

# REDEEMER KIDS

2022-2023 Servant Handbook



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# 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 (Deut. 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

Carolyn Yohe - RedeemerKids Director ([yohe.carolyn@makingmuchofjesus.org](mailto:yohe.carolyn@makingmuchofjesus.org))

### RedeemerKids Attendants

Each service will be assigned two RedeemerKids Attendants who will lead check-in and will make sure procedures and policies are being followed. They can most likely be found by the kiosks or monitoring the hallway during service.

# 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 Carolyn Yohe or one of the pastors.

**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 Carolyn Yohe before and after you find a sub.

**3. Teach Jesus.** Proclaim the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ! 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 Gospel Story lesson plans during the week in through email. 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. Contact Carolyn Yohe (yohe.carolyn@makingmuchofjesus.org) with curriculum questions.

**4. Build relationships with parents.** We need to foster a robust partnership between church and home. 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 worshiping with the church family. Please plan to attend the Sunday service during which you are not serving.

## Key Safety & Security Reminders

1. At least **two unrelated adult servants** must be present in each classroom, including at least one Redeemer Church member.

***Nursery and walker adult to child ratio is 1:4.  
2 years old through Kindergarten ratio is 1:7.***

*If you have more children than this, please inform the RedeemerKids Leader immediately, who will either find another servant, or close check-in for that room.*

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. One of the RedeemerKids attendants will accompany one servant to the restroom, while the other leader will stay with the other servant in the classroom.
3. Male servants may not change diapers or take any child to the restroom. Female servants must leave the bathroom stall 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 or apron. (If you do not have one please ask Carolyn Yohe and she will obtain one for you.) 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 classrooms.
- Please arrive **15 minutes** prior to your scheduled service time at the check in table to pick up your nametag. If time allows, promptly pray with your co-servant.
- Check to make sure you have your class' lesson plans (including videos, if applicable), and lesson supplies you need. Make sure you are familiar with your classroom's schedule. (see example of schedule on p. 7)

## CHECK-IN

- One servant should remain by the classroom door during check-in and check-out to greet families and for security purposes.
- Each regularly attending family should have an account in Planning Center and will check-in through the kiosk system. 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 security tag they will use to claim their child at check-out.
- **Visitors:** Visitors should be directed to the RedeemerKids attendant. 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 room, making sure to introduce yourself and your partner if it is the first time you are meeting the parents.
- **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 RedeemerKids

attendant. Check this label for any instructions that need further clarification. Also make sure diaper bags are labeled.

- Ask each parent if there are any further special instructions.

## 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. Use words like *“I see two children who both want the same toy. What do you think you could do to make sure everyone gets a turn?”* This helps them make a choice to do what is right—and to obey God and love others.
- If an infant or child cries for more than 15 minutes, please contact the parent/guardian. Their phone number is listed on the child’s name-tag. If the parent/guardian does not respond, contact the RedeemerKids attendant.

### Large Group / Worship Time:

- During music and worship time, we encourage you to worship God with the children, so do the hand motions and sing as well! We use some songs on YouTube by Yancy, Seeds Family, Crossroads that are fun and engaging. You can also use your old Sunday School songs like “Deep and Wide”, “My God is so Big” and so many others. Don’t be afraid to worship and use hand motions—the kids love it!

### Lesson Time:

- Make sure the children are aware of the class rules and consequences (see p. 10).
- Follow your class lesson plans. If you have questions about the Gospel Story lessons please contact Carolyn Yohe for your class’ curriculum.

### Snack Time

- For the nursery and walkers room only feed babies snacks from their own diaper bag, unless the parent has indicated their child can have Cheerios or an applesauce pouch. There is a booster chair table to conveniently place each child for snack time. Please be sure to strap each child in to ensure his/her safety. An adult must be attending the table at all times.
- For 2 year-olds through Kindergarten, sanitize your hands and children’s hands before serving them fruit snacks. Be sure to check their name tags for any allergies.

### Bathroom Breaks and Diapers:

- Parents should be strongly encouraged to take their potty-trained children to the bathroom BEFORE class to minimize breaks. Should you need to bring a child potty, inform the RedeemerKids attendants in the hallway.
- Please *check diapers* 15 minutes before check-out. See *Diaper Changing Procedures* (p. 11f)

## CHECK-OUT

- During check-out, one servant must remain at the door.
- Release children only to a parent/guardian 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 RedeemerKids attendant or Carolyn Yohe for release authorization.

## CLEAN UP

- Please sanitize toys and all surfaces with spray provided. You may leave the toys on the table or mat to dry overnight as well. Tie up trash and leave outside your room and shut the lights off. Place any mouthed toys in bin and bring to workroom sink to be sanitized.

# Nursery Guidelines

- **No one under 18 is allowed to work in the infant room.**
- There should be an adult/child ratio of 1:4, and at least 2 workers should be present. If you have more children than this, please inform the RedeemerKids attendant immediately, who will either find another servant, or close check-in for that room.
- Please do not wear shoes on the mat in the infant room.
- Sleeping infants should be placed on their backs. Infants in the rocker must be buckled.
- To prevent burns, do not microwave bottles or water for bottles.
- Remove mouthed toys to a separate bin and sanitize after service.
- Sanitize all toys and bouncers after check-out.
- **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. 11f)
- If a child continuously cries for longer than **15 minutes**, please contact the parent/guardian so they can pick-up their child. The parent's number can be found on the child's label or the RedeemerKids attendant has a master list they can use to text or call the parents.

## **REDEEMERKIDS CLASS RULES**

### **TODDLERS-KINDERGARTEN**

- WE LISTEN TO OUR TEACHERS
- WE ARE KIND TO OTHERS
- WE USE INSIDE VOICES
- WE KEEP FEET ON THE FLOOR
- WE HAVE FUN LEARNING ABOUT JESUS

### **ELEMENTARY**

- I CAN LISTEN
- I CAN LEARN
- I CAN STAY SAFE
- I CAN SHOW RESPECT
- I CAN PARTICIPATE

### **CONSEQUENCES**

- VERBAL WARNING
- SIT BESIDE A TEACHER
- ~~SIT IN TIME OUT (5 MINUTES)~~

- **INFORM REDEEMERKIDS LEADER TO CONTACT PARENT**



# 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.

# OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## FIRE EVACUATION

1. Before evacuating, account for all the children in your class. RedeemerKids attendant needs to retrieve the red Ipad to assist with headcount numbers for each class.
2. Walk calmly to the evacuation area located in the nearest parking lot. The RedeemerKids attendant will take attendance for your class after 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 RedeemerKids Director, 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. The RedeemerKids Director will follow up with the parent, if necessary, the following week.

**First-aid kits** are located in the labeled cabinet above the counter in the workroom.

**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 RedeemerKids attendant 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 RedeemerKids attendant and RedeemerKids director to inform them of the situation.
4. RedeemerKids Leadership will contact the parent and take over the situation so you may return to the classroom to care for the other children.
5. RedeemerKids 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, or a child needs to be transported by ambulance to a medical facility, complete an **Incident Report** (located in the labeled black binder in the workroom) and submit to RedeemerKids Director. *Please report any blow to the head (from a collision with another child, object, or the floor) immediately to the RedeemerKids Director or RedeemerKids attendant for observation and will notify a parent and the Children's Ministry Leadership as necessary)*

# 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” to keep them away from the other child until he/she can be cared for.

**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 RedeemerKids attendant or RedeemerKids Director 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 room.

**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. Copies of the incident reports are in the top right cabinet in the work room.

**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 the RedeemerKids Director 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 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. A printed copy is in the classroom.
- 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 or use wording like "I know you both want to play with that toy but how can we share today?"
- If "redirection" does not help, remove the child for a "time out." If the situation does not improve, notify the RedeemerKids attendant or Carolyn Yohe.
- Address the inappropriate behavior rather than the child. ("Zippy, your behavior is not appropriate. Hitting is not kind. How can we show kindness to our friends?")
- Do not spank or use threatening or demanding language or tones when talking with a child. Please, 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 & 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.

(04.25.08)

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