**A logo for a children's ministry

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**Sprinkles**

**of Grace Mini Grant**

**Overview, Glossary and Resources**

*“I will sprinkle clean water upon you”* Ezekiel 36:25

Traditionally, baptism is the first faith step a child, with the support of their parents and sponsors, takes on their faith journey. Together, the parents, sponsors and congregations promise to nurture the child’s faith by teaching them the Word of God, prayers and creeds, and how we participate in our faith as Lutherans. Together these adults provide the child with opportunities to “live among God’s faithful people,” “learn to trust God,” and “care for others and the world God made.”

From baptism through the age of 8 years old (the definition of early childhood) families are laying the foundational building blocks of faith as their child is also going through different developmental stages physically and emotionally. Unfortunately, the population of families with children ages birth through eight years old is one of the least served groups in the church. Parents are looking for developmentally appropriate ways to fulfill their baptismal promises for their child, yet they are rarely finding them.

The *“*Sprinkles of Grace” grant was created to help ELCA churches in South Dakota fill this gap for families with children ages birth through eight years old. What ideas and dreams does your church have to create age-appropriate faith building opportunities for these families? Where do you feel or see the Holy Spirit leading you and your church with this age group? You are encouraged to gather a small group (3-5 people), prayerfully dream up an action plan for an opportunity your church would like to offer in 2025 and put the plan in writing to be considered for “Sprinkles of Grace” grant funding. No church or idea is too big or too small to be considered.

**Grant Guidelines**

\*The “Sprinkles of Grace” grant is a three-year pilot project. It is currently in Year 2.

\*ELCA churches within the South Dakota Synod are eligible for grant funding.

\*The term of each grant is one year.

\*Your organization can apply for another new project each year.

\*Grant applicants may work with other churches or community members in their area to do a joint project; however, the main contact person must be with the SD Synod church.

\*Grants are intended to be used for expenses connected with the new creative, out-of-the-box opportunity proposed by the church group for this specific grant. The grant application should be for age-appropriate faith building opportunities for ages birth to 8 years old. Because this is a new opportunity, we expect this project is not part of the church financial mission plan (budget).

\*The grant does not cover salaries or honorariums for staff.

\*Grant recipients will be asked to share pictures and a short reflection of their experience or progress on the project by May 1 so this information can be shared at Synod Assembly.

\*The Grant application will be available August 1, 2024.

\*The deadline for grant applications is October 15, 2024.

\*Awards will be given by December 15, 2024.

\*The SD Synod will distribute funds after the first week in January, 2025.

\*Application and cover letter will only be accepted as word documents at [sprinklesofgrace@sdsynod.org](mailto:sprinklesofgrace@sdsynod.org)

**Glossary and Resources**

**Glossary of Terms**

\* Early Childhood – Children ages birth through eight years old. Their families are super important to the church because they choose lifelong faith learning. The Grant team recognizes that many of our congregations in SD have no or limited faith growth opportunities for children age birth to three and their families

\*”Sprinkles of Grace” – Poem written by Deacon Christy Olson in *“Growing Young Spirits”*  based on Ezekiel 36:25. This is the name chosen for a three-year pilot grant of $10,000 per year.

\*Ministry/Ministries – Word used instead of ‘programs’ to describe faith growth opportunities within a church or community of faith. The faith community acknowledges there are many ways to grow in faith all of which are ministries of our church.

**Resources**

*These are some of the resources available for use with Christian Education ministries. This list is by no means all available resources.*

Frolic – This is early childhood curriculum for birth through five years old. There is written curriculum which could be used for birth through three as special event around a book OR weekly with parents. <https://www.wearesparkhouse.org/store/search?lv=true&c=286738&av000=665&sb=p>

Vibrant Faith at Home – <https://www.vibrantfaithprojects.org/vibrant-faith-home.html>

Early Childhood Resources Exchange - <https://exchangepress.com/> There is a good daily newsletter and lots of great early childhood ideas. This is not specifically spiritual, but the best way to see what is important to young children, their families and their teachers.

Media 1517 (<https://1517.media/>) is the umbrella company for the ELCA. Specific resources include:

Wearesparkhouse.com for children

Augsburg Fortress for ELCA Lutheran specific materials <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/>

Beaming Books for kids

ELEA– A professional association for congregations and professionals of ELCA Schools & Learning Centers <https://elcaschools.org/>

The ELCA Youth Ministry Network – A network which exists to strengthen and empower adult leaders in children, youth and family ministry, in service to Christ. <https://www.elcaymnet.org/>