

LEADER HANDBOOK



2025 & 2026



WORSHIP
CONNECT & SERVE

KID LIFE & STUDENT LIFE



FAITHBRIDGE
Encounter God. Live Transformed.

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Mission Statement

To promote lifelong faith by partnering with parents and the larger church while creating space for children and youth to experience God.

Ministry Programs Overview

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
Newborns	Newborn Ministry	Call to schedule
0-36 months	Nursery	Sunday mornings
3-5 years	Preschool	Sunday mornings
K-5th grade	SHINE	Sunday mornings (Oct-Dec)
K-5th grade	SHOUT	Sunday mornings
4K-5th grade	Bible Blast	Wednesday evenings (School Year)
6th-12th grade	Student Life Small Groups	Sunday mornings
6th-12th grade	Student Life	Wednesday evenings

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Vision and Expectations

Vision for Leaders: We envision leaders who...

- Feel like they have an ownership role in the ministry; leaders who are ALL IN.
- Develop lasting relationships in order to CONNECT with kids/students and each other.
- SERVE in the right positions based on their gifts and talents so that we can achieve excellence in our mission.
- Feel as though they have been appropriately 'equipped and mobilized for ministry.'
- Are willing and able to 'equip and mobilize future leaders for ministry.'
- Make it a priority to WORSHIP, CONNECT, and SERVE on a regular basis.

We expect you to...

PURSUE your own spiritual growth through prayer, the study of God's Word, regular worship attendance and fellowship with other believers.

PRAY for yourself as a leader in Family Life, the kids/students you work with, the Senior Pastor and staff, and seek God's guidance in ministry.

PREPARE to lead. Pray, know your lesson materials well, gather supplies, arrive for huddle 20 minutes early, be creative, and expect God to use you!

Kids'/Students' needs come first. Our ministry is to serve them. Socializing with other leaders should be saved for other times.

Read and be familiar with the contents of this handbook.

Make every effort to secure your own substitute when needed.

Communication is vital! We'd like you to respect the 48 hour rule— we commit to responding to you within 48 hours, and we'd like you to do the same.

ROOM STEWARDSHIP

Kid and Student Life are collectively given the most designated space at church. Our leadership views children and youth space needs as a high priority. However, good use of the church means using rooms for multiple purposes. We share rooms with other ministries of the church.

Therefore, it's very important that we practice excellence in maintaining the cleanliness and tidiness of these rooms.

Please help us achieve responsible stewardship of our rooms in the following ways:

Unless instructed otherwise, return rooms to the way you found them.

1. Return toys, supplies, etc. to designated storage areas/bins/cupboards.
2. Spray and wipe down table tops and countertops.
3. Vacuum or sweep floors
4. Stack chairs on tables or in a stack against the wall.
5. Place teaching materials on carts and in backpacks. Place backpacks in Kid Life closet and carts in classroom closets.
6. Gather and tie full or stinky garbage bags and bring them to designated area. Then, replace the liner.
7. Scan the room before leaving. Ask yourself: "If I were the next person to use this room, is this how I would want to find it?"

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE!

Procedures during Programs

Check-In

Kid Life (Birth-5th Grade) Parents

- Are required to check-in their children at the check-in station when they arrive, providing the child with a nametag and parent tag.
- Must accompany their children (birth-preschool) to their classroom, making sure the teacher records their name on the attendance sheet. Children K-5th grade can proceed to their room without a parent.
- Must pick up their children at their classroom at the end of class and turn parent tag in.
- Must remain outside of all classrooms.

Student Life (6th-12th Grade)

- All students are required to check in before joining programming.

All Leaders

- Ensure that every kid/student has a nametag (depending on age) upon arrival.
- Gather needed information for any newcomers if it has not happened.
- Record attendance on clipboard in case of emergency.

Behavior Policy—3 Strikes, You're Out

Rules imposed in programs for kids and students (Birth-High School) which do not include abuse of any kind, are as follows:

Make eye contact—Strike 1

- Leader acknowledges, with eye contact, the kid or student's behavior.

Redirect—Strike 2

- The kid/student will be told that their behavior is not acceptable and their attention will be redirected.

Remove the child from participation—Strike 3

- An adult will take the kid/student to the side of the room and instruct him/her to stay there until invited to return. The kid/student will be invited to participate again after an age appropriate amount of time.

Remove from the room—You're out

- Upon a kid/student's 3rd behavioral offense, the leader removes the child from the room, taking him/her to appropriate Kid/Student Life staff member. Later, the parents will be notified.

Note: Parents are ultimately responsible for the behavior of their child. It is important that our leaders reinforce the parents' natural power in this role. Most of the time, parents appreciate being informed and want to follow through.

Once a child/student has been removed from the room, it is at the discretion of the Kid/Student Life staff to determine when the child/student will be welcomed back into programming and what steps must be taken to make this possible.

Contacting Parents

In the event that a parent must be contacted during a ministry program:

1. Use the paging system if contacting a Nursery parent. Inform the Nursery Attendant on duty in the Infant Nursery.
2. If contacting a preschool - high school parent, tell the appropriate Family Life staff member. If necessary, ask an usher to help locate a parent in the sanctuary.

Emergency Procedures

First Aid

First Aid Kits are located in each room. Please acquaint yourself with the location of each. These kits contain basic first aid items such as band aides, gloves, and disposable cold packs.

In the event of injury, use good judgment in determining the following:

- Decide if you need to call 911. Contact the parents immediately.
- If the injury is very minor, communicate all details to the parent at the end of the program.
- Administer the best care to the child that you are able.
- Inform the appropriate Family Life Staff immediately. They will assist you in filling out an injury report.

Fire Alarm

In the case of a fire emergency, kids/students should not be released to their parents. If parents come to the classroom, they should be asked to stay with the class so a full count can be taken once all are in the meeting spot.

Kid/Student Life teaching staff will:

- Lead all kids/students out designated exit, with one adult at the front and one at the back. Non-walkers should be placed in the reinforced crib and rolled to the exit.
- Proceed to meeting spots and recount kids/students. Report 'all clear' to appropriate staff person: hold up green sign to show all kids accounted for, red sign to show kids are missing.

- Once the 'all clear' has been given, kids/students may be released to their parents. Record name of adult who picks up each kid/student. Pick-up is allowed in meeting spots ONLY!

Note: Fire doors will automatically close between the church lobby/sanctuary/YCC and the rest of the church (Gathering Place, Kitchen, Chapel, Offices, etc) when the fire alarm sounds

Meeting Spots: Playground/garage or Front Lawn

Tornado

Family Life staff will inform teachers of inclement weather

- Kids/students should not be released to their parents. If parents come to the classroom, ask them to stay with the class so a full count can be made at the safe area.
- Proceed to lower level interior hallways, have kids/students sit on the floor, recount.
- Wait for further direction from Family Life staff.
- Record name of parent who picks up kid/student.

Intruder

At the first sign of an intruder, it is important to stay calm and follow these guidelines:

- Close and lock the door. Use any object in the room to barricade the door.
- Turn off the lights.
- Move everyone to a corner/wall which is least visible to the door. If there is a closet in the room, move everyone there.
- Instruct everyone to stay quiet.
- Do not open the door for any reason, including parents looking for their kid/student.
- Do not leave your classroom unless you have received an 'all clear' from a staff member, or you can see police identification.

Inclement Weather

SUNDAYS:

- Our church does not close on Sundays in inclement weather. Rarely are weather conditions extreme enough for this. If in doubt, check the church website or Facebook.

WEDNESDAYS:

- Wednesday night programs are canceled in the event that Racine Unified School District (RUSD) has canceled school that same day.
- If RUSD has canceled after school activities only, we may still remain open. It is advised to call the church office, or check Facebook pages, or check the church website.

Ministry in a Broken Age—Responding to Child Abuse

As the church embraces the mission statement to “Bring people into a personal and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ and prepare and equip them for ministry”, it is vital to balance the need for outreach to hurting families with protecting children who are unable to protect themselves. We believe the church body, empowered by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, is a source of healing for distressed families, but healing often begins when problems and issues are clearly identified and confronted.

State law and denominational policy REQUIRE reporting child abuse if we SUSPECT abuse. Wisconsin clergy are “Mandated Reporters” of suspected abuse. As soon as abuse is SUSPECTED, we are obligated to report it.

As children and youth ministry volunteers, you are the people who are most likely to hear about and confront child abuse, so it is important to know how to respond to abuse, and how the church will respond.

What to do if you suspect abuse

1. When to report suspected abuse:

You should bring it to our attention whenever you believe that a person who is caring for the child, who lives with the child, or who works with or around children has caused injury or harm or put the child at risk of physical injury as defined in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Some examples include:

- If you see someone hitting a child with an object.
- If you see marks on a child's body that do not appear to have been caused by accident.
- If a child tells you that he or she has been harmed by someone.
- If a child appears to be undernourished, is dressed inappropriately for the weather, or is young and has been left alone.

We do not need to report if the child is engaging in stories, drawing violent pictures, having nightmares, etc. There needs to be fairly specific objective evidence of abuse or neglect.

2. Needed information to make a report of abuse:

Let the Kid/Student Life Staff know about your concerns. They will work with you to fill out the attached form and determine:

- The child's name, address and age.
- The nature of the suspected abuse or neglect, including when and where it occurred.
- The names of suspected perpetrators and their relationship to the child (parent, teacher, etc.).
- Any other information you think may help.

Remember, we do not need to act as investigators, so it is vital to not be too intrusive and raise concern within the family. Do not inform the family that you suspect abuse or intend to tell someone. People who report alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith cannot be held liable for damages under criminal or civil law. In addition, their names are not given to the person they name as the abuser or to anyone else unless

ordered by a hearing officer or judge. Members of the general public may make reports without giving their names.

3. The church's response to abuse:

You are free to report suspected abuse or neglect to Human Services directly. Many people find this difficult to do, so you are free to share your concerns about abuse or neglect with the Kid/Student Life staff, and they will report it as a representative of our church. This will consist of the following steps:

- Kid/Student Life Staff will inform Senior Pastor
- Kid/Student Life Staff will gather relevant information and report it to Human Services
- Kid/Student Life Staff will notify you that action has been taken-after this; you will receive no additional information unless human services takes action and needs to contact you.
- Resources are available within and outside of the church to help you cope with the emotions which often develop in dealing with a situation like this
- Pray for the child, the family and God's power to heal in this situation

4. Maintain Confidentiality

Confidentiality is vital in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. It is important to recognize that many suspected cases of neglect or abuse will not be pursued by Human Services. Since we believe in the redemptive and transforming power of God, we desire to be able to minister to families in need. If a family were to be accused of abuse or neglect unjustly, or the family became the source of gossip, it is extremely likely they will leave the church which eliminates our ability to minister to them and their children. How would you feel if you were the one falsely accused, even if it were done in good faith?

FAITHBRIDGE: SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

Revised August 2024

Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to help provide a caring and secure environment for children, youth, and their families in all phases of church life, and to protect the church from legal risk and liability exposure.

Biblical Foundation. This church seeks to express God's love of children and provide for their personal wholeness. This caring community seeks to provide a safe church environment, prevent any form of abuse or harm to the children and youth in our care, and to be a ministry to families where abuse may occur, providing nurture and support in all circumstances. The Bible is foundational to our understanding upon which all policies, procedures, and ministries must stand.

"And they were bringing children to him, that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But When Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them." Mark 10:13-16

By example, Jesus teaches us that children are to be welcomed, cared for, and protected. He demonstrated this through blessing and acceptance. Our goal in response is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place

where children may grow, a place where caregivers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and unpaid staff) minister appropriately to their needs.

Covenant Statement. Any individual working with children or youth will read and sign this Child Protection Policy statement. Signing this statement indicates that the individual has read, understood, and agreed to abide by this policy.

Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse. In an effort to create the safest possible environment, several child protection measures will be utilized. These measures include (a) screening of paid and unpaid staff for past child abuse convictions, (b) training of paid and unpaid staff on child protection and child abuse issues, (c) use of the two-adult rule, (d) open classrooms, and (e) standards for appropriate behavior management.

A) Screening

The following screening requirements apply to paid and unpaid staff responsible for supervising children or youth programs.

1. Background Information. All persons applying for paid and unpaid staff positions will complete an application for their particular ministry—whether children or youth.
2. Records Checks. The following records checks will be conducted on all paid and unpaid staff of children and youth programs—Protect My Ministry LLC: National Combo Search.

B) Training

All paid and unpaid staff are required to attend a volunteer education training session.

C) Two Leader Rule

The church will make every effort to recruit a sufficient number of unpaid staff so that two unrelated adults will be present during each scheduled child and youth activity. While in a classroom we will make every effort to have at least one adult and one youth volunteer, five years older than the assigned class age. In the event that two are not present in a room, an assigned monitor will make random, unannounced visits to the rooms in which those activities are taking place. No single adult leader should be in a closed room/space 1:1 with a child of any age.

D) Open Classrooms

Classrooms, child care rooms, and all other child and youth activity areas may be visited without prior notice by church staff, the parents of children and youth involved in those activities, and other unpaid staff working during child and youth activities. Paid and unpaid staff working during child and youth activities will conduct intermittent observations of all classrooms, child care rooms, and other meeting areas throughout the church facility to ensure the safety of all children and youth.

E) Bathroom Policy

Diapers-

Paid staff or lead volunteers will be assigned to change diapers.

Bathroom-

In the event that a child needs to use the restroom during programming one adult leader can walk the child to the restroom and wait in the common area. If the classroom has an attached bathroom, one leader may help a child into the bathroom while leaving the top half of the door open.

F) Behavior Management

All paid and unpaid staff working with children and youth will use the behavior management guidelines (outlined in the leader handbook).

Reporting Accidents. Whenever a child or youth is involved in an accident during a church-sponsored activity, the adult who witnessed the accident will complete a report using the Accident Report (shown in the leader handbook). After completion, the report will be given to the adult in charge of the activity, who will provide a copy to the appropriate Family Life staff member to be placed in the official church files. In the case of multiple witnesses, the person with primary responsibility for supervising the activity will complete the report and a copy will be given to the church office for filing.

Reporting Child Abuse. The church will treat all allegations of abuse seriously. All action will be taken within 24 hours after receiving the allegation. Under no circumstances will the pastor or any other church staff member or church official investigate the allegation or confront the accused. In providing care or ministry to either the victim, the accused, or the families of either party, under no circumstances will the pastor or other church official be drawn into a discussion as to the truth or falseness of the allegation. The Senior Pastor, with the advice of legal counsel, will be the designated contact person for all media contact. Under no circumstances will any other member of the pastoral staff or other senior church official—except in the absence of the Senior Pastor—or any other member of the church discuss any allegation with any media representatives. If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person will be temporarily relieved of his/her duties until a complete investigation is concluded.

Well Child Policy

It's our desire to see that the only thing kids and students "catch" here is the joy of Christ!

If a child has one or more of the following symptoms, we ask that they not attend Kid Life nurseries or programs:

- Fever 100 or above within the previous 72 hours without the aid of medications.
- Cold or flu symptoms including: runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat or cough
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infections such as boils, ringworm, impetigo, pink eye or other eye infection
- Any symptoms of disease such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough, COVID-19

If any of these symptoms are noticed, a parent will be contacted and the child will be sent home.

Note: If a kid/student is on antibiotics, he/she should be on the medicine for at least 24 hours before coming to nurseries or programs.

Thank you for considering the health of all our Kids and Students!