

Dear parents of 5th graders,

Can you believe 5th grade is coming to an end? This is such an exciting time as your child leaves Children's Ministry and enters Youth Ministry at AHUMC. To celebrate this transition, you are invited to the **5th Grade Blessing on Sunday, May 4th** in the Parlor (next to the CLC) from 6-7:30 p.m.

We believe celebrating the transition from the Children's Ministry to Youth Ministry is an important step in children's developing faith. This rite of passage blessing has many components. The children will be honored by Children's Ministry, you'll read a Blessing Letter over your child, our Youth Ministry leaders will do a brief orientation for all 5th grade families, and you'll hear a little bit about the New Zion Youth Choir.

For the Blessing Letter, we ask that you write a maximum one-page letter of blessing for your child. This letter will be read out loud by you at the Blessing.

This written blessing is a beautiful way to affirm your child as she transitions to the next phase of her life and faith. Speak life-giving words into her. Affirm his gifts and faith. Acknowledge how you've seen him grow. Allow this blessing to represent your relationship with your child. There is no wrong way to craft your words of encouragement and blessing. See the enclosed letter for further tips on writing your letter.

The Children's Ministry will gift each child with a copy of your Blessing Letter. In order for your child to receive this gift, please send a copy of your blessing to Gina Beal no later than **Sunday, April 27th**.

We will also put a slideshow together. Please send 5-7 pictures to Gina by April 27th. You can send 1 baby pic, 2-3 growing up, 1-2 current, and 1 family picture of good quality (good lighting, in focus, etc.).

If a 5th grader's parent(s) are unable to attend, a significant adult chosen by the 5th grader is welcome to attend. Our catered dinner is \$30 per family. Childcare will be provided for younger siblings only with reservations made to Shawn Jones at sjones@ahumc.org. Please bring a sack dinner for these children.

**Letters & photos can be sent two ways:
email to gbeal@ahumc.org, or upload to the website: ahumc.org/blessing.**

***please send letters & photos by Sunday, April 27th!**

We cannot wait for this special night! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Blessings,

Gina Beal
Director of Children's Ministries
gbeal@ahumc.org

A Blessing Letter

"You are my child in whom I am pleased."

A child longs for the approval and acceptance of a parent. God made us that way! Just as God, our Heavenly Parent, loves us and has a plan for us, human parents are called to love and have a plan for their children. That's what writing a Blessing Letter is about. The goal for a Blessing Letter is to reassure a child that his parent(s) love him, appreciate his uniqueness, and have dreams for his life. Often times, life is too busy for parents to reflect on the special qualities of a child, much less have time to tell their children about these qualities in an intentional way. So we have created an unique opportunity for you to do this for your 5th graders by reading a Blessing Letter aloud to your child during the Blessing. This will be done with the entire class of 5th graders so we can all gain a deeper appreciation for the unique individuals and unique class God is forming.

Here's how it will work . . .

Each family will write a Blessing Letter for their 5th grader. This letter should be written by the child's parents. In the case of a single parent, blended family, or other family dynamic, please have the "parental figure(s)" write the letter. A copy of this letter will be given to the 5th grader as part of their gift from Children's Ministry. This letter should be emailed to gbeal@ahumc.org or uploaded to the website: ahumc.org/blessing **no later than April 27th**. Parents should bring a copy of this letter with them to the 5th Grade Blessing Dinner on May 4th. After dinner, all parents will be invited to read their Blessing Letter to their child. Each family will go one-at-a-time, so that each family can be blessed by hearing other families' letters. Each letter should just take a couple minutes and only one letter per family will be read. No family will be forced to share.

If you would like a template to follow, you may use the prompts written below to guide your letter, but please don't feel that you have to follow this format.

Dear Child,
Since the day you were born . . .
Now, as I watch you . . .
Your special qualities are obvious to me . . .
My hopes for your future include . . .
I am thankful to God for your . . .
Love,
Your Parents