



Parent Handbook

Children's Ministry

CrossPointe Church

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Dear Parent and Caregiver,

Thank you for letting us serve your family by teaching and caring for your children. We don't take it lightly anytime a family entrusts their children into our care.

If you have any questions about our children's ministry, feel free to talk with a pastor or staff member before or after the service, meet with us during the week, or send us an email.

Blessings!

Pastors, CrossPointe Church

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CrossPointe's Children's Ministry Philosophy

Our goal is simple:

We want to **show** Jesus to children and families so they
grow to be like him and **tell** others about him.

We seek to accomplish this by:

- Partnering with parents to teach and model the gospel to children, and . . .
- Using methods of instruction and interaction that are both excellent and age appropriate

We believe that only the good news of Jesus Christ can change children and families. As we teach and model the gospel to children and families, we participate in CrossPointe's larger vision of seeing our neighborhoods, city, and the world transformed by the gospel.

Why and how does CrossPointe partner with you as a parent?

We desire to partner with you as a parent because the home is the primary context for the care and discipleship of children. According to the Bible, you as a parent are primarily responsible for teaching your children about God. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, we read:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The call to parents to disciple their children is comprehensive. According to Deuteronomy 6, parents are responsible to teach their children about God in the course of everyday life: in the morning, during mealtime, drive time, bedtime, etc.

And we have a responsibility as a church to support and equip you in the care and discipleship of your children, walking alongside you as you train your children. We want to provide resources to equip you to pray and plan for your kids' spiritual growth. Our hope is that our regular ministry to children serves to reinforce what you as a parent are doing at home. *Check out our Resource Room for many resources on teaching kids at home.*

Why is the gospel so important? Can't this wait until my child is older?

The stories of the Bible aren't fables or adventure stories about people who lived long ago. The Bible reveals God's plan to save people from sin through Jesus. The Bible is a book about Jesus. The Sunday morning curriculum that we use is designed to make God's character and Jesus' work central in every story and lesson. Children, like adults, need God's saving grace. When we teach children about God's plan to save sinners, we teach them about their need for the Savior, Jesus. We do not flatter or deceive children by teaching them that their nature is good and only needs to be developed. Rather, we tenderly teach children about their own failures—pointing out the specific sins to which children are prone (lying, disobedience to parents, etc.). We pray that the Holy Spirit will use the truth of God's Word to bring conviction to the child's heart, and ultimately grant them the gift of faith.

What do we mean by “methods of instruction and interaction that are both excellent and age appropriate”?

A child's basic attitude toward God, his Word, and his church is shaped by the attitudes and actions of the adults in his or her life during the earliest years. Psalm 78:5-7 states:

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

Our basic educational philosophy is modeled after the progression found in these verses. *We want to help move children from knowing the gospel*

story to participating in it. From their earliest years, our nursery age children (up to 35 months) are taught basic Bible doctrines as spoken through big truths, blessings, and prayers. Our preschoolers (age 3-grade K) are taught to see and memorize basic Bible truths as they hear God's Word. In our elementary class (grades 1-5), there is an emphasis on knowing how the major Bible doctrines and stories fit together as one grand story with Christ at its center. Our goal is that they will be prepared to tell the next generation God's grand redemptive story. What does this look like in our Sunday morning classes?

- Our *Nursery* is more than a babysitting service. It is the launching pad for nurturing the faith of the next generation. Here we welcome babies and toddlers with nurture and prayer, speak big truths and blessings to them, and teach 2-year-olds simple Bible lessons. In this way, our nursery forms an integral beginning for our children's ministry.
- Our *Preschoolers* (age 3-grade K) are also taught basic Bible truths. *The Gospel Story for Kids* curriculum that we use for ages 3-10 is designed to teach the Bible's storyline over a three-year period with 78 lessons from the Old Testament and 78 lessons from the New Testament. A leader tells a Bible story, shows the children an object lesson, and plays games to highlight the main point of the lesson. While children are coloring or eating a snack, a leader reviews their monthly memory verse and catechism question. Leaders often engage the children in singing songs to God as well. In order to equip parents to disciple their children, we send home three things each week: (1) family devotions for the week, (2) a Bible memory verse and catechism question for the month, and (3) a coloring sheet with the lesson on it.
- Our *Elementary Room* (called "Kids' Church") for grades 1-5 emphasizes knowing how the major Bible doctrines and stories fit together as one grand story with Christ at its center. Our elementary-aged children are challenged to participate in God's story by living out their faith in community as they engage the Bible in small groups with their peers.

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What do you expect of me as a parent? What should I bring?

We ask that parents use only disposable diapers while at church gatherings. Please bring an adequate supply of disposable diapers as well as an extra change of clothes for all infants and toddlers.

Please bring only plastic bottles or cups for milk, juice, or water.

Parents should label all items (such as bottles, cups, diaper bags, etc.) with their child's first and last name.

Parents should notify children ministry volunteers of any allergy or special circumstances their child may have.

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Policies and Procedures

Ensuring a safe environment is crucial to our mission. We observe the following policies for the safety and security of all children and volunteers:

General Safety and Security Policies

- All volunteers receive training, which covers our philosophy of ministry, structure and leadership, and policies and procedures.
- All classrooms are staffed by a team of three or more servants. Under no circumstances should children be left in a classroom or anywhere unattended. A parent must stay with a child until a volunteer arrives.
- All children's ministry leaders and teachers are CrossPointe members. Classroom helpers may be members-in-process.
- All adult volunteers have completed a servant application, submitted to a criminal background/reference check, and have been approved to serve by a CrossPointe staff-member.
- Anyone who has been convicted of child abuse or a related offense may not serve in children's ministry.
- In the event that there are last-minute volunteers who have not

been screened, they will be approved by a pastor/staff member and placed with a volunteer that has been background-checked.

Secure Check-In/Check-Out Procedure

Classrooms open 15 minutes prior to regularly scheduled church activities and close 15 minutes after the completion of the worship service.

All children must be checked-in at a computer check-in station. Upon check-in you will receive a security tag that matches the alphanumeric code on your child's nametag. *In the event you lose your security tag, you will be asked to show your driver's license.* Your child's safety is our first priority, even if it requires extra time.

- Please take your child to the restroom before checking him or her in.
- Please pick up your child promptly after the worship service.

If for any reason, you are needed during the worship service, the alphanumeric code on your security tag will be displayed on the screen in the main worship gathering. *Parents will be notified after 15 minutes if their child remains inconsolable and unable to adjust.* Regular attendance and positive conversations about church will alleviate most separation anxiety problems.

Only parents, legal guardians, or individuals they designate may retrieve a child from a classroom. Parents must present the appropriate security tag before their child will be released.

Sickness Policy

If your child is sick, please respect others by keeping him or her with you. If your child shows signs of illness (including, but not limited to, high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, colored nasal drainage, pink eye, head lice, undiagnosed rash, and any infection disease), we will ask you to remove him or her from the classroom. This policy exists for the protection of the children in our care. We regret that it sometimes means not admitting children that have been brought to our gatherings.

Parents are asked to contact a pastor or children's ministry leader if their child contracts a communicable disease (such as chicken pox, head lice, etc.) after being in a children's ministry classroom.

Food Policy

Children should be fed before coming to church. Infants will be given formula, milk, juice, or water when parents provide these items with clear instructions on how to feed their child. Time constraints do not allow for spoon-feeding. If there are any special instructions for feeding your child, please let the room leader know when you check your child into their classroom.

CrossPointe provides organic, gluten-free puffs for children 6-12 months old. A snack of water and Goldfish and/or animal crackers will be served to children one year old and up. Occasionally, other food will be given to children if a lesson plan calls for any snacks for food tasting. *Please let the classroom leader know if your child has a food allergy.*

Restroom and Diaper Policy

Adult volunteers may accompany children to the restroom and stand outside while the child uses the restroom. If a child needs assistance or supervision while in the restroom, more than one adult will always be present. No adult will ever be alone with a child.

All diaper changes and toilet assistance will be done in the presence of two adults. To protect children and adults, male volunteers will not change diapers or assist children in the restroom.

Discipline Policy

The effective spiritual formation of children requires a stable environment. Our ministry to children seeks to support and supplement parental training by upholding high standards for behavior, respect and discipline. Some of the expectations we have for your child include that he or she:

- Participates with a willing heart and eager to learn and obey

- Avoids being disruptive or distracting to what is going on in the classroom
- Respects others (whether verbally, in attitude, or by action)
- Follows instructions

If your child is being disruptive or unruly, volunteers are trained to give the child verbal warnings and then to separate the child from others for a few minutes if disobedience persists. If these measures do not resolve the issue, we will contact you and ask you to remove your child from the room. Since our goal is to assist in the effective training and instruction of your child, the classroom leader will talk with you about any consistent behavioral problems we are experiencing with your child. We understand that kids are kids, but Scripture teaches that proper training and expectations are crucial to raising children in a God-honoring way (Proverbs 22:6). A major goal during all disciplinary situations is to help children see that they have sinned against God and their neighbor, and then to encourage them to ask for and extend forgiveness.

No child under CrossPointe's care will be subject to corporal punishment, shaming, threatening, humiliation, yelling, or the use of physical restraint (unless restraint is necessary to protect others from harm).

Sanitation and Hygiene Policies

The very nature of childhood behavior can create an environment that has the potential to spread germs and infection. Therefore, it is our commitment to try and maintain the safest, cleanest atmosphere possible to ensure the health and welfare of all children.

Volunteers are instructed that hands must be washed with soap and warm water after assisting in the bathroom, diapering, or after handling cleaners.

All linens are laundered after each individual use. They are not shared among different children during one session.

Toys and classroom furniture are disinfected after each classroom session.

Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect

In the case of suspected parental abuse, a CrossPointe pastor will be notified immediately. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or CrossPointe pastor/staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions. Rather, we are responsible as a church to comply with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and cooperate fully with the Child Protective Services and the law enforcement officials in our community. In such a process, confidentiality will be upheld at all times.

Emergency Action Plan

First Aid—Although we strive to maintain the safest environment possible, the nature of children's activities occasionally leads to accidents. A first aid kit is available to treat minor accidents within the classroom such as scratches, scrapes, and the removing of scabs. Room leaders will notify parents of any minor injury or first aid care given to their child by paging them or upon check out.

In the event of a medical incident beyond one that is minor, you will be notified immediately. Childcare workers will administer appropriate treatment measures such as applying pressure or a bandage to a bleeding wound. No pharmacological treatment will be administered. Life-threatening situations will, of course, be handled as emergencies with appropriate treatment measures being immediately instituted. A doctor and/or nurse who is a member of CrossPointe will be notified immediately and, if needed, 911 will be contacted by either you as the parent, a CrossPointe pastor/staff, or a healthcare professional.

Fire—In the event of a fire, children's ministry leaders will lead the children out of the room and into the parking lot in an organized, quick fashion. Rolling cribs are to be used in the nursery rooms. Children will not be released to parents until all children are accounted for. Parents should not try to pick up their children before evacuating.

Tornadoes, Storms, and Severe Weather—Children will be calmly escorted to an enclosed part of the building. Specifically, children in exterior rooms with large windows will be immediately moved across the

hallway to interior children's classrooms. They will be taught how to sit with their back against the wall, knees tucked under their chins, arms wrapped around the knees, and head bent down. All children will be accounted for, and efforts will be made to calm and entertain the children. Again, no child will be released to his or her parents until all children are accounted for.

Earthquakes—Children's ministry leaders will seek to keep children away from heavy hanging objects and tall or heavy furniture. Children will be gathered under a supported doorway or sturdy table and kept calm and secure until parents are able to check them out.

Intruder in the building—In the case of an intruder in the building, children's ministry leaders will lock the doors of their rooms and gather the children in the safest corner of the room until the threat has passed. Ushers are on patrol in the children's ministry space during the morning service and will be alerted if any suspicious person is in the building or hovering around the children's ministry areas.

***Endnote—image on cover used courtesy of Helen Brooks*