

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

for the
PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

of
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BAPTIST CHURCH

*“Let the little children come to me
and do not hinder them,
for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”*

----Jesus (Luke 18:16 NIV)

Dear Parents,

God has entrusted to your care and nourishment a most precious gift—your child! Your child is a gift of eternal significance and worth. God has given that gift to you and your family, intending that you lead him/her to a growing relationship with Jesus.

THANK YOU for allowing us, your Church family, to share and to partner with you in teaching your child about God. We take this responsibility very seriously, recognizing the trust you have placed in us.

For this partnering arrangement to be most effective, it should involve your active participation in the Preschool Ministry. Therefore, we encourage and solicit your assistance in the preschool classrooms from time to time. Your participation would be that of an assistant to the teacher. It will allow your child to see that you believe this ministry is important and that he/she is important enough for you to be involved in this part of their lives. It will also allow you to see how the classroom actually functions and to see potential areas where the program can be enhanced. Consequently, you may soon be called to ask for your involvement in this ministry.

The purpose of the Preschool Ministry and our basic approach to teaching your child is covered in the following pages of this handbook. It is not intended to cover every situation that could possibly arise, but it is intended to share with you several key areas in which you may have interest. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact your child’s teacher or any member of the Preschool Committee. The names of the various teachers and workers in the Preschool Ministry are posted in the Preschool area. However, you may also call the church office at 217-367-5924. The church office staff will then be able to put you in contact with the teacher or worker best able to address your questions.

In Isaiah 40:11 (NIV), it is said that “(God) tends His flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; he gently leads those that have young.” That verse pictures the tenderness and love that God has for each one of “His lambs.” – you, your children, and us. Our desire is to reflect that same love through the Preschool Ministry by providing a wholesome, caring, and safe environment for the teaching of your child about Jesus.

May God bless your family and may your child “grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52 NIV)

The Preschool Committee

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OUR VISION; OUR MISSION; OUR VALUES

OUR VISION: To see children "...grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God...."

OUR MISSION: To nurture and disciple children, in partnership with families, so that they might grow into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

OUR VALUES:

- ★ Each child is an individual created by God and entrusted to our care.
- ★ Our church and our ministry are Christ-centered.
- ★ Learning and teaching are conducted in a safe and healthy environment.
- ★ Bible teaching is conducted creatively.
- ★ Learning about God is fun, exciting, and purposeful.

CURRICULUM:

As we join parents in laying the foundation for a life lived in a relationship with Jesus, it is our philosophy that preschool-age children need to know that God made them, that God loves them, and that Jesus wants to be their friend forever. Therefore, the curriculum provided for each class is meant to facilitate the teaching of these truths while introducing basic Bible stories and verses.

CLASSROOM CLEANLINESS:

The classrooms are thoroughly cleaned by vacuuming and mopping weekly before the Sunday services. After completion of each of the services in which the classroom is used, the tables, play equipment, and toys are disinfected by the Preschool personnel.

Toys and equipment are inspected regularly, and any broken or otherwise dangerous items are discarded.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE:

It is our philosophy that encouragement and praise strengthen good behavior. Close attention to children, smiles, pats on the back, and approving words are encouraged to help all children behave properly as well as to recognize their worth as God's creation.

If a child is upset or inconsolable, the teacher will attempt to comfort and assist the child for about ten minutes. If the child is still inconsolable after that length of time, the Registration Coordinator or security personnel will assist in contacting you. (Please see the section on classroom security for an explanation of how the contact with you is made.)

When a child misbehaves in the classroom, three methods of discipline may be used:

1. Redirect the child's attention to something else.
2. "Actively ignore" the child. This is most effective with temper tantrums and whining in that it removes all attention from the misbehaving child. The teacher will keep an eye on the child, but should not make direct eye contact or respond to the bad behavior. When the misbehaving stops, the child will be shown much attention. Of course, this "ignoring" will not allow the misbehaving child or any other child to be put in any danger.
3. Put the child in "time out." This method should be used if the previous two methods are ineffective and if the child is two years of age or older. The length of time will approximate one minute for each year of age. The child will be placed in a chair away from the activity of the classroom. The teacher will explain to the child the reason he/she is being placed in "time out." After the "time out" is over, the child will be returned to the group. Again, the teacher will keep an eye on the child to be sure that child or any other child is not put in danger.

The above three methods of discipline should be effective for most preschoolers. If a child's repeated misbehavior becomes disruptive or dangerous, the security personnel or the Registration Coordinator will come to the service you are attending and, as inconspicuously as possible, let you know of the difficulty.

CLASSROOM INJURIES:

Minor Injuries:

If a child sustains a minor injury (such as a small scratch or bump), the teachers and workers will console the child if possible and take any first aid measures necessary (such as band-aids, ice, or other similar measures). If the child wants his parents or guardian, then you will be contacted by the security personnel or the Registration Coordinator immediately.

An accident report will be completed by the teacher and approved by the Registration Coordinator. One copy of the report will be given to you as the parent. If the child is hurt by another child, it is our policy to not release the name of the child who caused the hurt.

Medical Emergencies:

If a child has a medical emergency that could be life threatening, the appropriate workers will take any life saving measures that are appropriate and for which they have been trained. Then, we will:

- have security personnel or someone call 9-1-1 immediately.
- notify the security personnel to contact you.
- notify a medical resource person that may be attending that particular service.
- if possible and proper, move the child from the classroom to a more private location. If such a move is not advisable, then we will move the other children to another classroom in order to not upset any child more than necessary.

CLASSROOM SECURITY:

In order to ensure the safety and security of all children in our care, we have instituted the following policy and procedures:

Restroom Safety:

Children will be accompanied to the restroom by at least two adults. If only one adult can be present, then the restroom door will be left open.

Security Before and After Services:

Teachers who serve during any service will be in their classrooms prior to the start of that service.

At no time will a child be left alone in any classroom without a teacher or worker being present. Because of other commitments the teachers may have after the service, please make every effort to pick up your child as soon as possible after the service you are attending is completed.

Training:

All persons working in the Preschool Ministry will be offered an annual opportunity for CPR and First Aid training.

Facilities/Equipment:

As mentioned above under Classroom Cleanliness, every classroom will be evaluated regularly to ensure that equipment and supplies are safe, clean, and adequate for a secure and healthy environment.

09-18-06

Registration/Sign In/Tagging/Release of Children:

Registration cards will be kept on file for all children enrolled in the Preschool Ministry. These cards will contain relevant medical and allergy information, information and instructions on whom to release the child, and the location of the parent or guardian during services.

The Registration Coordinator will tag children in the Preschool Ministry with one half of an adhesive security label upon their arrival. The parent or guardian (who must be at least 18 years of age) will retain the other half of the label, which must be presented to the Registration Coordinator at the end of the service in order to pick up the child. Children will be released only to the person presenting the label matching the corresponding one on the child.

Emergency Communications:

Two security people with walkie talkies will be in the hallways during church services to provide security and assist with communications. If an emergency or a need arises, you may contact either of these security people or the Registration Coordinator. These security people will escort you back to the preschool area where you child is located.

CLASSROOM WELLNESS:

To minimize the exposure of the children in our care to contagious diseases, we request that you keep your child at home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Temperature should be normal for a minimum of 24 hours before attending church.
- Upper Respiratory Infection (including colds, bronchitis, throat infections, etc.).
- Nasal Drainage (particularly thick, cloudy, and/or colored drainage).
- Cough (including frequent, loose, productive, “barkey,” and/or deep sounding).
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing.
- Eye Infection (including redness of the eyes, white or yellow drainage, excessive tearing, and/or dried drainage on the eyelashes after sleeping).
- Vomiting and/or Diarrhea. Symptoms should be absent for at least 24 hours before attending church.
- Rashes (but does not include heat, diaper, or allergic rashes).
- Irritability and/or Listlessness (not related to fatigue or teething).
- Head Lice.

If the child is on antibiotic treatment, he/she is considered contagious for the first 24 hours. Also, recent exposure to a contagious disease could cause the child to be a potential carrier and a source of exposure for others. In both instances, the child should be kept at home.

If a child, who has been left in the Preschool area, exhibits any of these symptoms or situations, or if the child becomes ill during class, you will be contacted by the security personnel to pick up your child immediately.

DISASTER RESPONSE:

Fire:

In case of fire, teachers will take their class in a quick and orderly fashion out of the building through the nearest exit. Once outside, they will reassemble at the edge of the parking lot furthest away from the fire. Teachers will stay with their class at all times.

Tornado:

If notification of a tornado is received, or if the local disaster siren sounds, all building occupants will go to the main hallway in the education wing in a quick and orderly fashion. Once in the hallway, everyone should kneel along either wall and stay there until notified that it is safe to return to other areas of the building.

PRESCHOOL MINISTRY STAFFING:

It is our intention that every child placed in our care is safe and secure. We want you to feel comfortable leaving your child with us. Consequently, our teachers and workers have been interviewed by staff, have been cleared through background and reference evaluations, and have been equipped and trained with the skills necessary to provide quality instruction, worship, playtime, and childcare.

The Preschool Committee is the governing body for the preschool ministry and its members are approved by the Church at a business meeting.

The Registration Coordinator is appointed by the Preschool Committee to ensure that you and every child who attends our program feels welcome and secure. The Registration Coordinator makes sure that each child is registered and has a security tag.

Classroom Teachers:

- Every classroom will be adequately staffed for the number of children enrolled in that particular class.
- At least two adult workers will be present for any activity involving children away from the church building.
- Before being considered to work in the preschool ministry, a teacher must be a member at Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church. Assistants may be either members or regular attenders at Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church.