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Kids & Families: What We Believe

The well-being and faith development of our children matters dearly to God, and it matters dearly to us, as a church, as well. We believe kids are full participants in our community and their needs and concerns are valid and should be valued by the influential adults/mentors in their life.

The reality is that these children depend on us—moms and dads, and spiritual aunties and uncles—to pass on our experience of knowing, loving and serving God. This is an important and humbling responsibility. And so we look to God and to one another as we seek to answer the question: “What is it going to take to raise up the next generation of CrossWalkers?”

What follows is the CrossWalk mission statement, a list of what we believe, as well as what we are striving to do to respond faithfully to this challenge:

The mission of the CrossWalk Kids ministry is to come alongside parents in guiding our children to become followers of Jesus, participating with the CrossWalk community on our common mission to “Walk with God, walk with others, and go be Jesus”?

CROSSWALK COMMUNITY CHURCH EXISTS TO HELP PEOPLE CONTINUALLY DISCOVER AND DEVELOP A LIFE CHANGING, WORLD IMPACTING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AS MODELED BY JESUS CHRIST.

OUR MISSION

CrossWalk Community Church exists to help people continually discover and develop a life changing, world impacting relationship with God as modeled by Jesus Christ. As described in CrossWalk’s Belief Statement, this ongoing, daily choice leads us to a life where we learn to stretch our understanding of God, kneel in service to other, grace people with the presence of God, walk with people as an expression of incarnation, connect with God intentionally through a variety of practices, and participate in the resurrection now and in the future as we seek to restore life where death has loomed.

WHAT WE VALUE:

WALK WITH GOD.

This movement is about connecting directly to God, usually in community. CrossWalk Sunday gatherings are meant help connect people with God, which is why regular attendance works for so many people. Of course, we can deepen our relationship with God personally, too, wherever and whenever we want. But there is something special about being together and seeking God collectively. It’s powerful.

WALK WITH OTHERS.

We are not made to live all by ourselves. We need each other to love and be loved. Groups offer the opportunity to learn from peers, deepen relationships, and have fun! CrossWalk has a wide variety of groups that meet for different reasons at different times – we’ll help you find a good fit.

GO BE JESUS.

We only get so far in our relationship with God when we’re mainly looking to meet our own needs. When we actually do something that makes a difference where its needed, our faith really grows. Why? Because that’s what Jesus did—he served a world in need. When we do what Jesus did, we experience what Jesus experienced – more and more of God. So, we look for opportunities to care for people all around us, and even half a world way.
WHAT WE BELIEVE:

WE CHOOSE.
If there is one word that describes Jesus and the Way of life he modeled, that word is love. Love of God. Love for all of creation. We dedicate ourselves to Jesus’ Way of love, freely committing to follow his lead. We choose to see God, biblical texts, ourselves and the world through Jesus’ example. This covenant leads to great personal and global hope, and also leads us to flip the tables of the status quo wherever destructive beliefs and systems exist. We celebrate this free choice, and lovingly encourage others to consider the same new way of life we embrace. What follows is what this covenant looks like... John 1-2

WE STRETCH.
To pursue a relationship with God is a choice to be continually stretched to new ways of thinking and being. When Jesus was with Nicodemus, John the Baptist, and the Samaritan woman at the well, he stretched their thinking with love and respect, even though it required them to let go of the familiar. Therefore, we choose to stretch as God grows in us, and we lovingly help others stretch toward God as God works through us. John 3-4

WE KNEEL.
Jesus served humbly without discrimination. He served enemies of the state, touched untouchables, healed those who were broken, and fed those who were hungry. Therefore, we choose to share God’s love by kneeling to serve as Jesus modeled, bringing healing to our world. John 5-7

WE GRACE.
Jesus was famous for lavishly extending grace to everyone, but especially to those who were feeling condemned. Be it an adulterous woman caught in the act or a blind man convinced that he was beyond grace, Jesus acted with and spoke grace into their lives in order to free them from condemnation in all its forms. Therefore, we choose to lift up those who experience shame, to love instead of judge. John 8-9

WE INCARNATE.
God’s love was perhaps most profoundly expressed in the incarnation, when God entered the full human experience with us in the person of Jesus. He loved deeply by being intimately present with people in their grief, joy, shame, pain, filth, denial, and even their betrayal. Therefore, we choose to welcome God into our darkest corners, and as those who are being indwelled by God’s Spirit, we choose to live deeply with people in the same intimate places Jesus chose to dwell. John 10-13

WE CONNECT.
Jesus’ Way kept him connected to the heartbeat of God. Jesus fostered an intimate, personal relationship with God by practicing a variety of disciplines (solitude, prayer, gathering for worship, service, community life) that allowed God’s presence to guide and direct his steps. Therefore, we choose to be so connected that the image of God is clearly reflected in our thoughts, passion, and mission. John 14-17

WE RESURRECT.
Jesus’ resurrection demonstrates God’s power over death, and the possibility for new life now. After denying knowing Jesus three times, Peter experienced resurrection as the darkness of his shame and fear gave way to new life when he was reinstated in his ministry. Therefore, we choose to allow God’s power to bring new life wherever darkness resides, and we encourage others to do the same. John 18-21
Being Involved in CrossWalk Kids Ministry: How it works

Those involved:
Pastor/Community Care Pastor
CrossWalk Kids Ministry Director
Anchor teachers (WeeCare and Youth)
CrossWalk Kids Parents/Volunteers

The responsibilities of those who serve with our children are described below.

Pastor/Community Care Pastor
- Gives oversight to the Children’s Ministry environments for CrossWalk Church.
- Meets regularly with the Director/Anchor teachers
- Schedules meetings and trainings
- Chooses curriculum
- Shares vision and equips parents and others to disciple our children and provides support.

CrossWalk Kids Ministry Director
- Meet with all new Parents/Volunteers one-on-one to review safety & security policies, risk management policy, and expectations
- Create a rotational schedule for those serving in each classroom
- Organizes/manages list of all children, parents, and contact info
- Provides snacks each week
- Purchase the necessary materials (keep receipts and submit them to the office for reimbursement) for the crafts and/or props and prepare them, as needed, so they are ready for use
- Have the supplies in the classroom and ready for the teachers NO LATER than 9:30 a.m. each Sunday
- Provide support to Anchor teachers & Parent/Volunteer

Anchor teachers
As of now, two of our age-specific rooms (WeeCare and Youth) have an Anchor teacher who attends each week, organizes and provides support to the Parent/Volunteer in their group.
- Meet with all new Parents/Volunteers one-on-one to review safety & security policies, risk management policy, and expectations
- Serve in the rotation each week
- Return all unused materials to the storage closet and clean up the room (spraying down toys, vacuum, etc.)
- File used lesson, extra coloring sheets/leaflets/parent handouts, in dated accordion folder
- Notify the Director of any supplies that are lacking in the classrooms, schedule changes, issues, etc.

WeeCare (Birth-PreK) Anchor teacher & Parent/Volunteer
- Be in contact with the Director to get the materials you need for your designated weekend (Director will email lesson if requested, and will email to remind you of your scheduled service days.)
- Arrive by 9:40
- Prepare to teach using the materials provided to you by the Director
- Greet children at the door high five, hug, knuckles (should be child directed), welcoming them. Make sure all children are signed in by their parents and a contact number is included.
- Adhere to morning routine and lead in welcoming, storytelling/lesson, response/art activities, snack and blessing.
• Notify Director of any issues that arise, schedule changes, etc.

• Pray for the kids you teach and consider checking in on them from time to time, even when you’re not the assigned teacher for the day. We believe kids are full participants in our community and their needs and concerns are valid and should be valued by the influential adults/mentors in their life.

**KidsCrossing (K-3rd) Parent/Volunteer**

- Be in contact with the Director to get the materials you need for your designated weekend (Director will email lesson if requested, and will email to remind you of your scheduled service days.)
- Arrive by 9:40
- Prepare to teach using the materials provided to you by the Director
- Greet children at the door high five, hug, knuckles (should be child directed), welcoming them. Make sure all children are signed in by their parents and a contact number is included.
- Adhere to morning routine and lead in welcoming, storytelling/lesson, response/art activities, snack and blessing.
- Notify Director of any issues that arise, schedule changes, etc.
- Pray for the kids you teach and consider checking in on them from time to time, even when you’re not the assigned teacher for the day. We believe kids are full participants in our community and their needs and concerns are valid and should be valued by the influential adults/mentors in their life.

**Youth (4th-8th) Anchor teacher & Parent/Volunteer**

- Be in contact with the Director to get the materials you need for your designated weekend (Director will email lesson if requested, and will email to remind you of your scheduled service days.)
- Arrive by 9:40
- Prepare to teach using the materials provided to you by the Director
- Greet children at the door high five, hug, knuckles (should be child directed), welcoming them. Make sure all children are signed in by their parents and a contact number is included.
- Adhere to morning routine and lead in welcoming, storytelling/lesson, response/art activities, snack and blessing.
- Notify Director of any issues that arise, schedule changes, etc.
- Pray for the kids you teach and consider checking in on them from time to time, even when you’re not the assigned teacher for the day. We believe kids are full participants in our community and their needs and concerns are valid and should be valued by the influential adults/mentors in their life.
CrossWalk Kids Curriculum
Aside from, and in combination with our Sunday lessons, we aim to instill our beliefs and values of choosing, stretching, kneeling, grace, incarnation, connection, and resurrection to and through our children.

We currently use SparkHouse for our Sunday curriculum in all 3 classrooms. In WeeCare, we use lessons geared towards 2-3 year olds. A Bible story is read and discussed in a manner that the children can understand. We aim to hold their attention by keeping the lesson short, but repeating the main theme throughout the following art activities and free play.

Core Truths:
God made me.
God loves me.
Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

In KidsCrossing we also incorporate an art activity and free play, but the lesson is a little longer and age appropriated for a middle ground of grades 1st-2nd.

Core Truths:
I can trust God no matter what.
I need to make the wise choice.
I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

The Youth classroom uses an older workbook for the lesson plans and a video is included. We read passages from the Bible that coordinate with the lesson and use the workbook for discussion prompts. Often times our dialogue opens up and we are able to elaborate on the themes with current events and life happenings. Free play is included and sometimes art if we are helping the younger kids with projects, or working in outreach.

Core Truths:
I am created to pursue a relationship with my Creator.
I belong to Jesus and should define who I am by what He says.
I exist every day to demonstrate God’s love to a broken world.

In our 2 younger classrooms (WeeCare and KidsCrossing), parents will be given a Family Sheet that outlines what lesson your child received that day. It contains great prompts to help open family discussion and reflection.

For more information on SparkHouse, please visit www.wearesparkhouse.org.

Hard Limits
As we all know, some stories in the Bible touch on subjects that make us uncomfortable. Prostitution, murder, conception and circumcision to name a few. When such subjects come up in the classroom, they will be briefly described and then the lesson will move forward. If a child has further questions and wants more detail on the subject, we will direct them to open conversation with their parents. The Anchor teacher or a Parent/Volunteer may also notify the parent during pick-up that their child has questions. If you are uncomfortable talking about certain issues with your child, or would like help reinforcing or explaining instances/topics with your child please ask an Anchor Teacher, Director, or Pastors. Any and all would be more than happy to help.
Safety and Security Issues

Safety and security are essentials for a healthy learning environment. Here are a few guidelines to protect our kids, you, and our church.

Room Ratios—Per California law, there must be 1 teacher or Parent/Volunteer to every 4 children in our WeeCare classroom. If more than 8 children are present, the Anchor teacher must call for an additional Parent/Volunteer from our alternates list. A list of all Parents/Volunteers will be available in each classroom.

Inconsolable Children—if a crying child is inconsolable for more than 10 minutes, a teacher or Parent/Volunteer from the classroom will retrieve the parent/guardian from the worship gathering to help.

Bathroom Runs—Our WeeCare classroom is equipped with a bathroom that includes a child-sized toiled. All children must be accompanied to the restroom by an adult who will check to make certain the restroom is unoccupied and will then prop the restroom door open and wait outside the stall for the child to finish. If the child needs additional assistance, the teacher may re-enter and offer assistance. More about this is included in the diaper change/potty assistance waiver form below.

General Security—Children are not permitted to wander the facility during a worship gathering. They need to be in their appropriate classroom or seated with their parents in the worship gathering.

Medical Procedure—Typically, an injury can be treated with a little loving attention, a cool cloth, a little first aid cream and a band-aid. First aid kits are in every classroom. An injured child will be treated, an injury report form should be filled out and parents should be notified so they know what happened and how the “ouch” was treated. No over-the-counter or prescription medicine will be dispensed to the injured child. For serious injuries, see Serious Injury procedures.

Wellness Policy—Parents are requested to please refrain from bringing their child to a classroom or activity if the child has a fever or a rash, green running nose, red swollen and watery eyes, vomiting, cold or flu, throat/ear infection, or if diarrhea or any other contagious disease is present, or has been present in the previous 24 hours.

Biting—If any child exhibits persistent biting behavior while in the classroom, his/her parent(s) will be asked to remove that child from that classroom until such behavior ceases.
Behavioral Expectations

The mission of the CrossWalk Kids Ministry is to come alongside parents in guiding our children to become followers of Jesus, participating with the CrossWalk community on our common mission to “Walk with God, walk with others, and go be Jesus”.

Each child is expected to be responsible for their own behavior and to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Jesus modeled healthy relationships and taught us how to live in love and peace with others.

As we seek to create a loving, forgiving and inclusive environment, it is important to keep in mind that when a child is consistently preventing other children in the class from learning, we must provide gentle boundaries. Therefore, when a child is disruptive, the following methods for discipline will be applied:

- **Time out/regroup:** this is separation from the group for a period of time until the child regains control of his/her behavior. The goal is for the child to rejoin the group. Time out/regroup is intended to interrupt and correct inappropriate behavior, rather than to be punitive.
- **Apology, possibly including action:** If one child has harmed another child, or his/her belongings, the child responsible needs to make appropriate reparation. This will also include an apology.
- **Loss of privilege:** If a time out is ineffective in correcting inappropriate behavior, or, if an item/activity is misused, a teacher may suspend a child’s participation in the activity for a reasonable length of time.
- **Removal from classroom:** If inappropriate behavior continues after the above 3 methods have been applied, a teacher or Parent/Volunteer will walk the child into the worship area to join their parent/guardian.
- **Parent-Child-Teacher Conference:** If inappropriate behavior continues, or if the misbehavior is serious or egregious, the teacher will also need to alert the parent(s). The goals of this meeting should include clarification of the misbehavior and parameters for expected change of behavior.

Teachers should remember to discipline the action and not the child. Reinforce love after discipline. Reassure the child that you enjoy having him or her in class, but you need his/her cooperation. If the child cries, the teacher may ask permission to give them a hug.
Physical Contact
We desire to create a safe place for all of our children. Comfort and affirmation can be experienced through physical touch, and so loving and well-intended physical touch is encouraged. Sadly, there are those who would pervert these loving gestures. That is why these guidelines have been established. Failure of a teacher to maintain these guidelines may result in dismissal from the ministry position.

Physical contact with children should be “appropriate” and only in the presence of others. Appropriate touching should be limited to handshakes, “high fives”, brief hugs, or a brief touch on the shoulder or head.

Workers should not have children sit on their laps while the room is darkened, the door closed or when other workers are not present.

Serious Injuries
These would involve broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury, and should be treated as follows:

1. Keep calm and keep children and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly to assure the child.
2. Do not move the injured child and do not leave them.
3. Send a fellow teacher to contact the parent(s) and advise them of the child’s situation.
4. If needed the teacher will contact 911 and any medical personnel available at the worship gathering. The teacher will refer to the parents for details on doctor or hospital preferences.
5. The teacher should write out a report, using the Incident Report Form, of what happened immediately following the emergency.
Risk Management Policy
All teachers (including Parents/Volunteers) will be required to complete a screening prior to participating in children's ministry.

Background checks/fingerprinting will be mandatory for all Anchor teachers and Parents/Volunteers. This is for the health and safety of our children and community.

When a new Parent/Volunteer meets with their Anchor teacher or the Director, the risk management policy will be presented in full. The instructional objective of CrossWalk Community Church is to ensure that all adults have a functional knowledge of issues pertaining to physical and sexual abuse and comprehension of this policy.

CrossWalk’s Risk Management Policy:

1. Individuals who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse will not volunteer service in any church sponsored activity or program for children or youth.
2. Individual survivors of childhood sexual abuse or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. Counseling options are available.
3. Teachers will immediately report to their classroom coordinator any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate as required by State law.
4. CrossWalk Community Church will request criminal background checks on all teachers that are involved with children or youth on a regular basis.

Child Abuse defined
Child abuse or neglect can take a variety of forms, including the infliction of physical or mental injury; sexual abuse; excessive corporal punishment; the exposure of a child to risk of injury; the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care; the failure to provide minimal care or supervision; abandonment or desertion.

Any person having “reason to believe” that a child has been abused or neglected is required by law to report such knowledge or suspicion to Child Protection Service within 24 hours and CPS is required by law to investigate all such reports. In California, failure to report is a crime, which carries criminal penalties and also subjects the offender to liability for damages caused by failure to report.

Sexual Abuse
This section has some very specific and graphic wording related to recognizing the signs of sexual abuse. It is placed in this manual to inform our volunteers and to heighten the environment for safety among our children. In addition, the terminology in this section is one that is used by many churches across the nation. Although this is important information to read and understand, its content is not appropriate for children.

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse
Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is at least four years older than the victim. It includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. Types of abuse that involve touching includes: fondling, oral, genital and anal penetration, intercourse, and forcible rape. Types of abuse that do not involve touching includes: verbal comments, pornographic videos, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, allowing children to witness sexual activity.
Symptoms of Molestation
Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. If any of the following signs are exhibited, a church worker should consider sexual assault a possibility and begin keeping written records of behavior. If at any time the situation becomes serious, the church worker should immediately begin the reporting process outlined below.

Physical signs of abuse:
- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

Behavioral Signs of Abuse
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from activities and friends

Verbal Signs of Abuse:
- “I don’t like __________ .”
- “________ does things to me when we’re alone.”
- “I don’t like to be alone with ________.”
- “________ fooled around with me.”

Important Note: Remember that it is not a Parent/Volunteer’s job to question whether abuse has occurred or not. A Parent/Volunteer is only responsible for reporting their suspicions.

In the event of an allegation, the Director, Anchor teacher and the Pastor and Community Care Pastor will implement the enclosed Reporting and Response Procedure.

Reporting Procedure
1. Suspicious behavior is observed.
2. Orally notify Director, Anchor teacher or a Pastor immediately, if possible, but at least within 24 hours.
3. Reporter and CrossWalk leadership decides if a written report should be filed.
4. Reporter files a written report. Copies are made for Reporter, Director, Anchor teacher, Pastors and CrossWalk leadership. (The process may be stopped at any point upon the concurrence of the Pastors, Director, Anchor teacher, and other leadership.)
5. Director, Anchor teacher, Pastors and the CrossWalk leadership investigate case and call the Family & Child Services in accordance with State law.
6. Pastors and CrossWalk leadership then notify:
   - The Police or Human Services
   - The Church’s Insurance Agent
   - The Church’s Lawyer
7. If the allegation involves a church worker, the suspected church worker is suspended from duties until the investigation is complete and a decision is rendered.
8. Every step in the process should be carefully documented.
9. Remember that every step in the process must be kept confidential.
Release of Liability
Diaper Changing/Potty Assistance

During church service children in the WeeCare class may require a diaper change or help using the potty. If for any reason during your absence, your child needs to be changed, or needs help in the potty, this form gives the Anchor Teacher and Parent/Volunteers permission to do so.

Diaper creams and ointments will not be applied to any child while in WeeCare. Even if verbal permission is granted by the parents/guardians. Only basic diaper changes will be administered.

Assistance in the potty includes walking the child into the bathroom, waiting outside the door for the child to finish, and help with wiping, and pulling down/pulling up pants if needed.

More information on this policy is included in our CrossWalk Kids Parent/Volunteer Manual.

I have read the above release form: (Please check your choice)

I grant permission for WeeCare Anchor Teacher and Parent/Volunteers to change my child’s diaper or provide potty assistance, if my child needs to be changed/helped in my absence.

I do not grant permission for WeeCare Anchor Teacher and Parent/Volunteers to change my child’s diaper or provide potty assistance. I will be available by phone, and will come to the WeeCare classroom to change the diaper/help with the potty myself.

I have read the above release form, and I have marked my form according to my choice of diaper change/potty assistance options.

Signature: ___________________________ Date_______________________

Printed Name: ________________________________ Child’s Name: ________________________________
Child’s Name: ________________________________________________________________________________
   (Last) (First)

Parent(s) Name: ________________________________________________________________
   (Last)                                                         (First)

Contact Information/Phone number: _______________________________________________

Date/Time of incident: __________________________________________________________

How and where incident occurred: _________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

Description of injury: ____________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

How was injury treated?: ____________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

Teacher/Parent/Volunteer(s) present: ______________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

Name:_____________________________________ Signature: __________________________

Title: ________________________________ Date: ______________________________