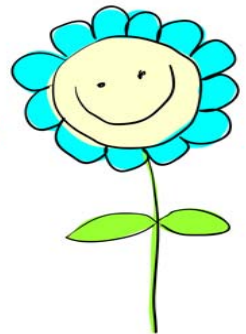




valleychildren

Children's Ministry Nursery Team Handbook

2011 - 2012



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Welcome!

Welcome to the Children's Ministry Team! Whether you are a first time team member or have served for years, we are glad you have a heart to serve the Lord and use your talents and spiritual gifts to help children grow spiritually. Whether you work in the resource room, check books in the library, lead a team or teach children, your part of the team is just as valuable as anyone else's. We cannot accomplish what God has for us without each other!

One of the most important things for a team to be effective is to have unity of vision and good communication. To help our team gain that, this handbook has been written. Please read on to find out more about our team and feel free to ask questions if something is not clear or a topic hasn't been covered which interests you.

Be Aware of the Team's Mission and Values

Mission: To help children come to know and follow Jesus.

Values:

1. We value prayer as the foundation of our planning and preparation, connecting us with the will of God.
2. We value workers who demonstrate a personal relationship with Christ by acting like Him, who love sincerely, who willingly share their life stories, who desire to use God-given gifts, who come prepared, and who are committed as partners with parents to disciple the children.
3. We value scripture-based creative learning that challenges the children to think and grow in their understanding of God's view of the world, how to listen to God, and how to live as a disciple of Jesus, including being able to share the **good news** with one another.
4. We value an environment that is safe, accepting, caring, and supportive for the children and the team of workers.

Check yourself:

1. Are you passionate about helping children come to know Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord and helping them learn how to be a disciple?
2. Do you share the same values as the team?

Be Aware of Yourself

The most important tool in the hand of God for spiritually influencing a child is not the curriculum, not the building, not the snacks, but **you!** Although the parents win the honor of having the highest influence in their child's life, you can have a great impact on a child by the way you let the love of Christ shine through you! Check yourself according to the standards below to see where you are strongest and where you might need to grow.

1. Am I displaying a Christ-like character in the following ways:
 - my speech (encouraging and not harming)
 - my commitments (keeping my word)
 - my dress (maintaining modesty)
 - my team relationships (keeping pure and forgiving)
 - my actions toward authority (being respectful and following church procedures)
 - my spirit (humble and teachable)

2. Am I doing what I'm expecting the children to do; praying, reading and studying God's Word faithfully?
3. Am I showing compassion to and interest in each child by getting to know him or her and their parents, not just by name but as individuals?
4. Do I pray for the children weekly? Do I pray for the ministry at large and other teachers?
5. Do I show concern for children when they are missing for a week or two through a phone call or note?
6. Am I confident that God can use me and am I faithful to do my best job? This includes arriving at least fifteen minutes before the start of class and being prepared for the lesson and activities.

Be Aware of the Environment

We are referring to the environment set either in the church or when on a group outing. There are three components: the spiritual, the emotional, and the physical. To be the most effective children's team member, you need to be aware of all three!

Spiritual Environment

Setting the tone for your classroom or nursery spiritually involves praying when you arrive and asking God's presence to fill the place, asking for hearts to be receptive and asking for God's guidance as you carry out your role for the day.

It also involves being aware of any open doors that the enemy may try to walk through. The Bible says we have an enemy who is like a roaring lion, roaming around and seeking whom he may devour. He thinks he has permission to enter areas where there is strife, lying, judgments and other negative attitudes. The Bible tells us not to give the devil a foothold.

If you have any unresolved conflict between you and a coworker, be adamant about resolving it and asking God to help you to forgive. Unforgiveness in our hearts is a breeding ground for the enemy to form a stronghold and to bring confusion into our ministry. Dealing with conflict is explained more fully in the section on team dynamics.

If you see these attitudes in the children, instruct them on how to forgive one another and lead them in a time of prayer. If you hear any fighting among the children or unkind words, stop it immediately! Use this opportunity to instruct and better understand the needs of the children involved.

If you feel there is a strong spiritual battle going on against you or your class or group, please ask other team members, your team leader and/or any of the Children's Ministry Staff to pray with you. Exposing things to the light helps diffuse its power!

Emotional Environment

Keeping an environment emotionally healthy is closely related to spiritual health, since the more Christ-like an environment, the safer children will feel emotionally.

Be sure to demonstrate to all children that they are accepted and loved. Watch for other children who might want to leave a child out, and encourage those children to be kind to everyone.

Demonstrate kindness and gentleness in your speech. The Bible says a harsh word stirs up wrath. Sometimes people think they must talk in a harsh way to demonstrate authority. This is quite the opposite! When one walks in true authority, it is evident by having control over their tongue. Speak firmly when needed, but never harshly!

Help new and shy children to feel secure by giving them eye contact and getting to know them a bit. Often children are uncomfortable coming to a room and being left by their parents with people they don't know or recognize. Reach out to them in their discomfort and try to invite them in and inform them of some of the great things that are in store for the day.

Get to know your children and what makes them tick. Call their parents to get to know them. Encourage parents to visit your class and to partner with you in other ways.

Follow the Children's Ministry Discipline Procedures. We expect each classroom teacher to set up and maintain classroom expectations so that children can clearly understand the behavior that is expected of them. We do have expectations and we do expect children to follow them. We have four very basic expectations for all children which are:

Discipline Procedures

Discipline means teaching; the very kind of teaching Jesus did with his disciples. The purpose of this teaching is to immediately stop inappropriate behavior (behavior that might hurt a child, destroy materials or disrupt the group) and to help the child find a more appropriate way to behave.

Procedure:

1. **Prevent Problems:** Set up a safe and trouble-free environment where young children can explore with little restraint as possible. Put things out of reach (pocketbooks, pencils, personal items, etc.), keep cabinets latched and remove unsafe, inappropriate and broken toys/equipment.
2. **Set clear limits:** Use no as little as possible because it does not teach a child appropriate ways to act. Instead, give clear information about the situation. Save no for dangerous situations where immediate restraint is needed. Deal with unkind words or behaviors individually by asking the child what happened and why. Then ask the child how the situation might have been handled in a less hurtful way.
3. **Redirect Behavior:** Change activities/toys, move to another part of the room, change playmates or change seats. Do not expect toddlers to fully understand sharing or how to apologize. This can cause confusion for them. Distraction works with children under four. Modeling sharing and apologizing for those over four is an important part of teaching.
4. **Give Choices:** Give the child a choice between two acceptable alternatives.
5. **Acknowledge Feelings:** Show the child or children you understand that they are hurt, have been hurt by some one else or feel sad.

6. Talk through Problems: Describe what you see and how the children are reacting as you help them solve the problem.
7. Unacceptable: Discipline of babies and toddlers should never include any negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, swatting, tapping, shaking, and biting back). It never includes ridicule, sarcasm, threats or withholding care from the child.
8. Inform Parents: Parents love to know how their children were in the classroom and the nursery. It is important to give them feedback on the positive behaviors when they leave.

Physical Environment

The physical environment includes knowing who is in the room at all times, knowing the condition of the room (safe and clean), knowing you are not serving any food to which a child could have a deadly allergic reaction, knowing how to get out of the room in the case of an emergency, and knowing how to monitor activities in the room to keep everyone safe. Let's start with focusing on who is in the room.

We want to know that the children have **safe** adults who have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. Therefore, each children's team member who works directly with children must go through our **Kids' Safe Process**. If you haven't already done this, follow the steps below:

1. Complete Children's Ministry Application.
2. Read through policies and procedures and our Statement of Faith.
3. Give completed application to Director of Children's Ministry.
4. Call the Children's Ministry office to make an appointment to discuss your testimony and interests/gifts for serving in the ministry. The next step to get connected with the ministry will be provided at that time.

Staff to Student Ratios Procedure

1. Teens are a valuable part of the nursery team, although, there should always be an adult present when teens are staffing.
2. Children under 12 will not be considered part of the staff.
3. During Saturday and Sunday services, staff names are posted on the white board. Only those names listed should be in the room.
4. The ratio for infants 0-12 months to adults is 3:1
5. The ratio for walkers 12-24 months to adults is 4:1
6. Special services and events, weekday child care , Moppets and Mom's Morning Escape use paid staff. Only those over 16 years of age can be paid. It is required that all paid staff, including 16-17 year olds have proper working papers.

Staffing Reminders and Guidelines Policy

Here at Valley, we highly value our precious children. Our aim is to provide a safe and loving environment so parents feel at ease about leaving their little ones in our care. Following these simple guidelines will reassure parents and promote a calm and peaceful atmosphere.

Procedure:

1. Arrive 15 minutes before service/event/program starts.
2. Put all personal belongings away in the cabinets and keep the countertops free of unnecessary clutter.
3. Wear a nametag so parents can know your name and identify you as a nursery worker.
4. Only those assigned to work in the nursery (names on white board) should be in the room. Staff can ask a parent to stay if extra help is needed.
5. Hot coffee/tea is discouraged. If it is a must, please use covered cups for your hot beverages.
6. Parents are to fill out name label information while staff fills out the attendance sheets.
7. Children will only be released to the parent once the security card is presented. If they don't have their card they can pick-up a temporary card at the Children's Welcome Desk.
8. Straighten up the rooms 15 minutes before parents arrive. This may help decrease the chaos of transition.
9. Wear shoes with low heels, dress comfortably and modestly and please keep jewelry to a minimum.

Diaper Changing Policy

The Koala changing stations are where diapers will be changed and there should be two people in the room when changing occurs.

Procedure:

1. Wash hands and gather needed supplies: gloves (optional), clean diaper and disposable wipes before placing child on changing station. Gloves are provided for the workers protection and not as a replacement for hand washing.
2. Put disposable liner down and place child on liner. Talk to the child about what you are doing, stay close and never turn away or leave them unattended.
3. Remove wet/soiled diaper and clean diaper area with disposable wipe going front to back. Place wipe in soiled diaper, wrapping diaper into bundle using the diaper tapes.

4. Nursery staff should not apply lotions and powders and are not expected to change non-disposable diapers.
5. Put clean diaper and clothing on. Place child back in the play area.
6. Put dirty diaper in designated diaper container.
7. Wash hands in sink or use waterless soap product after handling each child.
8. Diaper changes and diaper rashes will be reported to parents when they pick up child.
9. After the 11 a.m. service, the walker nursery's diaper containers will be emptied, triple bagged and left in the bathroom. (Diaper containers will be cleaned, emptied and changed by housekeeping staff during the week).
10. Extra diapers are located in the nurseries.

Toileting Toddlers and Preschool age Children

1. Our walker nursery and two's room have their own bathrooms.
2. Prop the bathroom door open.
3. Wait by the bathroom door.
4. Maintain a conversation with the child so they don't feel alone.
5. Assist potty training per parent instruction.
6. Encourage the child to wipe themselves, support as needed making sure to use the gloves.
7. Assist the child with pulling up any underwear or outer clothing.
8. In the case of an accident where the child does not get to the bathroom in time, contact the parents for assistance.

Snack Policy

It is clearly a preference and decision made by parents that they choose when and what goes into their babies' mouths. It is our belief as nursery staff that we are here to serve the parents and follow their wishes as best we can.

Procedure:

1. Parents will give staff information regarding what they can eat/drink each time they put their child in the nursery.
2. Separate *Special Needs* and *Allergy* labels are available to place on child's back.
3. Never give snacks to infants/walkers without the parent's permission.
4. The nursery stocks Cheerios, Ritz-type crackers, pretzels, and Goldfish. No juices are kept.

5. Label all bottles, cups and personal snacks.
6. Extra sippy cups are available when forgotten.

*Nursery staff will not feed meals to the children on Sunday mornings. Please feed your child at home before they come.

Toys and Equipment Policy

Nursery equipment and play items frequently end up in babies' mouths. It is very important to clean and disinfect these items in order to prevent the transfer of germs.

All surfaces (swings, play equipment, tables, and counters) that have been used will be cleaned at the end of nursery sessions or weekday childcare programs. Toys that have been used can be placed in a bin labeled "dirty" until ready to be cleaned. Nursery staff is responsible to clean at the end of each nursery time.

Cleaning Procedures:

1. Small (infant) toys will be placed in the dirty toy bin to be sprayed with disinfectant (bleach/water mixture), rinsed thoroughly with hot water, and placed in the drain or bin labeled "clean" to dry.
2. All other (larger) toys & equipment will be removed from play area, wiped with disinfectant cleanup wipes, and allowed to dry for a few minutes before going back into the play area. Bins can be used for this process.
3. Snack areas, play tables, and diaper changing tables will be wiped with disinfectant cleanup wipes at the end of each use.
4. If sheets are used in crib or pack-n-play please remove them after use and place in dirty bin.

Staff and parents can remove inappropriate/broken/dirty toys & equipment from the play area. These toys can be placed on the front counter with a note regarding removal.

Toys and equipment donations are welcome and a blessing to receive. Call the Nursery Director at 673.6826 X124 to arrange for drop off time and place. Items should be clean and in good condition. Stuffed animals are not accepted due to the difficulty of keeping them clean.

Moving Up Policy

The nursery is a busy place and it's always changing! As new babies are born others begin to roll, creep, crawl and finally walk. The nursery rooms are designed with toys/equipment appropriate for their development level. Infants (0-walking) are in Room 301. Walkers (walking-24 months) are in

room 302. Room 304 is for the two-year-olds Community. Readiness to move to the next room is determined by parents and the nursery staff.

Procedure:

1. Children will move into the walker nursery when they master walking.
2. Walkers turning two from April-December can move to the Community for two year olds, (Room 304) where there is some structured class.
3. Walkers who turn two from after the beginning of the year will move in September to the Community for two year olds.

There are exceptions and special instances concerning a child's readiness to move to the Walker Nursery or Community class for two-year-olds. Parents, Nursery Staff and the Nursery Coordinator will decide together when the child will change rooms.

Illness Policy

Children should be kept at home with any of the following symptoms: Fever, runny nose (anything but clear), sore throat, questionable rashes, coughing, and diarrhea. If the child is being treated with antibiotics, he/she should be on the drug for at least 24 hours.

Procedure:

1. Illness Policy is posted in rooms.
2. To prevent the spread of illness, children will not be admitted into the nursery or classroom with the above-referenced symptoms.
3. We request parents care for their children at home if they have any of the symptoms within the last 24 hours.
4. Babies with a clear runny nose or rash due to non-contagious allergies may be admitted.
5. The nursery staff can use their judgment if there are questionable symptoms and not permit a child to be dropped off.
6. Staff that has any of the above-referenced symptoms should not be in the nursery and will need to find a substitute.

Evacuation Procedure

Nursery Evacuation

1. Calmly gather all children into staff arms and evacuation cribs.
2. Designated teacher/leader should take attendance list and count all children as they exit room.
3. Designated teacher/leader should check room, if safe to do so, to make sure all children are accounted for, take attendance list and shut door of room upon exiting.
4. Follow posted fire evacuation plan to nearest exit. Keep in mind that if that exit is blocked you may need to seek an alternate route. Please go to designated spot on fire evacuation route plan.
5. Once outside and away from building teacher/leader should take attendance once again to ensure all children are accounted for.
6. Please keep children with you and ask parents to wait to sign them out until the "all clear" has been given and it safe to re-enter the building.
7. Should it not be possible to re-enter the building parents will be asked to sign their children out before taking them.

Evacuation Procedure for two-and three-year-olds:

1. Calmly line children up and have them take hold of fire rope. One adult should hold each end.
2. Designated teacher/leader should take attendance list and count all children as they exit room.
3. Designated teacher/leader should check room, if safe to do so, to make sure all children are accounted for, take attendance list, and shut door of room upon exiting.
4. Follow posted fire evacuation plan to nearest exit. Keep in mind that if that exit is blocked you may need to seek an alternate route. Please go to designated spot on fire evacuation route plan.
5. Once outside and away from building, teacher/leader should take attendance once again to ensure all children are accounted for.
6. Please keep children with you and ask parents to wait to sign them out until the "all clear" has been given and it safe to re-enter the building.
7. Should it not be possible to re-enter the building, parents will be asked to sign their children out before taking them.

Be Aware of Team Dynamics

You are part of the Children's Ministry Team which includes all people who serve in any of the Children's Ministries and is lead by the Children's Ministry paid staff. You are also part of a smaller team which is lead by a team leader. In some cases we still don't have team leaders. In that case, one of the Children's Ministry staff will act as the team leader.

The role of your team leader is to lead your team. He/she has been given authority and training by the Children's Ministry staff. Therefore, please respect this authority granted to them. They are there to encourage you and your team, to communicate with one another, to grow to be more mature Christians and more skillful ministry servants, and to be there for you as a supporter and listener. Please allow your team leader access to your life! Give him/her the chance to get to know you so that you can have a better working relationship and he/she can be there for you. Please make your best effort to attend all meetings and fellowship opportunities that your team leader coordinates. If you have any questions about your ministry, he/she should be able to answer them. If not, he/she know where to go to find the answer. Have fun with your team leader and be thankful for them!

To be a healthy team, one of the most important aspects is for each member to understand their role on the team so that he/she can communicate in a healthy way with one another. Let's start with the obvious things we need to communicate to one another.

Important Calendar Dates

Meetings, days when no clubs or classes are occurring, and Children's Ministry Team trainings will be communicated to you in a variety of ways.

- Email is the easiest and most cost effective way. If you are willing to check your email regularly, that will help with communication.
- There are also printed calendars located in the hanging pockets near the Children's Ministry office.
- Team leaders will call to alert you of things.
- Postcards will be sent for certain events.

Just as we make our best effort to reach you, please be sure to call or email back when a response is needed!

Teacher Replacement Procedure

Please start by notifying your team leader! He/she will look for a substitute for you. If you are sick at the last minute and cannot reach the team leader at home before your class, call the Nursery Coordinator. As a last resort, call the Children's Ministry Welcome Desk at 673.4760.

Resolving Conflict

If you are hurt or frustrated by a situation, it is your biblical responsibility as a Christian to seek out that person and talk with him/her (refer to Matthew 18). Do not allow hurt and conflict to build. You

can be part of a solution, healing or breakthrough that helps the church as a body move forward in unity and be a light in the community! If the person will not cooperate to resolve the conflict, please ask the team leader to go with you to the person a second time. If you are having conflict with your team leader, and they will not listen, then have one of the Children's Ministry staff go with you to help mediate.

Now that you've read this book, check yourself:

- Do I share the same values as the team?
- Am I aware of the spiritual, emotional and physical environments of my classroom?
- Do I know my responsibilities as a team player?
- Do I have the important dates written on my calendar?
- Am I ready to see the lives of children grow?
- Am I praying for the children, the team, and the church?
- Am I ready to partner with parents?

Get ready! God is going to do great things among us this year.

Let's be looking for His work and rejoice together over it.

Have fun!