

How To Conclude the Program Year?

Many churches conclude some programming in May or June. At worship, your community may do some of the following:

- Thank volunteers and teachers
 - Honor graduating seniors
 - Have youth serve in worship or preach
 - Celebrate ministries
- Free Webinar: Wednesday, May 2nd at 3 p.m.

“Finishing The Program Year” Webinar Recording

Ideas From Viewers

- Last year. we gave out bubbles at our Pentecost picnic and passed out an explanation of the Holy Spirit being a “breath of God”
- We thank teachers on the last day of Sunday school, which is Father’s Day this year.
- We are doing a send and blessing to graduates on Pentecost for the first time. We will have an ice cream social after church.
- We recognize in worship- ALL Christian Formation volunteers. At beginning and end of school year. Every month I write a note for volunteers and give them something quarterly...
- We’ve done a “Spirit Week” with simple things to do each day of the week following Pentecost to help people take Church into the world.
- Give them something NOT junk- homemade breads, tervis types cups with names, pots, mugs the kids decorated with a plant.
- We did our whole church volunteer appreciation day last sunday as well and made a video of what the church would look like if there were no congregation members- both funny and effective.
- We started last year to honor our high school graduates by giving them prayer blankets in the service with a lovely poem about how everytime they wrap it around themselves our prayers will be surrounding them.
- For our Senior Graduation Sunday, we create an insert program with each Senior’s name, the logo of the college they are attending, and a brief bio of their high school accomplishments, church ministries they served in, mission trips they participated in,

and other extra curricular activities. It's a keepsake for the families, as well.

- Our teachers did not want to be given "stuff." They chose to have a tree planted in their honor and it will be dedicated on Pentecost.
- We close out our Sunday school year this Sunday. (SS ends in June but this is before college graduations) We have a breakfast. Everyone brings a dish, we have small gifts for the teachers and the kids write a prayer for the teachers. This year we are giving them small battery operated lanterns with a note thanking them for being a light to our kids.
- For the children and youth volunteers... My favorites are when I ask parents to send notes (partially with the help of kids)...
- We also are giving donations in honor of teachers to local church camp and books in the library as well.
- We did a 5th grade Blessing to mark their transition to the youth ministry and include them in the end of year youth party.

Panelists

Caren Miles is the Associate for Faith Formation in the Diocese of California. She was born in California but grew up in Texas. She's served in the Diocese of Dallas, the Diocese of New York, and ran the Children's Program at General Convention in 2012 and 2015. Caren has a BA in Political Science from the University of North Texas and over 15 years of life lessons learned in ministry helping children and youth find their identities as beloved children of God. She loves that her job ranges from sitting on the floor to read Bible stories with preschoolers to sitting in a coffee shop waxing theological with teenagers to helping adults find the best ways to work with all ages. Caren also enjoys spending time in the kitchen, but prefers if someone else does the dishes.

Erika Bower is the Director of Children and Youth Ministry at St. Thomas' Church, Whitmarsh, PA. Erika has an Associate of Arts degree from Collin College in Plano, Texas and was a preschool teacher, nanny and private school teacher before joining the staff at St. Michael and All Angels Church. She is married to Phil, a contractor, and they have two bright, joyful children, Philip, age 11, and Liliana, age 5.