

Children's Ministries Handbook



Insert Name of Church

Insert your name and title, Children's Pastor

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**Children's
Ministry Goals
and
Objectives**

Our Heartbeat

Great Commandment Love

Matthew 22:37-40 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Our Mission

The Great Commission

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Our Vision

The Insert Church Name Children's Ministry exists to create the atmosphere where children will be saved, sanctified, Spirit-filled, sold out to God and serving others by the age of twelve years old.

Our Goals

These are the goals we set to minister our heartbeat, our vision, and our mission to children:

- Goal #1: Reach out to the children of our community with the message of God's love for them through Jesus Christ.

Strategies: Park ministry, Back Pack to School, benevolence ministry, bus ministry, family crusades, special outreach events and community events for children and families.

- Goal #2: Encourage children to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, participate in water baptism, receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and become a part of our church family.

Strategies: Consistently teach biblical doctrine through Sunday School, Children's Services, and Wednesday night clubs. Provide opportunities for children to come to the altar during Children's Services and Intergenerational Services, and provide opportunities for children to be baptized in water.

- Goal #3: Prepare children to discover that God created them as valuable individuals, and that God has a plan and purpose for their lives.

Strategies: Teach children to give their time, talents and money, as well their entire lives, to Jesus Christ, and provide opportunities for children to participate in giving and ministering in the church.

- Goal #4: Include children in the community of believers through positive role models, opportunities for service, and acceptance of children as a part of the church today as well as tomorrow.

Strategies: Provide opportunities for children to worship and serve with the entire congregation. Have special services emphasizing the role of children in the church. Teaching the congregation the importance of children's ministry.

- Goal #5: Disciple children through relevant biblical training so that they may grow to become spiritually mature.

Strategies: Teach children the entire Word of God in a variety of methods that correspond to their age levels and understanding so that by the time they reach twelve years old, they will understand basic biblical doctrine and know how to apply God's truths to their lives.

Our Core Values

We believe:

- Children are a gift from God and should be treated with love, care and compassion. (Psalm 127)
- Children are important in the kingdom of God, and Christ died to redeem children from their sin. (Matthew 19:14)
- Jesus Christ has called children to follow Him, and children can be equipped to serve Jesus Christ and others.
- Children need a safe, positive, nurturing, and age appropriate learning environment that is free of fear, pressure to *grow up*, and/or prejudice.
- Ministry is not just *to* children, but *with* children. Redeemed children are members of the body of Christ and as such endowed with certain spiritual gifts that enable them to serve in the body of Christ.
- God has appointed parents as the primary spiritual instructors in the lives of children. It is the role of the church to assist parents in the cooperative effort of fulfilling this responsibility.
- Successful ministry is the shared responsibility of children, the church staff, volunteers, parents, and the entire church body.
- Ministry to children should be creative, innovative, and *in touch* with the children and families of our community.
- Effective teachers and ministers are the most important component of our ministry.
- Relational ministry by adults who serve as positive role models for the child is the most effective ministry to children.

**Children's
Ministry
Descriptions**

Purpose of a Children's Ministry Worker

A Children's Ministry worker's main goal is to be a model. Jesus said, *"Let your light so shine among men, that they may glorify your Father in Heaven."* You are influencing the lives of children. This is a very high calling. In James 3:1 the Bible admonishes us, *"Not many of you should presume to be teachers because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."* If you work with children in any capacity you are teaching them. Your purpose is to model Jesus Christ.

To Qualify as a Children's Ministry Worker

- A. You must be a born again believer and be able to tell what that means.
- B. You must be a faithful member of the Insert Church Name.
- C. You must have a personal interview with the senior pastor, Christian education director, or children's pastor and go through a screening process.
- D. You must be baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Ministry Responsibilities

- A. Training
 - 1. Attend initial training seminar.
 - 2. Mentor under another teacher for one month.
 - 3. Attend at least one scheduled training or workers meeting a year for your department.
 - 4. There will also be periodic training seminars and conferences available to those who seek to further their skills. Children's workers are expected to seek further training.
 - 5. Be familiar with all policies outlined in this manual.
- B. Arrival Time
 - 1. Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to the beginning of your class time. Parents get anxious when there is no one to greet their child.
 - 2. If there is a class immediately preceding yours, be ready to go as soon as the other class dismisses.

C. Absences

Call ahead of time when you are going to be absent so a replacement can be secured. Do not arrange for your own replacement. It is understandable that absences will occur among Children's Ministry Workers. Please give us as much notice as possible. In the event of a sudden illness or emergency, please contact the church and leave word with the appropriate person.

1. Department Leader
 - a. Preschool (Insert Name, Insert Contact Information)
 - b. Sunday School (Insert Name, Insert Contact Information)
 - c. Children's Church (Insert Name, Insert Contact Information)
 - d. Wednesday Night Classes (Insert Name, Insert Contact Information)
2. Children's Pastor or CE Director (Insert Name, Insert Contact Information)
3. Church or Pastor (Insert Name, Insert contact Information)

D. Duration of Commitment

We ask that you give at least a 6 month commitment to your area of service. (Volunteers only)

E. Go the Second Mile

1. Follow up on students. Send cards whenever possible.
2. Pray for your class every week before you come to teach.
3. Involve yourself in extra curricular activities that involve your class whenever possible.

F. Personal Life

1. Exhibit a lifestyle that would be pleasing to God throughout the week.
2. **Must** attend one service a week when not serving.
3. Have personal devotions daily.

- G. Discipline In the Classroom** (See Assertive Discipline pg. 19)
1. Never strike a child under any circumstances.
 2. If there are children who can not be dealt with due to special handicaps, see the director of your department, the children's pastor or the pastor.
- H. Suspicious Behavior** (See Child Abuse & Molestation pg. 26)
1. Behavior exhibited by a child or adult leader that is suspicious should be reported to your department leader immediately.
 2. The parent should not be confronted by the teacher under any circumstances.
- I. Bathroom Usage**
1. There should always be a children's worker within *earshot* of the bathrooms to insure that children do not linger in the bathrooms and make it back to class safely.
- J. Unapproved Workers in the Classroom**
1. There should not be any children or adults in a classroom unless they have gone through the proper procedures for working as an assistant or a classroom teacher.
- K. Crying Children in the Classroom**
1. Parents who have children who are upset will be allowed to stay for a short period of time until their child adjusts if they wish. However, parents are encouraged not to stay through the entirety of the class. If their children will not adjust they should be encouraged to leave their children in the classroom.
 2. If a child is left in the classroom and continues to cry persistently, the parents should be sought out so that the child does not disrupt the entire class. A determination on when to return the child to the parent should be made by the individual teacher.
- L. Ratio of Teachers to Children**
1. A ratio of teacher to children will be determined for each class by the Christian Education Board.
 2. If the ratio ever exceeds the determination, please notify your department director immediately.
- M. Dismissing Children From Classrooms**

1. All children in the fifth grade and below should only be dismissed with an approved adult or guardian.
2. Children in the Nursery through Kindergarten Class will be dismissed using the Check-out Procedures on pg. 18.

Infant and Toddler Nursery

Check In

1. Always greet the parents at the door with a smile. Reassure them that they are leaving their child in good hands by being efficient. Don't make them look for you.
2. Have parents sign their child in on the tablet at the door, using the two part ticket. Separate the ticket and attach the small portion to the child's clothing using the plastic holder with a clip. Give the large portion of the ticket to the parent. Notice both portions have corresponding numbers on them.
3. Have parents fill out a visitor form for children not currently on the roster.

Picking Up Children

1. Encourage parents to pick up their children immediately following the service. The nursery staff is composed of church members and they need to leave as soon as possible to see to their own family's needs.
2. Allow children to leave only when the adult presents the ticket portion that matches the portion that is clipped on the child. Make no exceptions to this rule.

Marking Belongings

There is masking tape available for labeling all bottles, pacifiers, ect. This will help us identify these items for proper return.

Parents In Classrooms

No parents are to be inside the nursery or toddler classroom The bottom half of the nursery door should be locked to prevent entry and the gate should be in place in the toddler doorway before drop-off and pick-up times. Nursing mothers, of course, are permitted to enter to feed their babies.

Classroom Procedures

1. Each classroom should have a schedule posted.
2. Curriculum for the toddler class is located in the metal cabinet in the room.
3. Snacks are kept in the metal cabinet also. Juice is kept in the refrigerator in the kitchen. **Always** keep juice refrigerated. After snack, the helper should take the cups to the kitchen and wash them. Please **do not** leave cups in the kitchen. After washing them, return them to the classroom and put them away.
4. In the nursery, have praise music playing during drop-off and pick-up times. Tell the babies frequently that Jesus loves them. While rocking them, changing them, etc. sing songs such as “Jesus Loves Me” to them. Always show the children and parents lots of love.
5. **No food or drinks are permitted in the nursery.** Bottles, etc. provided by parents for their babies are allowed.
6. Never be found reading the newspaper or taking care of personal business in the nursery. We don’t want parents to think their baby will be neglected.
7. Never have anyone in the classroom or nursery unless they are screened, trained and scheduled by the Nursery Director to work. **No Exceptions.**

Diaper Changing / Sanitation Procedures

See Universal Precautions for Handling Bodily Fluids on pg. 16.

Underage Workers In the Nursery

1. We encourage workers between the ages of 14 and 18 years old to help in the nursery.
2. Workers under 18 years old are only to assist adults. They can not be left to attend to the children without an adult present.
3. Workers under the age of 16 years are not permitted to pick up, carry or change the babies. This is for safety reasons.

4. All workers under 18 years old must be screened and approved before they can help with children.

Universal Precautions For Handling Body Fluids

The center for Disease Control has established a set of universal precautions for handling spills or blood or bodily fluids to minimize the risk of spread of communicable disease. These will be adapted for the Insert Church Name nursery and child care areas as outlined below.

1. Gloves must be worn for touching blood and body fluids, mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) or non-intact skin (cuts, open sores), and for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Gloves should be changed after each contact.
2. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly if exposed to blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed. Careful hand washing after each contact is essential to prevent spread of infection.
3. Cleaning of body fluids on surface shall be done with gloves. The surface on which a spill occurred (on which a child was changed) shall be cleaned with a spray bottle of bleach and water available in each nursery and toddler classroom.
4. No worker who has an exudative or weeping skin sore shall handle any situation involving potential blood/body fluid contact.
5. All contaminated cleanup materials shall be disposed of in a sealed plastic trash bag placed in a larger trash bag out of the reach of children.
6. All wounds in workers or children must be covered.
7. Toys soiled by saliva should ideally never be shared and as a minimum should be washed after every nursery session.
8. Toileting of children should be done by an adult or helper wearing gloves. Gloves should be disposed of immediately.

Sick Children

Familiarize yourself with the following symptoms. If a child exhibits any of these symptoms **do not** allow them into the nursery. In the case of a persistent parent, call the Nursery Director immediately!

- * Impetigo or any stubborn blister on the upper lip, close to the nostril.
 - * Symptoms of a sore throat in conjunction with fever and swollen glands.
 - * A temperature of 101 degrees or above.
 - * Presently being treated for streptococcal infection.
 - * Pinworms
 - * Chicken Pox. All pox must have scabbed and be dry for your child to attend.
 - * Pin-head sized red dots too numerous to count, prominent over cheeks, chest and abdomen.
 - * Conjunctivitis (pink eye). Reddened eyes, with mucus being produced in varying quantities. Often crusted shut in the mornings and itching.
 - * Thick green or yellow mucus draining from the nose.
 - * Drainage from the ear.
 - * A cough bringing up phlegm.
 - * Watering eyes.
 - * Diagnosed with a communicable disease.
 - * Vomiting within the last 12 hours.

Preschool and Kindergarten Procedures

Check-In Procedures

1. As each parent brings the child to the room, check the child's name off the roster. If the child's name is not on the printed roster, have the parent fill out a visitor form on the child.
2. Place a name tag on the child's back (so he can't pull it off) and give the parent or adult a corresponding security card.

Check-out Procedures

1. Greet the parent at the door. Ask for their security card to claim their child. As the child leaves with the parent remove the numbered tag from the child. Nobody under age 16 can claim a child.
2. Make sure the children gather all their belongings to take with them (coat, sweaters, papers they have done in class, ect.)
3. Stay in the room until all children are gone. Never leave children by themselves.
4. Straighten the room before leaving. Make sure all tabletops are cleared of all papers. Return all toys to their correct places in the cabinets.

Classroom Procedures

1. Please teach the children that when the lights flash, they freeze and await further instruction. Use this tool in the classroom to regain order and to give instruction. Try to use this consistently so that all children get used to the signal.
2. Encourage children to use "inside feet" that don't run and "inside voices" that don't scream and yell.
3. Someone needs to accompany children to the bathroom. Please do not send them alone.
4. Please feel ownership of your room. Feel free to decorate bulletin boards or place displays on the walls, ect.

Assertive Discipline

Communicate Assertively

A. Non - Assertive Responses

1. Children will tune you out when you are non-assertive.
2. You have communicated NOTHING to them that they can respond to.
3. Examples of non-assertive responses:
 - a) “How many times do I have to tell you...” (don’t make them the adult)
 - b) “Why won’t you listen to me?”
 - c) “What am I going to do with you?”
 - d) “Please go to bed!” (the fourth time)
 - e) “I’ve had it with you!” (threats)
 - f) “The next time you’re gonna get it!”
 - g) “Please try to behave!” (pleading or begging)

B. Be Calm

1. The louder you yell, the less effective you will be.
2. Hostile screaming communicates that you are out of control. (and you are!) It also results in negative feelings between you and your children.
3. When you threaten discipline and do not follow through you are teaching children NOT to listen to you!
4. NEVER use put downs!

C. Be “Cool”

1. Don’t be a “broken record”. (3 times max.)
2. Never argue, YOU are in charge!
3. Let the rules enforce the behavior once they are established.

D. Be Specific

1. Describe the action you want to see the child exhibit.
2. Avoid vague responses like “Be good!”

E. Some helpful hints

1. Obtain eye contact with the child.
2. Touch the child on the shoulder.
3. Don’t try to win an argument with a child, you never will!
4. The power of PRAISE! (Don’t make children get your attention only through negative behavior!)

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

- A. There must be consequences that are **KNOWN** ahead of time
 - Don't wait for them to misbehave to come up with a discipline strategy.
- B. The consequences must be something that is of value to the child.
- C. Consequences should follow behavior **IMMEDIATELY** and **CONSISTENTLY**!
- D. Remind the child that the consequence was a result of **THEIR** choice!

Making It Work

A. Make a list of Rules. 3 - 4 max. and post them in a visible area.

1. Have the children rehearse them over and over.
2. Some examples:
 - a) The Four Ups
 - (1) Sit UP Straight!
 - (2) Listen UP!
 - (3) Hush UP!
 - (4) Don't get UP and run around!
 - b) The three B's
 - (1) BE Respectful to Teachers and Other Students!
 - (2) BE On Time!
 - (3) BE Involved!
 - c) Look with your eyes, listen with your ears, sit on your seat and raise your hand to speak.

B. Enforce the rules

1. Make a Discipline Hierarchy (Consequences).
 - a) 1st Offense -
 - b) 2nd Offense -
 - c) 3rd Offense -
2. Use a "point system"
 - a) Break children into groups or classes and give or take points as they earn them.
 - b) Offer a "prize" to the winning team. (Try to give everyone something and the winning team more.)

REMEMBER: *Negative consequences will stop the behavior, but only positive reinforcement will change it!*

Resources

Curriculum

Curriculum will be provided by your department leader every quarter. If there are any questions about your curriculum please contact your department leader.

Classroom Supplies

Every classroom is provided with classroom supplies and a cabinet to keep them in. To restock supplies, contact the resource supply person in the resource room before Sunday School.

The following list of supplies that should be available in your room:

Scissors (child-sized, 2-3 adult sized)	Glue
Crayons (for each child)	Washable Markers (Juniors)
Colored Pencils (Primary & Junior)	Marker Board
Erasable Markers for marker board.	Flannelgraph board
Scotch Tape	Masking Tape
Pencils	Writing Paper
Construction Paper	Index Cards
Name Tags	Braids
Stapler	Staples
Tape Machine	

Resource Room

The following supplies can be picked up in the Resource Room before Sunday School. The resource room will be closed at 9:40 am. If you know what resources you will need during the week, please hand in a supply request form at the church so that the supplies will be ready for you on Sunday Morning or Wednesday Night.

Craft Supplies (order 1 week ahead of time for supplies not usually stocked)

Stickers	Fabric Glue
Drawing Paper	White Shelf Paper
Poster Board	Paper Clips
Paper Punch	First Aid Kit
Thumbtacks	Paint Supplies
Paper Bags	

Sign Out List

A list will be available for you to sign out equipment, flannelgraph stories, object lesson books, craft books, flash card stories, missionary stories, memory verse coloring pictures, videos, costumes and puppets. Please check the notebook in the resource room to see what is available. These will be signed out for a certain period of time and on a first come, first serve basis.

Copies

The copy machine is available for your convenience. However there are a number of teachers who need copies made on Sunday morning. We prefer that a few days ahead of time you turn in what you need copied with a note stating your name, class and the number of copies you need. We will make those copies for you and have them in your class on Sunday morning or Wednesday night. Of course for emergency situations, you are still free to use the copy machine on Sunday morning.

Child Abuse and Molestation

Policy for Reporting

All cases of suspected child abuse or molestation must be reported. There will be no exceptions. Ohio Law requires it and holds those who do not report criminally liable.

- * Do not confront the parents or adults that brought the child.
- * Contact the children's ministry director immediately.
- * Children's services will be contacted.

Signs of Child Abuse

(Sloan, 1993)

Physical Signs May Include:

- * Lacerations and bruises
- * Nightmares
- * Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- * Difficulty with urination
- * Discomfort when sitting
- * Torn or bloody underclothing
- * Venereal Disease

Behavioral Signs May Include:

- * Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- * Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- * Sexual self-consciousness
- * "Acting out" sexual behavior
- * Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs May Include the Following Statements:

- * "I don't like (insert name)"
- * "(Insert name) does things to me when we are alone."
- * I don't like to be alone with (insert name)."
- * "(Insert name) fooled around with me."

Child Protection Policy

Policy Rationale

Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be uncomfortable for church leaders. However, it only takes one case of child molestation to devastate a church and divide a congregation.

Ben Franklin once said that “an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure.” Since our church is on the cutting edge of effective and relevant ministry, we must provide the highest level of accountability and integrity as we respond to the milieu of cultural disintegration in which we minister. The facts are not very good:

- * Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year.
- * A natural retrospective study on the prevalence of child abuse found that 27% of adult women and 16% of men claimed to have experienced some kind of child abuse.
- * Over 25% of abused persons were abused before the age of nine.
- * Estimates indicate that when a known assailant commits the abuse, half of the time it is a father or stepfather and the rest of the time it is a trusted adult who misuses his or her authority over children.
- * The usual offender is between 20-30 years of age. 20% of sex offenders begin activity before the age of 18 and child abusers are often married and have children.
- * When abuse occurs in the church, it usually is by a respected member of the congregation.

Insert Church Name Preventative Goals

Insert Church Name Preventive Goals for reducing child abuse are threefold:

1. To provide protective care for our children and youth.
2. To maintain proper supervision and training for our youth and children's workers.
3. To provide every precaution to protect Cuyahoga Chapel Church of God against any liability in regard to child abuse and communicable diseases.

Screening Procedures

Insert Church Name Policy Regarding Supervision of Children age 0 up to 18th Birthday:

1. All teachers, pastors, Sunday school superintendents, ushers, greeters, camp counselors, chaperons for socials ect., playground supervision personnel, music department personnel, bus drivers, van drivers and any other persons involved with children / teen ministries, inclusive, must be screened.
2. All interviews should be done by a qualified person, preferably the pastor or and associate pastor.
3. All applications / questionnaires must be kept strictly confidential and kept in a locked file cabinet.
4. All above listed personnel currently active shall go through the screening process and any and all new personnel shall be screened prior to doing any work.
5. All records must be kept permanently by the Insert church name. (These records must be kept strictly confidential under any and all circumstances unless needed for legal purposes.)

Church Doctrine

Declaration of Faith

We Believe:

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
3. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the intercessor.
4. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for the forgiveness of sins.
5. That justification, regeneration and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
6. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word and by the Holy Ghost.
7. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
8. In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
9. In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
10. In water baptism by immersion and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saint's feet.
13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.
14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous and eternal punishment of the wicked.