



Children's Ministry Volunteer Handbook



Crossway Christian Church
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Mission Statement and Values

Mission Statement:

We exist to help children and families practice the way of Jesus.

Values:

Child-Centered: We do things Kids' ways! We aim to be developmentally appropriate in all that we do in each age group. We make every decision with kids in mind so that we might reach, teach, and love each child.

Safe: Kidsway offers an environment that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe for children so that they are free to learn and grow without reservation. Physical safety is assured through our application and background check process for all staff and volunteers, our child registration process, and check-in/check-out procedures. We keep kids emotionally safe by surrounding them with adult leaders who are positive, welcoming, and sincere. Kidsway kids are nurtured through kind words and actions by all of our volunteers. Spiritual safety means that each child will be allowed to move along in their spiritual journey one step at a time at their own pace. A child in Kidsway will never be forced into making decisions they are not ready to make.

Fun: Kids learn best when having FUN! We want kids to come back week after week because they enjoyed their visit and can't wait to return. Making Kidsway fun allows us to be able to nurture and teach them spiritually.

Relevant: The Bible lessons we teach are designed to be relevant and appropriate for kids and families today. We want kids to understand that God's Word is relevant for them and can be applied in practical ways in their everyday lives.

Relationship-Based: Kidsway is a place where kids can feel they belong. It's a place where kids can connect with other kids as well as adult and teen volunteers (who we call Small Group Leaders or SGLs). Our SGLs care for, encourage, guide, listen to, and love kids through their actions as well as their words.

Creative Bible Teaching: In Kidsway we value each child's unique learning style, personality, and talents. Therefore, we will use a variety of teaching styles to reach our variety of kids. The Bible is the same yesterday, today and forever. However, we change our teaching methods to increase our effectiveness as communicators and teachers of God's Word. We want kids to be so excited by what they learn that they can't wait to hear more.

Kidsway Policies and Procedures

Application Process

Any person interested in serving in Kidsway needs to fill out a Crossway volunteer application, which includes permission for a background check of all adults 18 and older. After the application is turned in and a satisfactory background check is completed, the campus-specific Service Director will contact the new volunteer, providing them the Children's Ministry Handbook and a job description for their specific area of service. Training and observation sessions will also be set within a one-week time period following the completed application. Teens and other assistants in a class may begin as soon as the need arises.

Kidsway welcomes student volunteers! We encourage middle school students to volunteer in toddlers/preschool. High school students may choose whether they would like to serve in either toddlers, preschool or elementary. The same process will apply for students as for adult volunteers with the following exceptions:

*Students under the age of 18 will not need to complete a background check, but will instead be asked to read through our teen volunteer guidelines and have a parent check off that they have discussed these together.

Small Group Leaders

No applicant will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has met with the Service Director or the Children's Pastor. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

Two Volunteer Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Arrival of Volunteers

All volunteers are expected to be in their classroom and prepared to receive children **15 minutes prior** to the beginning of the worship service during which you are serving. We must be prepared for the children we serve physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and that cannot be accomplished if we are just arriving to church at the start time of our serving hour. Parents will feel most at ease dropping off their children when the room appears to be adequately staffed and under control. Please help our ministry strive for excellence by making every effort to arrive early when you are serving.

Name Tags

All volunteers are provided with Kidsway name tags. Please wear them so that parents may easily identify you as a volunteer. When you are done serving, please return your name tag to its designated area.

Scheduling

Ministry schedules are created quarterly using Planning Center (you will receive an email to activate your account). When each new schedule is created, you will have the ability to go into Planning Center to accept serving dates or decline any dates you are unable to serve. Please note that we require all volunteers to try their hardest to swap serving weeks with other volunteers when asking for a week off, instead of just taking it off completely. This helps Kidsway function in the best way possible from week to week, and your campus Service Director will be in touch with you regarding switching when you decline a week of serving.

What do I do if I have a scheduling conflict?

If you realize in advance (*more than 24 hours before you are scheduled to serve*) you have a scheduling conflict that prevents you from serving, please contact other volunteers on your serving team to see if they can switch with you OR let your **campus-specific Service Director** know. If you **do** find someone to switch with you, please notify the Service Director at your campus.

If you have a scheduling conflict within 24 hours of your scheduled time to serve, please call or text your Service Director to let them know! Please do your best to avoid last minute call-ins, as it is nearly impossible to find substitutes at the last minute. We appreciate you making every effort to serve at your scheduled time unless you are sick or have an unavoidable emergency.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure: Kidsway

For children fifth grade and under, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be checked in at the Kidsway greeting area by a parent or guardian, who will receive a “check in summary” (receipt) for the child. The parent or guardian must present the receipt to the classroom leaders in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the receipt, please send them back to the check-in kiosks and a new receipt will be printed for the child’s release.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Crossway Christian Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections

Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

At this time, we are encouraging all volunteers and children 3 years of age and older to wear a mask in Kidsway.

Restroom Guidelines

If an individual classroom bathroom is not available, volunteers should escort a child or group of children to the hallway bathroom. The volunteer should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow one child inside at a time. The volunteer should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child or group back to the classroom when finished. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the volunteer should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

Otherwise, wait outside the bathroom until the child is finished to be sure no one tries to enter, or to be sure the child does not need assistance. For the protection of all, volunteers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and *never* be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

1, 2, 3 Magic! (used in Preschool & Elementary)

In order for all children to learn and have fun in Sunday school, we must create an environment where children are expected to show respect for God, their teachers, their peers, and our facility. The goal of any sort of discipline is to help the child be aware of unacceptable behavior and make better choices in the future. Generally, if a behavior is not acceptable at school, it is not acceptable at church either.

If a child's behavior needs to be addressed in the form of consequences, please use the following discipline plan:

- **"Child's name, that's 1"**- Warning to the child that he/she is disrupting the class or bothering another child. Child expected to redirect.
- **"Child's name, that's 2"**- Second warning to the child that he/she is disrupting the class or bother another child. Child expected to redirect.
- **"Child's name, that's 3"**- Remove the child from the class to sit in a "time-out" until the next activity begins.

If child continues to disrupt after being removed and rejoining the group, child will be removed from the classroom to talk with the Children's Pastor/Director or other adult regarding the situation. Parent may be called or child may remain outside the classroom for the duration of the service hour.

Snacks and Allergies

Due to a growing number of food allergies and restrictions, snacks will no longer be offered in the toddler or preschool rooms. The only food allowed in Kidsway will be bottles in the nursery supplied by the parents.

If a child arrives to class with a beverage or snack, please ask the parent to wait to drop off their child until they have finished their drink or snack.