

# NURSERY MINISTRY HANDBOOK

## Chapel Presbyterian Church

*...planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. Psalm 92:13*

### WELCOME TO OUR MINISTRY PARTNERS

Thank you for your desire and commitment to minister to our covenant children and their parents through our nursery ministry. You are significant to this ministry, as you help to lay a firm foundation of faith, and sense of belonging in the lives of the youngest in our covenant community. Your faithfulness is vital to the nursery ministry's success and operation. Your input by way of asking questions, communicating problems, and offering suggestions is greatly valued and welcome.

### PURPOSE AND POLICY

It is our goal to provide a safe and loving environment for our covenant children, while allowing their parent(s) to fully engage in worship, having peace of mind that their child is well cared for during their absence. These guidelines, and health and safety measures are provided to give our Chapel children the best possible care, as well as protect both them and our ministry partners. All nursery ministry partners are expected to follow these guidelines and procedures.

### NURSERY MINISTRY PARTNERS

All adult ministry partners are required to review and comply with Chapel's Child Protection Policy (CPP), and to obtain the necessary background checks required by state and federal law. The nursery ministry also welcomes teen and tween helpers, age 11 and older, who exhibit Christian character, maturity, and good judgement (as evaluated by the Director of Children's Ministry or Nursery Ministry Coordinator) to assist the adults in caring for our covenant children. These teens and tweens will attend periodic, age-appropriate training concerning these guidelines and procedures.

A nursery schedule will be distributed to all ministry partners every 3 months, at least one month prior to the start of the schedule. **Should a ministry partner be unable to serve on their scheduled date, it is their responsibility to contact another individual(s) to find a replacement or to trade. Additionally, please notify the Director of Children's Ministry of the change as soon as possible.** In the event of a *last-minute emergency* (illness, etc.) where it is not possible to keep your commitment or find a replacement quickly, please contact the Director of Children's Ministry so a last-minute replacement can be found.

### AGES AND APPROPRIATE NURSERY CHOICE

During both the Worship hour and the Sunday school hour, our nurseries are divided into three age groups:

- Infant - Newborns to Steady Walkers (approx. 18 months of age)
- Toddler - Steady Walkers (approx. 18 months) to 36 months
- Preschool - Ages 3 & 4

During the SS hour, our Preschoolers enjoy learning about God's Word through the use of the *Show Me Jesus* Sunday School curriculum. If children turn 4 before Sept 1 of the current academic year, they are welcome to join the PreK-4/Kindergarten SS class. Otherwise, they are asked to wait until the following academic year to promote up to this class. This will mean that there will be young 4s in the Preschool Nursery until Promotion Sunday (usually the last Sunday in August).

## PROTECTION AND SAFETY

Understanding the precious value of each image-bearer, and the life-long impact that maltreatment can have on an individual, Chapel PCA takes all indications or suspicions of child abuse very seriously. Child abuse can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. In the event that you become aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under your care, or in the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Chapel or during our sponsored programs or activities, please follow the procedures lined out in the CPP.

### Appropriate Touch

- Appropriate touch is important to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all our children and ministry partners and for ensuring that our children feel loved and welcomed. Some examples of appropriate touch include:
  - Hugs – Hugging a child is a natural response when children seek affection. When a child runs to hug you, “catch and release” the child with a quick hug then a quick but gentle release. Side hugs are the most appropriate
  - High Fives/Fist bumps – High fives and fist bumps are a great way to show encouragement or a great way to say, “Way to go!” or, “Fun to see you!” These may be used with children as young as 12 months old.
- In some circumstances, holding can be appropriate. Some children may seek to be held by a leader as a form of security or affection. Holding an infant is appropriate if it is necessary for their comfort or safety. Wisdom is needed when holding a child, as situations can easily be misinterpreted.
- Inappropriate touch includes things like wrestling, tickling, piggy back rides, and the like, even back rubs on older children.

### Security

- NEVER leave children unattended for any reason.
- Never leave our teen helpers alone with the children.
- Security personnel are on duty “patrolling” the facilities throughout the morning. Please contact them with any medical or safety concerns.
- Security personnel will lock exterior doors during the service and during the SS hour (unlocking them for the time in between). Latecomers will need to use the main entrance doors after the side doors are locked.
- In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, please follow these procedures:
  1. Ensure the sign-in pages are completed each morning in order to have a correct roster of attendance.
  2. Be familiar with the potential evacuation routes noted on the building map located in your room.
  3. When the fire alarm is activated or if fire or smoke is detected stay calm. Take the attendance roster and exit the room and the building in an orderly fashion by the nearest evacuation route. If the nearest exit is blocked by fire/smoke find an alternate route. A pre-assigned Deacon will assist in removing the children when necessary. Infants can be placed in the evacuation crib (located in the Infant Nursery) to facilitate exit from the building. The crib has a weight limit of 160 lbs.
  4. Once outside, proceed to the lower (gravel) parking lot. Using the attendance roster, verify all children are accounted for.

Please refer to the Chapel Emergency Plan for additional information on emergency response.

### Additional Safety Measures

- Be alert to electrical sockets having safety covers on them when not in use.
- First Aid kits are located in the Toddler and Infant nurseries as well as the Director of Children’s Ministries office for minor injuries (scrapes, cuts, etc.). Contact parent for injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple first aid.
- Notify parents of any incidents upon check-out.

## CORRECTIVE/DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

The Session and Staff at Chapel believe that the proper exercise of correction and discipline is a God-appointed means to point children to Christ, and to obtain peace and order. Therefore, we must handle disruptions and behavioral issues promptly, consistently and graciously, exhibiting the goodness and grace of Christ at all times. Communicating and consistently enforcing limits is key to maximizing the growth and development of children, and to protecting the group and the individuals within it.

**Positive reinforcement** is a major tool for correcting children and communicating appropriate behavior.

- Take note of those who are behaving appropriately (“Johnny, thank you for sitting nicely in your chair while you eat your snack.” “I liked how you were sharing your baby doll, Susie!”)
- Redirect inappropriate behavior in a positive manner (“The toys in this room are meant to be shared” rather than “Don’t take toys from others;” or “Let’s use our crayons on the paper” instead of “Don’t write on the table!”)

**Communicate Limits and Redirect** - Situations can often be misinterpreted, or simply the result of a child’s immaturity. Be sure to give the child the benefit of the doubt. Positive guidance and discipline usually work better than punishment. Verbalize the limits and redirect the child to acceptable behavior. However, any behavior inflicting physical harm on another individual (child or ministry partner) **must** be dealt with quickly and decisively, regardless of motive. These incidents must be communicated to both the “victim’s” parent and the “offending child’s” parent at pick up (being careful not to do so in an accusatory or condemning manner).

In **rare** cases where repeated redirection is not successful, or in the case of **intentional** physical harm to another, Chapel’s policy is to allow for **one** “Time-out” to be given to a child in the following manner:

- Remove child from the group and have him/her sit in a “Time-out Chair.”
- Explain why he/she has been removed, and why his/her behavior or action was not appropriate.
- Stay close by during the Time-out and wait for approximately one minute per year of age (no more than 3).
- At the end of the Time-out, encourage the child to verbalize why he/she was placed in time out.
- Encourage restitution/reconciliation with any other individuals involved.
- Give assurances and express confidence in the child’s ability to make a good decision next time before allowing the child to return to the group.

If the child continues to cross limits or cause harm after one Time-out is given, page/text a parent for pick-up.

**Time-outs are NOT to be given in the Infant Nursery.**

Always use your best judgement and discretion when issuing a Time-out. If you sense there is real danger to other children, page/text the parent without delay.

At Chapel, Nursery Ministry Partners **WILL NOT:**

- Use corporal punishment
- Subject children to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse
- Deny a child food as a form of punishment
- Punish a child for soiling or wetting clothes, or not using the toilet.

As always, any concerns related to behavioral issues or disciplinary measures can be directed to the Director of Children’s Ministries.

## NURSERY MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

A Nursery Team Leader will be present throughout the morning in an effort to provide oversight and support for all of our ministry partners. They will be available using the walkie talkies provided. The Team Leader is responsible to:

- Provide oversight for all three nurseries, floating between them as necessary, or redistributing ministry partners as needed to ensure a balance of adult to child ratios.
- Serve in this capacity for both the worship service and Sunday School hour to ensure coverage throughout the morning, and to make for a smooth transition between the hours.
- Ensure that things are running smoothly, and procedures are being followed by the ministry partners.
- Introduce nursery team members to new/visiting families: Help new families through check-in procedures, answer any questions, and ensure their overall comfort in leaving their children.
- Clean and sanitize any toys as needed throughout the morning, and ensure toys are properly stored at the end of the morning.
- Assist with Check-in/Check-out
- Ensure the tables and diapering stations are sanitized after use.
- Help train/acclimate new ministry partners.
- Notify Children's Ministry Director of any issues or incidents concerning children or ministry partners throughout the morning.
- Notify Children's Ministry Director of any needed supplies.

### CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

- Ministry Partners are asked to arrive in the nursery 15 min before the start of the service, by **9:40 AM**
- Place personal items out of reach of children
- Greet parents and receive children.
- **Issue a Pager** to parent. Make sure parent and child are signed in on Sign-In Sheet. ***NOTE: We do not currently have enough pagers to issue them in the Preschool nursery. Please have parents note their cell phone number or pager number from another child, if applicable.***
- Ensure child's belongings are placed in cubby, and cubby number noted on Sign-in Sheet. All personal items (sippy cups, snack cups, etc.) should be labeled with the child's name. Labels are available in the nurseries if the items are not already marked
- **IMPORTANT: The pager MUST be presented back to the nursery before we will release the child.**  
A parent can give the pager to any **ADULT** they desire to pick their child up...as long as the correct pager is presented and they give the child's name, we may release the child to them.
- Ask parents about any specific instructions regarding allergies, bottles, pacifiers, feeding, crying instructions, etc.
- Place a name tag on child's back.
- Please use the "HELLO" tags for volunteers.

### CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE

- Greet parents for check out.
- If more than one nursery team member is working, have one stay at the door to check children out. We discourage parents from coming into the nursery during checkout.
- **Child will be released only to adult presenting the pager along with the child's name.** If parent forgets pager, kindly explain that we need the pager before we can release their child. We will not release a child to anyone without a pager. If any issue arises with this, contact Nursery Team Leader.
- Bring child and their belongings to the parent at the door. Indicate on Sign-In sheet that child has been checked out return pager to charging unit.

## OTHER PROCEDURES

### Paging/Texting Parent

- No single child should monopolize a team member's ability to care for the entire group. If one child is doing so either because they are inconsolable (for longer than 10 minutes, or at parent's instruction), or because of ongoing behavioral issues, please page/text parent.
- Page/text parent if child becomes ill, or at parent's instruction.

### Restroom Guidelines

- Follow CPP procedures: If a child requires assistance with toileting/potty training, an **ADULT ministry partner** should give assistance in the restroom while leaving the door open. For the protection of all, team members should not be alone with a child in a restroom with a closed restroom door. Therefore, Please **DO NOT** use the family restroom.
- A children's restroom is located in the Preschool Nursery.
- Additional restrooms are available in the children's wing hall. Please call on the Nursery Team Leader if children need to use the hall restroom.
- If additional assistance is needed, please call for the Nursery Team Leader.

### Diapering

- **Diapering is to be done by ADULT ministry partners ONLY (not teen helpers).**
- **NEVER** leave a child unattended on the changing table.
- The parents should provide disposable diapers. Extras are available in the nursery.
- Change all soiled diapers immediately upon detection.
- Diapers should be checked at 11:00 and changed if necessary. Put soiled diapers in diaper sacks provided at the changing table before placing in diaper pail.
- **After each diaper change, clean changing table pad and hands with disinfectant and hand sanitizer.**
- Fill out one of the stickers provided to indicate that the child was checked/changed and place it on the child's back. This communicates to both the parents and other team members that the child was changed.
- Extra clothing is available at the changing table for accidents.

### Medications

- Nursery ministry partners will **NOT** give medication to children. Exceptions to this may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). This should be addressed with the Nursery Team Leader and the Children's Ministry Director.

### Snacks

- **Check for food allergies and if snack is permissible on Sign-In sheet.**
- In the infant room, snacks are only to be given when provided and directed by the parent/guardian.
- Approved snacks are provided in the Toddler and Preschool rooms, and include pretzels, animal crackers and goldfish crackers.
- Please **DO NOT** bring in other snacks to offer. Exceptions may be granted by the Director of Children's Ministries for special occasions.
- Offer snack around 10:50 AM, or at your discretion. A water pitcher and cups are available in the cupboards for those who do not have their own cups.
- Children should be seated at the table while eating a snack.
- Wipes are available near the changing stations for children's hands and to clean the table.
- Please refrain from bringing your own snacks into the nursery so that you are not eating in front of the children.

### **Phone Use**

- Please refrain from using your phone while serving in our nurseries.
- **Remember** that nursery ministry partners are prohibited from posting pictures of children under the age of 18, unless given permission by the child's parent or legal guardian.
- **Best practice – Put the phone away!**

### **Breastfed Infants**

- A privacy screen is available in the Infant Nursery for moms to nurse their babies with privacy.
- A Cry Room is also available in the Narthex with rocking chairs, privacy screens and audio feed of the sanctuary.

### **Cribs**

- Put infants into cribs on their backs, or at the parent's instruction.
- Please strip the cribs after use and place the dirty sheets in the Dirty Toy Bin to be washed by the Nursery Team Leader.

### **Toys**

- We discourage children bringing and playing with "personal" toys. Ideally, they should be left in diaper bags.
- Place any toy that was noted to be in a child's mouth in the Dirty Toy Bin.
- Remove any broken or small toys that an infant could swallow (a piece that fits through a toilet paper roll is a good general rule) from the nursery immediately.

## **ROOM MAINTENANCE**

- Strip sheets & blankets from crib in Infant Nursery if used and place in **Dirty Toy Bin** before leaving.
- Pick up toys and return to their designated and labeled shelves and bins.
- Place any toys that were in a child's mouth in the **Dirty Toy Bin**.
- Check for anything left lying on the floor that could be a choking hazard such as coins, marbles, jewelry, buttons, crayons, etc.
- Disinfect tables, chairs, changing tables, etc.
- Clean minor messes of debris or crumbs with hand vacuum stored in the Toddler Nursery.

## **REMINDER ABOUT OLDER CHILDREN**

If you are a nursery team member who has a child that is 5 years or older but who is still too young to be on their own in the sanctuary during Worship, please do your best to make arrangements for your child to stay in the sanctuary with someone during service while you are serving in the nursery.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

In order to ensure a safe and healthy environment, children with the following symptoms within the past 24 hours should not be admitted to the nursery:

- Diarrhea or vomiting.
- Fever
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Undiagnosed rash
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed to be ill should be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

## CONTROLLING COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

- Wash hands **before** and **after** serving in the nursery.
  - Wash hands (preferred) or use hand sanitizer after each diaper change, toileting for child or self, assisting child with wiping nose, etc.
  - Disinfect changing tables after each diaper change and table after snack.
  - Make sure that child's hands are washed after using the toilet.
  - Use disinfectant to clean up all biological mishaps (vomiting, diarrhea, urine, etc).
  - Contact Nursery Team Leader in the event of a biological mishap that needs attention (someone vomited or had diarrhea)
  - Place any toy that was in a child's mouth in the Dirty Toy Bin.
  - contact parent of any child who appears to be ill to request that the child be checked out
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### AGREEMENT

I have read and understand the Nursery Ministry Handbook and agree to the policies and procedures as presented therein. I agree to follow these guidelines to the best of my ability.

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Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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*[For Office Use Only:]*

- Children's Ministry Application Complete*
- CPP Agreement*
- Handbook Agreement*
- PA Criminal Background Check – Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_*
- PA Child Abuse Clearance – Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_*
- FBI Clearance or Waiver – Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_*
- Nursery Training complete*
- Other \_\_\_\_\_*
- Other \_\_\_\_\_*

## NOTES TO OUR TEEN/TWEEN HELPERS

We praise the Lord for your desire to serve Him among our youngest covenant family members. We are excited to have you join us and to help you develop your gifts. While everything in the CPP and preceding procedures applies to you too, the following are some specific things you need to remember:

1. It is your job to play *calmly* with the children, redirect them to safe play when necessary, and encourage them to follow the instructions of the adult ministry partner.
  - a. Please refrain from picking up the children. This is for the safety of the kids but also for the protection of YOU! An alternative to picking them up may be to get down on the floor with them.
  - b. Do your part to keep things calm and orderly. Generally speaking, the kids don't need any help with getting themselves riled up. 😊 **No wrestling, tickling, chasing, or horse play!**
  - c. Honor the requests of the adult ministry partner with whom you are serving.
  - d. Feel free to initiate the playing of an appropriate game, or reading a book or Bible story, or breaking out the crayons. Your ideas are welcome!!
2. Remember what kind of touch is appropriate and inappropriate (see Protection and Safety section on page 2). A good question to ask is, **"Where are my hands?"** Make sure your hands do not accidentally go up a little girl's dress or a child's shirt.
3. You always need to be with an adult ministry partner. We are so glad you are here and have confidence in your desires and abilities. But the burden of caring for our littles ones is great and should be shouldered by the adults. They know this and should never leave you alone. Should you ever find yourself alone with the kids, use the walkie-talkie to call on the Nursery Team Leader to help.
4. Toileting/diapering children is the job of the adult ministry partners. Be glad you don't have to do this dirty job!
5. **Put the phones away!** Now is not the time to be texting friends or checking your social media pages. Remember that you are not allowed to post pictures of kids. Just put the phones away so you won't be tempted.
6. You are not permitted to take children out of the room for any reason, except when assisting in an emergency evacuation.
7. You are **expected** to serve at your scheduled time...we are counting on you! If you are unable to serve at that time you will need to find a replacement, just like the adults. You are more than welcome to switch with another youth worker or find an adult who is willing to fill in for you. If you are having a hard time, Mrs. Kick is always available to help find a replacement. If you are interested in serving on a day you are not scheduled, please talk to Mrs. Kick or the Nursery Team Leader to see if there is a need.

You all are such a blessing to our ministry and bring a fun and vibrant energy to the Nursery Ministry. We really are so grateful that you've chosen to serve the Lord in this way. Do not think that this is any small task that you are doing. You are teaching our littlest ones what you have hopefully learned – that God is with us through His Body, the Church, of which you are a part. It is a blessing to serve beside you!