



**PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

Dear Parent,

Thank you for trusting us with your children.

Mark 10:13-16 says, “*One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, ‘**Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them!** For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.’ Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.*”

We know from this passage that Jesus loves children and that He is passionate about them! What an honor it is to partner with you in ministry to His precious little ones!

Here at KidsZone, we don’t babysit your children – we’re here to provide a safe and fun environment that will lead your children to follow Jesus. Our goal is for our kids ministry to be the best hour of your child’s week. We operate with four core values:

## **SAFETY**

We will provide a safe environment for children to enjoy. We want children to be safe and feel safe and parents to rest assured that their child is well cared for while they are attending OCC services. For this reason we obtain background checks on all adult volunteers and there will never be less than 2 volunteers with your child at a time.

## **FUN**

We want your child to have fun! Our desire is to see your child have such a good time they will be begging you to come back next week. We believe creating this fun environment for kids will help children learn more about Jesus. We use games, crafts, props, creative stories and smiling volunteers to communicate the message, and we think it’s a must for kids to have a good time in church.

## **TRUTH**

We value safety and fun as a foundation for our number one value - kids knowing and learning more about Jesus and His passion for them. Lessons about Jesus and the Bible will be age appropriate and will help them understand God’s love and plan for their life.

## **FAMILY**

We believe that what happens at home is more important than what happens at church. KidsZone partners with parents by providing resources, support, and encouragement as you lead your family from where you are to closer to Jesus.

Sincerely,  
The KidsZone Team

## CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

KidsZone follows the local school board in placing children in the proper environment. In the event a child is homeschooled, we will place them according to the grade they would be in if they were enrolled in public school. Non-school age children will be placed according to their age.

## CHECKING IN YOUR CHILD

All regular attendees and first time guests must check in at the KidsZone Check In Station.

1. Please take your child to the bathroom before checking him/her in. While we will take children to the restroom if needed, it's much easier for you to do it before the service begins.
2. After checking your child in, you will receive a sticker with a unique number. Place the nametag on your child. Keep your matching security code portion in order to pick up your child.
3. For babies with bags please remind nursery workers to properly label your bag upon dropping your child off.
4. If your child has allergies or other special instructions, make sure they are given to the check in volunteers and printed on your child's nametag.

## CHILDREN ENTERING THE CLASSROOM

1. It is helpful to us if you use a permanent marker and label bottles, pacifiers, diapers, and/or cups that are left with your child.
2. ***Please do not send your child with toys, handheld games, phones, etc.*** Our volunteers have worked hard to prepare for your children, and there are plenty of things to do in each class. You may send comfort or security toys with younger children to help them feel safe and secure (blankets, teddy bears, etc.).
3. If your child cries as you drop him/her off, please step away immediately. It is our experience that children calm down much faster when parents step away quickly. We will notify you if your child continues to cry for 10 minutes or is inconsolable.

## DURING THE SERVICE

In the event of an emergency or should any of the staff need to contact you during the service, one staff member will come notify you. If called out of service, please make your way to your child's classroom and our staff or volunteers will be waiting for you. Please have the matching ID sticker with you.

## CHECKING OUT YOUR CHILD

1. Children will not be released to anyone other than the person with the correct security code tag.
2. To pick up your child, proceed to your child's classroom. A volunteer will be at the entrance to make sure your security code sticker matches your child's nametag.
3. Parents are not allowed into the classrooms. Please pick up your child at the entrance of his/her classroom.

## **PRO-KID POLICY: CHILDREN IN THE SERVICE**

The worship service at Oswego Christian Church is designed with middle school, high school, college students and adults in mind. We believe it is a great place for adults and students to worship and learn. KidsZone, on the other hand, is solely designed with children in mind. Teams of committed volunteers work hard all week long to prepare to teach children some of life's most important truths. Mothers with their babies are invited to use the cry room or nursing mom's room during the service. When COVID is over, we will also have some wonderful volunteers in our nursery who are ready to love on your children so you can enjoy the service!

The primary reasons you may not want to have your children in the service with you:

1. **CONTENT.** This service is designed for adults. We talk about what the Bible has to say about sex, parenting, cultural issues and finances. Most children are not ready to discuss these topics the way we may address them. As a church, we don't want to subject kids to anything that might make them think church and Jesus are irrelevant and/or not for them.
2. **DISTRACTIONS.**
  - a. For parents, when a child is in this service, they will likely have to devote a considerable amount of attention to helping them behave appropriately, which keeps them from focusing on the message.
  - b. While it may not bother a child's parent to have them fidget in their seats, talk or cry, it may keep others around them from focusing on the message.
3. **APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTS.** We never want to think of children as distractions, and it's not their fault if they make noise or act out in an environment that was not designed for them. We have an excellent environment for children. We have Godly, caring adults who invest in children every week. We complete a background check on every adult volunteer and provide training for everybody that works with children. We believe that teaching them in a child-focused, fun, engaging environment keeps with the spirit of Jesus and the importance He placed on children.

As a church we will do everything we can to help guests, new parents and everyone else be comfortable with what happens during our services. Greeters will introduce parents and kids to the KidsZone check-in volunteers. Parents are also welcome and encouraged to volunteer in our KidsZone environment.

This pro-kid policy is not a rule against children being in an adult service; rather it is a policy valuing the importance of kids knowing Jesus is passionate about them, He is their friend and, He can relate to their everyday world.

## **SECURITY**

In order to keep KidsZone a safe and secure environment for parents and children, the following security measures are constantly in effect.

1. Volunteers at the doors of each classroom will match the number on the sticker of the child to the security code given to the parents.

2. Only volunteers with the appropriate identification, parents with the appropriate documentation, or staff/volunteers with appropriate name badges are allowed into our KidsZone ministry.
3. No adult is allowed to work in KidsZone without a completed background check.
4. Security team members actively patrol KidsZone hallways. Security team members do not enter KidsZone classrooms.
5. Every KidsZone classroom will have two volunteers present at all times. No volunteer is to ever be alone with a child.

## **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

All volunteers are required to fill out a background check authorization form. We run a background check on every adult who works with minors. Students must be in 7<sup>th</sup> grade or above to volunteer, and they are always under the supervision of an adult.

## **ROOM OPENINGS**

Classrooms open 15 minutes prior to the start of service. Rooms cannot be opened until the necessary volunteers are in place.

## **PARENTS IN THE ROOM**

One of the primary values of KidsZone is to provide a safe environment for children each week. In order to accomplish this, we do not permit parents to enter the rooms without a background check. You are welcome to observe from the doorway, through classroom windows and/or you are invited to begin volunteering in the classroom with a completed background check.

## **GENERAL WELLNESS GUIDELINES**

In order to ensure the health of children and volunteers, we ask that sick children do not attend KidsZone. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child should not leave home when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever (100.4 degrees) within the last 24 hours.
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough.
4. Common cold, including colored runny nose.
5. Sore throat.
6. Croup.
7. Any unexplained rash.
8. Any skin infection – boils, ringworm or impetigo.
9. Pink Eye or other eye infection.
10. Any communicable disease.
11. Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits.

These are the guidelines that we follow.

## **MEDICATION**

KidsZone staff and volunteers will not administer any medication except in life threatening situations where there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and give it.

In a situation where a child has a potentially life-threatening condition and medication may need to be given, a medication authorization form should be completed and signed by the parent.

EACH TIME a parent drops off a child and his/her medication clear directions must be dropped off as well. These directions must be written out by the parent and must outline the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed. The form is to be given directly to the lead teacher by the parent so the lead teacher can read the directions and ask for clarification if necessary. The signed form must be given to the instructor following the service for OCC's records.

## **DISABLED CHILDREN**

Special needs children are to be part of the whole, not separated from the group, whenever possible. Children will be included in all activities offered. We will provide personal attention and the child will be matched to a one-on-one caregiver as needed.

## **DISCIPLINING CHILDREN**

KidsZone volunteers are always prepared and will be sensitive to the children's needs. Volunteers will never use harsh words or corporal punishment. In the event a child becomes disruptive and volunteers feel positive correction options have been exhausted, the parent will be notified. Children that bite or hit other children will be isolated from other children. Our leaders and volunteers will discuss the situation with parents without revealing the identity of other children.

## **CRYING CHILDREN**

Crying children obviously need care and compassion. We will reassure the child that their parent will come back for them. We will contact you via your child's security code on the screen if your child has been crying consistently for 10 minutes.

## **DIAPERING POLICIES**

The person changing diapers will be an adult. Diapers will be checked before the end of service. Parents should send extra diapers, pull-ups, and possibly an extra change of clothes. A child is never punished for toileting accidents. Until a child is fully potty trained, parents should send them in a pull-up.

## **FEEDING**

Please write down specific instructions regarding bottles during the service and place instructions visibly in the diaper bag. Make sure all bottles, diaper bags, and formula containers are labeled. Only volunteers (16 years or older) are permitted to feed children. For children without bottles, we offer age appropriate

snacks in the nursery. Please do not plan for our volunteers to feed your child beyond a bottle or KidsZone provided snacks.

## **BATHROOM POLICIES**

We observe the following procedures when taking children to the bathroom:

1. An adult (18 years or older) will walk children to the bathroom, for young children needing assistance.
2. Children will not enter any restroom until it is cleared of all adults.
3. The adult will wait at the bathroom door.
4. If a child needs assistance, we will follow the two volunteers present rule.
5. We will remind the child to wash his/her hands and return to class.

## **SALVATION FOR CHILDREN**

We often wonder how it works for a child to become a Christian. It's the same as for adults. At the point where a child understands the following he/she can begin an eternal relationship with Jesus.

1. God loves you. 1 John 4:10
2. Sin (choosing my way instead of God's way) separates you from God. Isaiah 59:2, Romans 3:23
3. God sent Jesus so you would not have to die for your sins. Jesus died on the cross, He was buried, and He rose from the dead. John 3:16

Once your child has a clear understanding of God's love for them, that he/she is a sinner and that Jesus died for his/her sins, leading the child to Jesus is as simple as 1, 2, 3.

## **BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN**

Start with the basics: Can you tell me who Jesus is? What did He do for you? Facilitate the conversation, but don't dominate it. Kids are naturally curious. Commit to answering every question, no matter how silly, and let the child ask lots of questions. See above if the child does not understand salvation and you need to begin there.

Here are some suggestions and places to point to in their Bible:

1. Baptism is how we tell God we want to follow Him - that we want the new life He offers. (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38)
2. Baptism takes place in the water. It's a picture of what Jesus did when He took the punishment for your sins. When you go under the water, it shows people that you believe Jesus died for you. When you come out of the water, you show others that you believe God brought Jesus back to life. (Romans 6:4)
3. Getting baptized doesn't mean your life will be perfect. There will be times when you will sin and make wrong choices. When this happens, pray and ask Jesus to forgive you. Jesus took the punishment for all our sin. That means even though you will sin again, you don't need to be saved or baptized again. (1 Peter 3:18)
4. You can continue following Jesus day by day by reading the Bible, doing what Jesus says and praying every day. (Psalm 1:2)

As parents, we often want to make things happen for our kids. Our hearts are in the right place. We want what is best for our kids. But baptism is about their faith, not ours. What ***we choose*** and ***they do*** might last for a little while, but what ***they choose*** and ***they do*** will last ***forever***.

If your child is ready for baptism, talk to your child's teacher about filling out our KidsZone "Baptism Form" to schedule his/her baptism.