



# Volunteer Guidebook

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\*This guidebook is adapted from Kidzlife Children's Ministry Volunteer Guidebook

*"If I could relive my life,  
I would devote my entire ministry  
to reaching children for God!"*

-Dwight L. Moody, evangelist

# INTRODUCTION

## First Things First

Before we talk logistics or teaching style, we have to first address the most important aspect of children's ministry: Revealing the true heart of God to kids.

When we teach kids about God, if we add anything at all or take anything away, we aren't showing God to be as good, as perfect, as He actually is. In fact, God takes great offense at those who do not portray Him accurately (Job 42:7). If we get this wrong, if we miss who He is, it would actually be better for us not to teach (James 3:1). God is the ultimate mixture of grace and truth (John 1:14). We can't leave out His perfection in preference to His grace, or major on His righteous requirements while minimizing His grace. God's righteousness makes His grace all the more astonishing; His holiness makes His mercy even greater. Motivated by love, this God with no fault of His own reached down to us, a sinful people, and made a way for us to join Him by sending His only Son, Jesus, to take the penalty for our sins (John 3:16). His lavish grace is the magnet that wins our heart and allegiance. It boggles the mind while transforming the heart.

Entrance into His amazing kingdom is not based on a list of tasks we do or behaviors we avoid. Our entire walk with the Lord comes down to one key principle: **Belief**. Belief in Him is what God has asked of His created since the beginning. How can our kids believe in Him if they don't really know who He is? But when we show God for who He **really** is, kids are so likely to fall in love with Him. He is entirely lovable. This core principle of belief is what we must impart to our kids. Our goal is not moral kids who tow the line and look clean-cut on the outside (Matthew 23:27). That would be far too shallow an outcome! No, we want kids who BELIEVE God and follow Jesus. When they truly grab hold of His goodness, they'll trust His instruction, and their behavior will (super)naturally fall in line (John 14:23). And, much more importantly, they will live in relationship with God as He designed it to be (Leviticus 26:12, John 15:4).

So, when you consider serving in children's ministry, first things first: You have to seek God through His Word personally. You need to talk to Him in prayer and ask God daily to reveal Himself to you and to shine His light on any wrong thoughts, attitudes and actions so YOU can become more like Jesus. He wants us all to know Him as He is, that is eternal life.

*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God,  
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

-John 17:3

# PARTNERING WITH PARENTS:

## Kids are Part of a Family

Throughout Scripture we see that parents are to be the primary disciple makers of their own children. As a church family we encourage, serve, and support the family, and together we help kids begin to grow in their relationship with Jesus. As a ministry, we are always working to set up parents to win.

### **Connecting Personally**

For starters, partnering with parents means that they know who you are. That's why it's important to speak to and attempt to connect with the parents of the kids in your group. Introduce yourself and let them know that your goal is to help their child grow in their faith.

### **Connecting Informationally**

It is vital for families to have good and intentional conversations at home, so every week we send information to all our families describing what we're learning at church. We want our parents to know what's going on and what their children are learning so they can discuss it at home.

### **Connecting Spiritually**

Sometimes kids express a desire to become a part of God's family while they're at church. When this happens, we always contact parents so that they can follow up at home with prayer and more conversation.

### **Always Remember**

While God may give us a brief window of opportunity to impact a child's life, we know that a parent's role is forever. The Bible commands children to honor their parents, and your job is to help them. No family is perfect, and you will likely hear things that may not sound good. But remember, there is a possibility that you may not have heard the entire story. Remember to always point kids to Jesus and His Word. Parents have the greatest influence on their child's life, and they're there long after you're gone. Help kids build family relationships. Even if the parents aren't believers, they're still the parents, and your role in building up their family is very important.

# LOGISTICS

## **PARKING**

We are a family-friendly church, and we want to save the closest and best spots for our families, particularly those with young children. As a courtesy, if possible, we ask all of our awesome volunteers to please park away from the building so there is plenty of parking nearby for everyone. Because volunteers arrive early, there is plenty of time to get to your place of service.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Please be early. Make it a priority to be in your place of service before the first child arrives. If you are scheduled to serve during the first service please be in the classroom by 8:45am. If you are attending the first service and serving during the second service please do your best to get straight to the classroom promptly following the end of the service.

If you are going to miss your scheduled day, please let the ministry director know as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made.

## **CHECK IN**

All children should be checked into CCB at the computers and have a name tag. Please also check child in on clipboard provided in each classroom and check with parents for any needs specific to the area you are serving in.

All children should immediately be greeted by name and connected with at eye level (this may mean kneeling, stooping, bending over, etc). In doing this you are recognizing each individual and assuring parents that you know their child is there. A friendly greeting to the parents is also encouraged, but be sure to greet the child first.

## **CLASSROOM PROMOTION**

Children ages birth through two years old will be welcome in the nursery and will be promoted to the toddler room on their second birthday unless an alternative arrangement between parents and leaders is made. Children may be promoted from the toddler room to the preschool room on their third birthday as long as they are potty trained. Children ages three and up who are potty trained are welcome in the preschool room and will be promoted to the LIFEkids ministry at the end of the summer of the year they begin kindergarten. Upon finishing the fifth grade, students will then be promoted to FUSE.

## **GUESTS**

You may be the first contact a visiting family has with our church. A warm smile makes everyone feel truly welcomed! Please ask parents of visiting children to enter information into CCB. We need information for every child here. If you are unsure how to add a new family into CCB, please ask another leader or the ministry director for clarification. Also, make sure to ask about any special circumstances, allergies, etc.

## **DURING SERVICE**

Only approved volunteers should be in the classrooms. If a child is uncomfortable, the parent may choose to stay one time. Beyond that, we will ask them to fill out a volunteer application. Do not leave a guest alone with the children or allow them to take children to the restroom.

Please do not use your cell phone during class unless needed for the lesson. We want the children to know that they have our full attention.

## **GIVING**

We believe that our kids are capable of being actively involved with reaching neighbors and nations with the good news of God's Kingdom. It is not too early to teach our children the joy of giving to God's work.

Furthermore, we will give kids opportunities to collect needed items and various other activities so they will have the opportunity to respond and make a real difference for the Kingdom of God. Let's encourage our kids to share, give, and pray for the gospel to be shared in their neighborhood and to the ends of the earth!

## **FOOD SAFETY**

Please only serve the snacks that are provided unless approved by your ministry director and checked for possible allergies. Please avoid anything containing peanuts or tree nuts as these can be especially problematic for children who are allergic to these ingredients.

The following foods are known choking hazards for younger children: Nuts, popcorn, hard round candy, grapes (unless cut in half lengthwise), hotdogs, jumbo marshmallows (all ages).

## **DISMISSAL**

We ask parents (not siblings) to pick up their child from your group. Parents will need to present their claim sticker or a photo ID to pick up their child.

We know there will be exceptions to this rule, especially when parents are serving in other areas, but please don't let the exception become the rule. If you are ever unsure, we ask that you be overly cautious and wait until you can be confident that you are releasing the child to the appropriate guardian.

## **Additional guidelines for Little LIFEkids:**

### **PLAY AREAS**

For the safety of the children, please explain gentle conduct in the play area: always have walking feet; we sit when we slide, and we treat our toys gently; we are always kind to others. Please explain this to the children before heading to the play area, and then reinforce it when needed.

### **SNACKS**

Snack time is another great opportunity to connect with the children. We encourage you to sit or kneel with your children and join in this time with them.

Encourage children to volunteer to be helpers for snack time by having them serve the snack and/or clean up.

Help the children express their thanks to God for creating such yummy, beautiful, and healthy food for our bodies to eat!

Have the children sit down to eat and/or drink at snack time. Be sure that the snack is served from a package/container that has not been previously opened.

## *Food Allergies*

Part of creating a safe environment for our children includes being aware of any food allergies a child may have.

In order to provide a safe environment for children with food allergies, we have set the following guidelines:

- LIFEkids is a tree nut-free and peanut-free zone.
- Red stickers are available on all checkin carts to be worn on name tags by children with food allergies.
- When adding a new family to CCB, we must always ask if a child has any food allergies and indicate that in the appropriate field in CCB.
- All food present in LIFEkids classrooms will be either purchased or pre-approved by First Medina staff.
- LIFEkids leaders may take candy from the approved candy bin in the LIFEkids closet near to give to students.
- A list of ingredients for snacks will be available for Nursery through Preschool classes.
- LIFEkids leaders will have parental contact information readily available at all times, in case of an allergic reaction. If a reaction is suspected, LIFEkids volunteers will immediately contact parents.



Candies that are tree nut and peanut free and are approved to be given to students: smarties, suckers (dum dums/ring pops/blow pops), skittles, starbursts, swedish fish, lifesaver gummies, sour patch kids, laffy taffy, nerds, twizzlers, gummy bears

List of candy that would seem safe because nuts are not listed under ingredients but are in fact NOT safe:

- Plain M&M's: lists warning "may contain peanuts" and occasionally they really do
- Hersey's milk chocolate bars: the ingredients are nut free but the packaging states it's made on the same equipment that processes almonds
- Kit Kat: produced on same line as peanuts
- Milky Way: produced on same line as peanuts
- Twix: may contain peanuts/tree nuts

\*Chocolate candies are to be most avoided with peanut and tree nut allergies because of cross contamination issues.

\*Reading labels on packaging is very important. Even ingredients in food deemed "safe" can sometimes change without warning. Avoid snacks/candy that contain peanuts or any tree nuts in the ingredients. But also look for the warning labels such as "may contain," "made on shared lines with," or "made in the same facility as." These labels warn of cross contamination issues and are therefore not a safe option.

# LEADING CHILDREN INTO THE KINGDOM

We believe that in every child, God creates a longing in their heart for Him. This is a longing that only He can fill.

*From the mouths of infants You have ordained praise.*

–Psalm 8:2

When you spend time with children, you are investing in the most precious treasure on earth! As God's truth is revealed, we pray that His Spirit will be at work, drawing the hearts of children (and their families) to Himself (John 6:44).

As children show interest in salvation, we ask that you be attentive and available. Scripture does not show us that there is any sort of "magic prayer," or any prayer at all, that is necessary for salvation.

When a person recognizes that he is a HELPLESS sinner (powerless to do anything to save himself) and BELIEVES that Jesus is the only One who can take away his sin, he is saved. We simply ask that you make yourself available to speak with a child, ask questions, hear from God, and pray with the child if he or she needs clarity on any issue.

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind:

- **We know that children can encounter God.** There are several examples in the Bible of children who had direct spiritual encounters: Consider Samuel, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist (in the womb!)

*See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.*

–Matthew 18:10 (NIV)

- **Jesus tells us that unless we become like little children we cannot see the kingdom of God.**

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And*

*whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”*

–Matthew 18:1-6 (NIV)

- **Jesus said not to hinder children from coming to Him.** He became indignant at the way His disciples treated children:

*People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.*

–Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

Focus on the phrase, “Do not hinder them.” How can we be sure not to hinder children from coming to Christ?

1. Get out of the way.
2. Make space.
3. Be comfortable with silence.
4. Accept their questions.
5. Welcome them.
6. PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!

- **Salvation is the work of God!** (John 6:44, Isaiah 59:16)

Sometimes, in our zeal to see children come to faith in Jesus Christ, we actually become a lot like a “salesman.” There must be conviction, not convincing. If you are convincing a child to be saved, you are actually hindering the Spirit from working.

Jesus loves children far more than we do, and it is His desire that no child would be separated from God but that all would be saved (2 Peter 2:9). He will work in His perfect time. PRAY for the children, and pray that their understanding of God will grow and that in time, they will receive the most wonderful gift of eternal life with the Lord.

Each child expresses interest in God at different ages and stages of development. While it’s important not to rush children, we want to be ever sensitive to how the Holy Spirit may be working in their lives. Remember that all it takes is childlike faith! When a child recognizes that he/she is a HELPLESS sinner and BELIEVES that Jesus is the only One who can take away their sin, he/she is saved.

## Some Questions to Guide you...

If you have the opportunity to speak with a child who seems interested in salvation, here are questions you may want to ask. We are not looking for a “perfect score”—just an understanding of God’s truth. This time of discussion is an opportunity to clear up any misconceptions.

Asking questions is the best way for you to find out where the child is spiritually! If the child really does not grasp these truths at this time, pray with him or her. Thank God for moving in their life, and ask that He continue to reveal Himself to the child.

Remember that there must be more than just an understanding of a Bible story or series of stories. **Salvation involves a CHANGED HEART.**

- Are you perfect or have you sinned? (*I have sinned—Romans 3:23*)
- What does sin do? (*Ruins everything, separates me from God, earns death and punishment in the Lake of Fire*)
- Does God WANT to punish you? (*No*)
- Why doesn’t God want to punish you? (*Because He loves me!—John 3:16*)
- Can you save yourself? (*No*)
- Can you do good things to outweigh your sins? (*No, adding good things can’t take away my sin.*)
- What sacrifice is required to take away your sin? (*Death is the payment for sin. Jesus was perfect. He took my sin and put it on Himself. He is the only One with perfect blood. Hebrews 9:22—This will require some explanation from the Old Testament.*)
- Who has perfect blood? Who can save you? (*Jesus, the Lamb of God—Romans 5:6-8*)
- How can God punish sin without punishing you? (*He took my place, He provided a perfect Substitute, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sin—Isaiah 53:6*)
- What does God want you to do? (*He wants me to TRUST/BELIEVE in Him—Acts 16:31; Romans 3:26*)
- Is that all? Is there something you need to DO to be saved? (*No, when I change my mind about my sin and completely trust in Jesus, I am saved—Ephesians 2:8-9*)
- How can you know that you belong to God? (*Because Jesus is the Good Shepherd—John 10:27-29*)

## Avoid the Following...

### **Confusing Terminology:**

*Give your heart to Jesus.*

We don't give anything to Jesus. He gave us everything by giving us HIS blood to pay for our sins.

*Commit your life to God.*

Again, it is Christ who has committed His love to us, not us to Him.

*All you have to do is...*

Remember that we can't DO anything to be a part of God's family. It's all about what God has done for us.

*Confess your sin to the Lord.*

This is not what saves you. We can't even begin to know all of our sin. We must repent: literally, to change our mind about our sin and be in agreement with God.

### **Confusing Vocabulary:**

Be careful to explain all terminology (Kingdom, sin, saved, forgiveness, everlasting life, believe).

### **Confusing Word Pictures:**

Sometimes, in our effort to make things "kid-friendly," we avoid using the Bible and rely on props and/or man-made stories. But God's Word is alive and powerful. It changes lives! Never discount the power of God's Word! Our words are just our words. God's Words are LIFE!

## Embrace the Following...

### **Be spiritually prepared!**

DEPEND upon the Holy Spirit to do the work. If it's His conviction, the decision is lasting. If it is our convincing, a child may remain confused and actually live in turmoil and dissatisfaction.

**PRAY for God's guidance, and PRAY for the children you are ministering to.**

**Take your time:** there is nothing more important than salvation.

**Talk to a child alone** (not in a secluded area, for your own protection).

**\*\*\*Ask questions:** make sure he/she understands.

## A Path to Guide you...

God's Word is alive and powerful! The following scriptures from the book of Romans are a clear path to follow when leading a child to Christ.

- **We are all sinners by nature and by choice - that makes us enemies of God.**  
*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*
- **God demonstrated His love for us, His enemies.**  
*But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*
- **Jesus changed everything. Death is what we deserve but in Him, we receive life!**  
*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*
- **We must trust and surrender to Jesus as Lord.**  
*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9-10)*
- **Our assurance of salvation through Jesus**  
*For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)*

**The next step will be to begin talking with the child about the act of baptism which should be their first act of obedience as a believer.**

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)*

**Please be sure to communicate any decisions made by a child to your ministry director so that we can follow up with their parents.**

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

## DIRECT

Following are a few practical guidelines for implementing a results-based discipline strategy. This is assuming that the negative behaviors do not involve violence or intimidation. In those instances we would go directly to **T** (Take a break).

Here is an acrostic to help you remember:

**D**etermine the behavior you want. As the leader, state your expectations clearly. (i.e. Sit down; open your Bible; come here; stop talking; etc.) Sometimes we feel frustrated by behavior, but if we're honest, it may be that we haven't been clear in stating what's expected.

**I**nvite students into what is going on: lesson, craft, snack, activity, etc. This is relational, you are inviting them in.

**R**emind what's expected at first offense. Don't ignore wrong behavior; address it the first time.

**E**valuate the offense. Is there a possible trigger? Can it be changed? The student should be part of this process. It's a conversation.

**C**ollaboration with director. The leader talks to the ministry director and a plan of action is put into place.

**T**ake a break: setting into place a set of consequences. Appropriate discipline steps include:

- A. A visit with the ministry director.
- B. A meeting with parents and ministry director.
- C. Suspension of attendance for a period of time followed by a reentry process, which includes another meeting to define expectations with the immediate supervisors and class leaders.

Whether inside or outside the classroom, a child's environment should be safe, healthy, and conducive to learning. Reinforce positive behavior, and redirect inappropriate behavior.

### **Leaders Define Expectations**

Let's be honest, discipline issues in children's ministry can be messy and time consuming, and these disruptions can hinder kids from coming to Jesus. But if we keep the true well-being of our kids in mind, we will see discipline issues as an opportunity to help kids learn and grow.

Hebrews 12:5-6 reminds us that the Lord disciplines those He loves. And since we want to be like Jesus in all we do, it's important that we always discipline because of love. *Our goal should be to create and sustain a nurturing environment where kids can thrive* and not a "gotcha" culture, which only promotes sneaky behavior.

Please make every effort to positively instruct children to behave appropriately. Because we are serious about helping kids grow in their relationship with Jesus, we will not tolerate behavior that inhibits other children from learning. If you have a disruptive child, take action immediately. Do not wait for the problem to go away by itself– it won't. It will only intensify and spread to others.

We are often hesitant to challenge poor behavior in fear we will lose students. The truth is that a well implemented discipline strategy does just the opposite. If students are disciplined with dignity and concern, then the environment will be much more attractive. Letting our yes be yes and our no be no requires that we understand what we are truly looking for and calmly directing students to that end. Understanding our purpose and communicating it clearly is the first step toward developing a community that is more focused on growth than rules.

### **Inappropriate Discipline**

- Absolutely **no form of physical punishment** may ever be used on a child.
- Do not shake, jerk, strike, pinch, or roughly handle a child.
- Do not use physical restraints or devices to discipline a child.
- Do not punish toileting accidents.
- Do not allow children to discipline or humiliate other children.
- Do not use any form of sarcasm with children. Absolutely no name calling or cutting remarks.
- Do not yell at children or say unkind words to them.
- Do not threaten children– even as a joke.
- Do not place children in an isolated area.
- While you are volunteering, you must treat your *own* children in accordance to the above guidelines.



# KEEPING KIDS SAFE

## General Safety

- All persons serving with children and youth must complete a criminal background check prior to serving that will be updated annually. Please also keep personal photo and information updated in CCB.
- Classrooms must be staffed with a **minimum** of two volunteers **at all times**.
- When taking children to the gym or playground, please do a headcount before you leave the classroom and when you arrive. Please also notify parents at drop-off and leave a note on the door clearly communicating your location. (Little LIFEkids only\*\*)
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 15 seconds or use hand sanitizer:
  - ✓ Upon entering the classroom
  - ✓ After wiping a nose
  - ✓ Before serving any type of snack
  - ✓ After assisting in the restrooms
- Cover any open wounds.
- If someone becomes ill or injured, please let the ministry director know. We will contact the parents while you stay focused on assisting the child. We can only provide bandages and ice packs but CANNOT administer medication. In the case of an injury, the next step will be to fill out an incident report and turn into the ministry director.
- No hot drinks around kids, including coffee, unless in spill-proof container kept out of reach of children. Please do not allow kids to have hot drinks either.
- When ministering to a large group of children from various backgrounds, it is possible that you may encounter a situation that needs attention. If there is ever a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you feel it needs attention, please let us know.
- Please help us collect data. Be sure that we have everyone accounted for with complete and accurate information.
- In the event of a true emergency, please follow the directions provided in this guidebook. While we sincerely appreciate everyone's willingness to help, situations can intensify when there's confusing information.
- Be alert! If you see an adult or child wandering around, ask how you can help.
- Please wear a name tag every week, as this clearly identifies you as a safe adult.
- If there is ever a life-threatening emergency, CALL 911! Do not wait for the ministry director. It's always better to be safe than sorry.
- Continue to pray for God's protection.

## No Child May Go Anywhere Alone

- Please remain with your group of children at all times. Two volunteers must be present with each group of children at all times. If your partner is late or absent, we will do our best to be there for you. Sometimes this is not possible (if many volunteers are late/absent). In the event that you are by yourself in a room with children, leave the door open. This guideline is for your protection as well as for our kids.
- Children must never leave the building without their parent or an adult leader.
- Please remind children to walk (no running ahead).
- Parents (not siblings) need to pick-up their children. Be alert at pick-up time. Don't be afraid to ask questions! Ask for their claim sticker or photo ID if a parent comes to you for their child. Again, we understand that there will be exceptions but please don't let the exception become the rule.

## Illness

For the protection of our volunteers and the other children, we will only accept healthy children each week. Children with the following symptoms may be contagious and will not be allowed to participate in our program:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Green nasal mucus
- Severe coughing, strep throat
- Any untreated rash, skin infection, or open lesion
- Head lice or nits in hair
- Pink Eye or any other eye infections with mucus discharge
- Flu-like symptoms: chills, sweats, body aches, coughing up mucus

If any of these symptoms occur while in class, the child should be moved away from the other children while the parent or guardian is notified.

If a child vomits, please contact ministry director or Facilities Manager to assist with clean-up.

# Restroom Safety

- The single use restroom located near the office will be marked off as a children's restroom for Sunday mornings and will be exclusively used as such.
- Two sets of keys will be provided in both the LIFEkids and preschool classrooms.
- Two adults should be present during visits to the restroom when this is a scheduled part of your group's routine.
- If a child needs to use the restroom and the rest of the group is occupied, one adult volunteers should escort the child to the restroom and wait outside in the hallway.
- If a child needs further assistance due to illness, hygiene, or comfort, please inform your ministry director so that the parents can be contacted.
- While we greatly appreciate our high-school aged volunteers, they are not to assist children in the restroom.
- If the single use restroom is occupied and a child cannot wait, the main restrooms can be used as a secondary option. Please make sure the restroom is empty before allowing the child to enter and then wait in the hall until they are finished.
- After the child is finished, please make sure toilet has been flushed and water has been turned off before returning to the classroom. Be sure to return keys to designated location.

## **Additional guidelines for Little LIFEkids:**

- **Diaper Changes:** For children in the nursery or toddler room who are not yet potty trained, please check diaper at least once per service and change as needed.
- **Never** walk away while child is on changing table and always make a note of any diaper changes on clipboard. Please wash your hands before and after every diaper change.
- **Toddlers:** If numbers allow, walk child to nursery restroom or ask nursery volunteers to assist. Encourage children to be as independent as possible and if assistance is required, always leave door open so that you are visible.
- **Preschool:** Please always make sure two adults are present for any trips to the restroom. Some children that are newly potty trained may still require occasional assistance. In this case, one volunteer may remain in the classroom while two volunteers are present for restroom visits, in case assistance is needed. *Again, please encourage children to be as independent as possible but if assistance is absolutely necessary, be sure to have an additional adult present.*

# SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY

God's people have been called to the highest standards of sexual morality and conduct. This is particularly important for those in ministry. Children place great trust in their adult leaders, and that trust must never be violated by staff or volunteers. Cases of sexual misconduct have profound effects on victims as well as offenders.

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state our positions, our safeguards, and our course of action, should an offense be accused. We have a zero tolerance policy in regards to the abuse of children. We report legitimate accusations to the appropriate governmental authorities.

It is our policy to screen with background checks every staff member and volunteer who works in a direct role with children within our ministry. Each staff member and volunteer also signs a ministry covenant in regards to their beliefs and conduct.

Furthermore, each staff member and volunteer is required to provide references, which are contacted in regards to the moral and spiritual character of the children's worker.

## Reporting Procedures

Due to the sensitive nature of sexual misconduct and out of concern for the safety and privacy interests of all involved, our church requires that when staff or volunteers become aware or have reasonable cause to suspect that another staff or volunteer is engaging in sexual misconduct, the staff or volunteer must report such misconduct immediately, and in strict accordance with the following procedures.

1. The staff or volunteer must immediately provide an accurate and verbal report of all relevant details to one of the following people in charge: the ministry director or a Pastor
2. Until a course of action is developed by the Pastoral Staff, the reporter must refrain from:
  - a. Contacting the person alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct.
  - b. Investigating the case or discussing the details of the case with any person other than the leadership as described above.
  - c. Any communication with the press.

# Preventative Policies

Our church endeavors to provide a safe, secure, and loving environment for children where God's love is modeled and taught. Parents should feel comfortable leaving their child in our presence and under our supervision.

As we minister to a large group of children from various backgrounds, it is possible that you may encounter situations that need attention. If there is ever a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you feel it needs attention, it is your responsibility to notify one of the following official church staff persons in charge: ministry director or a pastor.

We have several lines of defense to protect our children:

- Our first desire is to staff our ministries with trained, committed, and safe leaders.
- Each staff member and volunteer is required to complete a criminal background check.
- **The Two Adult Rule:** There must be two adults present with children at all times during any church-related activity.
- Kids older than preschool age should not sit in leaders' laps.
- Kids' hands should never be in leaders' pockets.
- Your required compliance with the policies and procedures as outlined above.

Please also be aware of any suspicious behavior or signs that a child may be being abused or neglected at home or in any other environment outside of our ministry. Abuse can be hard to recognize. Kids can get cuts and bruises or show signs of stress for many reasons that are a normal part of childhood. It helps to educate yourself in order to know specific signs to look for, and trust your gut as you look at the whole picture of the child's physical and emotional health. If you ever have any suspicion of abuse or neglect in the lives of any of the children we minister to, please notify the ministry director or a pastor right away.

# CALM EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## **In all things:**

- C** - Consider the situation
- A** - Assist the persons in need
- L** - Lead help to the situation (Contact appropriate personnel)
- M** - Move uninvolved people away from the situation

## **In the event of an injury:**

- Call 911 if necessary.
- Secure the child from further injury and stay with them until a guardian arrives.
- Remove other children from the immediate area.
- Contact the security team in the lobby through two-way radio.
- Nurse will assess/treat.
- Contact parent(s)/guardian listed on the check-in sheet.
- Do not acknowledge or deny responsibility when an accident occurs. The church will gather all relevant facts and follow recommendations of their insurance company. This avoids taking responsibility for something that may not be your fault.
- Communicate with the ministry director as soon as possible.
- Fill out incident report with nurse.
- The ministry director will follow-up with the family either later that day or the following day.

### **In the event of fire:**

- Line children up and take a headcount.
- Leave the room and proceed to the nearest safe exit.
- Check the restrooms.
- Help children leave.
- Please pull the fire alarm on the way out to alert everyone else.
- Go to the designated grassy area and take another headcount to ensure all children and volunteers are accounted for.
- Please maintain normal dismissal procedures.

### **In the event of violence:**

- Do not engage the person beyond protecting others.
- We have a security team on call that can be reached through two-way radios or any staff person.
- Remove all children from the area to the safest nearby location. If this is not a safe option, turn off the lights, close and lock doors and move as many heavy objects (i.e. bookshelves, furniture) in front of all classroom entries to serve as a blockade.
- If the building needs to be evacuated a member of the security team or the church staff will pull the fire alarm.
- Share information you may have on the location of the violent person with other staff/volunteers through whatever means is available to you.

### **In the event of a tornado/ severe weather:**

- The weather emergency will be announced via the two-way radio system.
- All leaders and children will move into the hall in an orderly fashion without talking. Children will assume the basic tornado drill posture of kneeling with hands placed over the back of the head. Leaders may stand or kneel as they see fit. \*\*See tornado warning procedure document on check-in clipboard to find out where to line your class up.
- Turn off lights and close all doors. Stay out of the gym, foyer, and auditorium.
- Leaders will take a count of all children. Immediately report all missing students to the security team.
- The most **important** things to remember are:
  - **Get in** - If you are outside, get inside. If you're already inside, get as far into the middle of the building as possible.
  - **Get down** - Get underground if possible. If you cannot, go to the lowest floor possible.
  - **Cover up** - Flying and falling debris are a storm's number one killer. Kneeling with hands placed over your head will help to protect you. If possible, use pillows, blankets, coats, helmets, etc to cover up and protect your head and body from flying debris.

*... so the next generation would know them,  
even the children yet to be born, and they  
in turn would tell their children.*

– Psalm 78:6 (NIV)



# NOTES

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