experience relationships with God and each other while living out the Word and growing together with a Christ-centered response to our community and world.

Note: Throughout the handbook, any reference to 'The Bridge Ministry' includes 'The Oasis' unless otherwise noted.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Bridge Covenant

Based on Jesus's plan for the church to embrace fellowship and encourage one another in faith, we strive to exhibit:

1. A personal faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior
2. The enthusiasm to share our Christian faith
3. A willingness to learn and grow in our Christian faith
4. Prayerful support of the Bridge ministry



The Four Parts of The Bridge Ministry

The four parts are designed to reflect the life of the early church as expressed in Acts 2.42:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

"Apostles' teaching" = Bible Study

"Fellowship" = Recreation & Family Circle Nights (FCN)

"Breaking of bread" = Family Time

"Prayers" = Worship & Ministry Skills

1. Bible Study

The Bible study portion of the BRIDGE Ministry provides the foundation upon which the rest of the Ministry is designed. To build Christian relationships, and to create an arena in which a Christian community can be experienced, everyone must come to know and understand the Bible. Along with regular attendance in Sunday School and other church programs, the BRIDGE Ministry strives to develop Biblically-literate youth and children who apply what they have learned in Bible study to all aspects of their lives.

2. Recreation & Family Circle Nights (FCN)

The purpose of Family Circle Nights is twofold; first, it serves as an opportunity to bring families into our ministry who currently are not members of the Bridge family; second, it offers a 'retreat experience' for servants in the Bridge ministry as they may be served in the FCN. A constant during this night will be families sharing Family Time. This night will be an outreach to the rest of our FPCP church families, and families outside of our Church.

3. Family Time

During the dinner hour, a unique sense of the family of God develops as BRIDGE members and adult table parents share a meal every week. The meal is served family style giving everyone the opportunity to serve one another. A caring "family" is created at each table as table members share important events in their lives and enjoy Family Fun time together.

4. Worship & Ministry Skills

The experience of worship is at the center of our life together as a Christian community. The Worship and Ministry Skills portion of the BRIDGE Ministry not only teaches about worship, but also provides ways for our young people to participate fully in the life of our church. This prepares youth and children to participate regularly in worship with the congregation each Sunday and in the ministry life of our church.

The Oasis

The BRIDGE Ministry believes that High School is where the accumulated effects of the BRIDGE System reach their fullest potential. Statistics show that church involvement of Senior Highs drops off dramatically at a time in their lives when there are countless difficult challenges that face the teenager of today. Because of this, Senior Highs are considered the culmination of the structure of the BRIDGE Ministry.

The Oasis mission statement defines the direction and mission of this program: **“Building a life-long bond with God through our relationships with each other, our church, our BRIDGE family and those in need.”**

We meet on Wednesday evenings just like the rest of BRIDGE but The Oasis is carefully designed to respond to the specific needs of our Senior Highs. Our programming follows a more flexible schedule than the elementary and middle school program. The complete adult leadership team remains with the students all night long affording the opportunity to build valuable relationships between the students and the adult leaders.

During Bible study, we'll delve into practical ways that we can live our faith while dealing with the kinds of issues teens face every day. We then hope to put the concepts we learn in Bible Study into practice during Recreation events and service projects where students can have a blast at the same time as they deepen their relationship with God one day at a time. In Worship Skills, while there may be some vocal opportunities for participation in a youth choir, there will be a strong focus on preparing our Senior Highs to plan and present parts of the liturgy. The students will have an opportunity to participate in Sunday worship with activities such as writing and reading prayers, reading Scripture lessons, giving the children's message and ushering. This Worship Skills vision is intended to help our Senior Highs build a loving appreciation for and comfort with corporate worship during their high school years which we pray will foster a commitment in them to continue worshiping in their adult life.

At The Oasis we delve into scripture to learn practical ways to apply our faith to the kinds of issues teens face every day. We encourage thoughtful questions and discerning discussion in a safe, non-threatening environment. We get to know what matters in each other's lives. We provide students with opportunities to actively live out their discipleship through monthly mission outreach activities whether within our own church or serving in Detroit or reaching out to our international mission concerns in Mexico and Malawi. We strive to help our students build a solid foundation for their faith in Jesus Christ, foster a genuine relationship with God, the Father, all while remaining open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We hope to equip The Oasis students with a desire to grow and nurture their faith-life into adulthood after they finish high school.

The Importance of Adult Servants/Members

A key part of the foundation of the BRIDGE Ministry lies in the adult servants/members that participate in the Ministry. Without the adult members, the Ministry would not exist. In order to reap the full benefits of the BRIDGE system of ministry, it is important that there is cross-generational involvement from the entire congregation. Adult members are *not* limited to parents of children participating in the Ministry.

Children and youth "catch" the Christian faith by entering into relationships with adults who live their Christian faith, and who treat every person as a child of God. Whether you are leading a game, washing dishes, parenting a table, or driving a car-pool, you are demonstrating to children and youth in the BRIDGE Ministry that you love them, and you want them to know God and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. They will know by your participation that you believe the BRIDGE Ministry to be a high priority for them.

In order to best share your gifts and talents, we ask that each adult prayerfully consider what gifts/talents/skills you can share with the Bridge Family to enrich the experience for the entire BRIDGE family.

Adult Enrichment

During the season, we will meet periodically within our respective areas (family time, recreation, bible study, oasis, worship skills) in order to facilitate communication and provide opportunities for additional training. A full leadership training will be held in the spring.

Our Commitment

We are committed to being purposeful and keeping the affirmations of our ministry in the forefront by:

1. Families attending congregational worship every week
2. Pastors participating and providing ministry leadership
3. Adult members attending an orientation meeting and offering their gifts in support of the ministry
4. Including financial participation of families

Fostering Fellowship

At the Bridge,

**Everyone is to treat everyone else as a Child of God.
No one has the right to treat anyone as if they do not matter.**

The Role of Discipline in the Christian Lifestyle:

Christian discipline includes the teaching of self control and guiding young disciples in responding to unacceptable behavior as Jesus would. A person can elect "self exclusion" by not remaining within appropriate behavioral boundaries.

How Do We Accomplish This? We look to The Word...

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

~ Matthew 22: 36-40

Step-up Policy for Discipline:

Unacceptable behavior will be dealt with as quickly, creatively, lovingly and firmly as possible. Courtesy is expected at all times regardless of the part of the Ministry in which the student is engaged. We ask that the family support our approach to discipline, and that cooperation with others in the Ministry be stressed.

A congregational approach to discipline is the most effective. This means that we hope that all adults will notice and stop unacceptable behavior as they see it.

1. Verbal Warning
2. Verbal Warning
3. Appropriate Consequence
4. Notify Director or Designated Adult

Registration

Registration for new and returning families is not complete until a parent or a sponsoring adult has attended an Orientation Meeting and has provided the following:

- All registration forms completed.
- Enrollment fees paid.
- A commitment to share his or her gifts in the Ministry is made.
- A Ministry with Minors form has been submitted.

Student Fees

Students (Age 3 – Grade 12):

The following fees have been set to help the church pay for the BRIDGE Ministry. The annual cost per participant (Age 3 by Dec. 1 of current year - Grade 12) is \$95, which covers meals, Bible Study and Worship Skills materials, and Family Time supplies. The fees represent an excellent value for our children and youth in that the \$95 annual fee is equivalent to a modest \$3.52 per night.

The enrollment fee does not cover all program costs. In addition to your fees, the Ministry is funded by contributions from FPCP, fundraisers, sponsorships and donations as well as nominal field trip fees paid by students.

Dinner Fees

In order to help cover food costs, all adult volunteers staying for dinner each week are asked to contribute an annual dinner fee of \$75 which represents a \$3.52 dinner fee per week or \$5.00 each night should you prefer a more flexible alternative. Paying a yearly amount represents a 30% discount per meal.

On Family Circle Night, for the families that do not attend regularly, the family fee will be \$5.00 per family member, but no more than \$20 per family.

Family Cap

A family cap of \$300 has been instituted. No family will pay more than \$300, regardless of how many children they have in the Ministry.

Methods of Payment

Payment of all annual fees at the time of registration is preferred. However, payment arrangements can be made upon request through the Treasurer at the time of registration. Payment options are check, cash or credit card.

Scholarships

No child or youth will be denied the rich Christian experience of BRIDGE for financial reasons. Scholarship aid is available. Please contact the BRIDGE Director or Treasurer (see page 10 for names and contact information) to make arrangements for financial aid. All requests and arrangements are strictly confidential.

Ministry with Minors

All persons, age 18 and over, working with children and/or youth, under 18 years of age, must read, sign, and agree to abide by the current First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth Ministry with Minors Policy. In addition, information (including Social Security number) must be provided to complete a nation-wide criminal background check. All information will be kept confidential and seen only by the FPCP Church Administrator.

Policies

Sign-in/out Procedures:

Each child (fifth grade and younger) participating in the BRIDGE Ministry will need to be checked in and out by a parent or guardian upon arriving and departing the church. Youth (6th grade and older) must check themselves in and out upon arriving and departing the church. A greeter will be located at the door of the church. Attendance, name tags, dinner fees (for guests), etc. will be handled at the greeter table.

Visitors:

We encourage youth and children to bring their friends to visit the BRIDGE and Oasis Ministries. The person bringing the guest should pay for the meal for the guest (\$5.00/guest/night). Payment may be given to the greeter. When a guest has attended three times, the parents will be contacted and invited to register their youth or child in the Ministry at the next Registration meeting.

Absences:

If your youth or child is going to be late or absent, please contact Registrar (see page 10 for names and contact information). It is important to note that if an adult volunteer must be absent, he/she is responsible for finding a replacement volunteer for the dates he/she will be absent. Please notify the appropriate Board member (see page 10 for names and contact information) of the temporary staffing change with 24 hrs. advance notice.

Car Pools/Transportation:

The BRIDGE Ministry is committed to providing transportation for those children who need it in order to participate in the Ministry. If you would like to be involved in a car pool or need transportation, please contact the Registrar.

Snow Days:

During inclement weather, please check the FPCP website by 2 pm to see if BRIDGE is meeting (www.FPCP.net). BRIDGE operations will be independent from the school closing schedules. Safety will remain the main concern in making a decision on whether to cancel the evening's activities.

The 2014-15 BRIDGE Board

The following persons meet regularly to plan, to call persons to service, and to administer the BRIDGE and The Oasis Ministries. Please feel free to contact any member of the Board with questions or concerns you may have.

<u>Leadership Team</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Team Leader	Lisa Williams	734-414-0157..... 734-414-0157 (cell)	prieth@comcast.net
Associate Minister	Chris Thomas	734-453-6464 ext. 117..... 805-679-1094 (cell)	christhomas@fpcp.net
Worship Skills Coordinator	<i>(In Need)</i>		
Bible Study Coordinator.....	Beth Olko	248-349-3104.....	olko@comcast.net
Family Time Coordinator	Anne Sherwood.....	734-422-4309.....	sherwood107@gmail.com
Publicity Coordinator	Susan Underhill.....	734-453-6464 ext. 111..... 734-546-4404 (cell)	susanunderhill@fpcp.net underhill.family@wowway.com
Registrar/Treasurer	Julie Kammeraad.....	734-354-4948.....	juliekammeraad@gmail.com
The Oasis Coordinator.....	Kurt & Tami Rager	734-667-2442.....	trager@comcast.net