

PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

We're glad that you have shown interest in joining one of our Ministry Teams. Please take a few minutes to carefully read the *Preschool Handbook* before making your commitment. Please contact the Preschool Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to help you find your place in ministry.

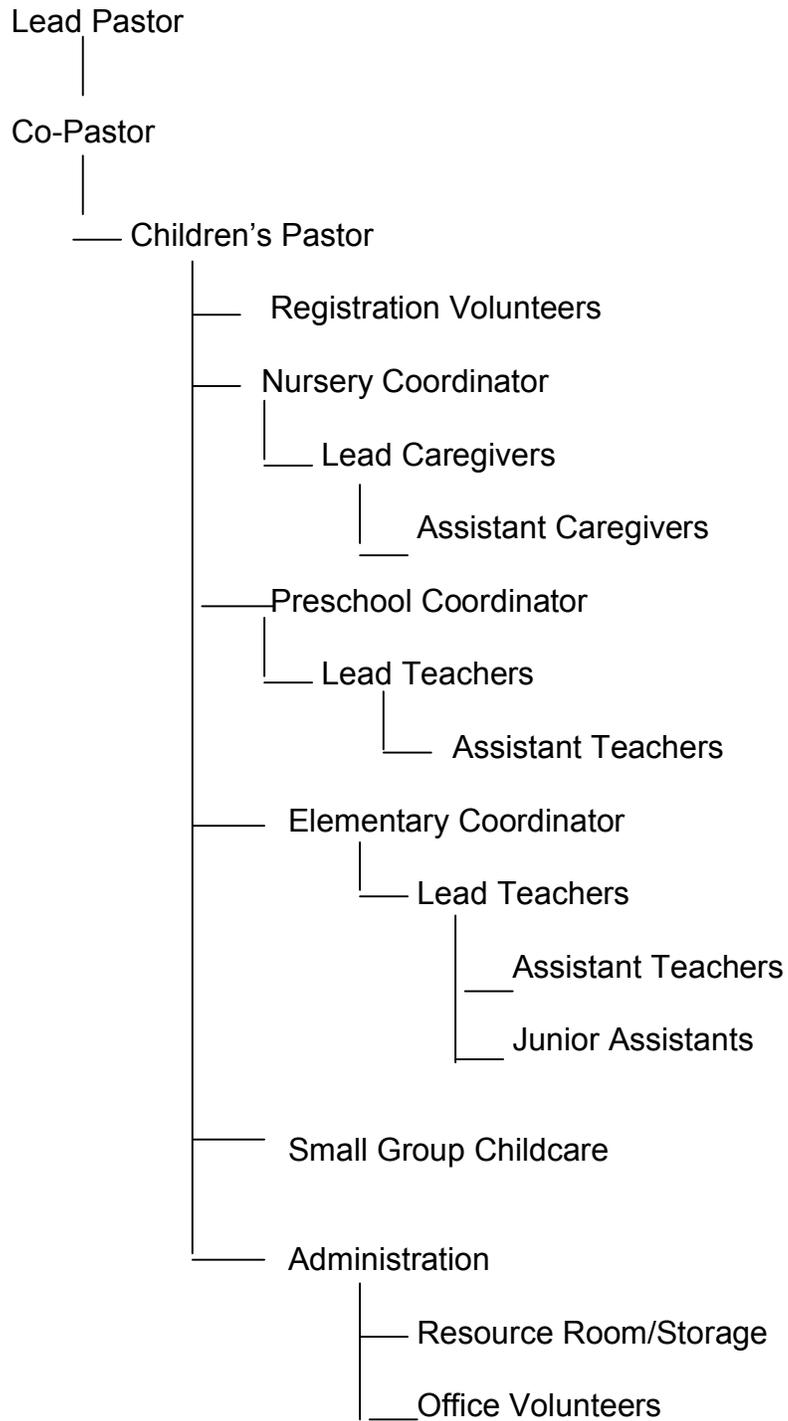
I. THE PURPOSE FOR THE PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

Our main purpose for the Preschool Ministry is to connect kids in a relationship with God. Through relevant music, creative messages, and fun learning games, we show kids how God's principles can be applied in their daily lives. We also provide opportunities for kids to form relationships with other kids.

II. STEPS TO JOIN THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

- A. Fill out the Children's Ministry application and turn it in to the church office.
- B. Read the *Preschool Handbook* and agree to follow the guidelines. Also commit to the Honor Code.
- C. Go through an interview with the Children's Pastor. Be willing to have a background check.
- D. Complete the Plug-In 1 class.
- E. Read Ages and Stages.

III. MINISTRY TEAM CHART



IV. LEARNING CENTERS

A. WHAT ARE LEARNING CENTERS?

Every week we have a Lesson Focus which is taught in small groups we call Learning Centers. Each Learning Center has a different hands-on application of the Bible truth we are teaching. We rotate the children from activity to activity. This gives the children the opportunity to learn about Jesus by experiencing, exploring, experimenting, expressing, and evaluating.

B. WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

1. Children learn best by doing.

We retain 10% of what we hear, 20% of what we read, 50% of what we hear and see, and 90% of what we do. We want children to take an active role in the learning process. Learning centers provide hands-on learning activities which stimulate communication, curiosity, and growth.

2. Children have different learning styles.

God made us with different personalities and talents. Children are not all made to learn the same. Only a small number of children learn best through listening. Some children learn best when sharing ideas in a group. Others learn best by direct hands-on experiences. Others learn best by experimenting. Through Learning Centers we can provide a variety of methods for more children to reach their potential for learning.

3. Children learn by repetition.

Each learning center repeats the same Lesson Focus. By the end of the class the student has heard the main theme over and over. Since each Learning Center presents the Lesson Focus in a different way, the child is also gaining a broader application of the central truth.

4. Student/ Teacher Ratio

Instead of one teacher for 30 preschoolers, we have one adult for every 8 to 10 children. The children have better interaction with the adults and with their friends.

Also, because children have different personalities, having a variety of teachers will help each child to connect with someone. It's valuable to have a variety of people representing the genders, cultures, and ages.

5. Attention Span

Since young children have a short attention span, rotating them to another activity every ten minutes helps to capture and hold their interest.

C. TYPES OF LEARNING CENTERS

Learning centers change each week, but here are a few examples:

Bible Story Center, Bible Verse Center, Art Center, Snack Center, Drama Center, Block Center, Nature Center, Home Living Center, Book Center, Puppet Center, Music Center, Puzzle Center, and Game Center.

V. CLASS FORMAT

Each Lead Teacher receives a Lesson Planner with the curriculum. We try to divide the children into groups by level of development.

The Preschool Ministry Team should arrive 45 minutes before the start of the service. Registration starts 15 minutes before the start of the service.

Learning Centers

Preschoolers are led into their classroom where they rotate in small group learning centers. The first round includes the Bible story center and a Bible verse center. Repeat the lesson focus in each center.

Dismissal

The Assistant Teacher does an activity with the children while the Lead Teacher stands at the door releasing children to adults with matching sticker to the registration card.

VI. MINISTRY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

A. LEAD TEACHERS

1. The Preschool Coordinator will give you a copy of the curriculum. Prepare learning centers.
2. Be in the classroom to greet and oversee the children.
3. Oversee the rotation of learning centers. Give a 2-minute signal before switching groups. Continually train Ministry Team members.
4. Only a Lead Teacher is authorized to call a parent out of the service. Keep a chart of disciplinary actions to make sure a child has been warned and given a time out with a discussion before calling the parent.
5. If you need forms, copies made, or items purchased, fill out the appropriate forms from the Registration desk.
6. Communicate with coordinator, workers, parents, and children.

B. ASSISTANT TEACHERS

1. Help with registration. Remind the children to use the restroom before class begins.
2. As a group leader you will be assigned activities to do with the children. You may be asked to help prepare the center during the week.
3. Use your time to interact with the children. Repeat the lesson focus and Bible words as often as you can. With your extra time, talk to the children and try to relate to their lives. If you run out of time, let them take the project home, if appropriate.
4. You are responsible to keep children in your group. Be considerate of other groups by keeping the noise level down.
5. If you are doing a take-home activity, make sure names are written on the project before you get started. When the group has finished the activity, put the take-home project at the table for take-home items.
6. The Lead Teacher will give you a signal to let you know that you have 2 minutes to wrap up your center.
7. As parents come to get their child, call the child whose parent has arrived and help them collect their belongings. Help to clean up.

VII. MINISTRY TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

A. IDENTIFICATION

For safety and recognition, wear your identification tag when working.

B. ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Team members must arrive 45 minutes before the start of their scheduled service and remain until each child has been picked up.

C. SET UP AND TEAR DOWN

Team members should make sure that everything in their classroom has been properly packed. They should help clean, pick up trash, pack items, and place lost and found items at the registration table.

D. ABSENCES

If you cannot serve on a scheduled date, it is your responsibility to contact your coordinator with a replacement. If you are planning on going on vacation, give your coordinator notice before the schedule is made.

E. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

It is important to stay connected with the vision of the church, so please make sure you are attending at least one service every two weeks.

F. FREE CDS OF THE MESSAGES

You can listen to podcasts on the website or order a CD of the message through the Service Supervisor.

G. DRESS CODE

Be comfortable, neat, and modest.

H. CHILD WELLNESS

Children are not to be in the classroom if they have had any of the following symptoms in the past 24 hours: suspected fever, diarrhea, vomiting, consistent coughing or sneezing, colored nasal discharge, any discharge from the eyes, any communicable disease manifesting in a rash.

I. FIRST AID

Every worker should go through our Child Safety course. The First Aid Kit is kept at the registration desk. Team members are not to administer medication of any kind. CPR and choking procedures are kept at Registration. If a child has a food allergy, the Registration person should inform the Lead Teacher.

J. CARE OF CURRICULUM

File your copy of the curriculum and your lesson planner in the Preschool file.

K. SECURITY TAG SYSTEM

Registration has their own procedures and schedule. We have a security tag system for the safety of the children. Children cannot be released without the security tag. If someone suspicious tries to take a child without the security tag, call the Planet Kids Coordinator or Children's Pastor. Always keep the doors to the classroom shut.

L. CHILD/TEACHER RATIO

Our aim is to have a 1-8 ratio for children in small groups.

M. CHILD PROTECTION

There is ALWAYS to be at least two adults present with a child. Never touch a child in any area that would be covered with a bathing suit. If you observe another Ministry Team member showing inappropriate expressions of affection, inform the Preschool coordinator.

N. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If you suspect that a child has been abused, molested or severely neglected, bring it to the attention of the Preschool Coordinator.

O. INCIDENT REPORTS

If an incident occurs, such as a child being accidentally hurt, Incident Report forms must be completed by the teacher, signed by a parent, and given to the Children's Pastor. Incident Report forms are at the Registration desk.

P. EVACUATION ROUTE

In case of fire, children are to line up with an adult leader in the front of the line and an adult in the back of the line. Crawl low under smoke if there is a fire. Leave the classroom and turn left to exit. The Lead Teacher is responsible to get the registration list and account for each child. Close all doors behind you.

Q. WORKSHOPS & CLASS MEETINGS

All team members should attend workshops and class meetings for ministry training, fellowship, and inspiration.

VIII. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

A. RULES

1. No talking when the teacher is talking.
2. Don't bother your neighbor.
3. Stay in your group.
4. No running.

B. REWARDS & CONSEQUENCES

Attending the class and participating in the activities is a privilege. If a child does not obey the rules, there are three steps of action to take in this order:

1. A warning.
2. Move the child to another seat.
2. Time out and have a discussion about their behavior.
3. Call the Service Supervisor. Only the Lead Teacher is to communicate disciplinary problems with the parent. Note: Call the Prechool Coordinator if the child is a visitor or has special needs.

C. GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

1. Present the rules positively before the start of each class. Make sure the children are disciplined for rebellion and not for ignorance or forgetfulness.
2. Ask the child why they think they are being disciplined. Make sure they clearly understand the reason. You may also discover why the child is acting out and minister to them.
3. NEVER SPANK A CHILD. Grabbing, pinching, or slapping a child is absolutely not allowed. Never degrade or embarrass a child.
4. Never label a child as "bad."
5. Pray with children and teach them self-control.
6. ALWAYS display your forgiveness after administrating discipline.
7. If there is a behavioral problem that needs to be communicated to the parents, report it to your coordinator.

IX. TEACHING TIPS

Additional information will be shared at workshops and meetings.

- A. Have fun with the kids. Show excitement.
- B. When communicating, get on the child's level and look into their eyes so the child knows they have your undivided attention. Make sure you include things that interest him or her.
- C. Catch a child doing something good.
- D. Let kids know what behavior is acceptable and what is not by consistently following through with discipline.
- E. Don't show favoritism.
- F. Promote total classroom participation. Be careful not to embarrass shy children.
- G. Teach children to respect one another and the property of others.
- H. Encourage children to invite their friends to church and special events.
- I. Remind children to make visitors feel comfortable and welcome.
- J. Speak positively to children and let them know you believe in them.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Preschool Handbook. It is our desire that you find your place in ministry and know the joy and fulfillment that goes along with being a team member.