

Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Austin, TX

Children's Ministry Handbook

Pastor

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Philosophy of Children's Ministry

Purpose: The purpose of Christ the King Presbyterian Church's Children's Ministry is to come alongside parents in raising their children to grow in the knowledge of, love for, and trust in our Savior Jesus Christ. Members of the congregation promise to assist parents in the Christian nurture of each child who is baptized. Psalm 78:1-7 teaches that God commands parents to teach the glorious deeds of the Lord so that their children will set their hope in God and keep his commandments. As a congregation we join with parents in nurturing, teaching, and prayer for our covenant children that they might learn to place their hope for salvation and all of life in Jesus Christ.

Foundations: The good news of God's grace in Jesus, which includes children of believers, is the foundation of CTK's Children's Ministry. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 confirms that children of believers are included in the covenant of grace and are by birthright members of the church (Acts 2:39). Jesus invited children into his presence, saying "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:16). Our ongoing ministry to nurture children to know, love, and trust Jesus are focused on proclamation and community.

Proclamation: Children grow in the knowledge of and love for Jesus as they hear stories of God's steadfast love and mercy toward those who love him.

- We prioritize weekly worship as a church family, and welcome the presence of children in the worship service.
- A nursery staffed by attendants and volunteers who are experienced and gifted in the nurture of infants and toddlers is also available during worship.
- During the sermon children ages 4-7 go to Bible class, and Sunday School classes for all ages are offered periodically.
- Children's curriculum will be chosen with these three questions in mind: What does this teach about God's character and his promises? What does this teach about Jesus and what he has done and continues to do for us? What privileges and responsibilities are ours because of the covenant of grace?
- Children are given an understanding of the Bible as one story about God's character and redemption of his beloved people through his son Jesus Christ, who is the promised Savior. Moral teaching is not the purpose of scripture or of children's ministry. Children are taught to trust the truth of scripture, know God's steadfast love for them, and to respond to God's steadfast love and grace by trusting in the saving work of Christ on our behalf, a trust that naturally produces grateful obedience. Faith in Christ — not legalistic self-effort, people-pleasing, or will-power — is what we prayerfully aim for.

Community: Children grow in love for the church and God's people through relationships with their parents, grandparents, and brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles in the faith. Children are known, loved, and valued as members of the body of Christ.

- Families - We prioritize reaching and strengthening families with the good news of Jesus, especially through encouraging and supporting parents in the Christian nurture and education of their children. The primary mens/womens ministry is that of husbands and wives each loving and serving one another and their children.
- Community Groups - Children are included in these groups of 8-10 people who gather regularly to study God's Word, pray together, share meals, grow in relationship, and serve our community.
- Community Prayer - Children are included in monthly prayer meetings.
- Playground Fellowship - Families gather on the playground on Sundays after worship for fellowship and play.
- Lay Ministry - The whole community is involved in caring for one another according to and with God's Word. This care regularly extends to families in need of childcare, meals, prayer, and other support.

Child Protection

As a church family we've been called to nurture and protect the children in our care. The CTK Child Protection Policy, volunteer application, and screening questionnaire at the end of this document have been developed to provide a safe, loving environment for worship, learning, service, and fellowship for all ages.

Staffing and Volunteers

All children's classes and activities will follow these requirements per the CTK Child Protection Policy:

- Volunteers 18 years of age and older are required to undergo a background check.
- Two-Adult Rule: At least two non-related employees/volunteers must be present in the room with minors during church activities.
- Open-Door Policy: The Open-Door Policy requires that in the event that the Two-Adult Rule cannot be observed under the circumstances for a period of time, the door is to be left open during the entirety of that time.
- Bathroom Policy: Only women over 16 are allowed to change diapers and take boys and girls to the restroom, standing outside the stall (with door ajar), only offering help if the child requests it.

Nursery Procedures

- The nursery is staffed on Sunday mornings by adult paid attendants and adult or youth (12 years and older) volunteers. The nursery coordinator or her designee will confirm that attendants and volunteers are present, and find additional volunteers if needed.
- Volunteers serve by engaging with the children in play, reading, singing, and enjoying them. Volunteers should keep in mind that this is not babysitting, but showing the love of Christ to the children entrusted to them.
- Paid attendants arrive at 10 am and set up the nursery. Supplies are stored in a rolling closet in the storage area. Spread the rug and blanket on the floor with toys and books, and set out hand sanitizer, clipboard with sign in form, name tags, and pen. Move or ask assistance in moving non-nursery items that could be a hazard to toddlers out of the nursery.
- Paid attendants are responsible for making sure each child is signed in by a parent with a contact number. Paid attendants will provide two clip-on or sticker name tags per child; one name tag will be placed on the child's back and the other will be given to the parent. Parents will return the tag with their child's name at pickup time so attendants will know each child is leaving with their parent.
- Parents must tell attendants and indicate on the sign in form if anyone else will be picking up their child.
- Parents should tell attendants if their child has any food allergies.
- Bottles must be pre-mixed.
- Nursery attendants will text parents if their child is unhappy and does not calm easily.
- Parents will collect their child as soon as the service is over. Attendants verify that each child is leaving with their parent or parent's designee.
- Attendants return nursery items to storage and clean the diaper changing area after all children have been picked up.
- Attendants or volunteers will communicate issues or concerns to the nursery coordinator.

Children's Bible Class Procedures

- The children's Bible class for 4 - 7 year olds is offered during the worship service. The class is led by two adults (one lead teacher and a volunteer helper), and one to two youth volunteers.
- The class follows the *Show Me Jesus* curriculum by Great Commission Publications. Each lead teacher is given a teacher's manual, visual aids, and the children's handouts for each week.
- The lead teacher and youth volunteers arrive at 10:00 am and prepare the classroom space.
- Supplies may be found in a plastic bin in the storage area adjoining the classroom. Supplies include crayons, scissors, glue sticks, masking tape, craft sticks, butcher paper, etc., and *God's Story Bible Coloring Book*. Copies of coloring pages may be made from the coloring book in the workroom behind the sanctuary.
- Children sit with their parents until the beginning of the passing of the peace. At that time children will join the teachers just outside the west entrance to the sanctuary.
- Teachers and youth volunteers will lead the children to the classroom.
- Teachers will be provided with parent text numbers for members and regular attendees, and will ask for text numbers from visitors whose children attend class.
- Class time is around 45 minutes. Teachers lead students back to the sanctuary when the sermon is over.
- After the worship service the teacher and youth volunteers clean up the classroom and return children's church materials to storage.

Preschool and Elementary Children's Sunday School Procedures

- Series of Preschool and Elementary Sunday School classes are offered periodically in conjunction with adult classes. Each class is led by two adults.
- Teachers will prepare classroom spaces as needed upon arrival.
- Teachers will be provided with parent text numbers for members and regular attendees, and will ask for text numbers from visitors whose children attend class.
- Parents will pick up their child as soon as the Sunday School time is over.

Discipline Procedures for All Children's Classes

A teacher or youth volunteer designated by the teacher will respond to a child who is being disruptive or disrespectful by escorting the child away from the group to a quiet area of the classroom for a time-out. The child will be welcomed back into the group after he or she is calm and able to participate in the lesson or play alongside others. Parents of children who continue to be disruptive will be required to remove their child from class or attend class with their child. Parents will be notified to come pick up a child who is at risk of injuring themselves or another child (by hitting, kicking, biting, etc.).

Child Wellness

Based on American Association of Pediatrics guidelines for when to keep children home, we ask that parents keep their children out of the nursery or class with any of the following conditions. For more details please see “When to Keep your Child Home from Child Care,” American Academy of Pediatrics, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>

- When the child appears to be severely ill, is not responsive, irritable, persistently crying, having difficulty breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash
- Fever (temperature above 100.4°F) and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, or diarrhea)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting in the previous 24 hours
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms
- Mouth sores with drooling that the child cannot control
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes
- Skin sores that are weeping fluid and are on an exposed body surface

Other Conditions until cleared by a physician to return to childcare or school:

- Streptococcal pharyngitis (strep throat or other streptococcal infection)
- Head lice, scabies, ringworm
- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Rubella
- Pertussis
- Mumps
- Measles
- Hepatitis A virus infection

Covid-19 Policy: Parents must confirm that their child (or anyone in their household) does not have a fever, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, loss of taste or smell, eye infection, or other Covid-19–related symptom (see dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/#symptoms), and has not been in close contact with a person with known Covid-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days before leaving their child in the nursery or children’s Bible class.

Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA)
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tim@ctkaustin.org

Please complete this application and return it to the above address, either via email or post, or to the Children's Ministry Director at diane@ctkaustin.org. Please read the safety policy at the end of this application (pages 3-5), and then sign at the end (page 6), acknowledging that you have read it and agree to abide by it; if you are over 18, you will need to consent to a criminal background check on page 6. Upon review of this application, you may receive an email or phone call to have an interview scheduled.

NURSERY/CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (cell) _____ (other) _____ E-mail: _____

Birthday: _____

Are you currently a member of a church? If so, where? If not at CTK, please give a contact name and phone number of someone at your church.

How long have you been coming to CTK?

What experience do you have working with children?

List any special children's ministry related abilities or skills you have (music, storytelling, crafts, etc.):

Any additional comments that might be helpful:

If you are not a member of CTK, please provide a brief testimony of your Christian experience including how you came to know Jesus Christ as your Savior and how you maintain a close relationship with Him.

References (for non-members of CTK)

If you are not a member of CTK, please give two references. Be sure to include a full mailing address and phone number to avoid us having to contact you. These references will be contacted within the next two weeks. References should be people who can attest to your character and, if possible, have observed your behavior and interaction with children. Please only include references who are 18 or older and who are not members of your family.

Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Relationship



Child Protection Policy at Christ the King Presbyterian (PCA), Austin – Adopted August 2018;
Slightly updated August 2020

Scope:

This applies to any activity that is formally sponsored by CTK in which adults and youth are working directly with children ages newborn through 18. Small groups informally hiring their own caregivers may use their own discretion but are encouraged to follow this policy.

Selection and Screening:

Volunteers:

Application: All new volunteers will complete a Children's Ministry application, which will include an acknowledgement of reading and agreeing to our child protection policy. All existing volunteers must sign a consent form agreeing to abide by the policy and, for volunteers aged 18 and over, also consenting to a criminal background check. Volunteers must: be a member of CTK; or, if not a member, (a) regularly attend CTK for at least one year and (b) be approved by the Session or Children's Ministry Director; and, if under 18, be approved by the Session or Children's Ministry Director, regardless of membership status. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old (but will not be background-checked if they are under 18).

Training: Volunteers will be trained in the Child Protection Policy of CTK.

Employees:

Application: All childcare employees hired by CTK must complete a Children's Ministry application, which includes a signed consent to a background check and an acknowledgement of reading and agreeing to our child protection policy.

Approval: Upon completion of the application and background check, the session, or the Children's Ministry Director, must approve an employee's application.

Childcare employees may not bring relatives with them while working for a CTK event.

Preventing Child Abuse:

Two-Adult Rule: At least two non-related employees/volunteers must be present in the room with minors during church activities.

Open-Door Policy: The Open-Door Policy requires that in the event that the Two-Adult Rule cannot be observed under the circumstances for a period of time, the door is to be left open during the entirety of that time.

Bathroom Policy: Only women over 16 are allowed to change diapers and take boys and girls to the restroom, standing outside the stall (with door ajar), only offering help if the child requests it.

Definitions of Abuse

What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse includes a wide range of acts and omissions, including acts causing mental, emotional, and physical injury and threatened physical injury to a minor. Child Abuse can even include failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent such harmful actions by another person.

What is Child Sexual Abuse? Child Sexual Abuse is any sexual activity with a child by a person known or unknown to the child. The Texas Family Code defines Child Sexual Abuse as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse, and it is against the law to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. The abuser may be an adult, adolescent, or another child. Child Sexual Abuse may be violent or non-violent, involving touching and non-touching aspects. It is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness. The relationship between the abuser and the child, or consent by the child are irrelevant to a determination of whether Child Sexual Abuse has occurred. It is extremely difficult for a child to report Child Sexual Abuse, in part because very young children may not understand that a particular activity is not normal or accepted. Child Sexual Abuse is criminal behavior.

Signs of Abuse

All staff, volunteers, and paid caregivers working with minor children will receive training in regarding the signs of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, and the steps to report any and all suspected child abuse.

Physical signs of molestation may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Venereal disease

Behavioral signs of molestation may include:

- Nightmares
- Anxiety when approaching the drop-off building/area (beyond normal separation anxiety)
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Advanced sexual knowledge/behavior for age (promiscuous behavior)
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs of molestation may include statements such as:

- "I don't like _____."
- " _____ does things to me when we're alone."
- "I don't like to be alone with _____."
- " _____ fooled around with me."

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Texas state law requires a person to immediately report suspected and reported child abuse to the authorities and, in organizations such as CTK Austin (PCA), to the appropriate individual in charge. If the Children's Ministry Director is unavailable, the volunteers/paid caregivers may contact the Children's Ministry Coordinator or other Staff Member of CTK Austin (PCA). The individual reporting the alleged abuse is required to maintain strict confidentiality of all information about the alleged abuse, and shall not disclose any information to any person other than the persons named above and governmental authorities as required by law. *There is no need to interview the child; this will be conducted by a trained professional.*

Anyone who fails to report suspected abuse can be prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor or, in extreme circumstances, may be subject to civil liability for money damages. Therefore, all employees and volunteers at CTK Austin (PCA) must adhere to the following procedures:

- In the event of suspected, reported, or discovered child abuse or violation of the Child Protection Guidelines of CTK Austin (PCA), the employee or volunteer shall immediately notify the Children's Ministry Director, who will then report it to a pastor and the Session.
- The Children's Ministry Director, will also immediately make a report to the local child protection service or law enforcement agency, within 48 hours of the alleged abuse.
 - For life threatening/emergency situations, call 911 immediately.
 - 1-800-252-5400 - Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.
 - www.txabusehotline.org - Report through secure site and receive a response within 24 hours
- Reports shall be documented in writing with the date of the report, the time of the report, the telephone number to which the report was made, the name of the recipient of the report, and a brief synopsis of the report. If at all possible, all oral reporting will be done in the presence of a recorded witness.
- Children's Ministry Director will also meet with the family involved to inform them of the incident or report.
- Confidentiality will be maintained. Therefore, only necessary individuals should be informed of alleged incident.

Internal Response Procedure

The official spokesperson for CTK Austin (PCA) shall be designated by the Session. All inquiries or requests for information from the media, attorneys or any other parties shall be referred to the official spokesperson. No person other than the official spokesperson is to release any information regarding any alleged incident of child abuse without the express approval of the official spokesperson. All communication by the official spokesperson to the media, congregation, and public will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

We will take any allegation of child abuse seriously and will reach out in Christian love and support to the victim and the victim's family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed.

We will treat the accused with dignity and respect. The accused person shall be temporarily relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished and the person cleared by the authorities. If the accused is a paid employee of our church, his or her income will be maintained, until allegations are cleared by authorities or until criminal charges are filed. If the accused is a member of our congregation we will reach out in Christian love and support to the accused and their family, extending whatever pastoral care resources are needed. We will fully cooperate with any authorities investigating an allegation of child abuse.

Personal Information (over 18 only)

For those over 18, our policy requires a background check to serve in the children’s ministry. All info remains confidential.

Name: _____ Male Female
(First Name) (Middle Name) (LastName)

Do you have a maiden name or any other name you have formerly been known by? Yes No

If so, what was it? _____

Current Address: _____

Since: _____

Age: _____ DOB: ____/____/____ Social Security #: _____ - _____ - _____ (necessary for background check)

E-mail Address _____

Cell #: _____

Affirmation and Release (all volunteers)

By initialing each bullet point and signing below, I affirm that:

____ (all volunteers) I have read and understand the CTK Child Abuse Prevention and Safety Policies and Procedures and agree to abide by all requirements and policies therein.

____ (age 18 and over only) I understand that CTK will run a background check (www.sentrylink.com) in an effort to uphold a safe environment for our children.

The following is my true and complete legal name:

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Legal Name _____