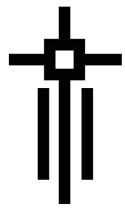


REDEEMER
KIDS

2017-2018 Servant Handbook

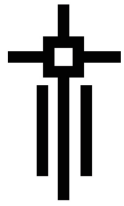




REDEEMER CHURCH

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REDEEMER CHURCH

RedeemerKids Servant Handbook

Our Purpose

RedeemerKids exists to see the gospel transform the next generation. Our goal is to **partner with parents** to help their children know and follow Jesus Christ by:

- Teaching children the Gospel of Jesus, not just moral lessons.
- Showing children the love of Jesus by creating a fun, inviting, safe environment.

We believe that only the power of the gospel can change children, families, neighborhoods, and schools. As we minister the gospel to children, we are participating in Redeemer's larger vision of city transformation.

Children's Ministry Programs: RedeemerKids programs provide a loving and safe place for children up to age 12 on Sunday mornings and during other church-wide functions to receive the love of Christ. By doing this, we also provide an opportunity for people to serve God and the church family by serving children on a rotational basis in the classrooms on Sunday mornings.

Parent Partnership: According to the Bible, parents have the **primary** responsibility for teaching children about God (Deu. 6:6-9). We want to equip parents to pray and plan for the spiritual development of their kids. Therefore, we strive to build good relationships between our teachers and parents, and equip parents with classes, material, and encouragement to build a Christ-centered family.

Children's Ministry Leadership

Lawson Flowers - Student and Family Minister
Christina Googer - Children's Ministry Assistant

"Building Leaders"

Each building will be assigned a Building Leader at each service who will lead in check-in and check-out, and will make sure procedures and policies are being followed.

Your Servant Responsibility

1. Be alert. Parents trust you with their child. Always be aware of where your children and co-servant are at all times. Report any suspicions of abuse immediately to the Children's Ministry Leadership.

2. Be reliable.

- Please arrive on time (**at least 20 minutes before the start of service**), as it reflects poorly on the ministry if parents arrive before the servants.
- **Servant Absences:** We want to maintain a safe and healthy environment for RedeemerKids. If you become ill, please respect others by staying home. Please find a replacement by either switching service dates with another servant, or finding one of the servants to sub in for you. Please notify Lawson Flowers before and after you find a sub.

3. Teach Jesus. As Christ and His free gift of righteousness is central to the Bible, likewise our message should be all about Jesus. Guard vigilantly against ending lessons with morals apart from Jesus.

- You will receive your lesson plans at least a week in advance through our planning website. Please spend time at home familiarizing yourself with the lesson, and do not allow the few minutes before class to be your primary preparation time.

4. Build relationships with parents. Get to know the family, demonstrate care for them and their child(ren), and see if they need guidance from the church in parenting.

5. Worship Jesus. We don't ever want you to fulfill your servant responsibilities at the expense of worshipping with the church family. Please plan to attend the Sunday service during which you are not serving.

Key Safety & Security Reminders

1. Two unrelated adult servants must be present in each classroom, including at least one Redeemer Church member.
2. Remain visible to your co-servants at all times, even when pulling aside a disruptive child. When changing diapers or assisting a child to the restroom, inform your co-servant what you will be doing and with which child.
3. Male leaders may not change diapers or take any child to the restroom. Female leaders must leave the restroom door open if it is necessary to enter to help a child.
4. **Physical Touch Policy:** Do not allow children ages 2 and above to sit in your lap. Physical touch or affection should be brief in nature. Please do not lay on the floor.
5. **Social Media Policy:** Please refrain from posting pictures of children from our church programs on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

**These rules and the ones to follow are designed to not only protect the children, but to protect you as a servant from false accusation and/or litigation!*

Sunday Morning Structure

ARRIVAL

- Please wear a RedeemerKids servant shirt. This enables the parents to recognize who the designated teachers are. Also wear modest, comfortable clothing that allow you to sit on the floor, play, and interact with the children.
- Do not bring hot drinks into the Children's Ministry buildings.
- Check in **20 minutes** prior to your scheduled service time with the Building Leader. If time allows, gather together promptly to pray.
- Check to make sure you have your class' attendance sheet, lesson plans (including videos, if applicable), and lesson supplies you need.
- Familiarize yourself with your class' checklist and schedule.

CHECK-IN

- There should always be a greeter at the entrance of the building during check-in and check-out to greet families and for security purposes.
- Children birth through Kindergarten will check-in at the kiosks in Building B. Elementary children will check-in at the kiosks in Building A.
- Each regularly attending family should have an account on Redeemer's Rock network. Parents will enter in the last 4 digits of their phone number, which will print out a label that they will place on their child. The parents will also receive a corresponding label they will use to claim their child at check-out.
- **Visitors:** Visitors should be directed to the check-in greeter. They will fill out a visitor's form and be given a label for the child and a corresponding claim label for the parent.
- Greet each child and parent at the entrance of the building or room, making sure to introduce yourself and your partner if it is the first time you are meeting the parents. Make sure you know the parent(s) name.
- **Make sure each child has a name-tag label.** If a child comes to the door without a label, instruct the parent that the check-in process is necessary and direct them to the check-in greeter. Check this able for any instructions that need further clarification. Also make sure diaper bags are labeled.

- Check to see if the child is on the attendance roster. If not, add him/her to the bottom of the appropriate class' sheet.
- Ask each parent if there are any special instructions, documenting them on the attendance sheet. Use potty and food allergy stickers if applicable and relay all information to the volunteers in the child's room.
- Direct the child to his/her classroom, making sure the appropriate teacher is notified of the child's arrival.

CLASS TIME

Play Time:

- Interact with the children on their eye-level. Play and have fun!
- Troublesome times among preschoolers may require your intervention in a loving way. They will sometimes need instruction on how to share.

Large Group / Worship Time:

- We will have music and worship time together in the middle of your designated building. We encourage you to worship God with the children, so do the hand motions and sing as well!
- One or two volunteers from each class will sanitize their respective playrooms during worship time.

Lesson Time:

- Make sure the children are aware of the class rules and consequences (see p. 22).
- Follow your class lesson plans.
- Toddlers through Elementary classes use Lifeway's Gospel Project curriculum.

Snack Time (Walkers-PreK/K only)

- See *Snack time Procedures* (p. 11, 16, 22)

Diapers:

- See *Diaper Changing Procedures* (p. 21)

Calling Parents

- If a child needs to have a parent contacted, please contact the Building Leader first. We need to be aware of the reason **before** any parent is called.

CHECK-OUT

- Check-out begins at 9:45 AM for the first service, and 11:15 PM for the second service, and 12:45 for the third service. If your children are not in their classrooms, promptly direct your students back to their classrooms. **Do not allow parents to enter building for check-out until all the children are in their classrooms.**
- Release children only to a parent who presents the corresponding label, checking the unique alpha-numeric code on their label against the code on the name-tag label on the child. **Do not release child to siblings under the age of 18.**
- If a parent has misplaced their label, please contact the Building Leader or Children's Ministry Leadership for release authorization.

CLEAN UP

- As each class has a specific-list of clean-up duties, refer to your class check-list.

Infant Room

Guidelines

- **No one under 18 is allowed to work in the infant room.**
- There should be an adult/child ratio of 1:4. But at least 2 workers should be present. If you have more children than this, please inform the Building Leader immediately.
- Please do not wear shoes in the infant room.
- Sleeping infants should be placed on their backs. If children fall asleep in the swings, make sure they are leaning back.
- Change sheets or blankets if a child has used them. Do not reuse sheets/blankets for different children.
- To prevent burns, do not microwave bottles or water for bottles.
- **All diapers should be checked at least once a session and 15 minutes before the end of the session.** No parent wants to pick up a dirty or wet child. (See *Diaper Changing Procedures on p. 21*)
- If a child continuously cries for longer than **15 minutes**, please notify your Building Leader.



Infant Room Checklist

BEFORE SERVICE

- ☐ Check-in with the **Building Leader**.
- ☐ Wash your hands.
- ☐ Take off your shoes and place them in hallway.
- ☐ Take out your **designated service toy bin** found outside the infant room

DURING SERVICE

- ☐ When a parent arrives with a child, ask for any instructions, and **mark the child on the attendance sheet** along with any **instructions BEFORE** receiving the child. Make sure diaper bags are labeled.
- ☐ If a toy goes into a child's mouth, place it in the **"Mouthed Toys"** bin until sanitized.
- ☐ Only feed infants snacks packed in diaper bag. Infants must be placed in a **booster seat** when eating a snack. (See **Snack Procedures for Infants** posted on wall).
- ☐ Check diapers **15 minutes** before pick-up (See **Diaper Changing Procedures** above changing table).

AFTER SERVICE

- ☐ Spray down all large toys, used ExerSaucers (including the cloth seats), and the rubber floor mat with Clorox HP Spray and let sit for **5 minutes**. Then, use paper towels to wipe off any remaining liquid. (Use Swiffer Wet Jet for the floor mat after the 3rd service.)
- ☐ Place all toys, including toys from "Mouthed Toys" bin, back into bin. Bring bin to bathroom and spray toys with Clorox HP Spray, moving toys around to ensure toys get well coated. Allow toys to air-dry with lid off for **5 minutes**, then take a paper towel and **wipe off any remaining liquid** from toys and bin. Replace lid and return to storage.
- ☐ Wipe down **light switches, gates, and door knobs** with Clorox HP wipe.
- ☐ Check out with the **Building Leader** before leaving.



Infants Snacktime Procedures

*Infants may **ONLY** be fed snacks packed in their diaper bag, unless otherwise specified by the parent/guardian.*

1. Check each child's tag and the attendance sheet for **food allergies**.
2. **Wash your hands** before serving snacks.
3. Check the child's **diaper bag** for a **packed snack**.
4. Children may eat a snack at anytime, but they **MUST** be placed in a **booster seat with a tray**.
5. **Sanitize** children's hands **before snack**.
6. **After** eating a snack, **clean child's hands** with a **baby wipe**.
7. **Wipe booster seat and tray** with a **Clorox HP Wipe**.

Walkers Room

Guidelines

- **No one under 18 is allowed to work in the walkers room.**
- There should be an adult/child ratio of 1:7. But at least 2 workers should be present. If you have more children than this, please inform the Building Leader immediately.
- To prevent burns, do not microwave bottles or water for bottles.
- **All diapers should be checked at least once a session and 15 minutes before the end of the session.** No parent wants to pick up a dirty or wet child. (See *Diaper Changing Procedures on p. 21*)
- If a child continuously cries for longer than **15 minutes**, please notify your Building Leader.



Walkers Room Checklist

BEFORE SERVICE

- ☐ Check-in with the **Building Leader**.
- ☐ Wash your hands.
- ☐ Take out your **designated service toy bin** found outside the infant room.
- ☐ Take off your shoes and place in restroom or nursing room.

DURING SERVICE

- ☐ When a parent arrives with a child, ask for any instructions, and **mark the child on the attendance sheet** along with any **instructions BEFORE** receiving the child.
- ☐ If a toy goes into a child's mouth, place it in the **"Mouthed Toys"** bin until sanitized.
- ☐ Feed infants snacks packed in diaper bag. If no snack is packed and child has no allergies, you may feed them Cheerios. (See **Snack Time Procedures**.)
- ☐ Check diapers **15 minutes** before pick-up (See diaper changing procedures above changing table).

AFTER SERVICE

- ☐ Spray down all large toys with Clorox HP Spray and let sit for **5 minutes**. Then, use paper towels to wipe off any remaining liquid.
- ☐ Place all toys, including toys from "Mouthed Toys" bin, back into bin. Bring bin to bathroom and spray toys with Clorox HP Spray, moving toys around to ensure toys get well coated. Allow toys to air-dry with lid off for **5 minutes**, then take a paper towel and **wipe off any remaining liquid** from toys and bin. Replace lid and return to storage.
- ☐ Use the Swiffer Wet Jet to clean the rubber floor mat.
- ☐ Wipe down **light switches, gates, and door knobs** with Clorox HP wipe.
- ☐ Check out with the **Building Leader** before leaving.



Walkers Snacktime Procedures

1. Check each child's tag and the attendance sheet for **food allergies**.
2. **Wash your hands** before serving snacks.
3. Check the child's **diaper bag** for a **packed snack**. If no snack is packed, they may be fed Cheerios (Rice Chex is available as a gluten-free option).
4. Children may eat a snack at anytime, but they **MUST** be placed in a **booster seat with a tray**.
5. **Sanitize** children's hands **before snack**.
6. **After** eating a snack, **clean child's hands** with a **baby wipe**.
7. **Wipe booster seat and tray** with a **Clorox HP Wipe**.

Toddlers Class

Guidelines

- **Toddlers (age 2) and preschool class (ages 3-4.5) adult/child ratio is 1:7.**
- Always have 2 adults in a room. If you exceed the ratio, please inform the Building Leader and check-in greeter immediately.
- **All diapers should be checked at least once per session and 15 minutes before the end of the session. Parents do not want to pick up a dirty or wet child. (*Please see Diaper Changing Policy and Procedures on pg. 21.*)**



Toddlers Room Checklist

BEFORE SERVICE

- ☐ Check-in with the **Building Leader**.
- ☐ Wash your hands.
- ☐ Look over lesson, making sure all your supplies are present.

DURING SERVICE

- ☐ Check each child's name tag for a **Potty Training Sticker** and ask the child to go potty every 20 minutes. Accompany the child to the bathroom.
- ☐ If a toy goes into a child's mouth, place it in the **"Mouthed Toys"** bin until sanitized.
- ☐ During worship time, send 1-2 volunteers to spray down all toys and containers with **Clorox HP Spray** (including mouthed toys) and let sit for **5 minutes**. Use paper towels to wipe any remaining liquid.
- ☐ See **Snack Time Procedures**.
- ☐ Check diapers **15 minutes** before pick-up (See diaper changing procedures above changing table).

AFTER SERVICE

- ☐ Wipe down **tables, light switches, gates, door knobs, toilet, toilet handle, sink, and faucet**, with Clorox HP wipes.
- ☐ Check out with the **Building Leader** before leaving.

Preschool PreK/K Classes

Guidelines

- **Preschool class (ages 3-4.5) adult/child ratio is 1:7.**
- **PreK/K class (ages 4.5-Kindergarten age) adult/child ratio is 1:9.**
- Always have 2 adults in a room. If you exceed the ratio, please inform the Building Leader and check-in greeter immediately.
- Preschoolers and PreK/K classes may use the playground area. (Please see Playground Rules and Guidelines on pg. 23.)



Preschool/PreK/K Checklist

BEFORE SERVICE

- ☐ Check-in with the **Building Leader**.
- ☐ Wash your hands.
- ☐ Look over lesson, making sure all your supplies are present.

DURING SERVICE

- ☐ Check each child's name tag for a **Potty Training Sticker** and remind child to tell you if they need to go potty.
- ☐ **During worship time**, send 1-2 volunteers to spray down all toys and containers with **Clorox HP Spray** (including mouthed toys) and let sit for **5 minutes**. Use paper towels to wipe any remaining liquid.
- ☐ Wash children's hands after playing outside.
- ☐ See **Snack Time Procedures**.
- ☐ Check diapers **15 minutes** before pick-up (See diaper changing procedures above changing table).

AFTER SERVICE

- ☐ After **EACH** service, wipe **snack counter** and **tables** with Clorox wipes, and **sweep** the kitchen floor.
- ☐ After **EACH** service, wipe down **light switches, gates, door knobs, toilet, toilet handle, sink, and faucet**, with Clorox HP wipes.
- ☐ After the **11:30** service, **stack chairs**.
- ☐ Check out with the **Building Leader** before leaving.

Other Procedures



Handwashing Procedures

Hand washing is one of the most efficient ways to prevent the spread of many types of illness and infection.

If your room does not have nearby sink facilities, hand sanitizer is provided for servants and children to use.

(NOTE: This does not **replace** hand washing!)

WHEN TO WASH

1. Arrival
2. Before handling food or bottles
3. After using the restroom
4. After changing each child's diapers
5. After any contact with body fluids
6. After contact with cleaning products

HOW TO WASH

1. Wash hands with running water and antibacterial soap
2. Wash front and back of hands for 15-30 seconds
3. Dry hands with disposable towel
4. Turn off faucet with towel



Diaper Changing Procedures

Please follow these procedures to reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

**Only women age 18+ may change diapers.*

1. Put on **disposable gloves**, using a new pair with each diaper change.
2. Place a **disposable covering paper** on the diapering surface if available.
3. Place child on the covered changing table, and buckle the child. **Tell** the child you will be changing his/her diaper. Be sure **never** to **turn or walk away** from the child and keep your hand on the child.
4. Unfastened wet or soiled diaper. Wipe child from **FRONT to BACK**.
5. Seal **soiled diapers, wipes** and the **changing cover** in a **grocery bag** (located in drawers under station). Discard in a lined trashcan.
6. **Remove gloves**, stripping them inside out, and dispose in trashcan.
7. Fasten clean diaper securely.
8. **Wipe child's hands** with a baby wipe, or have preschoolers wash hands in sink. Return child to playroom.
9. **Wash your hands.** (See Handwashing Procedures.)
10. **Wipe changing surface** with a Clorox HP Wipe.



Snacktime Procedures

(Toddlers, Preschool, PreK/K)

1. Check each child's tag and the attendance sheet for **food allergies**.
2. **Wash your hands** before serving snacks.
3. **Pray**
4. **Sanitize** children's hands **before** snack.
5. Give each child a **napkin**, and place Animal Crackers and/or Goldfish on napkin (Rice Chex is available as a gluten-free option).
6. **Sanitize** children's hands **AFTER** snack.

PLAYGROUND RULES & GUIDELINES

- There should be at least 2 adults on the playground at all times. This is so that at least 1 adult can remain on the playground in case a child needs to come inside for any reason, *i.e.* restroom break or first aid needs. (The adult attending to the child who needs bathroom assistance must not be the only adult in the building. Therefore, do not go to the playground if there are no other adults left to monitor the other adult.)
- Early walkers and up may use the playground area.
- Early walkers may NOT use the play structure.
- Before allowing children on playground, a servant must walk perimeter to check for safety concern such as snakes, ants, wasps nest, thorny weeds, broken toys, broken fence, etc.
- Always be in view of the entryway. If the gate is not up, have one adult standing by steps.
- When changing location, one servant will lead children & the other will walk behind children
- Take attendance
 - 1) Before leaving for playground
 - 2) Upon playground arrival
 - 3) Before leaving playground
 - 4) Upon arrival back in classroom.
- Children may not swing unsafely on play structure.
- Children may not climb up the slide

FIRE EVACUATION

1. Before evacuating, retrieve the attendance clipboard, and account for all the children in your class.
2. Walk calmly to the evacuation area located in the main parking lot. Take attendance when you arrive safely.
3. Once evacuated, please wait for further instructions from the Children's Ministry Leadership.
4. Stay with your group at all times. Do not leave to go get your own children, to obtain first aid or for any other reason. First aid will be brought to you if needed.
5. Do not release children to their parents (for ALL ages) during the evacuation process. Parents may walk with you, but children may only be released after you have arrived at your designated location and attendance has been taken. Release children to their parents after you have been given permission from the Children's Ministry Leadership.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

If a child becomes sick during a Children's Ministry program:

- Separate the ill child from the other children until a parent arrives.
- Notify the Building Leader, who will take the appropriate action and notify the parents to come retrieve their child.

Minor Injuries can be treated with a little tender loving care, a cool clean cloth and a Band-Aid. When the parent arrives, please let them know what happened. A Children's Ministry Leader will follow up with the parent, if necessary, the following week.

First-aid kits are located in the labeled cabinet above the kitchen counter by the pantry.

We are NOT authorized to dispense any ointments, over the counter medications, or prescription medications. In the event a child needs more attention than you can provide, please notify the Building Leader and the parent will be notified.

Serious Injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury should be treated as follows:

1. Do not move the injured child. An adult must remain with the child.
2. Stay calm and speak to assure the child while another adult cares for the other children in your class.
3. Have someone look for the Building Leader and Children's Ministry Leadership to inform them of the situation.
4. Children's Ministry Leadership will contact the parent and take over the situation so you may return to the classroom to care for the other children.
5. Children's Ministry Leadership will contact you with updates of the child's condition. You may be asked to give information to assist the staff in reporting the incident.
6. If there is a visible injury, including a bump or blow to the head, broken skin from a bite/scratch inflicted by another child (see page 21), or a child is transported by ambulance to another facility, complete an **Incident Report** (located in each Children's Ministry Buildings) and submit to the Children's Ministry Leadership.

Injuries and Accidents Involving Two Children

The following steps should be taken to handle injuries or accidents involving two children (bites, scratches with broken skin, etc.) Accidents can happen anytime children are together. It is our job to do our best to provide a safe and secure environment for all the little ones in our care. When incidents do occur, it is important to follow basic procedures in reporting and treating them.

Step 1: Remove the offending child from the situation by placing him/her in “time out”.

Step 2: Check the injured child to determine the level of injury. Any scratches or bites should be cleaned with antibacterial soap. If the skin is broken, the Building Leader should be contacted immediately so that treatment can be administered. (REMEMBER – WE DO NOT APPLY ANY MEDICATION!)

Step 3: Once the injured child has been treated and consoled, the offending child should be redirected such as, “We don’t scratch. It hurts when you scratch someone.” If the child continues to bite/scratch, they need to be isolated in such a way that they cannot injure another child. This may require removing the child from the building.

Step 4: Fill out an Incident Report and submit it to Children’s Ministry Leadership. The leader will then make a Parent’s Copy for the parent of the injured child which excludes the name of the offending child.

Step 5: When the parent picks up the **injured** child, IMMEDIATELY tell them about the injury discretely, no matter the level of injury incurred. Tell the parent that we are sorry that their child was injured and help them understand how seriously we take such things. DO NOT POINT OUT THE OFFENDING CHILD TO THE PARENT OF THE INJURED CHILD. If the parent asks who the offending child is, please tell them that it is Redeemer's policy not to do so. Give them the Parent’s Copy of the Incident Report. Refer the parent to Children's Ministry Leadership if further discussion is needed.

Step 6: When the parent picks up the **offending** child, IMMEDIATELY and DISCRETELY tell them of the incident and the disciplinary actions taken (time out, etc.) DO NOT POINT OUT THE INJURED CHILD TO THE PARENT OF THE OFFENDING CHILD.

RedeemerKids Class Rules

Toddlers-Kindergarten

1. We listen to our teachers
2. We are kind to others
3. We use inside voices
4. We keep feet on the floor
5. We have fun learning about Jesus!

Elementary

1. I can listen
2. I can learn
3. I can stay safe
4. I can show respect
5. I can participate

Consequences

1. Verbal warning
2. Sit beside a teacher
3. Sit in time-out (5 minutes)
4. Inform Building Leader to contact parent

Redeemer Children's Ministry Discipline Policies

Our first attempt will be to take care of most situations in the classroom and only address the issue with the parents if the above measures do not seem to have a positive response with the child.

Listed below are the discipline guidelines for our servants to follow when correcting a child who is not behaving appropriately.

- Treat each child with an overflowing abundance of love and grace.
- Tell the children the rules.
- Let the children know the age-appropriate consequences of breaking the rules (warnings, time-out, etc.) and keeping the rules (happy environment).
- ALWAYS try to redirect the child's attention when they are having a problem with another child or with obeying the rules. This should be the first step in all difficulties. (Example: if two kids are fighting over the same toy. The servant should quietly show one of the children another toy somewhere away from the other child.)
- If "redirection" does not help, remove the child for a "time out." If the situation does not improve, notify the Building Leader.
- Address the inappropriate behavior rather than the child. ("Zippy, your behavior is not appropriate. We don't hit.")
- Do not spank or use threatening or demanding language or tones when talking with a child. NO HARSH TONES!

Suspicion and Reporting of Child Abuse

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Our first action towards preventing child abuse is through our volunteer screening process, including an application form, reference check, background check, and personal interview.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Redeemer Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to Children’s Ministry Leadership for further action, including reporting to the church elders and authorities as may be mandated by state law.

Duty to Report

Section 261.101 of the Texas Family Code mandates: *“A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report.”* The report may be made to (1) any local or state law enforcement agency; or (2) the Department of Family and Protective Services (contact information listed below.) Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential.

Reporting Abuse

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred **at** this Redeemer Church or **during** our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children, pending an investigation, and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Redeemer Church will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Redeemer Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.

4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. A designated church elder will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

To report abuse, contact:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

1-800-252-5400



SafeChurch® **ACT to Keep Children's Ministry Safe**

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14, NIV)

Child sexual abuse is a documented problem in churches and children's ministry. GuideOne Insurance, a company that insures nearly 43,000 churches, has found that one in 100 churches will face a sexual abuse incident each year.

Churches are popular targets for child molesters because they serve many children, face a shortage of workers, and are trusting by nature. Children may also be abused by older children and youth who are brought together by church programs.

This is depressing information for Christians, but there is good news too. Churches and ministry workers are learning to safeguard children with proven methods. Many church leaders agree that safe practices do not weaken ministry but in fact make it more effective.

Three key safety strategies for children's ministry volunteers include **A**wareness, **C**ommunication, and **T**aking Action. These can be remembered with the acronym **ACT**.

Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse can happen in any church. No denomination, size, or type of church is immune.

Sexual abuse usually occurs with isolation of a child and a molester (adult or older child/youth). For this reason, many recommended practices attempt to minimize opportunities for one adult to be alone with one child. When ministry is conducted "out in the open," volunteers avoid even the appearance of misconduct.

Patterns of behavior, or warning signs, are spotted after the wrongdoing comes to light in many cases. The most common warning sign is a worker who seeks to be isolated alone with a child. Warning signs do not prove harmful intent of course. They do suggest that a change in ministry procedures is needed or that a worker should use better judgment to avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing.

Worker behaviors that warn of possible sexual abuse include the following:

- Seeking opportunities for isolated time with a child
- Being overly affectionate, and initiating physical contact rather than letting children take the lead
- Providing selected children with excessive attention, inappropriate gifts, or lenient discipline ("playing favorites")
- Acting as if safety rules do not apply to them
- Arranging contact with church children outside of church sponsored activities, especially in one-to-one situations (such as babysitting)



Workers should be aware that some church activities and places have proven riskier and therefore require extra precautions. Precautions may include extra adult supervision, modifying the activity, or avoiding it entirely.

Activities and Places That Require Extra Caution

- Infant nurseries and diaper changing
- Restrooms
- Overnight activities
- Transportation (vehicles can provide isolation of adult and child)
- Audio-visual rooms (darkness and seclusion are hazards)
- Any situation that provides opportunities for isolation of adult and child
- Mixed age group activities. (One researcher found that as much as 56 percent of child molestation cases involved an adolescent (usually male) as the perpetrator.)

Children Who are More Vulnerable Require Extra Precautions

Workers need to be aware that some children are more vulnerable than others. Children who deserve extra care and precautions include the following:

- Infants (because they need diaper changes and can't recognize or report abuse)
- Any child who needs extra attention or has trouble communicating. (Disabled children are four to ten times more vulnerable to sexual abuse than non-disabled kids.)
- Children with significant behavior problems or who are alienated from adults
- Children who have suffered prior abuse or neglect
- Children with a weak understanding of appropriate behavioral limits between adults and children (also known as "having poor boundaries")

Communication

Prompt and honest communication is a key strategy to preventing child sexual abuse. A worker who observes questionable behavior by another worker must bring this to the attention of a ministry leader. Workers should ask their leaders to clarify church policies and resolve safety problems when needed.

All states have "mandatory reporting laws" that require certain occupations to report suspected child abuse. In some cases ministry volunteers are included as "mandated reporters" in these laws even if the alleged abuse does not occur in connection with church activities. Workers must communicate with their leaders to understand what their reporting responsibilities are under law. Workers should always "err on the side of caution" by discussing any suspected abuse with a supervisor or other responsible church official.

Taking Action

The *ACT to Keep Children's Ministry Safe* video illustrates how workers can take action by using proven practices to make ministry safer.

A brief checklist of proven practices includes the following:

- Two adults working together ("the two adult rule")
- Open doors and windows and other practices that keep ministry in "plain sight"
- Restroom procedures
- Diapering procedures for nurseries
- A check-in and check-out system for nursery and young children
- Specific rules for transporting children in vehicles
- Extra adults and extra vigilance for riskier activities and situations (listed on page 2, "Activities and Places That Require Extra Caution")
- Discipline policies (no physical punishment!)
- Policies on appropriate touch

Many tragic cases of child abuse could have been prevented or detected sooner if adults had been more proactive by using best practices in child safety, communicating about concerns, or taking action in suspicious situations. Awareness, communication, and taking action have proven successful. Prevention is much easier than facing the horror of child sexual abuse. Most importantly, though, teaching and caring for God's children is a sacred responsibility that requires our best efforts.

Scripture calls on Christians to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:18, KJV). We must be wise in adopting proven prevention methods and harmless in our ministry with children.

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Appendix