



Grace Kids Handbook

Revised Sept 12, 2017

Our Vision

Our goal is to provide the children of Grace Church with a safe place to learn about the God of the Bible, His Word, and to stir up a Holy Spirit-given passion for Jesus Christ. Our desire is that they may experience a proven, personal faith in Jesus, and that they may be a blessing to their family, their community, and their world.

Encouragement

We are so very thankful for our volunteers! We are continually amazed and blessed by your hearts for the children of Grace Church. We encourage you to spend time with the Lord daily, meet with Him until you really meet Him, meditating on His Word and His promises, trusting Him for everything that you need. Pray for the love, wisdom, strength and patience that is needed for this ministry. Pray for the other volunteers and the children in your class. God graciously loves to work through our prayers. Join a home group for encouragement and support. And again, thank you for your service.

General Policies and Procedures

Volunteers need to complete a Children's Ministry (CM) application, and meet with CM Director.

Lead teachers need to be Grace Church members.

We ask that you attend Volunteer Training sessions.

We ask that all parents of children involved in Grace Church CM volunteer once a month.

Our goal is to have our classes run on a 4 week rotation. When we have enough volunteers, you will be serving once a month.

Volunteer schedules are made quarterly and emailed to you via Planning Center. Please write your dates on your calendar.

A weekly newsletter is sent out to the parents with helpful information regarding the previous Friday's lesson.

What to do if you need to re-schedule your date:

- 1) If you know a few weeks in advance please email or call the workers in your class to see if anyone can replace/switch with you for that date. **(If you are a lead teacher make sure you have a lead teacher replacing you)*
- 2) If you need a replacement within the week please take the time to **call** the workers in your class rotation to see if anyone can replace/switch with you.
- 3) If you have emailed and called workers and still no one is able to replace you on your scheduled date please call the CM Director as soon as possible.
- 4) Please let the Director know when you have switched dates so that the schedule on Planning Center can be corrected. Thank you!!

Start Time: 9:30AM

Please do all you can to be in your scheduled class at 9:30 am.

Why is it helpful for you to be in your class at 9:30am?

1. This helps us know that your class is ready for students to arrive.
2. This helps us be able to inform you of any needs or changes before church starts.
3. Parents and Children will be warmly welcomed by happy teachers and not by a frazzled CM Director.
4. This gives you time to prepare your heart for the morning.
5. This gives you time to organize and get the class ready.
6. This gives you time to pray for the kids that will be entering your classroom.

Check-In Procedure

Parents will check-in their children at the Grace Kids table. The child will receive their name tag which goes on their back, and the parent will receive a matching tag to use when picking up their child at the end of the service. Children with allergies will have a special sticker placed on their tag in order to alert volunteers. Both tags will have a matching number so that the tags can be compared at pick-up. The children will then enter their classroom, and the parents will proceed to the meeting room for service. For the safety of each child, they cannot enter their class without a printed tag, which confirms that the parent has handed their child over to our care.

Check-In will be open from 9:45-10:15. We close the Check-In at 10:15, because late arrivals into the Children's Ministry rooms create significant disruptions to the children already in class, and to the lessons that are in progress. If a parent brings a child without a tag into class, tell them you are sorry, but for their child's safety you cannot receive their child today without having them officially checked-in to the program. Direct them to the Check-In table in the hall for a full explanation of our policy. You can tell them you look

forward to having them in class next week.

Check-Out Procedure

Parents must have a the matching tag in order to pick up their child. Children are only permitted to leave their classroom when a parent/guardian presents the matching tag to the classroom volunteers. If an individual cannot present the tag to claim the child, the Director must give permission before the child can be released. The lead teacher or a classroom assistant should match each child's name tag to the appropriate parent tag. Once the tags are matched, the tags can be disposed of.

Special Needs Children

Every child is welcome in the CM at Grace Church. We desire that each child feel loved and accepted by all. Every child needs to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and His love for them. We are very happy to come alongside families with children with special needs, to assist and encourage as much as we are able with our volunteers and resources. We want to receive input and suggestions from parents as to the best ways to interact with their child, in order to provide them with a successful experience.

Parent Alert

If a parent needs to be contacted during a service, the lead teacher or a classroom assistant must send a message with the child's code to the CM Leader so it can be shown on the screen in the meeting room and the appropriate parent can respond.

Feeding Children

0-4 Class: Parents may supply bottles and ask you to feed their children. If you feed a child, please make sure that you feed him/her well; pay attention to air bubbles!

Make sure that bottles and cups are labeled with the child's name and the beverage inside. This is especially important for children who have allergies to milk, certain fruits, etc. Extra labels can be printed at the Check-In table, or masking tape may be used.

5-11 class: Snacks will be provided.

Allergy Alert: We will ask parents of children with food allergies to supply snacks for their children. They can be brought and labeled and kept in the snack box if the parents choose so. Volunteers will be made aware of children with food allergies, and it will be noted on their name tag with the special sticker.

Clean Up

It is important for us to take care of our space, and we want to teach our children to be good stewards of the resources we've been given. We want them to respect the building and the furniture and equipment. You may ask the children to help clean up. Please sanitize any

mouthed toys, wiping down tables, and packing up toys and any supplies that were used into the appropriate bins.

Safety Policies

To ensure the safety of our children and to protect our volunteers and church community from false accusations, the following policies must be implemented.

Diaper Changing

1. Red Class 0-2 years
 - a. Diapers/nappies are to be changed by a female adult volunteer, age 18 and over, in a public area where other volunteers are present.
 - b. Please put on a new pair of disposable gloves
 - c. Use the child's personal supplies
 - d. CM changing mat should be disinfected/cleaned following each use.
 - e. Diapers must be immediately disposed of in a plastic shopping bag, tied tightly, and thrown in the garbage can.
 - f. Volunteers must wash hands with hand sanitizer after each diaper change.

2. Orange Class 3-4 years

If a child wears diapers in the Orange Class (3-4 years), and their parent has left a diaper bag, see above/ or call for parent to come and change the diaper.

Bathroom Assistance

Only female volunteers may escort children to the restroom. Volunteers should not go inside the bathroom stall with a child unless the child is in obvious need. If the child needs assistance, only female volunteers may assist as the child requests. Remember: it is always okay to ask the child's parent for assistance. We take the security of each child very seriously!

Children over the age of 5 should not need routine bathroom assistance.

Appropriate Conduct

We are passionately committed to the safety of the children of Grace Church. For this reason it is crucial that all of our workers have appropriate conduct.

Touch is a powerful and important part of working with children. It can communicate warmth and care, and can enhance trust and safety when used with common sense and concern. We need to be sensitive and respect the boundaries of each child.

Appropriate touch in our CM is:

- Non-demanding, gentle and kind
- Shoulders, hands, arms, back, head
- A young child sitting on your lap in a lighted room with other adults present
- For infants: holding, patting, hugging, rocking
- For toddlers: hugging and holding
- For 5 years and up: hand shaking, patting arms/shoulders, quick side-to-side hug

Inappropriate touch in our CM is:

- Kissing a child
- Demanding Hugs
- Upper legs, bottom, chest, genital area
- Grabbing a child by any joint
- Spinning a child by his/her limbs
- Tossing a child in any way

Our purpose is to provide a safe environment where children can be loved, learn about Jesus, and where our volunteers are knowledgeable, appropriate, and protected.

If you have any further questions please contact the CM Director.

Incident Reports

In the event of a significant injury, or extremely inappropriate behavior (beyond a Behavior Slip, see below), the lead teacher must fill out an Incident Report. If you question whether or not an incident report should be filled out, ask: if your own child were involved, would you want to know?

For example, you may not want to know about each occasion where your child interrupted the lesson, but you would want to know if your child was engaged in repeated inappropriate behavior. And not every fall needs to be reported, but if an injury causes a bump or bruise the parent would want to know.

Some examples of situations in which incident reports should be filed include:

- A child falls and develops a bruise (on the forehead, knee, back, etc.)
- A child bites another child
- A child does something that puts him/herself or another child in danger
- A child makes a comment to another child or volunteer that is harmful to the classroom environment
- A child repeatedly disobeys to the point that significant time and energy are taken away from other children in the classroom.

After the class, you will want to have the parent join you inside the classroom so you can go over the incident report with them. If it's a physical injury, explain it to them, and assure them that we will do all we can to not have this happen again.

If it's a behavioral issue, do all you can to be humble, kind, and encouraging to the parent; help them feel that we are on the same team with them. We do not want them to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Our desire is to come alongside the families of Grace Church so our children are thriving. Let them know what occurred, and that we want to do all we can to not have this happen again.

In the event of an injury or sickness needing more than simple first aid, or requiring a doctor:

- Contact the CM Director immediately. Give the details of the incident and assist with meeting any needs.
- Alert the child's parent(s) immediately.

In the event of a broken bone, convulsion, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury:

- Stay calm. Speak calmly, reassuring the child.
- One volunteer must stay with the injured child at all times.
- DO NOT MOVE THE INJURED CHILD.
- After the CM Director is contacted, they will call 999 and alert parents on the child's condition, procedure suggested by medical personnel and determine their preference for hospital and doctor.
- The Room Teacher will be responsible for filling out the Incident Form. Be sure to include all specifics of the accident.
(See the end of the handbook for report forms.)

Illness Procedure

If a child is known to have an infectious or contagious illness, parents should not bring their child into the CM. Parents are also requested to notify the Room Teacher of any allergies or medical condition pertinent to their children that could require special care.

Children who have had the following conditions within the last 24 hours should not be brought into the CM rooms:

- Any Fever within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe cough, sore throat, flu, or common cold
- Green/yellow nasal discharge (Clear nasal discharge usually indicates an allergy or teething).
- Body or head lice, any skin infections
- Any symptoms of infectious childhood diseases:
 - Impetigo
 - Active Chickenpox

- Measles
- Mumps
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Croup

Medication

CM volunteers should not dispense medication to any child. This should be handled by the parents/guardians.

Emergency Evacuation

- Remain calm.
- Lead the children in a single-file line out through the door and out of the main exit.
- Check out each child to parents as you would in the classroom.

Behavior Guidelines and Procedures

It is our hope that a few general guidelines will help prevent behavioral issues, but situations may arise, and we want to help you handle them well by being prepared with Biblical understanding and confidence.

The guidelines that govern all Grace Kids activities are:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)

One way we show love for God and for others is by being RESPECTFUL. As the children grow in their love for Jesus, we pray that the motivation for showing respect will come from a heart filled with, and motivated by, the Holy Spirit.

Simply put, our classroom guidelines are:

1. RESPECT your teacher
2. RESPECT each other
3. RESPECT your surroundings.

Clearly communicating these concepts with children expresses our expectations for the classroom as well as God's standards for living. It is crucial that Christ's love serves as the foundation for our behavioral structure and procedures.

We keep a short list of guidelines so that they can be easily remembered by the children. We are part of a heart-shaping community. We desire that all the children will come to trust Jesus and know His love for them, His death on the cross to save them from their sin, their need for repentance, His forgiveness, and the gift of the Holy Spirit that will guide them and

satisfy them so they want to obey the Lord.

Process for Correction

We operate on a Behavior Slip program. If a child is --

- Disrespectful to a teacher,
- Disrespectful to a student, or
- Disrespectful to their surroundings,

-- the teacher will lovingly and firmly remind them about respecting others, and that Jesus can help them have a change of heart. Make sure they know you are glad they are in class today, and you want them to have a great morning. You can put your hand on their shoulder to connect and show compassion. You can ask them to tell you what it was that they did that was disrespectful.

Make sure they know the specific behavior you are referring to, and ask them to stop. Remind them it is not pleasing to God and it is disrespectful to those around them. Kindly remind them that this is their one warning and if they choose to continue the inappropriate behavior, a Behavior Slip will be given, and you will need to talk with their parent after class to help the child be respectful in the future.

If the student continues to choose to be disrespectful, and a behavior slip is necessary, you might say something like, (with a calm, peaceful voice and face), “Chris, I am sorry you have chosen to continue the disrespectful behavior. We will need to fill-out a behavior slip and talk to your parents today.” Then, move right back into your lesson/activity with a smile on your face for the class, and confidence in your heart that you are helping this child grow in respectful behavior. This is a discipleship moment and you are teaching the children about respecting others and pleasing God.

You, or an assistant, will need to fill out a Behavior Slip, and ask the parent to come in after class. When asking the parent to come in, you might say: “Would you please come in for a moment? I would like to talk with you before you go. We had an issue today and we want to share it with you in order to help Chris grow in respecting others”. Ask the child to share with his/her parent why he/she received the behavior slip. If more explanation is needed, be sure to speak gently and respectfully regarding the inappropriate behavior of the child.

You can encourage the child that you will pray for them during the week to understand that Jesus can help them be respectful. (If you feel comfortable you can pray for the child right then, that they would understand that God loves them, that Jesus forgives them, and that He will help them to be more respectful in the future.) Tell the child that you are looking forward to seeing them next week. Thank the parent for coming in and suggest that they might pray about this with their child during the week, and also suggest they talk about it right before church next week. Smiles, hugs, blessing.

Inconsolable Children

Workers should make every effort to engage unhappy children by encouraging them to play, or by rocking them. Sitting on the floor with the children is very effective and calming. If a child is inconsolable (10 minutes of nonstop crying, or LESS if the child is considerably worked up), the parents are to be notified immediately. This policy will help fortify the trust between our parents and our nursery staff. If the smaller children show some separation anxiety (example: crying when their parents drop them off), it is best that the parent does not linger. Let the parent know that we will comfort the child and if the child does not settle, we will come to get them. It is best for the parent to bring the child to the door/gate, tell the child that they love them, that they will be safe, and that mom/dad will return in just a little bit, and then leave the child with the volunteer – *even if* the child is still crying and does not want to separate. Most of the time, the child will calm down within a few minutes and begin to interact/play with the others.

Grace Kids Incident Report

Dear Parent,

While at church today

required attention for

Where did the incident happen?

How did the incident happen?

Treatment given: _____

Date _____ Time _____

Attended

by _____

Teacher's

Signature _____

Parent's

Signature _____

Please make two copies. One for parent, one for CM.
Please make 3 copies if two children are involved.

Grace Kids Behavior Slip

Child's Name _____

Date _____

A kind warning was specifically given to your child, but they continued to choose to be disrespectful.

Description of inappropriate behavior _____

