The children and youth at Emmanuel are valued members of our church. They are part of the heartbeat of this parish; not just kids who are to “be seen and not heard.” Emmanuel values our kids; their ideas, their contributions, their talents, and their hearts.

There is a rich history here with Senior High, Junior High, FaithQuest, Children’s Chapel, VBS, the nursery, and more. Each of these ministries requires financial support. The Emmanuel children and youth, along with their families, deeply appreciate the place they hold in the church’s annual budget.

When discussing their appreciation, some of the kids shared what the Emmanuel children and youth programs mean to them.

Youth Group at Emmanuel is a place where I can be myself, grow in my faith, and feel surrounded by people who actually care about me. It’s a place where I’ve learned more about God, made some new friendships, and found out how I can make a difference in the world.

Emmanuel helps me because I get to show up, just as I am, and I know there will be adults there who care about me, and they won’t judge me. And the kids are nice to each other. Sometimes it’s not like that at school. And it’s not like that in sports.

Youth Group has the best snacks.

Emmanuel Youth Group has helped me grow—not just spiritually, but as a person. It’s where I’ve learned to step out of my comfort zone, lead others, and see faith in action. (Note, we love how this kiddo actually used our “Faith in Action” committee name.)

I like FaithQuest. We do crafts, have snacks, and I like to learn more about the Bible.

In FaithQuest, I like how none of the grown ups tell us what to believe. They just talk to us and they ask us questions and we start to figure out what we think about God and Jesus. They don't tell us we're wrong. They just let us figure it out. I really like that.

FaithQuest is really fun.

I like Emmanuel Youth Group because it helps me feel more lucky. We learn a lot about people and kids who don't have enough food, clean water, toys, school supplies, or shoes. Then we work as a team to try to help those people. It makes the problems in my life feel smaller. And it makes me happy to help other people.

As you can see, our Emmanuel kids are relying on our church programs to build their faith, learn how to serve others, and, of course, to enjoy time with friends and adults who love them unconditionally.

That unconditional love is crucial. Most kids today are incredibly busy with extracurricular activities. Soccer, baseball, dance, hockey, band, piano, basketball, chess, karate, you name it, our kids are doing it. And those are all wonderful opportunities. However, they are all opportunities that are based on a kid's performance and that can involve a tremendous amount of pressure and stress.

Our kids who choose to attend college are up against a different level of standards than their parents or grandparents. A student today who has a 4.2 GPA, president of the Student Council, and captain of the basketball team can easily be waitlisted or rejected from a place of higher education into which older generations would have easily sailed. Everything is more intense for kids now. Throw in the pressures of social media, and it's clear the church is a vital place in our kids' lives. We are their soft place to land. Thank you for giving generously to support our amazing kids.