

# Children's Church

## Child Safety and Safety Policy Overview



## **Calvary Chapel Modesto Children's Ministry Core Values:**

- 1. Safety** (Proverbs 22:3)
- 2. Care for Others** (John 13:35)
- 3. Team Player** (Ecclesiastes 22:3)
- 4. Communication** (Ephesians 4:29)

## **Child Safety Policy**

In Children's Ministry the safety of the children entrusted into our care is of the utmost importance. We do everything possible to ensure the safety of all children in our care. While we desire to protect our children, we also desire to protect our teachers and workers serving in the ministry. With that in mind below are the guidelines we have in place that deal with child safety and more specifically protection from possible physical, sexual, or emotional abuse while children are in our care.

### **1. Screening of Servants**

Any person serving in any capacity in Children's Ministry is required to go through the following screening process. This process is designed with the safety of our children as the highest priority.

- a. An active Ministry Questionnaire must be on file and approved.
- b. At least four reference letters on file.
- c. Phone reference from previous church attended (if applicable).
- d. Applicant must attend Calvary Chapel Modesto for at least six months.
- e. Background check through the State of California and FBI.
- f. Interview with Children's Pastor (some exceptions may apply in certain areas).
- g. Training in appropriate area within Children's Ministry, either through group training or in class observation and discipleship.

Only servants who are approved to serve and are clearly identified with name badge are allowed to be in the classrooms during regular services. All others **MUST** have approval from a Coordinator or Children's Pastor. A parent of a child in your class **MAY** stay and observe a class, but must be informed that they may only interact with their own child and not with the other children. Do not allow them to serve in an "Aide" capacity while they are visiting. If they wish to remain for an ongoing period of time then we must have them go through the screening process.

### **2. Supervision of Servants**

While we recognize the importance of proper screening of individuals serving in Children's Ministry, we also recognize the need for proper supervision of Children's Ministry servants and events related to children.

- a. A Pastor and/or Coordinator appointed by the Pastor will attend, oversee and supervise all Children's Ministry events.

- b. The Pastor and/or Coordinator will be available to check on each class or group during the service or event to make sure all is going well and the environment is safe.
- c. During our regular services, to the best of our ability, we will provide two adults in each classroom and setting that involves children. In the absence of two adults there must be a youth helper and/or multiple children. NEVER, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOULD AN ADULT BE ALONE IN A ROOM WITH A CHILD. In cases where there is only one adult, the Coordinator will assume a greater role and regularly check on the class during the session.
- d. Events that are offsite, in homes, etc., or are onsite, but not during regular service hours, MUST WITHOUT EXCEPTION have a minimum of two ADULTS present AT ALL TIMES (One adult in an oversight position and one additional adult is OK).
- e. All Children's Ministry events must receive approval from the Children's Pastor.
- f. **All concerns and/or reports of abuse or sexual misconduct within Children's Ministry should be IMMEDIATELY brought to the attention of the children's pastor. We consider this to be a very serious matter and will respond appropriately.**

### 3. Interaction with Children

The key with all interaction is to STAY ABOVE REPROACH. The following are a few guidelines to help with discernment regarding interacting with children:

- a. NEVER be alone in a room with a child, EVER! This is for the servant's protection as well as the child's.
- b. Never tickle, wrestle with, allow a child to jump on your back, give piggyback rides, swing a child by the arms, kiss a child, or allow a child to kiss you.
- c. Do not allow children to sit on your lap; encourage them to sit next to you. Exception - in the nursery, (two year old and under) it is OK for a child to sit in your lap as long as there are two servants present at all times.
- d. Only show movies (videos) obtained in the children's resource room or approved by the Children's Pastor. Do not turn off the lights when showing videos.
- e. Positive ways to express love to children:
  - i. Listen to children with your ears, making eye contact.
  - ii. It is OK to give a child a "high five" or a gentle pat on the head or back to indicate a job well done or a gentle tap on the shoulder to get their attention.
  - iii. Encourage "side to side hugs", but never full frontal hugs with a child.
  - iv. Smile and acknowledge the children when you see them; also acknowledge the parents when they are present.
  - v. Pray and seek the Lord concerning wisdom. If you have any questions, ask your Coordinator or Children's Pastor.

### 4. Privacy and Appropriateness in the Classroom

Our desire is to minister to every child that the Lord brings to us. We recognized that the children we minister to might come to us from many varied and unique backgrounds. There are times when we walk a delicate balance between ministering to a child in trouble and maintaining the right spiritual atmosphere in the classroom. An example of this might be when you take prayer requests as a class. A certain child may share something happening in their family or life that might be considered inappropriate for the rest of the class to hear. Should you encounter

situations where a child shares something that could be considered inappropriate here are some guidelines:

- a. Never speak condescendingly to any child, but build them up in the Lord.
- b. If something is shared that is inappropriate gently ask the child if you can talk with him/her later about the situation.
- c. Talk with him/her after the class and pray individually concerning the situation.
- d. Contact your Coordinator or Children's Pastor if you need help or feel that additional follow-up is needed.

## 5. Restroom Policy

The restroom is an area of concern as it relates to child safety. It is important to follow these guidelines when taking children in our care to the restroom.

- a. As children arrive, encourage parents to take children to the restroom prior to checking in their children.
- b. Never ask the entire class if anyone needs to use the restroom; they will all answer, "Yes!"
- c. Only take 2 or 3 children to the restroom at a time; escort them to the restrooms located on the west end of the children's education wing.
- d. Check the restroom to make sure that there is no other adult in the restroom (If you need to check the restroom that is opposite of your gender feel free to ask a Coordinator or Roamer for assistance). Our policy is that during regular service times adults are NOT to use the restroom facilities in the children's area.
- e. Send the child(ren) into the appropriate gender restroom. If the children are four years of age and older there is no need for you to go into the restroom with the children. Send them in and wait for them outside of the door (remind them to put a seat cover on the seat and to wash their hands).
- f. If there is ever a need for you to enter the restroom with a child (accident in clothes, zipper stuck, etc.) do the following: prop the door open to make sure that there is clear vision into the restroom and have another adult (Coordinator or Roamer) either stand at the door or enter with you so that two people will be present.
- g. If the children are three years of age or under then ONLY FEMALE Teachers or Aides may take them into the girl's restroom regardless of the children's gender.

## 6. Classroom Ratios

Our goal is to minister to as many children as possible without compromising safety. The following guidelines are maximum numbers of children per servant, according to age group. Should you reach capacity please notify your coordinator or Children's Pastor. They will assist you in working through the situation. They may be able to shift servants to provide more help for you, or they may have you close your class and begin to have children signed into "overflow" classes when available.

- Infants - One servant to four babies
- Toddlers - One servant to six children
- Two through five year olds - One servant to eight children
- First through sixth grade - One servant to twelve children

## 7. Child Abuse Reporting

Under State of California law the Pastors on staff at Calvary Chapel Modesto are considered mandated reporters for child abuse. This means that if we are told of abuse or have reason to suspect abuse towards the children we minister to, then we are required to report it.

Volunteers that serve in Children's Ministry (Coordinators, Teachers, Aides, and Nursery workers) are not mandated by law to report suspected child abuse, but the law does encourage volunteers to report suspected abuse.

We also encourage servants to report suspected abuse and have the following guidelines for abuse reporting:

- a. If a child shares with you an instance of abuse (even if it was several years ago) notify the Children's Pastor immediately.
- b. If you observe marks, bruises, etc. on a child and suspect abuse notify the Children's Pastor immediately.
- c. IMPORTANT - Do not discuss suspicions with anyone other than the Children's Pastor or another Pastor on staff.
- d. Do not approach parents; allow the pastoral staff to handle the situation.
- e. You may be required to call Child Protective Services and write a statement concerning what was shared with you or your observation. The pastoral staff will assist you through the process.
- f. NOTE: The law requires us to report suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services by phone within 36 hours of our becoming aware of it with a follow up written report within 72 hours. It is important to contact the Children's Pastor **immediately** if you have any questions or concerns.

## 8. Accident Reporting and First Aid

There may be a rare occasion that an accident occurs in your classroom or a time when a child needs first aid attention. The most important thing is not to panic. Assess the situation and then take the appropriate action.

- a. If there is any life-threatening emergency call 911 immediately then notify your Coordinator. There are phones located in the Infant Room, Toddler Room, Supply Room and the Children's Auditorium.
- b. For non-emergency accidents or situations locate your Coordinator for assistance.
- c. If there has been an accident (any injury other than a simple band aide) in the classroom it is MANDATORY that you fill out an Accident Report (Appendix page 8) and turn it in to your Coordinator or Children's Pastor.
- d. The Teacher and/or the Coordinator should notify the parents as soon as possible. The Coordinator will determine if the parents should be pulled from the service to be notified or if it can wait until after the service is over.

- e. A box of Band-Aids is available in each classroom. A first aid kit is available in the Supply Room, which has Band-Aids, bandages, anti-septic, etc. A cot is also available for children needing to lie down. Ice packs are available in the Teacher Room freezer.
- f. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should we ever administer any medication to children, including aspirin, cough drops or antacids.

## **9. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

Locate the map and instructions which correspond to the room you will be serving in. Please be familiar with this procedure so that in the event of an actual emergency we can evacuate calmly and orderly.

These maps and procedures are also posted in each room for reference. On occasion cover this information to your class. Every class should do at least one practice drill every 6 months.

## **Classroom and Nursery Procedures**

### **Preschool and Elementary Classroom Procedures**

#### **1. Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the service to prepare your classroom**

- a. It is good to give yourself some time between your arrival and beginning to sign in children so that you can gather any supplies, set-up your room and pray.
- b. Be in place and ready to receive children 15 minutes prior to the start of a service.
- c. Our policy is that we will begin checking in children 15 minutes prior to the service starting.
- d. If a parent arrives early you may kindly share with them that check-in begins 15 minutes prior to the service beginning and ask them to return.
- e. You are not compelled to check-in children early, however if you are OK with early check in then it is fine for you to do so.

#### **2. Always begin your class time with prayer**

#### **3. Wear your nametag AT ALL TIMES**

- a. Always have the children address you with the title of "Mr.," "Miss," or "Mrs."
- b. You may choose whether you want the title followed with your first or last name.
- c. We feel this to be important in order to encourage the children to respect adults and those in authority.

#### **4. Check-In Procedures**

- a.** Greet parents and children as they arrive. It is important to engage families in conversation and allow them to get to know you as they check-in their children. As children arrive the Teacher should be interacting with the parents and the Aide should be directing the children to activities or quiet play as they wait for worship or the class time to begin.
- b.** Have a parent or designee check in each child.
- c.** Take the nametags and place one on the child and one in the binder.
- d.** OLDER SIBLINGS SIGNING IN CHILDREN: Occasionally older siblings, relatives or friends will want to check children in or out - this is OK as long as the person check-in or out a child is at least 14 years of age.
- e.** SIBLINGS JOINING TOGETHER FOR A CLASSROOM SESSION: In general, our policy is that all children should be checked into their appropriate aged classroom. You may on occasion have parents who wish to check-in all their children (of various ages) into one class, or for a particular reason check-in their child into an older or younger aged class than the actual age of their child. If the family is new and the parents want to help their children get acclimated then it is OK to combine the children together for a couple of Sundays maximum - after that they should be encouraged to go into the appropriate age groups. Also, when this occurs we want to have the older siblings join the younger siblings in their class. Any exceptions should be approved by a Coordinator or Children's Pastor.

## 5. Worship

- a.** During each Sunday service we provide a time of worship for the children.
- b.** Children's Worship (3's to 6<sup>th</sup> grade) at approximately 10 minutes into the service you will need to escort your class to the Children's Auditorium. Have your children line up, count the number of children before leaving and make sure that number corresponds to the number of children on your check-in binder. Any discrepancies should be reported to the Coordinator immediately.
- c.** Proceed to the Children's Auditorium. **IMPORTANT** - Make sure to bring your binder with you to the Auditorium to allow parents who are late to check- in their children and to allow you to have an accurate count when worship is over.
- d.** Place your class binder on the table provided - Coordinators will assist check-ins during worship
  - i. Explain to your children that the worship service is a time to praise the Lord, it is not just a "fun time" or a time to visit and play with their friends. Praising God is a privilege and it is a great honor to get to do it.
  - ii. During the worship service it is your responsibility to supervise your class. Please keep an eye out for children who are turning around to talk or disturb one another. Don't hesitate to intervene and separate if necessary.
  - iii. Please be an example during worship with your children. You should participate in the songs including hand motions and gestures. We ask that you sit with your children on the floor (unless you are physically unable).
- e.** Worship time will last approximately 25 minutes and usually consists of opening prayer, praise songs, the children greeting one another, a puppet skit, and offering.
- f.** When worship is over have your children line up; collect your binder and proceed to your classroom.

- g.** Immediately upon arrival in your class do a head count again and make sure that the number corresponds to the number of children on your class binder. Take into account that additional children may have been checked-in during worship time.
- h.** Any discrepancies must be reported immediately to your Coordinator.
- i.** Calvary Chapel Modesto has assumed responsibility for each child from the moment a parent leaves them in our care, so it is imperative that we keep track of the children placed into our care at all times.
- j.** After arriving back into your classroom you will have approximately 45 minutes of remaining time for your Bible lesson, activities and/or craft.

## **6.Check-Out Procedures**

- a.** At the end of each class session you will need to ensure that all the children have been checked-out and returned to the appropriate parent or designee.
- b.** When checking-out a child, you may release a child ONLY to the PARENT, ADULT, or SIBLING (14 years old and up) who has the matching check-in number sticker. The person who checks-out the child must also initial the check-in sticker in the binder.
- c.** If you have any issues whatsoever concerning checking-in or checking-out children refer them to your Coordinator or Children's Pastor.
- d.** Sometimes you may have a parent that is late in picking up their child. Please wait 15 minutes after the end of a service. After this time, you may escort the child, and try to find his/her parent. Sometimes the parent may be praying with someone in the sanctuary, please be sensitive if this is the case and remain with the child until the adult is finished.

# Accident Report Form

A First Aid Kit is located in the Resource Room with Ice packs in the Break Room. If the child is in need of additional medical attention call 911 and inform the Children's Ministry Pastor as soon as the situation permits.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom and Service \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or "Signed in By" Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Accident \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Accident \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's parent(s) contacted Date & Time

\_\_\_\_\_

CM Coordinator/Pastor contacted date

& time. \_\_\_\_\_

Accident occurred with

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Home (    )    -    Work (    )    -

**Teachers:** Please follow up on all accidents that require more than a Band-Aid.

Whenever there is an accident during class or an outing we need you to fill out this information completely.

**Hand in this form to your Children's Ministry Coordinator  
or put in Pastor Mark's box in the Resource Room.**