



# **Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures**

Updated September 2015

Cross Creek's Vision & Values	3
Policies	4
Classrooms	6
Curriculum	7
Parent Responsibility	8
Volunteers	10
Classroom Management Policies	13
Positive Classroom Management and Discipline	15
A Summary of the Gospel	17

## Cross Creek's Vision & Values

We are a community called by God's grace to engage North Florida with the transforming power of the gospel – to bring restoration spiritually, socially, and culturally – from St. Johns to the nations for God's glory.

- **Renewing Grace.** In a world of brokenness, Cross Creek seeks to be a place that fathoms God's relentless, pursuing love. The transforming power of the Gospel drives our worship, prayers, and desire for a deeper knowledge of Scripture.
- **Redemptive Community.** In a world of disconnection, Cross Creek seeks to build community that is authentic and honest about life's struggles. The Gospel builds healthy connection through life groups, discipleship, marriage building, and nurture of our children.
- **Relentless Mission.** In a world of self-absorption, Cross Creek seeks to be Kingdom-driven through relentless acts of mercy, grace and compassion. The Gospel brings health and healing to the hurting of our community and the world.

The Children's Ministry seeks to encourage & support families in their commitment to the church and community by facilitating, discipling, and offering practical support to them as they apply Cross Creek's values and beliefs to their families.

*Much of the material in this manual has been adapted from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC, NY.*

# Policies

## Wellness

1. Children must be symptom free from the following illness without medication for 24 hours before entering the classroom:
  - Fever of 100 or higher
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Conjunctivitis (pink eye or other eye infection)
  - Rash
  - Nasal drainage that is green or yellow
  - Sore throat
  - Open sores
  - Cold
  - Excessive coughing
  - Lice
2. If a child develops any of these symptoms while in class, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If a parent cannot be reached, the child will stay outside of the class with a ministry volunteer.
3. Security tags for children with allergies will be marked accordingly. Parents should also discuss allergies with teachers at drop-off.

## Injury and First Aid

1. We can administer *only* Band-Aids and Ice Packs.
2. For children with severe allergies requiring an epi-pen, please give it to the area supervisor.

## Safety and Security

We believe that it is of utmost importance that our children are nurtured in a safe and responsible environment. We also desire that our staff and volunteers be protected from any false allegations of misconduct.

1. Each new volunteer in our ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. Each volunteer is required to read and agree to follow the stipulations in this manual regarding Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures.
3. We hold comprehensive teacher trainings to (1) ensure our volunteers understand and follow our policies and to (2) enable them to nurture our children.

4. We have a detailed security procedure for picking up a child outlined in the Parent Responsibility section of this manual.
5. There is a Two-Volunteer rule in place for all classrooms. This means there should *always* be two volunteers, at least one of whom is a woman, present while children are there. This is to protect the children from the possibility of abuse and to protect the adults from false accusations. If there is a situation in which there is only one adult, the door to the room should be *open*.

### **Restroom and Diapering**

1. Parents are encouraged to take their toilet-trained child to the restroom prior to dropping him/her off in class.
2. Only women should take children to the restroom.
3. Only women or the parent of a child may change diapers.
4. All diapers should be checked and changed if necessary before children are picked up.
5. Adults must wash their own hands as well as the children's hands (at a sink or with hand sanitizer) after going to the restroom or changing a diaper.
6. Supplies should always be kept within reach of the changing table. Never leave a child alone on the table, even if just to reach for something.

### **Evacuation**

1. If the fire alarm sounds while parents are in the service, they must follow the evacuation instructions out of the auditorium. Parents flooding the children's area will cause congestion and prevent the children from being able to safely evacuate the building. Parents should pick up their children at outside evacuation areas. Evacuating staff and volunteers will not return to the children's wing until an all clear has been given by the fire department or fire safety staff.
2. All volunteers are aware of the plan to follow in case of an emergency. They will be responsible for getting everyone out of the building and helping people to follow the evacuation plans in their designated areas. Volunteers should take attendance sheets with them to the outside evacuation area in order to account for children.
3. Make sure that no one is left in the areas where you are serving. Close the doors as you exit rooms, but do not lock them. Move briskly to outside evacuation areas.

# Classrooms

The Children's Ministry has classes available for the following ages:

- **Nursery:** Infants through young 3's
- **Preschool:** 3 years through Pre-K / Kindergarten, if potty trained
- **Younger Kids:** Grades 1 through 2
- **Older Kids:** Grades 3 through 5

The Nursery opens 10 min prior to each service. Preschool and Elementary age children sit in the service with their parents until dismissed to their classes.

The welcome and check-in areas are located in the lobby. Parents must check in their children prior to leaving them in a classroom.

Generally, we promote children the first Sunday in August, with the exception of infant, walkers, and two's.

# Curriculum

## The Gospel Project for Kids

The big picture of God's story.

“At last! A Bible study resource that shows how Christ fits into the entire gospel story, pre-creation to eternity. And where each one of us fits into it, too. The three-year chronological timeline ensures that no matter when you jump in, you won't miss a thing.

The Gospel Project for Kids is a Christ-centered Bible study resource that follows a chronological timeline of Bible events—presenting the story of redemption through Jesus like kids have never seen it before! Each week, these stories come to life through video, music, activities, and more.”

### The Specifics

- Three-year chronological teaching plan for Preschool, Younger Kids and Older Kids
- Available in digital (customizable) or print format– quarterly or short-term

### Each lesson includes:

- Videos that bring Bible stories to life
- Discussion-starter videos for Younger and Older Kids
- Music for all ages available
- Coloring pages for Preschool and Younger Kids
- Fun-filled activity sheets
- Hands-on activities
- Low-prep lesson plans
- Customizable parent resources
- Additional hour of worship resources available

*“From infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15*

# Parent Responsibility

For the safety and well-being of your child, please adhere to the policies and procedures that are outlined in this entire manual.

## Alerts and Requests

1. If your child has an allergies or special conditions, please explain them to the volunteer leading your child's class. For allergies, make sure that a note about the allergy has been made during check-in. An indication will appear on the child's name tag.
2. Alert the teachers if your child is potty training. Please take potty-trained children to the restroom before dropping them off in class.
3. It is often most beneficial to quickly drop off your child, as this reduces separation anxiety and helps the child more quickly adjust to the classroom.
4. Drop off your child at the door rather than entering the classroom. This reduces confusion and crowding.
5. Whenever possible, allow one parent to drop off and pick up your child in order to prevent crowding.
6. We ask that only children's ministry volunteers and parents with a security tag (matching the child's name tag) enter the children's hallway.

## Items You Bring

1. Label all of your child's belongings, including diaper bags, cups, bottles, pacifiers, etc.
2. Please leave all toys and dolls at home as they can get lost or cause other children to be upset.
3. All bottles must be *pre-mixed*. Nursery workers are not allowed to mix formula for health and sanitation reasons.

## Tags

1. Every parent must acquire a name tag for their child and its corresponding security tag prior to entering the childcare area. This is a security measure to prevent unauthorized people from accessing children.
2. Affix the name tag to the child's back. Parents must retain the security tag as it is required for admittance in to the hallway and pick up. This security number may also be used to page parents in the sanctuary if their child is in need of extra attention.

### **Security for Child Pick Up**

1. As mentioned above, each child receives a name tag and security tag prior to class. Parents must retain the security tag. It allows parents access to the children's hallway and to pick up their children from class. No adult can pick up a child without the corresponding security tag without direct consent and supervision of a staff member.

### **Volunteering**

1. We encourage parents to volunteer in our classes. We request that all parents volunteer in class at least three times per year.
2. When you volunteer, please sign in when you check in your child.

# Volunteers

## Requirements to Serve

1. Each new volunteer in our ministry is required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check.
2. We hold comprehensive teacher trainings to (1) ensure our volunteers understand and follow our policies and to (2) enable them to nurture our children.
3. Youth under the age of 18 who are working in the nursery or with the children need to be accompanied by an adult volunteer, through permission of the staff and classroom teacher.
4. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by staff and placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.
5. Volunteers are entrusted to teach the children of Cross Creek about the Gospel. We ask that volunteers commit themselves to the responsibility of building a strong, spiritual foundation in the hearts of the children.

## Scheduling

1. Volunteers will communicate with the ministry leadership concerning the schedule.
2. Once the schedule is set, any changes should be made by switching with another team member and notifying the ministry leadership as soon as possible. Team members' contact information is supplied by the supervisor.
3. In case of an emergency that causes the volunteer to run late or be unable to serve, it is imperative to call or text ministry leadership.
4. When a volunteer is no longer able to serve with the Children's Ministry, please let the ministry leadership know as soon as possible to ensure enough time needed to find a replacement.

## General

1. Volunteers must be knowledgeable about and adhere to applicable policies and procedures in this manual.
2. Volunteers are not permitted to have any personal drink (other than water) or food during class.
3. Personal belongings must remain off of the floor and out of reach of children.
4. Phones are to be on vibrate and may not be used in the classroom except in the case of an emergency.

5. Any special treats or activities involving food outside of the scheduled curriculum must be approved by ministry leadership.

### **Arrival and Setup**

1. Please remember that tardiness has a domino effect, involving staff, fellow volunteers, children, and families.
2. Sign in upon arrival and take your name tag and lanyard from the check-in desk.
3. Wash your hands before setting up the room.
4. Set out any materials needed for class.
5. Ensure that all tables are wiped clean and toys and supplies are put away neatly in their proper places prior to leaving the room.

### **Snacks**

1. All children's hands must be washed prior to eating a snack.
2. A light snack is provided for Walkers and Two's children (water and goldfish, teddy grahams, cheddar bunnies, etc.).
3. Before handing children snacks, ensure they do not have allergies.
4. Children may have snacks and drinks only when they are seated. Children are not allowed to walk around with snacks or cups due to allergy and sanitation reasons.
5. Cups should be promptly removed once each child has finished.
6. All bottles must be *pre-mixed*. Nursery workers are not allowed to mix formula for health and sanitation reasons.

### **Class Time**

1. Anyone not wearing an approved name tag is not permitted to enter the classroom. *If there is a problem, or you feel uncomfortable asking someone if they are approved, see a member of staff or the ministry leadership team.*
2. One volunteer should welcome children and take attendance while the other engages the other children.
3. Be particularly aware of children with allergies and check all name tags for any indication of allergies or other special needs. Ask parents for further clarification.
4. Review the classroom rules with the children every week. (Refer to the Classroom Management section for details.)
5. Whenever possible, sit on the floor or in a chair with children to interact with them. Being on their eye level helps gain and maintain their attention.
6. Remain in the classroom at all times unless you are leaving to take a child to the restroom.

- 7. Enjoy being with the kids! Remember that this is not babysitting, but ministering to these children and guiding them closer to the Lord.**

### **Departure Procedures**

1. Children must be wearing an approved name tag to enter the classroom. If a child arrives without a name tag, send the parent and child back to the check-in area.
2. When a parent arrives, ask for the child's security tag before releasing the child.  
*This is imperative: do not release a child without having the security tag.*
3. Match the child's attendance number on the roster with the security tag number, and keep the security tag when releasing the child. Turn in rosters and security tags to ministry leadership after the service.
4. After all children have been picked up, tidy your classroom and return your name tag and lanyard to the check-in area.
5. You can listen to the sermon audio online at [crosscreek.us](http://crosscreek.us).

# Classroom Management Policies

## Classroom Rules

1. Obey the Teacher.
2. Listen.
3. Respect Others.
4. Keep Your Hands and Feet to Yourself.

## Proactive Steps for Helping Children in the Classroom

1. Communicate the rules at the beginning of class every Sunday.
2. Make eye contact when speaking to the child.
3. Catch the child being *well behaved*. Use positive reinforcement.
4. Have the child repeat what you have asked them to do.
5. Try to redirect the child if they are doing something they shouldn't be doing.
6. Discipline should always be given in love, not in anger.

## Preventative Actions

1. Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
2. Establish and communicate realistic expectations for children.
3. Focus on positive actions.
4. Be fair and consistent with children.

## Aggressive Behavior

1. Biting, hitting, pushing, scratching, or pulling is considered aggressive behavior.
2. If a child displays any of these behaviors, he or she will be removed from the class and the parent will be notified.

## Discipline Steps

1. Verbal Warning: If possible, *whisper* to the child in order to not draw attention away from the teaching and onto the inappropriate behavior.
2. Remove and Set Apart: Remove the child from the rest of the class. Have him or her sit in a different area of the classroom for a set amount of time or until the child is ready to participate cooperatively.

## Self Evaluation

1. Pay attention to how you feel. If you are stressed, children will sense that. Try to focus on the present moment and the children in front of you rather than outside stresses and circumstances. We only have a short time with these kids each week

to give them our all and teach them about the depth of God's love for them, which we can demonstrate through our actions and our undivided attention. Take a minute away if needed.

2. If you are struggling with a child, pass him or her off to another teacher or volunteer. You are never alone in the classroom, so let those around you help you through the difficult moments.
3. Arrive prepared for the morning, in heart and mind. Arriving on time enables you to have time to prepare for the morning (and get coffee...).

# Positive Classroom Management and Discipline

## 1. Praise the positive and reward good behavior.

Children often learn by modeling behavior. So try, for example, “I love the way Sarah is sitting quietly with her hands in her lap. Great job!” The other children will follow quickly in hopes of being praised in the same way. Praising kids rewards good behavior and reinforces it for the entire class. You may also use rewards, such as: obedient children are the first to receive snacks or art supplies.

## 2. Explain the rules of the class every week.

Children do well when they know what is expected of them. Keep the classroom structure similar from week to week. Having a predictable routine helps kids cope with an environment and understand appropriate behavior.

## 3. Make things fun!

Instead of going into things like cleanup time with a negative approach, such as “I’m so sorry, but we have to put toys away now...”, try addressing it with a positive spin like, “OK, kids, I have a mission for you: do you think we can have all of these toys put away in two minutes?” Or, singing the cleanup song is a fun way to begin and encourage a cleanup routine. Don’t offer too many activity choices for the kids. Switch out the toys so kids do not become bored.

## 4. Talk to a child who is crying.

Engage an upset child with something of interest. Talk to them in a way that distracts them from thinking about their parents and *avoid* saying that Mommy is coming. If absolutely necessary, you can remind them that Mommy and Daddy will come back soon, but do not make that the point of your conversation. For children who are likely to cry, ask their parents about how to best soothe them.

## 5. Incorporate the Gospel when you are correcting a child.

Focus on God’s love for the child and your love for the child. Be specific as you explain that you want him or her to follow directions, be kind to friends, participate, etc. Talk to the child about how it pleases the Lord when we obey Him. Remember that discipline should always be given in love, not in anger.

*“For these commands are a lamp, teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way of life.” Proverbs 6:23*



## A Summary of the Gospel

1. God is the Sovereign Creator of all things.
2. God created people for His glory.
3. Man is sinful.
4. God is Holy, Righteous, and Just. He is right to punish sin.
5. God is also Merciful. He is kind to undeserving sinners.
6. Jesus is God’s Holy and Righteous Son.
7. God put our punishment on Jesus.
8. God offers the free gift of salvation to those who repent and believe in Jesus.
9. Those who trust in Jesus will live to please Him and will receive the promise of eternal life—enjoying God with Him forever.

*“Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.” 1 Peter 3:18*

## Gospel-Centered vs. Morality-Centered Teaching

Morality-Centered Teaching	Gospel-Centered Teaching
You must try for Jesus.	You must trust in Jesus.
What you do.	What Christ has done for you.
Obedience because of obligation/duty.	Obedience because of gratitude/love.
You are the hero of the story.	God is the hero of the story.
The story is about you.	The story is about Jesus.
Aims primarily at action.	Aims primarily at the heart.
Stays small with the story.	Appeals to the big story of redemption.

*Yancey C. Arrington, Gospel-Centered Curriculum*

Our volunteers are a valuable part of our ministry. Volunteers are always needed. If you are not currently serving in the Children’s Ministry and would like to be, please contact the Children’s Ministry leadership team and/or the church office.

The information in this manual should help you understand our role in ministering to your child. If you have any questions, please contact our ministry leadership team and/or church office. We welcome you to the Children’s Ministry at Cross Creek Church!