

The Church of the Good Shepherd Nursery Handbook 2023-2024



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Introduction

Welcome to the Nursery of The Church of the Good Shepherd! It is our desire that every effort is made to promote a healthy, safe, and loving environment for all the children while staying at The Church of the Good Shepherd. Our Nursery policies are stated for the purpose of promoting unity and understanding between parents and nursery staff at CGS. Thank you for the privilege of caring for your children!

This handbook is divided into two sections: namely nursery parents and nursery staff. In order to foster unity and understanding, it would be helpful for parents and staff to read both sections.

Finally, if you have any comments or suggestions about the Nursery Ministry, please contact the nursery coordinator listed on the cover of this handbook. We welcome your input.

Nursery Ministry Mission and Objectives

Mission

At CGS the purpose of our children's ministry, including the nursery ministry, is to come alongside parents as they seek to raise their children in the love and admonition of the Lord. We seek to provide opportunities for children to be given instruction in God's Word, engage in worship, be involved in fellowship, and to give expression to their faith through service.

For Parents . . .

Our Objective

The Nursery Ministry desires to come alongside parents by providing a safe, loving environment for their children (12 weeks through 3 years) as they attend Worship and Sunday Morning Communities.

For Children . . .

Our Objective

The Nursery ministry not only seeks to provide a safe, loving environment for children, but to foster in the children a love of God and His church.

For Nursery Staff . . .

Our Objective

The Nursery Ministry desires to equip and encourage the nursery staff in their ministry to the parents and little lambs at CGS.

Section I

Nursery Parent Information

Facilities

The nurseries are available 15 minutes prior to the 9:30 Sunday Morning Communities hour and 10:45 Worship. During the SMC hour there is one combined nursery room available. During worship, there are 3-4 nursery rooms for children from birth (12 weeks) through 2 years old depending on need and volunteer availability. They are divided by age and child to adult ratio. Below is a guideline of how the children are divided:

Seedlings Class - 12 weeks to 7 months (1 adult : 3 children)

Sprouts Class - 8 months to 16 months (1 adult : 3 children)

Saplings – 16-24 months (1 adult : 4 children)

Two-year-olds - 2 years old by 8/31/23 (1 adult : 5 children)

The nursery information desk is located at the front of the nursery facility. The nursery coordinator and/or hostess will be available at the desk to assist with visitors, pagers, and other special needs during the services. There is also a baby room across from the Seedlings room next to the small kitchen. Mothers of little ones are welcome to use the changing stations in any nursery room, baby room, or in the ladies' room behind the fellowship hall. Fathers of little ones are welcome to use the changing stations in any nursery room, or in the mens' room below the sanctuary or next to the fellowship hall. Bathrooms for nursery age children are located in the Two-Year-Olds rooms. The Seedlings and Sprouts nurseries have small crib rooms within them for sleepy little ones.

Staff

Our nursery is staffed by members of the CGS church family. There are 2 to 4 staff in each room depending on the number of children. All adult staff have completed a proper background check. Youth, 12 and older, may serve in the Saplings and the Two-year-olds class during the worship hour. All nursery staff must be scheduled to work. For safety and consistency, drop-in workers are not allowed. All nursery staff are required to complete our C.A.R.E. (Children and Adults in a Responsible Environment) training prior to serving as a volunteer. Please contact the nursery director to volunteer & complete the required training. Because our nursery is staffed by volunteers on Sunday morning, we ask that all nursery parents consider regularly volunteering in the nursery. To best serve our youngest nursery aged children this year, we will encourage mask wearing in the youngest nursery rooms as needed, but it will not be required unless specifically requested by a parent.

Enrollment

Children of CGS members will be sent a nursery welcome packet after the child's birth. New members and regular attendees will be sent a nursery welcome packet after 5 visits or sooner if requested. The guidelines and necessary items for enrolling your child in the nursery are explained and provided in these nursery packets. If a family is not in the church's computer database or needs to update personal information, a CGS Family Information Card and Visitor Form should be completed. This document is available at the nursery desk.

Handbook

This Handbook contains all policies, procedures, mission statements, and any other information that pertains to the Nursery Ministry. It is for every family that has nursery age children and nursery staff.

Nursery Information Card

The purpose of the card is to help the nursery staff have the information necessary to take the best care of your child. A parent should complete the information card for each child enrolled in Nursery before Promotion Sunday of each year or the first time the child attends. Cards are available at the nursery desk.

Diaper Bag Tag

The CGS diaper bag tag should be attached to the child's diaper bag when they come to the Nursery on Sunday mornings. Tags can be obtained at the nursery desk on Sunday mornings. Parents may use their own name tag on their diaper bag if they choose, but all diaper bags must have identification.

Sunday Morning Check-In and Check-Out Procedures For Visitors

Visitors, those not enrolled in Nursery, should check in at the Nursery desk. The coordinator or hostess will then help visitors to the appropriate room and guide them through the nursery check-in procedures. For check-out procedures, refer to steps 5-7 listed below.

Sunday Morning Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

1. Please arrive a few minutes before the service to get your child settled.
Check your child/children in at any of the computers that are at the check in stations. Instructions will be there on how to go through this process.
2. Print your child's name tag and your I.D. number that corresponds with your child's name tag, then place the name tag on your child and the I.D. number on yourself.
3. Take your child to his/her assigned room and get him or her settled. Be sure to grab a pager (you may leave your keys as collateral) in case we need to get in touch with you.
4. Sign your child in on the sign-in sheet at your child's room with your pager number, and any specific instructions. *It is also helpful to communicate any instructions verbally to a nursery worker.*
5. Enjoy Sunday Morning Communities and Worship.
6. Return promptly to the nursery and have your I.D. number out so you can enter the nursery area. Show the nursery workers your I.D. number that matches your child's name tag. After you receive your child, please check them out on the sign-in sheet.
Please do not send relatives or siblings to pick up children.
7. Return your pager and pick up your keys.

Items to Be Provided in Diaper Bags:

1. Enough diapers for your child. Parents are requested to write the child's name on his/her diapers to aid in the process of changing diapers.
2. Enough milk, juice or water for your child in bottles and/or sippy cups labeled with the child's name. Please label bottle caps as well.
3. A labeled change of clothes.
4. If a child is using a pacifier, the pacifier is to be on a "leash" that can be attached to the child's clothes. This will help to prevent others from picking up dropped pacifiers.

If possible, please refrain from bringing any toys from home. These toys present hygiene problems, are a distraction to other children, and difficult to locate among the other toys. Of course, an exception is allowed if a child has severe separation anxiety and the parent feels the need for their child to have some type of comfort toy or blanket from home. Please label this item clearly with the child's name.

Sunday Morning Routine

During each hour in the nursery, children in Sprouts, Saplings, and the Two-year-olds class will have time to play, read stories, and have a snack. A schedule for the hour is posted by the door in each room. Diapers will be checked each hour, and changed at least once during the morning. The children's playtime will consist of time in the room or on the playground if weather permits. For snacks, please send a labeled sippy cup for your child. Cheerios and graham crackers are provided. **Snacks from home or from a child's bag need to be cleared by the nursery coordinator.** Although we strive to be a nut-free facility, our campus is used daily by a wide variety of groups, and we **cannot guarantee** a nut-safe environment. Nevertheless, **we do expect all facility users to be respectful to our vulnerable children with severe and life-threatening allergies.** Please avoid feeding your child peanut butter, almond butter, or any snacks with peanuts and tree nuts while at CGS.

Morning Schedule

9:15 (10:30) Nursery staff is in rooms

9:30 (10:45) Fellowship – Children arrive, free play

9:45 (11:00) Teaching – Circle time, songs, story
Worship – Play music, sing, dance, worship the Lord

10:00 (11:15) Fellowship – Free play inside (Saplings and up may also use the playground)

10:15 (11:30) Snack with prayer, begin changing diapers

10:30 (11:45) Finish diapers, free play

Wellness Policy

To create the healthiest environment possible for your child, the nursery is cleaned thoroughly each week and lightly after each use. Workers will no longer be asked to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19, and will only be asked to remain masked while in the nursery wing if so needed or requested by a parent. They will also be required to wash their hands upon entry/exit, & then as needed in order to prevent spreading of germs. Children will be asked to wash their hands upon entry/exit, & then as needed in order to prevent spreading of germs.

To assist us in this effort to create a healthy environment, please do not bring your children to the nursery if they have any of the following symptoms. Children should be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to the nursery.

- Fever or do not appear well
- Continuously runny nose or frequent nasal drainage, regardless of the color of the drainage or treatment with antibiotics
- Frequent loose or watery stools
- Frequent cough or sneeze
- Vomiting

If your child has a clear runny nose or other symptoms due to confirmed allergies, please let us know. We realize some symptoms hang on when a child is not contagious.

Additionally, this year we ask that you refrain from using the nursery if:

In the last 5 days, anyone in your household has:

- Been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Had any of the following symptoms
 - New cough
 - Fever, chills etc.
 - Sore throat, runny nose
 - Shortness of breath &/or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Had close contact (w/in 6 feet) of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a cumulative 15 minutes over a 24 hour period
- Had a healthcare provider been in contact & advised them to quarantine

If you are unsure whether you should use the nursery, please contact the Nursery Coordinator to discuss further. Thank you for doing your part to adhere to this policy.

Room Safety and Usage

In order to create the safest environment possible, please do not bring anything that would be a possible choking hazard or any outside food or drink that is not cleared by the nursery coordinator. When you enter and exit the rooms, please close the door directly behind you. We have new walkers that are excited to explore, and an open door is always a temptation for them to run out. We are happy for you to use the nursery rooms to meet a friend, shepherding group, co-ops or playgroups. Please help us to keep the rooms safe and clean by doing the following:

- Clear usage of the room with Liz Stioff in the office
- Sign in at the nursery desk before using a room (binder is on the wall to the right of the desk)

- . Use one of the room checklist in the binder to leave the room as you found it

Potty Training

The Nursery is very willing to cooperate with parents when they are potty training their child. We ask, however, that parents of children that are being potty trained do the following:

- . Provide a complete change of clothes for the child in the diaper bag
- . Communicate to the volunteers that the child is potty training
- . Be willing to return to the room to help the child use the bathroom (if necessary)

Behavior

When a behavior problem occurs, the youngest child will be redirected to a more appropriate activity. Older children (Saplings and up) will be told that their behavior is inappropriate, have the correct behavior modeled for them, and then may be asked to apologize to another child if the circumstance calls for reconciliation. If the above procedures are ineffective, the parents will be asked to come to the nursery room. If your child is struggling with a certain behavior, please communicate this information to the nursery staff so that they can help monitor the situation on Sunday mornings. If aggressive behavior such as biting, hitting, or pushing happens, parents may be asked to stay with their child in the nursery until the behavior has improved.

Promotion

Promotion Sunday for the Sunday school classes and nursery is generally in mid to late August. Promotion to new rooms is based on age &/or mobility and child/adult ratios. You will be notified by mail and/or email of the promotion date and new room for your child. During the year, a number of children may be promoted in order to make room for newborns and new members joining the nursery, except in the Twos room.

We are excited to be working alongside and partnering with you as your little one attends the nursery over the next few years. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery Coordinator. We thank you for entrusting your little ones to us on Sunday mornings.

Section II

Nursery Volunteer Information

JOB DESCRIPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

Hostess

Assist nursery coordinator with general nursery needs during the service. This includes helping newcomers and members get settled in the right class and alerting the nursery coordinator to any nursery needs that may arise. The hostess also serves as the authority present in the nursery coordinator's absence to deal with any sickness, accidents, or special needs. Each hour, the hostess takes attendance of workers and children using the provided form on the nursery clipboard.

Monthly/Quarterly Volunteer and Sub

Monthly and quarterly (5th Sunday) volunteers serve as the helping hands of the nursery. Volunteers interact with parents, change diapers, play with children, give out snacks, etc. Monthly volunteers assist in straightening the nursery room after the 10:45 service according to the pink checklist on the room clipboard. Subs should be willing to serve in the nursery at least once a month. Subs may be contacted by nursery volunteers or the nursery coordinator.

Training

Training takes place for all hostesses, volunteers, and subs. All volunteers are required to complete our C.A.R.E. (Children and Adults in a Responsible Environment) training prior to serving. If you are unable to attend, please contact the nursery coordinator to arrange a separate training. The nursery coordinator will also make rounds most Sunday mornings to answer any questions.

Health Requests for Staff

If you feel unwell or answer "Yes" to any of the questions (listed below), please find a sub and contact the nursery coordinator for further instructions.

COVID Entry Questions (for staff & nursery families):

In the last 5 days, has anyone in your household:

- Been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Had any of the following symptoms?
 - New cough
 - Fever, chills, etc.
 - Sore throat, runny nose
 - Shortness of breath &/or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Had close contact (w/in 6 feet) of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a cumulative 15 minutes over a 24 hour period?
- Had a healthcare provider been in contact & advised them to quarantine?

Age Requirement for Staff

Staff must be at least 12 years or older to work in Nursery. Youth may work in the Saplings and Twos rooms only during the worship hour. Children younger than 12 years old must work with a parent and the parent must supervise the child at all times. No one younger than college age is allowed to work in the Seedlings or Sprouts rooms.

Getting a Substitute

Staff are responsible for finding their own substitutes. Please refer to the contact list to find a substitute. The best option for getting a substitute is to swap with other staff. It is advisable to begin looking for a substitute as far ahead as possible. After finding a sub, please notify the coordinator of the change prior to Sunday morning. The contact list will be distributed each week in the email reminder.

Ending Nursery Service

If a nursery volunteer needs to stop serving in the nursery due to relocation, pregnancy, sickness, etc., please give the nursery coordinator as much notice as possible.

Enrollment and Visitors

If a parent wishes to enroll their child, please refer them to the Nursery desk. The coordinator is to oversee that every child is properly enrolled and placed in the correct classroom. If a child is just visiting, please make sure they check in at one of the check-in stations and speak to someone at the desk. Once they have signed in at one of the desks and obtained a name tag, I.D, badge, and pager, they need to sign in on the room sign-in sheet.

CHECKING IN

Arrival Time

Nursery staff are to arrive 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. 9:30 staff should stay in the nursery until 10:45 staff arrives. Please wash your hands as soon as you arrive in your nursery room.

Worker Name Tags

Name Tags must be worn by all staff and be visible at all times. Hostesses have blue tags and volunteers have white tags. Worker tags will be hung up near the room entry or located in the drawer of the nursery cabinets in each room. If a tag is missing, please notify the coordinator or hostess on duty.

Supplies

The nursery rooms should be adequately supplied with all the items that you will need for Sunday morning. If a supply is missing or low, please notify the hostess or coordinator during the hour or write a note on the pink checklist on the clipboard.

Safety

Regularly check floors in the nursery for choking hazards or dangerous items such as coins, marbles, safety pins, jewelry, food, buttons, pen caps, etc. Make sure the door to the nursery room remains closed at all times. There are some little ones who love to run or crawl through an open door. Please do not bring any drinks or food into the nursery rooms. Do not leave any child unattended in a swing, highchair, exersaucer, changing table, or any place where they might fall or get injured. Please do not use your phone or any other type of distraction during your time in the nursery. Make sure that crib sheets are on securely before placing a child in a crib. Unless a parent specifies differently, every baby using the crib rooms should be placed on his/her back without any blanket, lovey, necklace or headband.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

All staff are to familiarize themselves with the exit location for their room's evacuation in case of an emergency. A map of the emergency evacuation plan should be located on the wall of each nursery room. It is important that workers remain calm and follow the procedure exactly in order for the parents to be able to locate their child. Please be sure to take the sign-in clipboard with you to confirm all children are accounted for. The Seedlings room has an evacuation crib on rollers to assist in evacuating up to six children. The nursery hostess on duty will be responsible to clear all the nursery rooms including the bathroom in the Twos room, and both crib rooms. Once cleared, nursery doors are to be shut upon exiting.

As the Children Check In . . .

A volunteer should be at the door helping parents to check in. The volunteer should greet the children with a smile and warm words, using their name as they arrive at the door. Parents are to sign in on the sign-in sheet and may give verbal instructions. Ask parents to write down any instructions on the sign-in sheet for other staff. Once signed in, the children may be handed over the door or walked in if older. Parents are welcome to accompany children into the rooms, but siblings should wait at the door. We ask that all children and volunteers clean their hands with either soap and water or hand sanitizer upon entering.

Morning Schedule

9:15 (10:30) Nursery staff is in rooms

9:30 (10:45) Fellowship – Children arrive, free play

9:45 (11:00) Teaching – Circle time, songs, story
Worship – Play music, sing, dance, worship the Lord

10:00 (11:15) Fellowship – Free play inside (Saplings and up may use the playground)

10:15 (11:30) Snack with prayer, begin changing diapers

10:30 (11:45) Finish diapers, free play

DURING YOUR TIME IN THE NURSERY

Interacting with the Children

All volunteers are expected to show love, understanding, and acceptance for all the children. Nursery workers are encouraged to stoop, squat, hold, sit on a child-sized chair or sit on the floor with the children when working in the nursery. Being on their eye level helps get and maintain their attention. A ratio of 1 to 3 should be maintained in the Seedlings & Sprouts rooms. A ratio of 1 to 4 should be maintained in the Saplings and a ratio of 1 to 5 in the Two-year-olds room. Please do not take a child far outside of the nursery area. The hallway beside the nursery area or playground is good for ones who need a break from the room.

Snacks

The children have a snack time each service (except Seedlings). Cheerios are in the Seedlings and Sprout rooms. Teddy Grahams are available for snacks in the Saplings and Twos room. These are the only food items that may be given to children, except what a child may bring from home. **Snacks from home need to be cleared with the nursery coordinator.** Although we strive to be a nut-free facility, our campus is used daily by a wide variety of groups, and we **cannot guarantee** a nut-safe environment. Nevertheless, **we do expect all facility users to be respectful to our vulnerable children with severe and life-threatening allergies.** Please avoid feeding any children peanut butter, almond butter, or any snacks with peanuts and tree nuts while at CGS. Paper cups are provided in each room. If you need a sippy cup, they can be obtained from the nursery desk. Used sippy cups should be emptied and brought to the nursery desk at the end of each service.

Diaper Changing

Before the parents pick up, each child should be checked to make sure that the child's diaper has been changed if necessary. Diapers are to be changed on the changing tables on tissue sheets provided. Workers are to wear a new pair of disposable gloves before each diaper change. Dirty diapers are to be placed in a dirty diaper bag and then placed in the wastebasket under the sink. Dispose of tissue sheet and gloves in the trash. Hands are to be washed after changing each diaper. Extra diapers are in each nursery changing table. "Changed with care" and "Checked with care" stickers are to be put on the back of children's clothing or name tag to inform parents easily of their child's diaper condition.

Taking a Child to the Bathroom

If possible, female staff should accompany children to the bathroom. Staff and children should wash their hands afterwards. Do not take a child to any bathroom except the ones in the nursery. Leave the door to that bathroom cracked when occupied.

Behavior

When a behavior problem occurs, the youngest child will be redirected to a more appropriate activity. Older children (Saplings and up) will be told that their behavior is inappropriate, have the correct behavior modeled for them, and then may be asked to apologize to another child if the circumstance calls for reconciliation. If the above procedures are ineffective, the parents will be asked to come and talk with their child. If aggressive behavior such as biting,

hitting, or pushing happens, parents may be asked to stay with their child in the nursery until the behavior has improved.

When a Child Is Sick or Injured

If a child seems or becomes sick, please inform the coordinator or hostess on duty. A thermometer is available at the hostess desk. The parents of the child will be contacted to come and take or evaluate the child. If a child sustains a serious injury while in the nursery, immediately call 911 and contact the nursery hostess on duty and/or nursery coordinator. They will notify the parents. If anyone knows basic medical knowledge such as CPR or helping a choking child, he/she may administer help if necessary until help arrives. If the injury is minor, have one volunteer notify the hostess on duty or nursery coordinator while the other workers stay with the child. **A first aid kit is located at the nursery desk along with incident forms** (parent & director's copy) that should be completed after the child has been helped. *Please give the parent copy of the incident report to the parent, and place the director's copy in the nursery mailbox outside of the church office.*

Care of Toys

If a toy has been in a child's mouth, then it is to be removed, sprayed or wiped with disinfectant and then placed on the counter to air dry OR placed in the "Dirty Toy Bin" for further cleaning. After the toys are dry, they can be returned to the appropriate location. If you notice that a toy or storage box is broken, please bring it to the nursery desk. Do not leave it in the nursery room.

Attendance

The hostess is responsible for taking attendance during the service on pre-printed sheets. The coordinator will update class rosters at the end of each month by adding and deleting names as appropriate.

When Parents Come to Pick Up . . .

Children can only be released to their parents. **Please only release children to parents once you have taken and matched the I.D. number on their stub to the child's tag.** Once the code has been verified, please take the diaper bag and child to the door and remind the parents to check out on the sign-in sheet. Parents like to hear about their child when they pick them up. Telling parents how their child was during your hour helps them feel secure about leaving their child in the nursery and it shows care for the child. If there was a problem, please communicate that after you have communicated the positive. If ever you feel uncomfortable or unsure about how to communicate with parents, please contact the coordinator for assistance.

After They Have All Gone . . .

Volunteers will complete the tasks listed on the pink nursery room checklist. This sheet is to be completed each week and is located on the clipboard under the sign-in sheets. Any notes to the coordinator may be communicated on the checklist. Please have one staff member from each room bring the sign-in sheets, completed checklist, and trash to the nursery desk at the end of the 10:45 service. The clipboard and name tags can go back in the drawer.

INFORMATION REGARDING TOYS & EQUIPMENT

Toys

Type and Quality of Toys

Only age-appropriate toys are to be used in the nursery. A high standard of toys is to be maintained. Any toy that is broken, torn, rusty or dirty beyond cleaning is to be thrown out. Toys must be easily cleaned with disinfectant and water.

Evaluating & Replacing Toys

The coordinator will regularly go through all the toys in each room and evaluate them for age-appropriateness, quality, and ease of cleaning. Toys that do not meet these criteria will be removed or replaced. If you find a broken toy, please notify the coordinator and bring the toy to the nursery desk..

Cleaning and Care of Toys

Toys that have been mouthed need to be disinfected or placed in the “Dirty Toy” bin for cleaning once a child has stopped playing with it. To clean, place the toys on a paper towel on the counter and spray with cleaner and leave to air dry. After toys are dry, they can then be returned to their appropriate location. The rooms and toys are cleaned thoroughly once a week by the nursery cleaner and straightened and lightly cleaned after each use. You can help by making sure toys stay in their appropriate room and do not go out on the playground.

Equipment

Cribs

There are four cribs in the Seedlings room and two cribs in the Sprouts room. Any used crib sheets are to be changed at the end of Sunday morning. If the sheet has any stains or wetness, please change it immediately. Sheets are located under the counters in the Seedlings and Sprouts room. The crib with red bars on the legs is the Evacuation crib in case of emergency.

Changing Tables

Changing Tables are to be wiped clean with cleaner after each child is changed unless a piece of wax paper was used. Changing tables should be wiped clean at the end of Sunday morning.

Battery operated equipment and toys

At the end of Sunday morning, please turn off all toys and equipment that run on batteries. Please notify the nursery hostess or coordinator if any toys or equipment is broken or in need of new batteries.

“We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power & the wonders He has done . . . so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born . . .and they in turn would tell their children.”
Psalm 78:4b, 6a