



# *Parent Handbook*

Children's Ministry of Faith Presbyterian Church

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# *Welcome to FaithKids!*

We look forward to partnering with you in the spiritual nurturing of your children! Our children's ministry seeks to teach the children of Faith Presbyterian Church about God bearing in mind the command in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to: **“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”**

## *Our Vision*

From family worship to teaching the grammar of Christianity, we are dedicated to helping families raise their children in the Christian faith. It is our hope to see the children of Faith rooted in the foundation of God's Word, and confident in their belonging to the family of Christ solely through the work of Christ.

## *Mission*

The goal for our Children's Ministry (newborns-5th grade) is to partner with parents and caregivers in actively sharing the Gospel with the children in our ministry, having the hope of salvation and eventual church membership in mind. We aim to equip parents to teach and disciple their children in the Word of God at home. (Matthew 28:16-20; Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

# *Our Values*

**Belonging:** We often refer to the children of Faith as our covenant children. This is because they belong to the visible church and as such have been given promises from Christ. They are baptized in infancy (or childhood) as an affirmation and claiming of those promises. However, those children must personally respond to Christ's promises by receiving and resting on them by faith alone. Once their profession of faith has been confirmed, they receive access to all the privileges and responsibilities of communicant membership.

We welcome families with children of all ages for the entirety of our worship service. Should families prefer, we also provide a nursing mother's room, nursery for infants thru 3 years old, and children's church for children 4 years thru 2nd grade.

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**Foundational Truths:** One of the ways we partner with families in the training and discipleship of their children is by providing lessons in the foundational truths of Scripture through weekly Sunday School classes, and Children's Church. Children, from babies to elementary-age students, are at the early stages of learning. They are laying the ground-work for the future stages of analysis and logic by absorbing facts, memorizing information, and consuming stories. These are the years when catechism, scripture, creeds, and hymns are introduced and used to underscore the building blocks of faith: God's sovereignty, the totality of scripture pointing to Christ as our Savior, and God's covenantal faithfulness. Resources from our classes, relationships with other families, guidance from church leaders, and pastoral care are all ways in which we hope to support, encourage, and engage with families during these formative years.

**Relationships:** We love to have fun and play! Families are encouraged to make use of our playground, and we host numerous family-friendly events throughout the year where parents and children can get to know one another. Volunteering in the Children's Ministry is highly encouraged and is a wonderful way to serve in the church. Relationships between families, as well church members in a variety of ages and stages in life, are formed with our volunteers and the children they care for. All volunteers are required to fill out an application and undergo a background check.

FaithKids provides a nursery on Sundays for infants and toddlers; Sunday School classes for toddlers through 5<sup>th</sup> grade; and Children's Church for 4yrs through 3rd grade. Childcare is also provided during a number of Bible studies and events.

Along with the above, we enjoy several family-friendly, fellowship oriented events throughout the year. FaithKids is in existence to help teach children about God and His plan for their salvation.

FaithKids is a place where the church family comes alongside the parents, grandparents, and caregivers of our covenant children, to equip them with tools for taking the lead in teaching and training their children in the Word of God. We strive to provide opportunities for learning about prayer, service to others, and what it means to be a part of the body of Christ. It is our calling to assist in laying a foundation of correct Biblical knowledge and understanding that will be firm ground on which to stand for a lifetime.

# Well-Child Only

For the protection of your child and other children, we request that parents do not bring a child to the nursery when any of the following symptoms exist: Fever of 99 or higher, vomiting or diarrhea, conjunctivitis (Pink eye or other eye infection), rash, nasal drainage which is green or yellow, sore throat, open sores, excessive coughing.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. We ask parents to exercise considerate judgment before subjecting other children to their child's symptoms.

If your child develops any of these symptoms while in the nursery, the parents will be notified to pick up their child.

Your child must be symptom free without medication for 24 hours before entering the Nursery.

If your child is being treated with *antibiotics*, and has been on them for at least 24 hours then he/she is allowed in the nursery.

# Injury & First Aid

In the event that a child is injured there are first aid kits located in each of the classrooms. If there is any injury in a classroom, the teachers and/or volunteers are to immediately inform the Deacon on Duty. **Any injury must be reported to the parent** since trivial injuries can turn out to be serious. The volunteer must complete an Accident Report Form (located in each room on the clipboard) as soon as possible. In the event that the child is unable to continue in the Nursery, the parents will be notified of the accident and asked to pick up the child.

# Safety & Security

- When you arrive and upon entering the main doors of the church building proceed to the Welcome Center located directly in front of the main doors.
- Your child will be given a name tag with their name and your cell phone number on the tag. You will need to provide a cell # in case we need to contact you during the course of time that you are here. Be sure to set your phone to vibrate! Should you receive a call, proceed to the room where your child is located.
- A pick-up tag will be given
- One parent may bring their child(ren) to their classroom. Parents are asked to remain in the hallway as their child enters the classroom.
- Nursery rooms are located down the hall adjacent to the Welcome Center. The infant nursery (Seedlings) and toddler nursery (Sprouts) are at the end of the hall. The Children's Church classroom (Saplings) is the first room on the right as you enter the hallway.
- There is a "Two-Adult" rule that is in place for all classrooms. Every effort will be made to always have two adults present while children are there, and one of these will always be a female over the age of 18. This is for the protection of both our children and volunteers.
- All volunteers undergo a screening process (see *Volunteers & Screening policy*) prior to serving in FaithKids.
- You will need to turn in your matching tag to pick up your child

Note: Only those who are approved **and** scheduled (or subs) are authorized to be in the room.

# *Restroom & Diapering*

- Parents are encouraged to take their toilet-trained/training child to the restroom before dropping their child off in the Nursery.
- Only women volunteers are to take children to the restrooms or change diapers.
- All diapers should be checked and changed if necessary before children are picked up after Sunday School or Worship Service.
- Volunteers are to either wash their hands (either at the sink or with hand sanitizer) as well as the children's hands after going to the restroom or a diaper change.
- Volunteers are expected to always attend to a child when on the changing table.
- When changing diapers, volunteers will have prepared the area with diapers, wipes, etc. before placing the child on the table so that the process will be uninterrupted and further ensure the safety of the child.
- A child will never be left alone on the changing table.

# Evacuation

If the fire alarm sounds, (or any other emergency evacuation takes place) parents are requested to go directly out of the sanctuary. Parents attempting to retrieve their children from the nursery will hinder efforts to safely evacuate the children from the building. Nursery volunteers have been trained to evacuate the children safely away from the building.

In the event of an emergency, the Nursery's evacuation plan is as follows:

During worship services and Sunday School, children are in the Worship Center Building and Teaching Center Building. In the Worship Center, the primary exit will be the fire exit in the infant nursery on the west wall. If this exit is not available, then they will exit through the main doors on the east side of the building, then the west side door, in that order.

Upon exiting, they will proceed to the retention pond area nearest the church sign on 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. to await pick up by their parents. In the Teaching Center building, the primary exit will be the exit door in the southeast end of the building. If this exit is not available, they will exit through the door at the north end of the building. Upon exiting they will proceed to the retention pond area nearest the church sign on 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. to await pick up by their parents.

To further expedite the evacuation, elders are to assist with the nursery (infants & non-walkers) & toddlers while the deacons will remain with the adults to aid in that evacuation.

A volunteer will bring out the attendance sheet from each class.

Volunteers must check children out on the attendance sheet before parents take them. This is to ensure that every child is accounted for.

# *Classrooms & Ratios*

The nursery is available for children ages 6 weeks through 3 years. The nursery opens at 8:45 am for Sunday School and 9:50am for the Worship Service. All nursery classes for the services are located in the main building and Teaching Center. Children of parents who attend both Sunday School and Worship Service may leave their children between the services. We request parents to check on them at the time between the two events *unless doing so will cause undue anxiety or upset for the child.*

We welcome children of all ages and stages to participate and remain in the worship service! Note-taking pages, crayons, noise-canceling headphones, and fidget-buster items are all available at the check-in desk in the lobby. A covenant care room is located in the children's wing for parents needing a quiet space to be with their infant or child during the service.

We want to provide the best care possible for your child. Therefore, we closely monitor the adult-child ratio in each classroom. Should a classroom go over the appropriate ratio, the staff member or lead volunteer will have backup volunteers in order to adjust the ratio to an acceptable level, or will move children to other nursery rooms based on their age in order to even out the ratios.

# Curriculum

**“From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15**

Young children learn best by doing! Children of all ages should be included in Biblical teaching; therefore, it is our desire to incorporate God’s Word into every avenue of learning. We do this through the various curricula that we use.

Currently, the toddlers through 5<sup>th</sup> graders Sunday School class utilizes Great Commission Publication’s program called Show Me Jesus. The Children’s Church curriculum comes from The PCA’s Teach Me to Worship, GCP’s Kidquest Catechism program, as well as from other various Session approved sources used for holiday lessons.

Generally, children are promoted in September. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1 to be included in the K4-K5 Sunday School class and Children’s Church. Our classes are as follows:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Infants & crawlers	6 weeks- approximately 14 months	1:3
Walkers	Approximately 15 months- 3 years old	1:5
Children's Church	4 years- 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	1:6
SS K4-K5	4 years-5 years	1:6
SS 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup>	6 years – 7 years	1:6
SS 3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>	8 years – 9 years	1:6
SS 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 years – 11 years	1:6

# *Classroom Management & Discipline*

God's Word teaches us that the education of children in the Christian faith rests upon the parents. In light of that, we as the Church are in the position of supporting the family in the process of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Discipline is not punishment but guidance, training, and molding of character. We do not seek to merely control behavior, but to partner with parents to help shape a child's character to be more and more like that of Christ. Discipline is an important aspect of the learning process, not only because it teaches children to have proper respect for their parents and those in authority, but also because it teaches them how they are to respond in obedience to the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:42; Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 12:7-11; Proverbs 15:32).

## **Recommended classroom rules –**

- Obey the teacher
- Listen
- Respect others
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself

**Preventative Discipline – Used first and foremost and involves:**

- Creating a loving, caring atmosphere.
- Maintaining a close watch on actions to help redirect behaviors before an issue arises.
- Establishing and communicating realistic expectations for children.
- Focusing on positive actions.
- Being fair and consistent with children.
- Communicating the rules at the beginning of class

**Corrective Discipline –Used in cases when preventative discipline is not adequate and involves:**

- Trying to handle any issues individually, taking the child aside and not correcting in front of the entire class if possible.
- Explaining to the child why the behavior is unacceptable and telling them what is acceptable.
- Redirecting the child to something positive.
- Explaining the consequences of unacceptable behavior by telling child the correct way to behave using language that is edifying, not demeaning or berating the child.
- Offering choices that are acceptable to both you and the child

## **Aggressive behavior –**

- Biting, hitting, pushing, kicking, scratching, or pulling are considered aggressive behavior
- If a child is displaying any of these behaviors, he or she will immediately be removed from the class and parents will be notified to come and talk to the child.

Teachers may take the following steps when a child is disruptive, unruly, is hindering the teaching process, or compromising the peace of the classroom:

- **1st consequence – Verbal Warning.** In a class setting, if possible, whisper to the child in order to not draw attention away from the teaching and onto the inappropriate behavior. (See above guidelines for corrective discipline).
- **2nd consequence = Remove and Set Apart.** Remove the child from the rest of the class and have him or her sit apart for a set amount of time, or until he or she is ready to participate cooperatively.
- **3rd consequence = Parent Notification.** Parents will be asked to come and speak to their child and we will work together with the parents to decide what the best next steps are for the child.

Should it become necessary for the church officers (elders and deacons) to become aware that a child is consistently a discipline problem, the officers will address the situation, prayerfully considering the nurture of the child, the responsibility of the parent, the duty of the teacher/leader, the nurture of the other students, and the responsibility of the church. Any decision made by the officers of the church will be done with the knowledge of the parent, in love for the family, and for the peace of the church.

# *Children in Worship & Nursery*

## *Guidelines*

At Faith, we love having children in our worship services! Families are always welcome to remain together for the entire service. We know little ones can have big needs, so we provide several spaces and resources to help parents feel supported:

- **Stay Together in Worship** – Children are welcome in the sanctuary for the full service. Kid-friendly worship guides are available in the lobby at the welcome center.
- **Private Room for Nursing Mothers** – A quiet, comfortable space is available for moms who need privacy. The service is live-streamed on a TV in this space located in the children’s wing to the left of the lobby welcome center.
- **Staffed Nurseries** – Our caring volunteers provide safe, loving care for infants and toddlers. Check-in for your child is in the lobby at the welcome center.
- **Parent-Friendly Spaces** – If you’d prefer to remain with your child outside of worship, seating is available in the lobby where you can listen to the service, or you may enjoy the porch near the playground.
- **Changing Stations** - Changing tables are located in:
  - the women’s restroom in the lobby
  - the infant nursery room
  - both the men’s and women’s restrooms in Grace Commons
- **Children’s Church** - is an available option for children who are 4 years old (as of September 1) thru 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Children are dismissed from the worship service prior to the pastoral prayer and return to the service prior to the partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

# *Miscellaneous*

## **a. Parent Notification**

Some crying or fussing at the initial time of separation is normal and usually subsides within a few minutes. If we are unable to comfort your child after 10-15 minutes, you will be notified. Please attend to your youngest child first. A covenant care room is available where you can hear the sermon and attend to your child's needs in private if necessary.

## **b. Snacks**

1. A light snack is provided during the Worship hour in all classes except for Infants. If your child has allergies, please notify the Nursery Coordinator and indicate the allergy on your child's name tag at check-in.
  
2. The Infant room has rocking chairs as well as bottle warmers. Parents should inform the caregivers if a bottle needs to be refrigerated or warmed up. All bottles should be premixed. Nursery Volunteers are NOT allowed to mix formula for sanitation reasons.

### **c. Medications**

1. All medications are to be sent in the original container, whether prescription or not.

2. Medicine may not be mixed with formula or juice unless prescribed by a doctor. We do not know the chemical reaction between medicine and beverage. We also cannot make your child drink the entire bottle or cup to ensure that he or she gets the entire dose.

3. If your child has any condition which may need specialized intervention, please contact the Nursery Coordinator.

4. Only the parent or guardian will administer all medicine.

5. For any children with severe allergies we recommend that you obtain and keep with you an EpiPen Jr. for use on your child.

# *Parent Responsibility*

1. At your child's first visit to the Nursery, complete the information card given to you at Check-In in order to provide pertinent information regarding your child.
2. Please make sure all of your child's belongings are labeled, including the diaper bag, cups, bottles, pacifiers, coats, etc.
3. Alert the Director or FaithKids Team Member of any allergies or any other special needs or conditions your child has. Please also include ways to soothe your child, likes, dislikes, etc.
4. Alert the greeter as well as the caregiver if your child is potty-training. Please take your child to the restroom before you drop your child off in the Nursery.
5. Adhere to the policies and procedures that are outlined in this manual.
6. When you pick up your child, please turn in your child's printed pick-up tag.

# *You can volunteer!*

Our FaithKids Team Members are a valuable part of this ministry. Volunteers are always needed and parents are encouraged to serve. If you are not currently involved with the children's ministry and would like to be, please contact the FaithKids Ministry Director.

The information in this manual should help you understand our role in ministering to your child, and what you can do to best transition your child into FaithKids. We welcome you and look forward to journeying with you!