

**Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA) Austin, TX**

# **Children's Ministry Handbook**

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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 praying 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.
- Bible Class for children ages 4-7 years and Bible Story Time in the nursery are offered each Sunday during the sermon, and Sunday School classes 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.
- Fellowship – Families gather outdoors on the church lawn 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:

- All volunteers will complete a Children’s Ministry application, which will include an acknowledgement of reading and agreeing to our Child Protection Policy and, for volunteers ages 18 and over, also consent 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).
- 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. 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 – See the Child Protection Policy at the end of this document for more details

- 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 bathroom, standing outside the stall (with bathroom door ajar), only offering help if the child requests it. If a child in the nursery asks to go to the bathroom, nursery attendants and volunteers will text the parents to come for their child and take him or her to the bathroom.

## Nursery

- The nursery for infants and toddlers ages 4 months – 3 years is staffed on Sunday mornings by two adults (paid attendants and/or volunteers). The Children's Ministry Director or her designee will confirm that attendants and volunteers are scheduled and present, and find additional volunteers if needed. Volunteers engage with the children in play, reading, singing, and enjoying them. Nursery care is more than babysitting; it is showing the love of Christ to children entrusted to our care.
- Paid attendants and volunteers arrive in the nursery by 10:00 a.m.
- Parents who will be leaving their child in the nursery at any time during the service will check their child in using the laptop and printer at the check-in table in the lobby. The printer prints two labels: parents place the label with their phone numbers on the child's back, and keep the second label to give to nursery attendants when they pick up their child. Parents must tell attendants if another adult will pick up their child.
- First time visitors complete the [Nursery Registration form](#) at the check-in table, place a name label on their child's back, and give the form to nursery attendants.
- Attendants or volunteers will direct parents to the check-in table if a child arrives without a name label.
- Parents provide food and pre-mixed bottles for their child. Diapers and wipes are available in the nursery.
- Attendants or volunteers will text parents if their child is unhappy and does not calm easily.
- Attendants or volunteers will text parents if a potty-trained child asks to go to the restroom.
- Only women attendants or volunteers over 16 may change diapers, and must wear disposable gloves, fasten the safety belt around the child and keep one hand on the child at all times while child is on the changing table, clean the diaper changing pad and wash hands after each diaper change, and dispose of wet or soiled diapers in the nursery diaper pail.
- Parents collect their child as soon as the service is over. Attendants or volunteers verify that each child is leaving with their parent or parent's designee.
- Attendants or volunteers put toys away and clean the diaper changing area after all children have been picked up by parents.
- Attendants or volunteers will communicate issues or concerns to the Children's Ministry Director.

## Nursery Bible Story Time

Nursery Bible Story Time is offered each Sunday morning during the sermon. An adult volunteer comes to the nursery to tell a Bible story, read from a Bible story book, and lead songs and a prayer. Parents are welcome to bring children ages 3 and under to the nursery just for Story Time or to stay throughout the service.

## Bible Class for 4 – 7 Year Olds

- Bible class for 4 – 7 year olds is offered on Sunday mornings during the sermon, and is led by two adult volunteers and one or two youth volunteers.
- The class follows the *Show Me Jesus* curriculum (Great Commission Publications). Lead teachers will be given a teacher's manual, visual aids, activities, and handouts for each week. At intervals throughout the year the class uses additional resources such as *Prepare Him Room* (Marty Machowski), *Teach Me to Worship* (CDM),

and *SEEDS* (Trinity PCA, Seattle).

- The lead teacher and youth volunteers arrive at 10:00 am and prepare the classroom for the lesson. Activity and craft supplies are provided.
- Children worship with their parents until the Passing of the Peace, and then join teachers just outside the sanctuary. Teachers and youth volunteers lead the children to the classroom.
- A roster of members and regular visitors is in the classroom and includes parent text numbers.
- Only women over 16 may accompany boys and girls to the restroom, and must stand outside the stall, with bathroom door ajar, and help only if the child requests.
- Teachers lead students back to the sanctuary after the sermon.
- Teachers and youth volunteers clean up the classroom and return supplies to storage after worship.

## Sunday School

Sunday School classes are offered periodically and use resources such as *New City Catechism for Kids* (Gospel Coalition), *Teach Me to Worship* (CDM), and *SEEDS* (Trinity PCA, Seattle).

- Each class is led by two adult volunteer teachers. Lesson plans, activities, and supplies are provided.
- Teachers will prepare classrooms as needed upon arrival.
- Before bringing their child to class, parents sign their child in using the laptop and printer at the check-in table in the lobby. The printer prints two labels: parents give the label with phone numbers to teachers when they bring their child to class, and keep the second label to give to teachers when they pick up their child. Parents must tell attendants if another adult will pick up their child.
- First time visitors fill out the [Child Registration form](#) provided in the classroom, give their child a name label, and take the completed form to teachers.
- Parents pick up their child as soon as 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 Academy 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:

- appears to be severely ill, is not responsive, is irritable, persistently crying, having difficulty breathing, or has 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 infection
- Covid

**Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA)**  
**PO Box 90967**  
**Austin, TX 78709**  
**tim@ctkaustin.org**

Please complete this application and return it to the Children's Ministry Director at [diane@ctkaustin.org](mailto: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 18 or over, 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 July 2022

**Scope:**

This applies to any activity that is formally sponsored by CTK in which adults and youth are working directly with children ages newborn up to age 18 years. Small groups such as CTK community groups arranging for their own hired or volunteer 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 consent 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 bathroom, standing outside the stall (with bathroom door ajar), only offering help if the child requests it. If a child in the nursery asks to go to the bathroom, nursery attendants and volunteers will text the parents to come for their child and take him or her to the bathroom.

## 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 other Staff Members 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](http://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 the 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 (18 or over only)**

For those 18 or over, 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)

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Since: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (necessary for background check)

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Affirmation and Release (all volunteers)**

By initialing each statement 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](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_