



# Children's Ministry Handbook

## 2016-2017



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**Welcome to the Children’s Ministry of The Chapel Evangelical Free Church.** We are blessed to have dedicated Christian role models who work with our kids, and we welcome you to our team.

**Our purpose statement for Children’s Ministry is:**

***To partner with families in training up children to know, love, and serve God through sound Biblical teaching.***

**We currently have 3 staff who work in CM (Children’s Ministry):**

- Joy Stemm, Director of Children’s Ministry
- Beka Dougherty, Director of Preschool Ministry
- Carla Penner, Children’s Ministry Coordinator
- Jennifer VanderVeen, Children’s Ministry Assistant

Feel free to contact any of us. We welcome and encourage your questions and feedback.

**Teacher Commitment:**

**Elementary teachers** of kindergarten through grade 5 commit to teaching during the entire school year. We believe this is the best way to develop relationships and to shepherd a child. Teachers are encouraged, however, to take a break during the summer.

**Preschool teachers** commit to teaching 1 month at a time to allow as much consistency as possible. However, we also welcome teachers who are able to serve the entire year. Please find and familiarize yourself with the green binder located in each preschool classroom. It contains what you need to know.

**We pray you are richly blessed** as you bring God’s truth and love to the next generation. May you bear much fruit for eternity as you teach, welcome, and pray for your students. **To God be the glory!**

## As A Teacher:

- Your #1 priority is to **reach out to children** as a model of Christ's love.
- Plan to **pray** for each child in your class. Try to also meet with your co-teacher for a short prayer time as you arrive each week. Prayer is powerful and the foundation for all our teaching.
- Please **communicate**. Share your joys, successes, and challenges with Joy, Beka, Carla, or Jennifer. Let us know how we can help, pray for, and celebrate with you. We are a team!
- Be sure to **welcome guests** warmly. Greet the family and the child by name, tell them we are glad they are here. Introduce the child to a friend and help him/her join the group. Reassure parents that we will call if their child needs them.
- **Share the positive**. When a family member comes to pick up a child, be ready to share something positive about the child, about the lesson, or about something that happened during class. Share that you are eager to see them next week.
- **Make a general schedule** of how you run your classroom. Include basic routines and information for a substitute to use if necessary. Post this inside a cabinet door by your lessons. (Need help? See Joy or Beka.)
- Post your **classroom rules** and review them frequently. (See page 8-9 for ideas)
- Please **do not take home the student worksheet pages** in case you are unable to be here unexpectedly. Do feel free to take home 1 copy for reference as you plan. Your manual is yours for the quarter and may be kept at home.
- **In case of emergency**, call Joy's or Beka's cell phone.

## CHECKING IN & DISMISSAL:

- Each child is **required to check in at a kiosk** before entering the classroom on Sundays.
- A child is **released ONLY after you receive a matching security label**.
- A more detailed explanation of these procedures is posted by the door of each classroom. Be sure you are familiar with this policy.

## NEED A SUBSTITUTE?

### For Sunday Morning:

- **Preschool:** Please try to find your own sub. You can switch with another teacher who is scheduled the month opposite of you. You can also look at the back of the green binder in your classroom for a list of subs. Be sure to communicate with your co-teacher so that at least 1 teacher is familiar with the routine and prepared to teach. Let Beka know who will be covering for you. If you are unable to find someone, **let Beka know as soon as possible**.
- **Elementary (Kindergarten—5th grade):** Please try to find your own sub. If you are unable to arrange your own sub, let Joy know as soon as possible.
- **E-mail** is best if you know in advance.
- Please be sure to call by **phone** if it is short notice.

### For Awana:

- Please contact your **club director** as soon as possible.

## CLASSROOM GUIDELINES:

- Please stack chairs against a wall after 2nd hour and make sure everything is off the counters and put away.
- Let Joy or Beka know if there is something that **needs attention**.
- Please use either blue painter's tape or masking tape on the walls.
- Please give your room a "once-over" before you leave, making sure lights are off, windows are closed, the CD player is off, toys are picked up, and the room is restored.
- Leave your offering containers out. Someone from the CM staff will happily take care of this for you.

## CLASSROOM PLACEMENT:

- **Elementary children** who are in kindergarten through grade 5 join a classroom equal to their grade in school or homeschool.
- **Preschool children** are grouped as follows: Kids who are 2, 3, 4, or in Pre-K are divided according to their **age in the summer**. We also have classrooms for infants and 1 year olds.
- Children are **moved to the next grade level each June**. We ask parents to communicate with us if an alternate plan is necessary.

## WHEN A CHILD CRIES:

- Understand this is **common**.
- Ask if the child has a **comforting item**.
- **Assure the parent** we will call them if their child does not calm down. Remind the parent to have their cell phone with them and on vibrate.
- After comforting the child for a few minutes, try to **attract him to activities** going on in the room. Bubbles can also be a great distraction.
- Walking the child in a stroller, looking out a window, singing, or even leaving the child alone for a few minutes can help.
- You can **call or find Joy or Beka for help**. We work with parents and honor their wishes about how long to let a child cry.
- If a child is not settling down and disturbing the rest of the class, **call the parent's cell phone** as printed on the nametag.

## MISSIONS:

- The Chapel has a **strong commitment to Missions** that extends through Sunday morning, Awana, VBS, and all of our ministries for children.
- In our Sunday morning program, we support **a new mission project every quarter**. The entire children's offering supports this project. A Missions coordinator introduces and teaches about each project throughout each 13 week quarter.
- **Display the information sheet** provided in your classroom.
- **Each week**, spend a few minutes **talking about** this project with your class and **pray regularly** about the people in the country we are highlighting. Include this as part of your regular class prayer time.
- **Pray** that some of our Chapel children are chosen by the Lord to serve Him in this way through our emphasis on missions education.

## **CLASSROOM RULES:**

- Each class is encouraged to decide their own rules near the first week of the year. Review them frequently. Use the following options as a guide, but feel free to modify them for your personality and specific class.
- It is important for kids to know what you expect of them, and this leads to better behavior in general.
- Kids are told enough about things they can't do, so these rules are stated positively and focus on things they CAN do. They are empowering statements that describe the behavior we expect.

### **1. I can listen**

Listening is very important. With a statement like “I can listen,” the kids know they are expected to listen, and they are also making a positive statement to describe their behavior.

### **2. I can learn**

No matter what age or learning level of your kids, the simple fact is, learning is one of the main reasons they came to see you. Yes they expect to have fun, but if they walk away and have not learned, what have you really accomplished? Statement 1 and 2 go closely together—if your kids listen, they will probably learn, since that is your goal overall. By making a positive statement such as “I can learn” the kids know up front that you will be teaching, and they are getting themselves prepared.

### **3. I can stay safe**

A common rule says, “keep your hands and feet to yourselves.” This is great, but also very limiting. It does not stop anyone from climbing on chairs, or running. A statement like “I can stay safe” puts responsibility on the kids. Take time to discuss some unsafe behaviors and agree we will not do those things, nor will we do anything else that does not seem to be safe. It fits well with the theme of empowering statements.

#### **4. I can show respect**

We all know that kids can be respectful. Sometimes they need to be reminded of what respectful behavior looks like. A positive statement to begin the morning starts the morning with a respectful attitude. Respect is listening. Respect is not talking to your friends, because then they can't hear. Respect is not making fun of someone. Whatever you want respect to look like, make a simple reminder. With a statement like "I can show respect" your kids are being set up with what is expected of them, as well as they are empowering themselves to be respectful.

#### **5. I can participate**

The definition of participation changes based on what activity you are doing. Basically, participating means doing what you should be doing, when you are supposed to do it. If it is song time, you should sing. If it is game time, you should play or cheer. If it is group time, you should listen and participate in discussion. If it is lesson time, you should be paying attention. A statement like "I can participate" sets up the kids to know they should participate. Their engagement should go up when you introduce this as one of your rules!

#### **6. I can have fun!**

With a statement like this up front, there are benefits to following all the other statements. While part of the goal is that the kids learn something, it is just as important that they have fun. A statement like "I can have fun" does 2 things—lets them know they will have fun, and lets them know it is OK for them to have fun.

Whether you use these rules (or statements) with your group or not is not as important as having a set of rules that explains your expectations. By explaining what you expect up front, you pave the way for a better behavior and a better morning, since there are no surprises, from you or for them. It is a win win for everyone.

(Rules adapted from <http://kidzmatter.com/5-rules-for-kids-ministry>)

## **MINISTERING TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

At The Chapel we are committed to reaching out to families—all families. We consider it a great privilege to minister to a family with special needs.

The CM staff collaborates with each family to determine how we can best meet the needs of each individual child. We acknowledge that there will be children we are not equipped to accommodate. We prayerfully evaluate each situation with the safety of all as our top priority.

We have **buddies available** to assist a child in the classroom on Sunday morning. This buddy is always with other adults.

Contact the CM staff member who is on duty if you ever need help or have any questions. We take turns covering so that at least one of us is available during each hour.

### **Confidentiality is expected.**

- Please **talk privately, with Joy or Beka** when addressing any concerns.
- Comments and concerns are to be discussed away from the child and other adults.
- Teachers are asked to **keep all conversations with parents positive**. A CM staff member will talk privately with family members if necessary. This protects you, the child, and the family. It also allows the CM staff to develop a plan with the family that best meets the needs of the child.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE:

If disruptive behavior occurs, the following steps should be taken.

### 1. First occurrence:

Make eye contact and say the child's name lovingly yet firmly. State what you want the child to do.

### 2. Subsequent occurrences:

Say the child's name and again state what you want the child to do. Give a warning that explains the consequence if the student chooses to continue.

- a. Switch seating or have another teacher sit near student.
- b. Move the student a short distance from the rest of the group.
- c. Remove student from the classroom. Find the Children's Ministry staff person on duty. Ask the child to explain why you asked him/her to talk to you in the hall or away from the class. Discuss what appropriate behavior is needed to join the group. Ask the student if he/she is willing and ready to cooperate. If not, wait a few minutes and explain it is time to join the group now.
- d. Pray with the child before returning to the group.

### 3. Continued disruptive behavior:

**Be sure to communicate with Joy or Beka.** One of us will contact the parent and discuss the situation with him/her. It may be that a behavior modification plan can be set up for that child during your class.

If any student is injured in the classroom because of the behavior of another student, the student who displayed the overly aggressive behavior (i.e., biting, hitting, pushing down, etc.) must be **immediately removed**. Contact one of the C.M. staff who will discuss the incident with the families of the injured child and the aggressive child. We will also help the teacher fill out an incident report.

## FOR YOUNGER/PRESCHOOL CHILDREN:

- Follow the same basic guidelines as above. However, for very young children (1 or 2 years old), redirecting them to another activity is often effective.
- **Be sure to tell the child what you want them to do.** For example, rather than saying, "don't draw on the table," say "please keep your crayon on the paper."

### FIRST AID KITS:

- Located in the infant nursery, craft room, main information center, and the kitchen.
- **All classrooms have sterile, vinyl gloves** to prevent exposure to bodily fluids such as diaper changing, bloody noses, vomiting, etc. Gloves are located in the drawers closest to white boards and/or changing stations.
- **Epi Pen: do not receive an Epi Pen from a family member.** Allergies are printed on name tags. Reassure the family we will contact them if necessary, but we are not responsible for administering an Epi Pen.

### TECHNOLOGY NEEDS:

- Let us know **in advance** if you would like a cable to **connect your smart phone or one of our laptops to a TV.** It usually works best to **use a Chapel laptop** because it is already set up to sync with our wifi.
- Sunday morning is **NOT** the time to ask for help with something you brought from home and want to use that day. Please come in during the week to do a “test run” to verify something will work.

### CRAFT ROOM:

- Feel free to check out the craft room for **basic materials** to use in your classroom. Many miscellaneous items are stored there including cups, construction paper, glue, paint, feathers, beads, and paper bags.
- If you need any supplies, please ask us. **If we don't have what you need, we can usually get it for you with enough advance notice.**
- **Sunday morning is NOT the time to ask** for craft items or last minute supplies as our focus needs to be on Chapel families. However, you are always welcome to help yourself.

## SNACK TIME:

- We supply snacks and encourage **all preschool and kindergarten classes** to have a snack. It is optional for older classrooms.
- Allergies are printed on nametags.
- **Include the children in snack preparation.** Allow them to take turns pass out napkins and cups, to help clean up, etc. Use a jobs chart to keep track so each child has a turn.
- Suggested procedure: have children wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Pass out napkins, then cups, **pray**, then pass out snack and pour water. Encourage children to say “yes please” and “thank you.”
- **Sit with the children.** This is a great opportunity to get to know them better, to discuss the Missions for the quarter, and to review the Bible lesson. You can also give a discussion prompt like “what is your favorite food?” and encourage children to take turns listening to each other.
- Schedule snack time **immediately after the lesson so you can review** what they learned.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN:

- Please **be familiar with the evacuation route that is posted in your classroom.** ABF classes are assigned to assist with infants and toddlers should we ever need to evacuate the building.
- We have **specific procedures in place** for emergencies. If this is not communicated to you or you are unsure, please see Joy or Beka for further training.
- Windows should be **closed**, lights turned **off**, and your door closed upon exiting.
- **1 teacher should be at the front of the line, the other teacher at the back** of the line.
- Be sure to take a **head count**.
- Take your **attendance sign-in notebook or chart** with you.
- Children are released to a family member **ONLY** when they give you their child’s **matching security label**.
- **If you do not have a security label, do not release a child.** Send a teen helper to get Joy or Beka or a staff member.

## CHILD PROTECTION:

- **Prayer** is our 1st line of defense. Pray regularly for the safety of our children and for our church.
- **2 Adult Rule**—Each class is staffed with at least 2 adults. **There must be at least 2 adults with a child at all times.**
- Adults who work regularly with children are screened and consent to a **criminal background check.**
- **Teen helpers** are usually serving in preschool classes. If you need a CM staff member, **call us on our cell phones** or send a teen helper to find us. Either Joy or Beka is on duty each hour. We walk the halls and are available.
- **If you suspect child abuse, you must report it.** We have a policy in place to deal with this. Contact Joy or Beka immediately. Do not share with another Chapel person. **Confidentiality is of utmost importance.**
- As an adult regularly working in children’s ministries at The Chapel, you are required to **watch our “Children at Risk” video at least once.** Please see Joy to schedule a time to view it if you miss a training meeting. This video is less than 30 minutes and will be shown at the conclusion of each CM meeting.

## BATHROOM POLICY:

- Only female workers change diapers—not men or teens.
- **There must be 2 adults with a child at all times.**
- We have bathrooms in all of our preschool—1st grade classrooms. Female teachers may assist with outer clothing. Teachers are NOT allowed to wipe a child. If a child needs help, notify the parent by calling the phone number as printed on the name tag.
- When a 2nd grade student has to use the bathroom take the entire class to the bathroom to adhere to our 2 adult policy. Or, if Joy, Beka, or a member of our security team is available, they may walk a child to the bathroom, wait in the hall, and walk the child back to class. Leave the main door of the bathroom open if possible.
- A 3rd-5th grader may take a buddy of the same gender without an adult.

## POLICY FOR TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEOS OF CHILDREN:

No photographs or videos may be taken or posted on social media unless parents sign a consent form. The consent form is available from the Children’s ministry staff. It is usually best to avoid taking pictures or videos of children in our care.