

A young child with long brown hair, wearing a red shirt, is holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign contains the title of the book. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees or bushes.

**CHILDREN'S  
MINISTRY  
VOLUNTEER  
GUIDEBOOK**

brought to you by

**kidzLife**<sup>™</sup>

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"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, worship, 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! So 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. 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 if you teach kids, first things first. Dig into His word and read it with an open mind. Ask God daily to reveal Himself to you—in His entirety. Ask Him to shine His light on any wrong thoughts so that you only teach full truth. 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*

# 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, we ask all of our amazing 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.

## **Coming In Time:**

Welcoming, FUN, Safe! Please be early—make it a priority to be in your place of service before the first child arrives.

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.

## **Visitors:**

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 complete a Welcome Form—we need information for every child here.

## **Dismissal:**

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

# ROLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

## LARGE GROUP BIBLE TEACHERS

A Bible teacher who wants to have great influence on those they teach should teach from the Scriptures they live out and from what God has taught them personally. His words are what give authority to teach.

*The people were amazed at his teaching,  
because he taught them as one who had authority,  
not as the teachers of the law.*

–Mark 1:22

**Large group Bible teaching time will be Biblical, relevant, and interesting. Here are some tips for teaching kids:**

### PREPARATION

- Before you begin to read through anything, pray for the Lord to open your heart and your eyes to what He wants you to know.
- Read early, then marinate. Read Scripture, the lesson, the small group lesson, devotionals—anything that helps set your mind and heart on what you're teaching.
- Listen to how God speaks to you throughout the week. Pay attention to how He is at work in your own life. Perhaps God will even allow you to experience or live out a part of what you're planning to teach. Be willing to share these experiences with your children.
- Take notes within the lesson on how you want to personalize it and share how God is speaking to you.

- Keep listening while you're praying, reading, and studying.
- Share what you're learning with others throughout the week.
- If you want children to look up Scripture during your lesson, prepare sticky notes with the reference ahead of time, and give those to children BEFORE you begin to teach. This assures a child is ready to read when you call on him, and your teaching flow will not be interrupted.
- Read through the small group activity ahead of time so that you can set up the small group leaders for success.

### **PORTRAYING GOD AS HE IS**

- The Bible says that teachers are held to a higher standard (James 3:1). Therefore, it is imperative to portray God as He is.
- God is rich in mercy and full of grace.
- God is always speaking to His people and pleading with them to listen. Whenever there is judgment coming, He always gives a warning (Amos 3:7).
- ALWAYS open your Bible when you're teaching, and help children open their Bibles too.
- When teaching about great things that have been accomplished, present GOD as the hero. (God put His favor on Joseph; God gave His power to David; God enabled Joshua to lead the people; God strengthened Moses, etc.)
- Even when sharing personal stories/testimony, be sure to give God the honor and praise.
- It's all about Jesus—not us!



## **PRESENTATION**

### Atmosphere of the Room

- As a large group teacher, you have a lot to do with the tone of the room. Does it feel like a place where a child would WANT to be?
- Help children feel welcome the moment they enter your area.

### Attention of the Group

- The Bible is the MOST exciting story ever, and we believe that it is a sin to bore kids with the Bible!
- Get and keep the attention of your listeners with a grabber at the beginning of your talk.
- Read your audience—look at their faces and body language. Adjust accordingly.
- Never say, “*Shhhh*” in the microphone.
- Look at children directly—especially when making a point.
- Resist the urge to scan the audience. Make and hold eye contact while you teach. When you’re connected to a child, the entire room will feel connected to you.
- When you really know and live your lesson, you won’t be glued to your notes.
- Never, ever read your lesson to kids—the only things that should be read to them are the verses from the Bible.
- Use voice fluctuation. Whisper, shout, talk... it keeps kids on their toes!

- State your main point and repeat it often.
- Don't overload kids with too much information at one sitting. If you give them too much, they'll walk away with nothing.
- Avoid rabbit trails.
- Keep your eye on the clock. Respect the time.
- Throughout your lesson, but especially at the end, set up small group leaders for success. Honor them and validate them.
- Be aware of kids' attention span—for preschoolers the lesson is going to be 8-10 minutes; 15-20 minutes max for early elementary kids; 20-25 minutes max for preteens.

## **PEOPLE**

- Always remember that we are teaching PEOPLE—not a lesson.
- Always remind children that God loves them and is always with them.
- Communicate your care for the children you're teaching.

## **Jesus knew His audience.**

- And you need to know yours too! This is fundamental to effective communication.
- Get to know your kids. Ask them questions before and after your lesson time. Let them talk and listen for clues of who they are and what their interests are.
- Use words KIDS understand.

## Since kids are your audience, here are some things that they love:

- Attention—We know you love to chat with your co-leaders, but this time is for the kids. Give them attention by greeting them when they come in and connecting with them at their eye level whenever possible.
- Stories—especially when they’re told with excitement, passion, and props. A story that illustrates the truth can be the greatest way you can communicate the truth. Always open your Bible!  
**Big Tip:** *Reading from the teacher’s guide is boring and it shows that you’re not prepared.*
- Props—It’s always worth the effort to bring in props to make your lesson come alive. Imagine the difference between saying, “The soldiers placed a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head,” and pulling out a branchy crown with long, sharp thorns protruding from it.
- Humor—Bring in some funny elements and get the kids laughing. You learn when you laugh.
- Audience participation—As a group, have the kids shout out answers, make sound effects, do motions, etc. At the right time, ask kids to repeat points or say key phrases to the person sitting next to them.
- Helping—Bring a few kids up front to help act out stories, hold props, emphasize the point, etc.

## Jesus used props and objects that were easily found by His audience.

Jesus used things like this:

- Dirt—to teach people about the condition of their heart

- Sheep—to show Himself as the Good Shepherd
- Coins—to demonstrate how valuable people are to Him
- Bread—to fill people’s minds with the truth that He is the only One who can satisfy

Great teachers use props that kids can easily identify with: Food, toys, games, family things. It is also great to use visual imagery and sound effects for extra effect. If you’re using puppets, please remember that puppets do not pray, and they are not prayed for.

### **Jesus PRAYED!**

It is often said that prayer is talking to God, but it is also a time when God speaks to us. As you prepare to teach, listen to what God is telling you. He is always at work, and He is always communicating with you. God is the Master of Creativity, and He will fill you with wonderful ways to communicate His Word. Close the lesson in prayer, asking God to bring life change and spiritual growth from the truths that were shared from His Word.

*The teaching of the righteous feeds many.*

–Proverbs 10:21

# SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Connect with children relationally so we can join God in His work of building believers.

**“Every child you encounter is a divine appointment.”**

*–Wes Stafford, President, Compassion International*

## **Before you meet with kids, meet with God**

Intentionally set aside some time to read the Scripture and the small group lesson. Ask God what He wants YOU to know, how He wants you to feel, and what He wants you to do. He *will* speak to you about your small group—will you listen?

## **Be aware when the Holy Spirit is at work**

When you are personally in tune with God, He often gives you keen insight into how others are responding. Be aware that there are a variety of ways in which people may respond to the Holy Spirit. Some children may become verbal about what they're sensing; others may become reflective and quiet. As a leader, you want to help kids process how God is speaking to them in the way He leads you.

## **Guide kids in the process of repentance and belief**

In Jesus' life on earth, He modeled what life in the Kingdom of God looks like: forgiveness, healing, spiritual authority, and hearing directly from God. Then in the resurrection, He opened the way for us to enter this Kingdom. Mark 1:15 says, "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" The two action words are repent and believe. Repent literally means *to change your thinking*. Believe means *to think to be true; to be persuaded*. Jesus is encouraging us to change our thinking regarding our former life and to be completely persuaded that the Good News of Christ is reality! As children hear from the Lord, encourage them to repent and believe!

### **Memorize the Scripture that the kids are learning**

The most effective way to communicate the importance of memorizing God's Word is to memorize it yourself! God's Word is powerful, and it changes lives.

*So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing  
the Good News about Christ.*

–Romans 10:17

*For the word of God is alive and active...*

–Hebrews 4:12

### **Listen carefully**

During the large group teaching time, pay close attention. Kids may have questions about what was taught.

### **Be very familiar with the small group activity for the week**

You will always have the lesson ahead of time, so take time to think through how it will work with your group. Know what it says, and be prepared to engage with your group.

Please do not feel that you have to cover everything in the small group lesson. Every week we intentionally give you more content than you need. As you prepare, highlight the sections that you feel good about sharing and that will be most beneficial for your group. If one question sparks conversation, camp out there—we want you to get to know your kids and meet *their* spiritual needs.

### **Open and use your Bible, and use the words, “The Bible says ...”**

God's Word is life and power. Our words are merely our words. His words change lives! An NlrV Bible will be provided in your small group room. Please use this for reading whenever possible. The NlrV is written on a child's level and will be easiest for them to understand.

### **Small group times are meant to be discussions, not lectures**

This is the time for kids to talk! They have just sat through a lesson. Now, by means of discussion, kids should work through how the lesson applies to their own life. Encourage everyone to participate, but realize that some may be hesitant to speak during the first few sessions. Tell everyone in the group that this is a safe environment to share, and that what's said in the group must stay in the group.

### **Avoid yes or no questions**

Instead of asking academic questions about the story they just heard, ask heart-questions. (Ex: What do you think Noah was most worried about? What do you worry about?)

### **Encourage more than one answer to each question**

A good question should have more than one possible answer, and each person in the group has her own unique perspective. So be sure to ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" until several people have had a chance to respond. When you sense that kids are ready to move on, ask the next question.

### **Affirm answers whenever possible**

Kids may often be reluctant to speak up at first, but if they know you appreciate their comments they will warm up much quicker. Simple words of affirmation such as, "That's a great insight," "Good response," "Excellent idea," or "I hadn't thought of that before" are enough to show children that you value their comments.

### **Never openly reject an answer, even if you think it is wrong**

When you reject a child's answer, it is easy for them to feel rejected as well, and they may decide that it is too risky to give their opinion again. A better response would be to ask them, "Which verse led you to that conclusion?" or let the group handle the situation by asking them what they think about the answer. This will stretch your group and help them grow deeper in God's Word.

### **Don't be afraid of silence**

It usually seems longer to you than to the children in your group. Kids may simply need time to think before they respond.

**If the silence persists, resist the temptation to answer your own question**

Instead, try rephrasing the question until you are confident that the group understands what you are asking. Remember that even an eager group will quickly “shut down” if they think you will do most of the talking. Of course, after everyone has had an opportunity to respond, you can share your own insights. But be careful not to ever dominate the discussion.

**Avoid going off on tangents, and guide them to see the big picture**

If kids wander off course, gently bring them back to the passage and question being considered.

**End with prayer** and also encourage kids to pray at home. Guide them to pray and ask God, "What is your plan for me in all of this?" Then be still and listen. Jot down what they hear.

## LARGE GROUP WORSHIP LEADERS

Help kids encounter God and usher in His power by responding in worship.

*From the lips of children and infants*

*You have ordained praise.*

–Psalm 8:2

Worship is your expression to God of your love and adoration for who He is and for what He has done. Look for God; His majesty is seen all around you! Take time to thank Him and praise Him for who He is and all that He’s doing in your life.

Enthusiastically participate in the praise and worship time along with the children. If we’re not teaching our kids true worship, who is?



### **Children shouldn't be viewed as worshippers in waiting.**

We tend to think that young children are less capable of worship than adults are. Actually, the reverse is true: Children are more imaginative, open, spontaneous, and uninhibited. Scripture even illustrates that children are quick to recognize and praise God, and sometimes they can even lead the way for adults (Matthew 21:12-16). It is important that we appeal to every child's God-given desire to worship.

### **Help us Engage our Kids in Worship**

Please remind your kids:

- **Face the front**
- **Hands to yourself**—It's fine to move around, raise your hands, clap, etc. It's not ok to bother people around you (talking, hitting, punching, tapping, etc).
- **Attention on God**—During worship time, attention belongs on God and not you. Point out to kids: If what you're doing brings attention to God, that's great. If what you're doing is bringing attention to yourself, you're actually robbing God of the glory and attention that is due to Him.

## **CRAFTS**

When we do crafts, all the necessary supplies for children will be provided for you. Each craft will include a Biblical message. Even craft time can be a great teaching time while allowing children to express their God-given creativity!

## **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.

# PRESCHOOL SNACK

Snack time is another great opportunity to reinforce getting to know one another's names as well as the leaders' names. Leaders, we encourage you to sit or kneel with your children and join in this time with them; talk about your favorite snack. Call on other children by name to ask about what they chose and what they like most.

Encourage children to volunteer to be helpers for snack time by having them help set out the napkins on the table, serve the snack, serve the cups of water, and clean up.

Help the children express their thanks to God for creating such yummy, beautiful, and healthy food for our bodies to eat! During this time, please encourage the children to discuss what different shapes and colors they see, and talk about the taste and smell.

## **Food Safety**

Be aware of any food allergies, and post a large note on your door stating what your special snack will be (in the event of a food allergy).

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

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.

# HAVING FUN & BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

## **Games at Church**

Yes! Kids love to play, so we have fun on purpose. Planned, organized, fun games will be played. Sometimes, there will also be periods of free-play.

## **Outside of the Church**

For our K-5<sup>th</sup> children, we'd love for you to do something fun with your group. Ideas include bowling, Pizza Buffet, Aquatic Center, playing in the park, making cookies at your house, playing football in your yard, cooking out over a campfire—you get the idea—anything fun that will help your group build relationships and stay connected.

If you're taking kids off campus or having them meet you somewhere, even if it's at your house, please remember to have a completed, signed permission slip from each child's parent beforehand.\*

## **Only approved drivers can transport children**

To be an approved driver, a person must be age 25 or older, must have an approved application to work with children, and must submit an enlarged photo-copy of their state driver's license to the church office. These requirements are required by insurance and must be adhered to!

\* Use good judgment, and keep our children safe. Children must be well-supervised by two adults with background checks at all times. Please check with Coordinator to avoid scheduling conflicts with other ministry areas in our church. Because everything sent home is a reflection of our church, any handouts, flyers, notes home, etc. must be reviewed by Coordinator.

# 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. (See “Biblical Salvation Stories” at the end of this section.)

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 child-like faith! When a child recognizes that he is a HELPLESS sinner and BELIEVES that Jesus is the only One who can take away his sin, he 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 in your life.**

**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.

**USE THE BIBLE!** God's Word is alive and powerful! Some Biblical Salvation Stories especially effective in explaining salvation to children:

- Jesus Talks with Nicodemus (John 3)
- Jesus Talks with the Woman at the Well of Samaria (John 4)
- Philip Tells the Ethiopian about Jesus (Acts 8)
- Paul and Silas Tell a Jailer about Jesus (Acts 16)

# EQUIPPING CHILDREN TO SHARE GOD'S KINGDOM

Children are not too young to share the Kingdom with their friends and the people they come into contact with! Our kids can be involved and active with sharing God's love and His Word in their communities and around the world.

## Reaching their friends

**We teach kids to share the Kingdom using colors:**

### **BLUE**

God is so powerful that He created the entire world—the water, the land, and everything on it—just by speaking! (Genesis 1:1-25)

### **DARK**

Sin is wrong thinking, which leads to wrong behavior. Sin separates us from God. (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8)

### **RED**

The penalty for sin is death, and the payment was perfect blood. In the Old Testament, a perfect lamb was sacrificed, and his blood covered the sins of the people. But this sacrifice had to be repeated as people continued to sin. But then, at just the perfect time, God sent a Savior, Jesus, who willingly shed His perfect blood for all of us. His blood didn't just cover our sin; Jesus' blood took our sin away forever! Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God. His death gives us new life! (Romans 6:23; Leviticus 17:11; Colossians 2:14; Revelation 7:9-17)

### **WHITE**

Once we believe that Jesus is the only way to being right with God, God sees us as perfect. (John 14:6; Romans 3:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

## **CLEAR**

Represents the peace of God. When we trust God, our heart will be filled with His peace. (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7)

## **YELLOW**

When we enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus promises us eternal life with Him in Heaven. Heaven is a perfect place with streets of gold, jewel-filled gates, and lots of happiness. There is no crying, sickness, or death in Heaven. (Revelation 21)

## **GREEN**

Living the Kingdom life is so much more than just waiting for heaven. Jesus wants us to bring His kingdom here on earth! Remember that the Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is done. He wants us to continue to GROW to become more like Him: Get to know Him, Respond to His voice, Obey Him, and Walk with Jesus. (Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 6:33)

# 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. The offerings collected from our children help support people who are going on mission trips. 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, participate in bake sales, send encouragement cards, 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!

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

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.

## 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 (Time Out).

Here is an acrostic to help you remember:

**D**etermine the behavior you want. As the leader, you've got to 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.

Invite students into what is going on—worship, teaching, small groups, etc. This is relational—you are inviting them in.

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

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

**Collaboration with Director.** The leader talks to the grade director and/or to the overall director. A plan of action is put into place.

**Time out**—setting into place a set of consequences.

Appropriate discipline steps include:

- A. A visit with the most immediate authority over the ministry.
- B. A meeting with parents and the director over the area.
- C. Moving to a new group.
- D. 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 group/class leaders.

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, 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.
- Classrooms must be staffed with a **minimum** of two workers **at all times**.
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 15 seconds:
  - ✓ Upon entering the classroom
  - ✓ After wiping a nose
  - ✓ Before serving any type of snack
  - ✓ After assisting in the restrooms
- Cover any open wounds.
- Do not report for your session if you are ill. Please call the Coordinator to find a sub. While it's helpful for you to replace yourself, bear in mind that all persons serving with children or youth need a completed background check—even if they serve just one time.
- If someone becomes ill or injured, please let your Coordinator know. We will phone parents, fix “boo-boos”, etc.
- No hot drinks around kids, including coffee. Please do not allow kids to have hot drinks either.
- For your own safety and well-being, please wear non-latex gloves if you're ever in contact with bodily fluids. Non-Latex gloves are available in each classroom as well as the restrooms.
- 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, it is the responsibility of the Coordinator to give instructions of the procedures to be followed. 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 ministry shirt (if applicable) and name tag every week, as this clearly identifies you as a safe adult. Please never donate your used ministry shirts to charity as children identify people in these shirts as "safe adults".
- If there is ever a life-threatening emergency, CALL 911! Do not wait for the Coordinator. It's always better to be safe than sorry.
- We are a gun-free/weapon-free campus.
- Continue to pray for God's protection.

## No Child May Go Anywhere Alone

- Please remain with your group of children at all times. Two workers 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 workers 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). When walking across the parking lot, keep them in the designated safe areas. Please help to enforce their safety!
- Parents (not siblings) need to pick-up their children. Be alert at pick-up time. Don't be afraid to ask questions! Ask for a photo ID if a parent comes to you for their child.



# Restroom Safety

- Two adults should be present during visits to the restrooms 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 worker may escort the child to the restrooms and wait outside in the hallway. If the child needs assistance while in the restroom, be sure that both the hallway door and the stall door are open. (This is for your protection!)
- Hallway doors should be propped open while children are in the restrooms in the main building.
- Stall doors should remain closed while a child is using the toilet.
- Stall doors should remain open any time a volunteer's assistance is needed. When a child asks for assistance with wiping, please remember to use non-latex gloves (available in the restrooms).
- If a child needs further assistance due to illness, hygiene, or comfort, please inform your Coordinator 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.
- Kids older than preschool are should not sit in leaders' laps.
- Kids' hands should never be in leaders' pockets.

# 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.

## The Pastoral and Biblical Challenge

Our understanding of appropriate sexual conduct comes from the Scriptures, which affirm intimate sexual activity between married heterosexual partners. The biblical narrative also reserves intimate heterosexual activity exclusively within the context of the marriage covenant.

The teaching of the creation narratives (Genesis 1-2) is clear that God created humankind as male and female in the image of God in order to reflect the glory of God to the rest of creation (Genesis 1:26-27).

The conclusion, which the Scriptures draw from this creation purpose for sexual conduct, is that men and women are to engage in intimate sexual activity with each other exclusively in the context of the heterosexual marriage covenant (Genesis 2:23-25).

In the gospels Jesus affirms this creation purpose by citing the creation narratives in His dispute with the Pharisees over the nature and purpose of marriage (Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8).

The Scriptures are also clear that sexual activity outside of these creation purposes, either of heterosexual or homosexual nature, is a rejection of the divine creation purpose to reflect the glory of God to the creation.

With regard to the matter of homosexual lifestyle and practice, in the light of the biblical data regarding creation, our church believes such activities to be clearly opposed to God's creation purposes.

On the basis of these theological affirmations, which flow from our understanding of the Scriptures, we therefore must state very clearly that our church staff members and volunteers shall not engage in Sexual misconduct.

We do not in any way wish to exclude persons who engage in sexual misconduct or who practice a homosexual lifestyle from being recipients of ministry of God's grace and mercy as expressed in Jesus Christ. We do, however, believe that such persons are not to serve as staff or volunteers in the mission and work of our Children's Ministry.

As in all things, we believe in the forgiveness of sin and loving all unconditionally. We want to continue to minister to those engaged in sexual misconduct but will not condone this behavior.

It is critical to our mission and ministry that our staff and volunteers conform to the highest standards of sexual morality and conduct. In their ministry and in their private lives, our church staff and volunteers shall not engage in any relationship or activity which constitutes sexual misconduct, including but not limited to the following:

1. Sexual relations or activities with any person outside of the marriage covenant.
2. Sexual relations or activities, which constitute sexual offenses as defined by Federal or State Law
3. Any other sexual relations or activities, which are contrary to the theological and moral affirmations of our church's ministry.

## 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 Children's Coordinator, Pastor, Elder/Deacon.
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: Children's Coordinator, Pastor, Elder/Deacon.

We have several lines of defense to protect our children:

- Our first desire is to staff our ministries with trained, committed, and safe workers.
- Each worker is required to complete a criminal background check.
- The Two Adult Rule: There must be two adults present with children at any church-related activity.
- Your required compliance with the policies and procedures as outlined above.

# CALM EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## In all things:

- C** – Consider the situation
- A** – Assist the persons in need
- L** – Lead help to the situation
- M** – Move uninvolved people away from the situation

## In the event of fire:

- Leave the room and proceed to the nearest safe exit.
- Check the restrooms.
- Help children leave.
- Go to the front lawn ASAP to assemble in age and gender groups. Keep the sidewalk clear.

## In the event of an injury:

- Call 911 if necessary.
- Secure the person from further injury.
- Remove other children from the immediate area.
- Communicate with your Coordinator as soon as possible.

## In the event of violence:

- Do not engage the person beyond protecting others.
- We have police officers on call. They can be reached through any staff person.
- Remove all children from the area to the safest nearby location.
- If the building needs to be evacuated we will pull the fire alarm.

# 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 and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

## **Connecting Personally**

For starters, partnering with parents means that they know who you are. That's why it's important to speak to them, send a note or an email, make a phone call—anything to connect with the parents of the kids in your group. Introduce yourself, share a short bit about yourself, and let them know that your goal is to help their child grow in their faith. Sending a picture of yourself is also helpful. For some, Facebook is a great tool to help make that connection.

## **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.



# MINISTRY COVENANT

The ministry covenant is not an attempt to create an environment of legalism. It also does not assume that keeping this leads to a Spirit-led life. We are saved by grace; we mature by the Spirit working in our lives. We will fail in thought, word, and deed at times. It is the desire of the heart and the direction of a life that we are striving for. It is based on 1 Timothy 4:12–

*... but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity.*

## **Speech**

- I will engage in honest and encouraging communication. I will refrain from damaging speech. I will communicate with those I minister to and am ministered by.

## **Life**

- I will live a life that endeavors to show my belief in Jesus Christ. I will seek to be a person of Biblical integrity. I will live humbly and seek the input of other believers to sharpen my walk. One day in seven will be spent focused on recreation and rest of body and soul.

## **Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)**

- I will be careful and respectful in what I post online (church and non-church related topics).
- If something is difficult in my service to our children and families at church, I will talk with my leadership about it. I will not post anything of a complaining nature on line. (Example: late parents; messy diapers; rambunctious children)
- I will use discretion when posting pictures and remember that little eyes are watching.

**Love**

- I will cultivate my relationship with God through daily contact with Him. I will support the ministry of the church. I will reach out to those in my path with the saving hope of Christ.

**Faith**

- I will hold to the teachings of the Church and doctrines of our local church body. I will not intentionally teach material that is inconsistent with the Statement of Belief established by our church (any point of clarity should be discussed in advance with the Pastor of the ministry you serve in).

**Purity**

- I understand purity to mean fidelity in thought, word, and deed. I will consistently fulfill the responsibilities of my position. I understand that sexual behavior has a direct and unique impact on my ministry and my testimony. I will not engage in any sexual activity except in the God ordained context of marriage.

**Alcohol and Tobacco (for Teenage Volunteers), and Illegal Drugs**

- I will not consume ANY alcohol, tobacco products, or illegal drugs while under this covenant. I will keep this covenant, by God's grace, with passion and focus. Should I fail to keep this, I will seek input from those that disciple me and discuss with them whether to notify a Pastor. If at any time I choose to not keep this covenant, I will advise the Pastor of Students and take a leave of ministry as I focus on my own spiritual walk.

# NOTES

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*... 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)



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