

# Danielle Szierer

Children's Minister



It is always healthy to celebrate the exciting and joyful things that God is doing in our midst through Children's Ministry programs and activities. ZCC Children's Ministry exists to provide a loving & safe environment where all children will be drawn to Jesus as we strive to help Children to know His Word and Grow in His word and then Show Him to the world. We are dedicated to cultivating and encouraging spiritual life in children. It is our privilege to partner with parents to nurture a spiritual hunger for God, an awareness of His presence, and a love for His Word. We thank God for the privilege of touching the lives of children and their families through this ministry, and we celebrate what He is doing!

Over the past year there were a number of exciting highlights that have occurred within Children's Ministry.

In March we held an Egg-Cellent Easter Adventure where our children got to learn about Jesus as the Light of the World and then excitedly hunt in a glow in the dark area for Easter Eggs. The children also created "Messages in a Bottle" in which they wrote the meaning of Christ's death and Resurrection, along with a personal note of Invitation inviting their friends, neighborhoods, and families to an Easter service by distributing these Message Bottles. Close to three hundred children attended our event and, by God's grace, we saw several children respond and open their hearts to God's salvation that night.

In June we hosted our yearly VBS as we went on an exciting adventure to Norway called "Expedition Norway." Our children learned what it looked like for children in Norway to serve Jesus in their culture. Every night we saw beautiful scenery come to life and we experienced Norwegian life right here at the CMC. Through song & dance, crafts, games, snacks, Bible lessons, prayers and so much more, our children discovered that they really can see evidence of God all around them in everyday life and that in every situation God is Good ~ All the Time. On the closing night of VBS, we saw over 42 children receive Christ into their hearts for the first time. We praise the Lord for this wonderful week with our preschool and elementary age children.

After a long wait, Our new Little Lambs Nursery in the ZMC opened its doors in September. We are so thankful for this new home for our babies right in the same bldg as their parents. God is blessing ZCC with wonderful new little faces to fill our nursery with. Our Preschool Director Julia Jasper moved into the role of Early Childhood Director at ZCC this past Spring and took on the big job of transitioning our nursery into its new home. We also added Christa Joy Kirtland to our staff as an assistant to Julia and helping with the lead in Nursery. We are so grateful for the love and efforts of Ms. Julia, Christa Joy and their volunteer team as they care for our children under five years old.

After serving with us through the summer in many different roles, Ann Tomasko became our Kindergarten Coordinator and has been doing a wonderful job leading our Kindergarten children and staff in weekly lessons and quarterly activities geared just for our K children and their families.

Our ACCESS program for our Special Needs children continues to run strong under the leadership of Chris Blaney and a dedicated team of volunteers who each week meet with our special needs children to teach them about the Lord and His great love for them at a level that meets them right where they are at.

Our discipleship night to our older elementary children changed its name to ROUTE 45 (formerly RT 56, but this year we graduated our 6th graders to move up to Junior High Youth Group). Its purpose is to bridge the gap between Kid's Church and Youth Group. The focus of this ministry is to help answer real-life preteen questions and tackle the issues preteens care about most, using God's Word as their guide! Our Rt 45'ers enjoyed a scenic hayride thru the beautiful Zarephath Campus in November. In December we went Christmas Caroling to Avalon Care Center, and the children ministered beautifully in song and prayers and encouragement and speaking to the residents.

The CMC also continues to be home to BRIGHT Homeschool Co-op on Wednesdays and Faith Center Fine Arts on Thursdays. Both of these ministries are committed to seeing children grow spiritually, academically and in the fine arts. May God continue to bless these ministries.

In September Danielle & Michelle began teaching our Elementary children "The Story of God and His People." While we followed along at a different pace than the adults' service, we saw wonderful results as we could see our children answering questions and understanding how God's chosen people, the Israelites, went thru ups and downs depending on their commitment and worship to the Lord. It was an awesome journey traveling thru the OT and bringing these stories of faith and great courage to life for our 1st - 5th graders. We feel a great confidence in the Bible knowledge that our children were able to understand in this time, and we are thankful to the Lord for his hand upon our hearts and minds thru this series. In January our children will pick up with the OT Prophets.

In Mid-November our children participated in Operation Christmas Child where 89 boxes were packed by our children and their families and collected at ZCC to be delivered to children across the World. In early December, after several months of dedicated/intense practice, 82 of our elementary children performed "All about that Baby" for our church, their families and friends. We stepped on the stage for two beautiful performances where our children sang, danced and acted for God's glory, telling the story of the Birth of Christ thru the eyes of Shepherds and their sheep.

Looking ahead to the new year, we are excited that our Elementary children too will be participating in the 90 day Change Your Life Challenge where we will commit to reading God's Word, Praying, Serving and Giving on a regular & daily basis. We are thankful to the Lord for the many dedicated & faithful servants who commit to serving in the CMC & our Little Lambs Nursery each week to minister to our children. We continue to ask our congregation to commit one Sunday a month to ministering to our children so that we can be effective at what the Lord is doing in our midst.