

## 2019 Mission Endowment Fund Recipient – Emmanuel - Granbury Storytime



*In 2019, the Mission Endowment Fund granted \$80,000 to 29 ministries. This is one of those ministries.*



Would you like to see a gathering of young children eager to participate in a Storytime hour offered by your church to the community. That's exactly what Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Granbury has accomplished. This ministry with the support of the Mission Endowment Fund reinforces three of Emmanuel's stated congregational values: community, service, and education. It also centers on Emmanuel's four focus areas: volunteerism, young families, music, and infrastructure. But there have been some additional surprising developments.....



Sally Adamson of Emmanuel in Granbury reports: For the Storytime ministry our congregation has met the weekly challenge to service and volunteerisms by committing 14 members to fill the positions of readers, music leaders, crafts and hospitality on a weekly basis. Lay leaders have taken responsibility for the needs of this ministry by organizing, choosing curriculum for Old & New Testament stories, selecting other picture books to read, planning songs and games, and preparing for the craft time that reinforces the Bible story of the week. We are also pairing older congregation members with young families and creating a communication system which benefits both groups.



There have been many highlights during the past year. However, two things stand out. One is the obvious one, that the children enjoy their time at Emmanuel. The second major highlight is that our church members have become dedicated to this program and eager to help in many ways. The Storytime Team has worked together with enthusiasm and a sincere desire to live out our Emmanuel Mission Statement – “Sharing God’s Word – So All May Know Christ’s Love.”

So how did Emmanuel make this new ministry work? The community, with a focus on young families, has received our invitation to attend with 3-7 children and caregivers attending during the first 4 sessions, and 8 new children in the Fall 2019 Session. Of these children, only one was a member of Emmanuel. The goals of education and music are being met as we teach God’s word through the Bible stories. The program fosters a love of reading with entertaining picture books, teaches preschool level songs which include movements and instruments, and offers a story-related craft time.



There was much preparation to launch the program. The congregation improved the children's Sunday School room with new bookshelves, and craft storage. Paint and murals were added. The Nursery area was refurbished as well with fresh paint and murals on the walls. Furniture was replaced and a diaper changing area was added to our restroom.



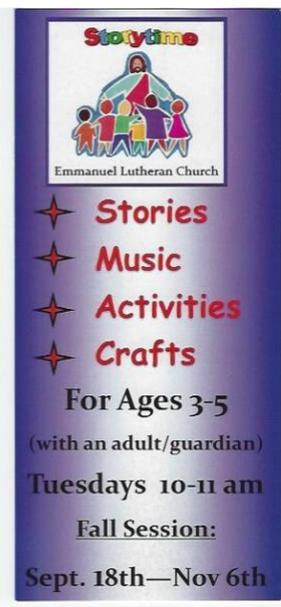
In order to publicize the new Storytime ministry, large banners were posted outside the church, optimally located on a major road in Granbury. We also posted in the Hood County News Community Calendar and a member paid for ads in the local newspaper. Additional postings included NextDoor.com (a neighborhood website) and Facebook. Emmanuel members participated in the Granbury Christmas Parade with a float made from a WW2 jeep and Emmanuel riders passed out 1,000 Story Time bookmarks with candy canes attached.



Fortunately, to raise funds in addition to the grant from the Mission Endowment Fund, the congregation had a Donation Tree fundraising effort, the WELCA organization dedicated a bake sale to Storytime, and a donation from Thrivent (Action Team) went toward playground improvements. The Emmanuel Memorial Fund granted funds for furniture needs.

**Emmanuel gives this advice if another church wants to start a Storytime ministry:**

- Establish a team of members to assist, attempting to find individuals with special talents – teachers, musicians, crafters, fundraisers, leaders and organizers.
- Discuss scheduling – full time all year, part time, only when public school is in session, etc. We decided to offer Story Time in 8 week sessions, with one session per fall, winter, spring & and summer. This allows volunteers time off so that they can be refreshed.
- Assess your facility and determine if you need more furniture, or other improvements.
- Plan your curriculum and find a source to purchase it.
- Determine the source of funds for all items that must be purchased. Curriculum is a major expense. Music instruments are also a major cost.
- One hour duration is adequate to read several stories, have music and for crafts. It is long enough for preschool children and changing activities frequently helps with keeping them engaged. Choose a day and time that doesn't conflict with other church activities. Also, try to avoid scheduling the same day as the



public library's children's activities.

- Check with your church insurance carrier to get information on liability concerns.
- Have a background check for each volunteer who interacts with children.
- We chose to avoid offering food, as that can become tricky with allergies.
- **And, of course, submit an application to the Mission Endowment Fund Board that clearly states your mission, your budget needs, and how you will achieve your goals!**

*Thanks to Sally Adamson from Emmanuel for submitting this information.*