

“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise...” Psalm 8:2a

**First Free Methodist Church**  
1725 W. Courtland  
Spokane, WA 99205  
**Children’s Ministry Handbook**  
Policies and Procedures for  
Workers



## **Introduction**

### **Mission, Goal, Strategy**

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to allow FFM families with young children time to refresh their spirits and strengthen their faith through worship and Bible study, while knowing that their nursery and elementary aged children are in a safe and caring environment.

#### **Goal**

It is our goal to share the love of Jesus Christ through our smiles, voice, and attention to every child.

#### **Strategy**

We not only provide safe, and loving childcare, but we aim to start building the foundation of faith through song, story, craft projects and games.

The Leadership is comprised of the Discipleship Board Member, Children’s Ministry Director, Team Leaders, and team workers—regular church attendees who have undergone the volunteer background process.

## **Children’s Ministry Director**

### **Job Description**

**Purpose:** To lead, enhance and nurture the Children’s ministry through prayer, communication, training, organization and interaction; and oversee Team Leaders in nursery and Children’s Church, as well as oversee annual events (VBS, etc).

#### **Responsibilities:**

##### Prayer-

- Pray for God’s patience, guidance and love.
- Pray for God’s wisdom when enforcing policy or addressing volunteer challenges.

##### Communication-

- Advise workers of responsibilities.
- Inform team leaders of any necessary information.
- Meet quarterly (or as needed) with Team Leaders.
- Submit announcements to the bulletin.
- Speak in worship services to recruit or inform.
- Pass along any questions, concerns, or administrative needs to the Discipleship Pillar and/or pastors.

##### Training-

- Recruit and train effective Team Leaders.
- Train new Nursery Workers and facilitate screening process.

##### Organization-

- Schedule classrooms throughout the year.
- Coordinate bi-annual cleaning days.
- Facilitate construction when necessary.
- Manage Children’s ministry budget and purchase supplies.
- Develop new strategies to meet needs of families with children Birth-10 yrs. old.

##### Interaction-

- Encourage and praise Team Leaders as opportunities arise throughout the week and on Sunday.
- **Pray for this ministry and its volunteers.**

#### **Other Requirements:**

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior - maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

# Director of Nursery

## Job Description

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 6-8 hours (1 year commitment)

**Purpose:** To give support and assistance to the Coordinator in the following areas: Staffing, Training, Organization, Oversight, and Communication in the area of nursery for all applicable church events.

### Responsibilities:

#### Staffing-

- Stay current with staffing needs.
- Ensure that staffing needs are met each week for worship services as well as other events that require nursery.
- Help process the summer & school year schedules.

#### Training-

- Assist in the research, development, and implementation of staff training.

#### Organization-

- Be sure that the rooms are supplied with the appropriate needs of that classroom.
- Be aware of prayer concerns for workers and children.
- Have material stocked for visiting or new parents. (registration forms, policies, temp nametags)

#### Oversight-

- Sunday observation and encouragement to room leaders and workers.
- Classroom operation enhancement and development.

#### Communication-

- Weekly contact w/ volunteers and coordinator (either in person, phone, or by email).
- **Bring the children, their families and this ministry to the Lord in prayer.**

### Other Requirements:

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior- maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend/facilitate training sessions.
- Must be 18 years or older.
- Must be available during Sunday morning nursery shifts.

# Nursery Room Leader

## Job Description

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 1-2 hours (Once every four weeks, plus one fifth week rotation)

**Purpose:** To check children in and out of classroom, assuring parents of a safe and loving environment for their children, and engaging children in a loving and Biblical way.

### Responsibilities:

#### Preparation-

- Pray for God’s wisdom, patience and love.
- Arrive **20 minutes** before your time to serve.
- Ensure that all workers check in (Contact Team Leader if lacking workers).
- Make sure room and toys are clean and you’re ready to receive children.

#### Implementation-

- Greet/welcome children and parents.
- Sign children in (please keep accurate accounts) and make sure that parents are receiving ID Badges.
- Maintain classroom safety.
- Clean up and prepare children for pick-up.
- Sign out children (Collect and maintain nametags).
- Implement appropriate discipline as necessary.
- Fill out incident reports if necessary and make sure parents and Team Leader are aware of any incidents.

#### Interaction-

- Encourage and praise children as opportunities arise.
- Encourage fellow workers.

#### Communication-

- Advise workers of responsibilities.
- Inform children and parents of any necessary information.
- Pass along any questions, concerns, or administrative needs to the Team Leader.

### Other Requirements:

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior - maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend training sessions.
- Must be 18 years or older.

## **Team Leader of Children’s Church**

### **Job Description**

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 6-8 hours (1 year commitment)

**Purpose:** To give support and assistance to the Coordinator in the following areas: Staffing, Training, Organization, Oversight, and Communication in the area of Children’s Church.

#### **Responsibilities:**

##### Staffing-

- Stay current with staffing needs for Children’s Church for ages K – 3rd grade.
- Ensure that staffing needs are met each week.
- Help process the summer & school year schedules.

##### Training-

- Assist in the research, development, and implementation of staff training.

##### Organization-

- Be sure that the rooms are supplied with the appropriate needs of that classroom.
- Be aware of prayer concerns for workers and children.
- Have material copied and given to appropriate workers at least 2 weeks in advance of their scheduled teaching.

##### Oversight-

- Sunday observation and encouragement to Children’s Church teachers and helpers.
- Classroom operation enhancement and development.

##### Communication-

- Weekly contact w/ volunteers and coordinator (either in person, phone, or by email).
- **Bring the children, their families and this ministry to the Lord in prayer.**

#### **Other Requirements:**

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior- maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend/facilitate training sessions.
- Must be 18 years or older.
- Must be available during Sunday morning Children’s Church Shifts.

# **Children’s Church Teacher (LEAD)**

## **Job Description**

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 1-2 hours on rotating basis

**Purpose:** To lead children in age appropriate discussions, crafts, and snacks of pre-set Children’s church curriculum, in order to demonstrate God’s love for them, while encouraging them to make a faith commitment to Christ.

### **Responsibilities:**

Preparation-

#### **PLEASE ARRIVE 20 MINUTES EARLY**

- Pray for God’s wisdom, patience and love.
- Have your classroom set up prior to children arriving.
- **Ensure that you’ve gone through the curriculum and come prepared to teach. Not the day of. (i.e. have all materials ready).**

Implementation-

- Maintain classroom safety.
- Clean up
- Collect and maintain children’s nametags.
- Implement appropriate discipline as necessary.
- Fill out incident reports if necessary and make sure parents and Director are aware of any incidents.

Interaction-

- Encourage and praise children as opportunities arise.
- Encourage fellow workers.

Communication-

- Advise helpers of responsibilities and communicate anything they need to do before class begins.
- Inform children and parents of any necessary information.
- Pass along any questions, concerns, or administrative needs to the Director.

### **Other Requirements:**

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior - maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend training sessions.
- Must be 18 years or older.

# Nursery Worker

## Job Description

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 1-2 hours (Once every four weeks, plus one fifth week rotation)

**Purpose:** To give support and assistance to the Room Leader in providing a safe, loving and orderly classroom environment for the children.

### Responsibilities:

Preparation-

- Pray for God's wisdom, patience and love.
- Arrive **15 minutes** before your scheduled service.
- Be available for help if needed.

Implementation-

- Wear nursery worker nametag.
- The leader will be busy with check in procedures. Be ready to receive children and begin engaging in appropriate play and warmly welcome them.
- Label children's belongings.
- Assist with providing a safe and orderly environment for the children as they prepare for and leave the classroom.
- Assist with the collecting and maintaining of nametags.

Interaction-

- Encourage and praise children as opportunities arise.
- Be actively involved with the children- rocking, playing and talking to them.
- Remember that we are showing the love of Jesus through our smiles, voice, touch, and attention to every child.
- Encourage fellow workers.

Communication-

- Advise Team Leader of any behavioral issues or safety concerns, or any general questions.

### Other Requirements:

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior- maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend training sessions when offered.
- Must be 12 years or older.

# Children’s Church Worker

## Job Description

**Monthly Time Commitment:** 1-2 hours on a rotating basis

**Purpose:** To give support and assistance to the Lead Teacher in providing a safe, loving and orderly classroom environment for the children.

### **Responsibilities:**

Preparation-

- Pray for God’s wisdom, patience and love.
- Check-in with lead teacher to see what you need to prep.
- **Arrive 15 Minutes early.**

Implementation-

- Wear worker nametag.
- Be ready to receive children as they’re dismissed from worship and help engage them in CC activities.
- Assist with providing a safe and orderly environment for the children as they prepare for and leave the classroom.
- Assist with the collecting and maintaining of materials.

Interaction-

- Encourage and praise children as opportunities arise.
- Be involved with the children-playing and talking to them.
- Remember that we are showing the love of Jesus through our smiles, voice, touch, and attention to every child.
- Encourage fellow workers.

Communication-

- Advise Team Leader of any behavioral issues or safety concerns.
- Inform children and parents of any necessary information.
- Remain with your class until clean up is complete.
- Pass along any questions, concerns or administrative needs to Team Leader.
- Check with your lead teacher for next weeks plan.

### **Other Requirements:**

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior- maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Have a desire to teach Biblical truths to children and a desire for children to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Attend training sessions when offered.
- Must be 16 years or older.

## **Children’s Ministry Schedule and Substitution Procedure**

The Children’s Ministry schedules will be prepared and updated by the Director and Team Leaders. The schedule will be distributed two to three times a year.

***If you cannot work your scheduled time slot, we ask that you be responsible for finding your own substitute and let the Team Leader and Director know about the substitution...***

### ***Some advice for finding a substitute:***

- Use the current Schedules to **switch** with someone else. We do not have a lengthy sub list! Make an even switch (couples switch with couples, etc.)
- Plan ahead. It is never too early to find your replacement.
- Make sure you have a church directory- it really helps in finding phone numbers.
- We have a GREAT group of people serving in children’s ministry and most are very willing to switch time!
- If you have exhausted all possibilities to find a replacement, call your Team Leader or The Coordinator.
- Be sure to **call the Team Leader** with changes you have made so that the lists are correct.
- Make sure your replacement has gone through the screening process and has their volunteer applications and background forms in.

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## **Contacting Children’s Ministry Leadership**

We desire to support, encourage, and assist our valuable volunteers.  
Please feel free to communicate with the leadership at any time:

- Discipleship Pillar, Zac Rose: Phone: 509.714.9629
- Director, Heather Blackburn- office@ffmwired.com Phone: 953.7552
- Nursery Team Leader, Lois Winters [lwinters@comcast.net](mailto:lwinters@comcast.net); 466.4947
- Children’s Church Team Leaders
  - Joanne Hotchkiss- [hotchkissjm7@yahoo.com](mailto:hotchkissjm7@yahoo.com); 509. 280.1511
  - Susan Huffman- [Susan\\_d\\_huffman62@msn.com](mailto:Susan_d_huffman62@msn.com); 509.413.8860
  - Debbie Kreuch- [Kreuchmd@gmail.com](mailto:Kreuchmd@gmail.com); 509.326.4488
  - Jon Spotts – [spottsjon@gmail.com](mailto:spottsjon@gmail.com); 509.466.7689

## Nursery Check-in Procedures

1. All children must be signed-in each time they come to our nursery.
2. All children will be given a nametag and all parents will be given a corresponding ID Badge. This badge must be returned to the Room Leader when picking up the child. This is for the safety and security of all children.
3. Children who are new to the nursery should be asked to fill out a child registration form. This is done only once. **To request a permanent status and nametag**, please have the parent indicate that on their filled out form. Leave the registration form for the Director.
4. When a child is being released from the nursery- the nursery staff must ask for the ID Badge from the parent before releasing a child. Under **no circumstances** will a child be released with out this ID Badge.
5. **Procedure for a guest using the nursery:** *First*, ask the parent to sign-in their child and give the child a sticky nametag to wear (on their back). Find out where they will be during service. *Second*, encourage the parent to fill out a registration form (unless they are out-of-town guests and not planning to be regular attendees). *Thirdly*, be sure to explain how the check-in/check-out procedures work.

## **Healthy Child Children's Ministry Policy**

**First Free Methodist Church operates a "well child" policy and cannot accept a child with any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:**

- A fever of more than 100 degrees F within the past 24 hours.
- A persistent or heavy cough, green runny nose, sore throat (redness or white spots or if a fever accompanies it).
- Stomach aches accompanied by vomiting or diarrhea.
- A contagious rash of any type (this might be the first sign of illness, measles or chickenpox).
- Discharge in/around eyes and/or pink eye
- Questionable Rash or Open Sores

If your child is on an antibiotic, he/she must be on it for at least 24 hours before coming in to the care of our church.

We strive to make our nurseries and classrooms as healthy and safe as possible. All rooms, including toys, are cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis to help reduce the spread of germs and illness. We also use disposable gloves for diaper changes.

**The Room Leader must assess each child. If any of the above symptoms or situations is in question, please direct the parent to the posted policy.**

**If any difficulty occurs, please immediately contact your Team Leader.**

## **Nursery Ratios, Capacity, and Closing**

It is our desire to provide a safe and loving environment in our Nursery ministry. To achieve this, we have set guidelines for proper room ratios and capacities. The following guidelines must not be exceeded:

### **Proper Ratio Total Capacity**

**0-2 year olds** 1 volunteer to 3 children (1 to 2 pref. for infants)

**2-4 year olds** 1:5 / 4:13

(Note: Although the 2-4 yr. old ratio would be maintained at a 4:20 capacity, the 2-4 yr. old room is not big enough to contain more than 4 volunteers and 13 toddlers.)

### **Suggestions for maintaining ratios**

If receiving another child is going to exceed the proper ratio of the room, get the Team Leader to come and serve in the nursery, providing that the room will not exceed its total capacity.

### **Closing of the Nursery**

The nursery will be closed if it cannot be fully staffed (at least 2 adults in each room.) The decision to close may be made by the Team Leader on a Sunday when staffing is not sufficient, or in advance by the Director when closing seems necessary (i.e. cleaning, serious illness.)

## **Emergency Contact Numbers**

**Poison Control Center:**

1-800-222-1222

**Emergency Police and Fire:**

911

**Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, WA:**

**Information Center**

509-474-3131

**Deaconess Medical Center, Spokane, WA:**

**Information Center**

509-458-5800

**Non-emergency Police:**

465-2233

**In the event of an emergency, please be sure to contact:**

**1- The Parents**

**2- The Team Leader**

**3- The Director or a Pastor (or someone else in leadership)**

**\*\*Any time a child needs medical attention of any kind, major or minor, (i.e. has to go to the emergency room, or they scraped their arm and require a band-aid): 1) an Incident/Accident Report (see next page for example) needs to be filled out and filed with the Coordinator, 2) a parent notified, 3) and the Team Leader notified.**



## **“5-10 Minute Cry” Policy**

**Children’s Ministry Workers are asked to notify the parents if the child has been crying or upset for a maximum of 10 minutes.**

Due to the large number of children in the children’s ministry, and the importance of quality care for all children, it is felt that a parent cares best for an extremely upset child.

- Every effort will be made by children’s ministry volunteers to soothe and console/comfort the child (i.e. – rocking, pacifier, bottle, etc.)
- However, after no more than ten minutes, parents will be asked to come and stay with their child until they are comforted.
- Parents are welcome to take their child with them until the child is ready to reenter their room, **however the child will need to be signed out.** Upon re-entry, the child will need to be signed in again.

### **What are Some Ways to Help a Crying Child?**

One way children communicate is by crying. A baby cries when he/she is uncomfortable, hungry, in pain, or needs a diaper change. If a diaper change, bottle, pacifier, or rocking fails to comfort the baby, it may be necessary to get the child’s parent. Older children may cry because of anxiety, shyness, or they may be scared due to a past problem. Parents will appreciate knowing about this time limit if their child is crying when they leave the room. Keep in mind that crying is hard on everybody: volunteers, other children, the parents, and the crying child.

1. Volunteers should let the child cry for a few minutes as they give them comforting pats, perhaps saying, “I know, I know”.
2. Begin to distract each child with a favorite book, toy, or activity.
2. If a child begins to cry before the parents leave the area, ask the parents to go and give you the opportunity to comfort the child, reminding them that you will come and get them if necessary.

## **Diapering/ Bathroom Policy**

### **Diaper Changing:**

- If you notice a messy diaper, please follow the diaper changing procedure below:
  1. Have two adults present in the room during diaper changes.
  2. Wash your hands and put on gloves.
  3. Place clean disposable diaper on the changing surface.
  4. Place disposable paper (wax paper) over the clean diaper.
  5. Put a folded paper towel on top of the wax paper.
  6. Remove the soiled diaper and wipe child’s bottom from front to back with diaper wipes until clean. Do this in order to prevent urinary tract infections. (pay particular attention to and cleanse the skin creases).
  7. When removing the soiled diaper, fold it inward, wrapping the diaper in itself.
  8. Place the soiled diaper, wax paper, gloves, and soiled wipes in a plastic bag. Close and knot the bag and throw it in the trash after finishing the diaper change.
  9. Put the clean diaper on the child and remove child from the changing area.
  10. Disinfect the changing area.
  11. Wash your hands!! (Soap and water). If you are changing more than one child’s diaper one right after the other, you may use sanitizing gel.

### **Toddler Bathroom Policy:**

- Parents are asked to take their toddlers to the bathroom prior to entering the nursery area. Nursery staff/teachers will do their best in taking a child to the bathroom, especially during toilet training process.
- A nursery volunteer or teacher **MUST** be present in the toilet area.
- **At no time should a child be in this area alone.**
- **At no time should a volunteer be out of view of another volunteer when helping a child in the bathroom!**
- Volunteer should assist the child with washing his/her hands after toilet use, and follow up by washing their own hands.

## **Cleaning Procedures**

### Hands, Toys and Rooms

#### **When to wash hands or use sanitizing hand gel:**

- Entering the nursery area
- Before each diaper change
- After each diaper change
- After wiping noses
- Before giving out snacks

#### **Toys:**

At the end of each shift, any toys that have been put in the mouth will be sanitized by the nursery staff on duty. Surfaces and larger toys will also need to be sanitized. **Follow the checklist for cleanup in each room.** Sanitation procedures will be posted in the diapering area and should be followed by all parents who are diapering their children. Nursery volunteers will also sanitize the diapering area at the end of each shift. Any soiled linens need to be bagged up and given to the Team Leader to launder for the next week.

#### **Rooms:**

All nurseries and classrooms will be **thoroughly cleaned once in February and once in August.** All toys will be sanitized with bleach solution, fabric toys/seats will be laundered, batteries checked/changed and large play toys disinfected. To aid in keeping the rooms sanitary, all volunteers and toddler age children will be asked to **remove their shoes before entering the play area.** This policy is especially important for the infant room, where babies crawl on the floor and put their hands in their mouths.

## Classroom Discipline Policy

*"For [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but [God] disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."  
Hebrews 12: 10-11*

Part of ministering to children, is providing a safe, nurturing and **loving atmosphere** where children can "be conformed to the image of [Christ]" Romans 8:29.

To help ensure this, we have set in place a method of discipline to address behavior that is nearing or outside the set boundaries of the classroom. This type of behavior will most often fall into one of three categories: 1) forgetting/misunderstanding of rules, 2) willful/defiant disregard of rules or 3) verbal/physical aggression. In these cases, classroom leaders will use the method below to address the child's behavior. This will be done in a firm but **loving manner!** Physical punishment **is not** an option.

**\* CM Leads are responsible for the discipline in the classroom.** Workers may take part in the discipline process, such as sitting with a child, but the leader should be the one to initiate discipline.

### Suggestions

- Pray before each class that God would grant you wisdom, discernment, patience and love as you serve the children.
- Praise and encourage positive behavior.
- Try to "re-direct" potentially problematic behavior.
- When possible, give children a choice if there is one.
- Talk with parents as to things that help them with their specific child.
- Take the time to develop the relationship between you and a problematic child. Often these kids come from difficult homes and don't have consistency and structure in their lives. Taking extra time to give that one-on-one attention outside of the classroom goes a long way!

**\* Remember** there are limits to what we as volunteers may be able to do. You are in the classroom with your children for a limited time and therefore may find it difficult to affect change in children with more severe behavior problems. Do your best to enlist the help of parents in these cases and always be mindful of our example;

***"The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Psalm 145:8***

## **Discipline Guidelines**

**Purpose:** *To provide a safe and structured environment for all children.*

**Policy Statement:** A positive and safe environment will be maintained in all activities while each child is learning, being accepted, and being loved for who God made the child to be.

### **Applications:**

#### **A. Reasons for discipline**

1. Positive learning environment is being jeopardized.
2. Inappropriate conversation during teaching times.
3. Safety of a child is at risk.

#### **B. Procedures for discipline**

- **STEP ONE** - A verbal warning stating consequences for continued behavior
- **STEP TWO** – Separation from group  
The teacher should discuss the inappropriate behavior with the child. Conversation should occur outside the room in order to avoid embarrassment. The child should then return to the activity; once again being made aware the next consequence for inappropriate behavior will be a talk with family/guardian.
- **STEP THREE** – Talk with family/guardian and report incident to Ministry Director  
The teacher will discuss the child's inappropriate behavior with the child's family/guardian following the activity. Please consider having this discussion privately if at all

possible, (out of hearing distance of both the child and others.)

- **STEP FOUR** – Removal from class  
If inappropriate behavior persists, a helper or usher will have a parent come to the child's activity. The parent may stay with the child or remove the child from the activity.
- **STEP FIVE** – Discuss situation and ongoing options with Ministry Director

**RESPECT METHOD:**

RESPECT OTHERS  
RESPECT YOURSELF  
RESPECT PROPERTY

## **CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING**

### **Who Needs to Know?**

As one who works with children, you play a significant role in the enhancement of children's lives. The nature of your work centers on helping children enjoy and learn from life; at the same time, you provide them care and protection. It is, therefore, important that you be well-informed regarding child-abuse issues as you strive to provide quality service to the children under your care.

Whether the program or service is a residential or day camp, a recreational program, a club activity, day care, church children's program, or after-school supervision, people providing these and other services need to know about child abuse and about their specific responsibilities. The caring, enjoyable environment these activities and organizations afford, along with the ongoing contact with children and youth, enhances the possibility of discovering or suspecting child abuse.

### **How Do We Know?**

- Nearly five children die every day in America from abuse and neglect.
- In 2010, an estimated 1,560 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States.

### **2010 NATIONAL ABUSE STATISTICS**

- Approximately 695,000 children were victims of maltreatment (unique instances).
- 47 states reported approximately 3.4 million children received preventative services from Child Protective Services agencies.
- Children younger than one year had the highest rate of victimization of 20.6 per 1,000 children in the population of the same age.
- Of the children who experienced maltreatment or abuse, over 78% experienced neglect; more than 17% were physically abused; just under 10% were sexually abused; approximately 8% were psychologically maltreated; just over 2% were medically neglected; and approximately 10% experienced other types of maltreatment.
- Nearly 80% of reported child fatalities as a result of abuse and neglect were caused by one or more of the child victim's parents.

### **What's Important? The Children**

Some people, whose jobs bring them in contact with children, would like to ignore the problem of child abuse in the hope that it will go away. These people either do not understand their legal responsibilities or the physical and emotional harm that come to an abused child.

The foremost reason to become actively involved in both the reporting and prevention of child abuse is to protect children. We are generally ill-prepared to handle incidents of abuse, even though we are in key positions to detect it. Abuse leaves visible as well as invisible scars that follow them into adulthood. The emotional and physical pain inflicted go far beyond the abusive encounters.

Those working with children need to be advocates for their safety. Whether working with children in a recreation, camp, or child-care setting, the safety of each child is of utmost importance. By keeping first-aid kits nearby, fire extinguishers in strategic places, and emergency phone numbers readily accessible, we prepare ourselves to act in the event of an accident.

### **Why Report Abuse?**

Some people feel hesitant to report suspected abusive situations, knowing the possible trauma it may cause the affected family.

One of the best ways we can help an abusive family is to let the situation come out into the open. This not only provides protection for the abused person, but also forces the family to admit their need to get professional help for the problem. In seeking to deal with the situation ourselves, we inappropriately take on the roles of rescuer, judge, and professional therapist.

### **Our Obligation**

Whether or not you are interested in learning more about this tragic societal problem, state laws mandate that you be actively involved. Those whose jobs bring them into contact with children are obligated to be informed about child abuse and about the requirement of reporting known or suspected abuse incidents. It is not optional.

We become involved because we are required to do so, but hopefully, we become involved because we care about the children. We also work to become aware of child abuse for our own protection.

## **Indicators of Abuse**

### **Behavioral Indicators of SEXUAL Abuse**

- Reluctant to change clothes in front of others
- Exhibits unusual sexual behavior and/or knowledge beyond that which is common of his/her developmental stage
- Poor peer relationships
- Either avoids or seeks out adults
- Pseudo-mature
- Manipulative
- Self-conscious
- Has problems with authority and rules
- Exhibits eating disorders
- Self-mutilating
- Obsessively clean
- Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- Exhibits delinquent behavior such as running away from home
- Exhibits extreme compliance or defiance
- Fearful or anxious

### **Physical Indicators of SEXUAL Abuse**

- Pain and/or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in genital area
- Venereal disease
- Swollen private parts
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Torn, bloody, and/or stained underclothing
- Pain when urinating
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or penile discharge

### **Behavioral Indicators of EMOTIONAL Abuse**

- Overly eager to please
- Seeks out adult contact
- Views abuse as being warranted
- Exhibits changes in behavior
- Excessively anxious
- Depressed
- Unwilling to discuss problems
- Exhibits aggressive or bizarre behavior
- Withdrawn
- Apathetic
- Passive
- Unprovoked fits of yelling or screaming
- Exhibits inconsistent behavior at home and school
- Feels responsible for the abuser
- Runs away from home
- Attempts suicide
- Low self-esteem
- Exhibits a gradual impairment of health
- Lacks self-confidence
- Self-deprecating and negative self-image

**Physical Indicators of EMOTIONAL Abuse**

- Sleep disorder (nightmares or restlessness)
- Wets the bed
- Hyperactive
- Exhibits eating disorders
- Exhibits developmental lags (stunting of his/her physical, emotional, and/or mental growth)

**Behavioral Indicators of PHYSICAL Abuse**

- Wary of adults
- Either extremely aggressive or withdrawn
- Dependent and indiscriminate in his/her attachments
- Uncomfortable when other children cry
- Generally controls his/her own crying
- Exhibits a drastic behavior change when not with parents or caregiver
- Manipulative
- Poor self-concept
- Exhibits delinquent behavior, such as running away from home
- Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- Self-mutilating
- Frightened of parents or going home
- Over-protective or responsible for parents
- Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
- Behavior problems at school

**Physical Indicators of PHYSICAL Abuse**

- Unexplained\* bruises or welts, often clustered or in a pattern
- Unexplained\* and/or unusual burns (cigarettes, doughnut-shaped, immersion-lines, object-patterned)
- Unexplained\* bite marks
- Unexplained\* fractures or dislocations
- Unexplained\* abrasions or lacerations
- Wets the bed

\*or the explanation is inconsistent or improbable

**Behavioral Indicators of NEGLECT**

- Truant or tardy to school often or arrives early and stays late
- Begs or steals food
- Attempts suicide
- Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
- Extremely dependent or detached
- Engages in delinquent behavior, such as prostitution or stealing
- Appears to be exhausted
- States frequent or continual absence of parent or guardian

**Physical Indicators of NEGLECT**

- Frequently is dirty, unwashed, hungry, or inappropriately dressed
- Engages in dangerous activities (possibly because he/she generally is unsupervised)
- Tired and listless
- Unattended physical problems
- May appear to be overworked and/or exploited

## Understanding Abuse & Who Must Report

### Understanding Abuse

**Prevalence** - There are more than two million cases of serious child abuse reported every year in the United States. One of every three to four females and one of every seven males have reported being sexually molested.

**Demographics** - There is no pattern to abuse. Child abuse occurs in all socioeconomic, ethnic, and age groups, and in all geographic areas.

**Historical Perspective** - The maltreatment of children has occurred as far back as recorded history. Over the centuries, children have been killed, abandoned, neglected, and cruelly chastised. It has not been until recent years that organizations have been formed to come to the aid of abused children.

**Who Abuses?** Generally, the abuser is someone the child knows—a relative, baby-sitter, family member, family friend, teacher, coach, institutional or agency employee.

### **What Contributes to Abusive Situations and Relationships?**

- **Historical or background:** The abuser was also abused, family violence, and/or neglect.
- **Situational factors:** The likelihood of abuse increases as the following are present: extreme parental stress, social isolation, delay in parent-infant bonding, resentment of a specific child, poor housing, marital problems, financial problems and /or unemployment, and unexpected life crises.
- **Personality factors:** The likelihood of abuse increases as a person manifests the following characteristics: has unrealistic expectations, controls his or her anger poorly, feels rejected, displays a poor self-image, and/or is depressed.

### **Types of Abuse**

- **Sexual** abuse or sexual molestation involves any sexual act between a child and an adult or a young child and a significantly older child. Such act may range from fondling to sexual intercourse.
- **Physical** abuse involves physical violence toward a child where the parent or caretaker is not in control. Such maltreatment occurs when anger is transferred into physical aggression against the child.
- **Emotional** abuse involves verbal or nonverbal violence toward a child that gives the child the message that he/she is no good and never will be.
- **Neglect** is defined as omission of the child's basic needs that are necessary for a child's well-being.

### **Who Must Report**

Every state maintains a mandatory child abuse reporting law. Many states further require that all employees who are mandated reporters sign a form acknowledging their awareness of the laws and their accompanying responsibilities. Although there are some differences in the requirements from state to state, all of the laws reflect most of the following basic information.

Those who, by nature of their employment, have contact with children are mandated reporters. These people include the following:

- **Medical Workers** - physicians, surgeons, nurses, dentists, residents, interns, pediatricians, chiropractors, psychologists, psychiatrists
- **Public/Private Workers** - employees of public and private schools, child-care personnel, resident and day-camp employees, social workers, peace and probation officers, member of the clergy and other youth/children ministry practitioners, child-welfare supervisors, certified personnel
- **Anyone with Reasonable Grounds a Child is in Need of Protection** - Some states require anyone to report when he or she has reasonable grounds to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused. Indiana is such a state. In fact, those who know of a child in need of protection and don't report it may be charged with a misdemeanor.

### **What Must Be Reported**

- Abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment
- Deliberate physical injury of a child
- Sexual molestation
- Causing pain or allowing great bodily harm, death, unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or danger to health
- Exploitation, child pornography and child prostitution

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **BEHAVIOR POLICY**

- A. Any abuse (whether sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) will not be tolerated at any First Free Methodist Church activity.
- B. Any abusive conduct or allegation will lead to immediate removal of the individual in question from First Church activities until a review by proper authorities is conducted.

### **PREVENTION GUIDELINES: BARRIER TO ABUSE**

- A. **Do not put yourself in a compromising situation. Be careful where you meet.** Procedure: No one-on-one contact between adult and child in private. Always meet in a totally public place in plain view of others in the group.
- B. **Do not rely on your good reputation or put yourself in a position where it's your word against another individual's.** Procedure: Use the “buddy system” (two adults with child/children) as standard procedure when counseling, transporting, and working with children.
- C. **Be aware of what you say.** Procedure: Check your conduct carefully to ensure that you are not the cause of emotional abuse. Refrain from idioms or vernacular that could be viewed as negative or suggestive.
- D. **Be aware of the line between discipline and abuse.** Procedure: Follow First Church's recommended policy and guidelines for discipline.
- E. **Watch what you do. Be cautious of and avoid “bad” touch. Physical contact in group settings is OK and can be a positive dynamic.** Procedure: Avoid full frontal hugs and back rubs. Both actions can be misleading to individuals receiving and those observing.
- F. **Be aware of fantasy relationships.** Procedure: Refrain from spending an inordinate amount of time with any one child that could lead him/her to misread your interest in him/her. Be aware of how you express your concern. When you express love, be sure children know you mean Christian love.
- G. **Be aware of children's needs during physical activities.** Procedure: Look out for fatigue, the need for fluids, the need for treatment of an injury, and weather conditions like electrical storms or extreme heat.
- H. **Focus on these spiritual guidelines while working with children:**
  - 1. **I Thessalonians 2:11-12** – “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”
  - 2. **I Thessalonians 5:22** – “Avoid every kind of evil.”

“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise...” Psalm 8:2a

3. **Philippians 4:8** – “Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”
4. **Matthew 18:5-6** – “And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT, cont.**

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- A. Stabilize the immediately abusive situation by stopping the abuse. Separate the individuals involved.
- B. Report the incident immediately to the leader of Children's Ministry or Youth Ministry who will in turn report it to the appropriate church staff member.
- C. Realize that this is an intricate legal matter. Before taking any further action, immediately contact the church office for advice on how to proceed. Leave questioning and analysis of the situation to the proper authorities.
- D. Understand that failure to report a situation of abuse is cause for immediate dismissal from any volunteer assignment within First Free Methodist Church.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Hammar, Steven Klipowica, & James Cobble, Jr. , *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*, Church Law & Tax Report, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Community Church of Columbus, *Directive on Child Protection Training*.

# **Administrative Greeter**

## **Job description**

Monthly time commitment: 1-2 hours

**Purpose:** To give support to the Children’s Ministry team by administrating the sign-in process for all Children when arriving on Sunday mornings.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### Preparation-

- Set up table with all attendance Clipboards
- Make sure all attendance clipboards are ready to go with the correct forms.
- **Arrive 20 Minutes early.**

#### Implementation-

- Wear worker nametag.
- Be ready to receive children when they come in the door.
- Make sure all children are signed in properly.
- If children are new, make sure their parents fill out the entire registration form.

#### Interaction-

- Encourage and praise children as opportunities arise.
- Be pleasant and welcoming when children and parents arrive.
- Remember that we are showing the love of Jesus through our smiles, voice, touch, and attention to every child.

#### Communication-

- Communicate and direct new parents and children where they need to go for their class.
- Inform parents and children of the activities (if different)
- Answer all questions if possible.
- Pass along any questions, concerns or administrative needs to CM Director.
- **Remind parents to pick up children after service.**

### **Other Requirements:**

- Know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior- maintaining a vital and growing walk with Him.
- Complete a Volunteer Application and FFM screening process.
- Attend training sessions when offered.
- Must be 16 years or older.

“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise...” Psalm 8:2a

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