

September 2004

Dear Parents of 4th, 5th and 6th Graders,

It is time to think again about the traditional fall Children's Hike at First Free Church. As the autumn leaves begin to turn, we will be strolling around Crosby Farm Lake, at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers (across the river from Pike Island.) This year's hike will be on Saturday, September 18, a little later than our usual, not because we were worried about hiking on September 11, but because we wanted more time to get the word around.



We are inviting the 4th, 5th and 6th graders who attend Junior Church or who are members of Adventure Club or Stockade, as well as those who came to Vacation Bible School at First Free Church and those whose family attend Spanish Bible Studies sponsored by Felix and Maureen Juarez. The children can bring friends along, but we need to know ahead of time to make proper preparations. In general, the friends need to be of the same age group and/or be shorter than Mary Anderson* (See below.)

For those who are not attending another church, we invite you to come to Junior Church which begins at First Free on Sunday, September 12. The children meet in the sanctuary with the adults at 9:30 am and are dismissed at about 10:00 to go downstairs. A copy of the schedule is enclosed with the mailed version of this letter. We touch on a lot of topics of great importance in a world where children are exposed early to many things we wish they would never have to face. We have developed a three year curriculum over the past 20 years and repeat it every three years so each child gets to hear the whole set of topics once.

The Hike information is as follows:

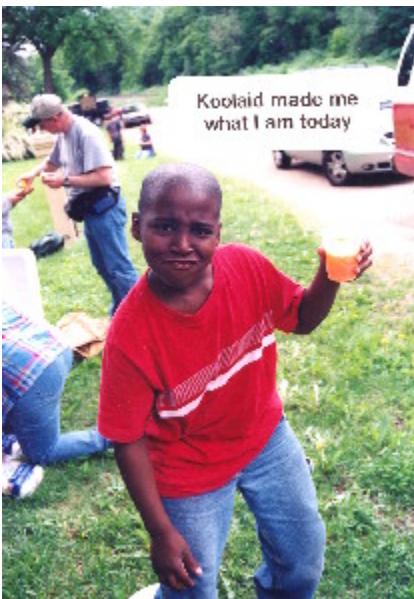
Place: Meet at First Evangelical Free Church parking lot, across the street from the church, which is at 5150 Chicago Avenue South in Minneapolis. For those who need a ride to church, that can be arranged when we call to confirm reservations. We will transport the group to Crosby Farm Lake which is on the St. Paul side of the Mississippi River near the start of Shepherd Road. Ross carries a beeper 612-538-6882 and a cell phone 612-719-6165 if you need to contact the group when they are underway.

Time: The children need to be at the starting place by 9:00 am on Saturday, September 18. We will bring the children back to their own homes (or other designated drop off place) at the end of the day. We usually start bringing them home at about 5:00 pm, but for some, they may not reach home by 6:30 pm or later. (Note: You do need to agree to take your children back!)

Cost: Because we provide lunch and three snacks as well as a packet of keepsake pictures for each hiker, we ask for a donation of \$7.00. If that would be a hardship, it can be waived.

What to bring: Dress for the weather. Long pants are best even if it is hot, however, because we often hike through poison ivy and nettles. Shoes that are OK to get wet are important because since we are hiking at the junction of land and water, there will be mud. For kids of this age, mud is a magnet. Sunscreen and bug repellent can be applied ahead of time to those who need it. We will also bring along some for those who need it as the day progresses. If it looks like rain, a rain parka would be nice. Snacks and water bottles can be brought but we will also provide plenty of food and drink. Personal backpacks will help us split up the load of goods to carry on the journey.

Weather: We have, over the years had every kind of weather from sweltering to snowfall. Even if it rains, the hike will go ahead. In a worst case scenario, we will do something indoors like going to one of the museums.



We have several parent volunteers and Junior church alumni who come along to provide crowd control and guidance. If you are interested in helping, let us know when we call.

If you are receiving this notice in the mail, we will try to call you the week of September 13 to find out if your child is coming. If you do not hear, or if you get this notice off the internet, in your car windshield at the Mall or dropped from an airplane, you will need to call the fearless leaders** to reserve a place.

* Mary is, by her own admission, "about 5 feet 2 inches if you count my hair"

** Perhaps they ought to be less fearless, but then, there may never have been any hikes.

Ross Olson 612-824-7691 Mary Anderson 612-824-5573