



**EMMANUEL**

**Children's**

**Ministry**

**Policies and Procedures  
2023-2024**

# **Overseeing Children's Ministry**

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# I. Philosophy of Children's Ministry

## A. Goals for the Children's Ministry as a Whole

1. **To see our children grow up to be adults who remain in the life of the church** (this assumes we will seek to develop in them a grounded/informed faith of their own that will lead them to freely remain part of the fellowship of believers once they live apart from their parents). Therefore:
  - Our children need to be **grounded** – we need to train them in the faith and practice of the Christian life, for their personal well being and as it is expressed corporately in the body of Christ.
  - Children need to have a **positive church experience** – this means safety, kindness, elements of enjoyment, etc. need to be present (these are not the focus/main purpose of the children's ministry, but we must assume them).
  - There needs to be some attention to **age appropriateness** – what are the typical issues faced at different ages (struggles, theological questions, ways of understanding) that we need to make sure the gospel is being applied to? How are children best engaged at each age?
  - We need to be mindful of **transitioning children into the full and regular life of the church** (rather than keeping the children separate from what the adults are doing until age 18 and assuming they will transition smoothly into an entirely different church experience).
  - **Children should form relationships** (over time) with other children in the church, children of different ages within the church, and Emmanuel adults.
2. **To nurture families so children are growing up in a healthy spiritual home** (the key to future spiritual well being in children). Therefore:
  - Parents should recognize that remaining balanced in the entire Christian life will have a greater impact than simply getting parenting advice.
  - The church needs to keep before parents their responsibility to be faithful to Christ and to properly care for their children.
  - The church must care for families by teaching about parenting/family life, members should care for one another (talking about parenting/family life, etc.), pastoral attention should be given to struggles particular to families (exhaustion, being overwhelmed, dynamics of child behavioral problems, family difficulties like illness, disability, tragedy, etc.).

## B. Values of our Children's Ministry

1. **Organic life** – rather than have children and adults in separate tracks within the church, we should have an attitude of togetherness, but separate occasionally to tailor certain experiences (like teaching – there is a higher need to be more age specific with teaching). Children's ministry is not a ministry to children, but ministry *with* children – our hope is that people without children will be involved, and we will learn of God and His ways as we serve the children – even while we are hoping they are learning of God and His ways from us.

2. **Family as a mini-church** – prayer, Bible reading, Christian example, and speaking of God and His ways should be a regular part of every family.
  
3. **Four priorities in regard to children:** praying with and for them, teaching them doctrine (ie. the Bible – and making use of catechisms to synthesize key things we learn in the Bible), setting before them a Godly example, and making use of the means of grace in the life of the church (hence our having a communicants class to prepare for Lord’s Supper).

## II. Policies

### A. Wellness

1. Children must be symptom-free from the following illnesses without medication for 24 hours before entering the classroom or nursery:
  - Fever of 100° or higher
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Conjunctivitis (pink eye or other eye infection)
  - Rash
  - Nasal drainage which is green or yellow
  - Sore throat
  - Open sores
  - Excessive coughing
  - Lice

Please note: We do not recognize teething as being a cause of fever or diarrhea.

2. If you suspect your child has COVID or has been exposed, please follow the guidance by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>
3. If a child develops any of these symptoms while in class, the parent/guardian will be notified to get the child.

### B. Injury & First Aid

1. We can administer ONLY Band-Aids.
2. If there is any injury in a classroom, the volunteers should fill out an incident report. Any injury must be reported to the parent immediately (or the Children's Ministry Coordinator, if parent is unavailable) since trivial injuries can turn out to be serious.

### C. Snacks

Only the Nursery and the Toddlers class will have snacks (nut-free) in the classroom. All other classes will NOT be having snacks during the lesson.

1. Nursery:
  - Cheerios will be provided for babies, as long as a parent/guardian has approved.
  - Only liquids that parents/guardians have brought for the baby will be given.
  - Nursery workers will not mix formula bottles for sanitation reasons. Premixed bottles can be sent with the baby and be given by nursery workers.

### D. Medication

1. For any children with severe allergies requiring an EpiPen or Benadryl, please be sure to supply this to the Sunday school teacher or Nursery staff.

2. We are unable to administer any other medication to your child. If your child requires medication, please make arrangements so that you can personally administer what is required.

#### **E. Safety & Security**

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

1. Sunday school teachers need to be members of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.
2. Each volunteer in our ministry will be required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check, which will be re-run every 3 years.
3. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to read and agree to follow the stipulations in this manual regarding Children's Ministry policies and procedures.
4. We will hold trainings to ensure our volunteers understand and follow our policies and to enable them to nurture our children.
5. There is a "Two-Adult" rule that is in place for all classrooms and nursery. There should always be two adults present while children are there. This is to protect the children from possible abuse as well as the adults from false accusations. If there is a situation in which there is only one adult, the door to the room should remain open or the class should meet in a public space.
6. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by the Children's Ministry Coordinator and placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.
7. Paid workers and volunteers will give notice to the Children's Ministry Coordinator at least a week in advance of the date that they would like to have a visitor serve with them in the nursery. The Children's Ministry Coordinator will evaluate such requests on a case-by-case basis.

#### **F. Reporting Suspicion of Abuse**

1. If you are aware of or suspect any suspicious or inappropriate behavior (sexual, physical, verbal abuse) report it immediately to the overseeing Children's Ministry Coordinator. If your concern is in regards to the overseeing staff, please report it to the overseeing pastor, Tim Chang.

#### **G. Restroom & Diapering**

1. Parents are encouraged to take their potty-trained children to the restroom prior to the start of the worship service.
2. Only parents of a child are allowed to change his/her diapers. A text message will be sent to the parent to inform them action is required.
3. In the event children in the Toddler/Younger Elementary Class need to use the restroom, parents of the child will receive a text accompany the child to the restroom.
4. Volunteers are to wash their hands as well as the children's hands (either at a sink or with hand sanitizer) after going to the restroom.
5. Younger and Older Elementary Classes, while walking to the elevators as a class, will stop to see if anyone needs to use the bathroom or get a drink of water to eliminate the need for anyone to

leave the classroom during the lesson.

6. In the rare occasion a child (1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) needs to leave the 3rd floor classrooms for the bathroom, the children will be accompanied by the assistant teacher to the restroom, but will enter and use the facilities UNACCOMPANIED by the grown-up. The adult is to wait outside the restroom and then accompany the child back to class. While the assistant is gone, the teacher will keep their classroom door open.
7. Older Elementary (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade) may walk themselves unaccompanied to the restroom and back. Though this should not become a pattern.

## H. Evacuation

Helpful tips in the event of an evacuation:

- Keep calm.
- As you leave the room, close the door behind you, but do not lock it.
- Exit quickly.
- Do not use the elevators.
- Do not go back for anything.

### **James Chapel** (Site for Adult Worship)

- Exit through the main doors of James Chapel to the door on the left (behind the welcome table), which is the exit to Claremont Ave. Proceed to south side of 120<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway.
- **PARENTS WITH CHILDREN in NURSERY or TODDLER class:** Exit through main doors of James Chapel, turn right, down wide flight of stairs into the Quadrangle Garden.
  - Wait in Quadrangle Garden by the southern exit to the Quad (on your right-hand side when exiting from James Chapel into Quad), ready to assist the young children coming out.
  - Cross the Quad and exit out 121<sup>st</sup> St. door.
  - Proceed to south side of 120<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Administration Building in Union Seminary** (Classrooms for: Younger Elementary, Older Elementary)

- Proceed to nearest staircase down to first floor Rotunda.
- Exit at Rotunda (120<sup>th</sup> St.).
- Proceed to south side of 120<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway.

### **Basement rooms next to the Cafeteria** (Classrooms for: Nursery)

- Exit into Quadrangle Garden from the Pit (Cafeteria). Parents should be at other side of exit, ready to assist the children.
- Cross the Quad and exit out 121<sup>st</sup> St. door.
- Proceed to south side of 120<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway.



REMAIN AT YOUR EVACUATION LOCATION (SOUTH SIDE OF 120<sup>TH</sup> ST. AND BROADWAY) UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ARE ISSUED.

No one is to re-enter any area of the Seminary complex until given the okay by the Fire Department or Fire Safety Coordinator who will relay the all clear to the Fire Wardens. At all times during the emergency, please use discretion, exercise best judgment, and proceed in a manner you deem safest for all involved.

### III. Sunday School Classes

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

- **Nursery:** 6 mo. – up to 30 mo.  
Large Classroom (AD-30) in Basement
- **Toddler/PreK:** 2.5 yrs. – preK.  
Stewart Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- **Younger Elementary:** K – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Room 305 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Administration Building  
*Note: We have a goal to have a K-1<sup>st</sup> grade class and a 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class by January 2024.*
- **Older Elementary:** 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Room 307 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Administration Building
- The transition from Nursery to the Toddler/PreK class is flexible and we will invite parent feedback on what is best for their child(ren).
- When a child is in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, we expect he/she will be able to join the adults for the duration of the Sunday Service. Please speak to Tim Chang if you have questions about this.
- Youth Group for the older children meets weekly at various times on Sunday. Please contact Ji Meng Loh for details.
- A Communicants Class will held starting Early Spring. Please contact Tim Chang for details.

To provide the best care possible for your child, we will closely monitor the adult-child ratio in each classroom. Should a classroom go over the appropriate ratio, the teacher will ask parents to volunteer.

Class	Promotional Marker	Ratio
Nursery	Upon turning 6 months	1:4
Toddler/PreK	Upon turning 2.5 years	1:7
Younger Elementary	Grade level	1:12
Older Elementary	Grade level	--

As a general rule, we promote children to the Nursery and Toddler/PreK classes based on the month they turn 6 months and 2.5 years old respectively. Children entering Kindergarten and up will be promoted at the start of the Fall quarter.

- September 10, 2023 Fall Quarter Begins
- December 3, 2023 Winter Quarter Begins
- March 3, 2024 Spring Quarter Begins
- June 2, 2024 Summer Quarter Begins

## IV. Curriculum

Our classes use a curriculum called “The Gospel Project”. For more information about the curriculum, please visit <https://www.gospelproject.com/>.

Our Sunday school curriculum and activities are meant to reinforce the spiritual education by parents in the Christian home, not meant to serve in place of such a responsibility.

# V. Volunteers

## Definition of Roles

- **Teachers** are responsible for preparing the Sunday school lesson and teaching the class.
- **Assistants** are responsible for assisting the teachers in Sunday school classes.
- **Nursery volunteers** refer to EPC members who volunteer in the Nursery.
- **Nursery staff** refers to the paid workers who work in the Nursery.
- **Volunteers** are Teachers + Assistants + Nursery volunteers.

## A. Requirements to Serve

1. Sunday school teachers need to be members of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.
2. Each volunteer in our ministry will be required to complete an application process, which includes a personal interview and background check, which will be re-run every 3 years.
3. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to read and agree to follow the stipulations in this manual regarding Children's Ministry policies and procedures.
4. We will hold trainings to ensure our volunteers understand and follow our policies and to enable them to nurture our children.
5. There is a "Two-Adult" rule that is in place for all classrooms and nursery. There should always be two adults present while children are there. This is to protect the children from possible abuse as well as the adults from false accusations. If there is a situation in which there is only one adult, the door to the room should remain open or the class should meet in a public space.
6. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by one of the leaders of the Children's Ministry Leadership Committee and placed with a volunteer who has had a background check.
7. Volunteers are entrusted to teach the children of Emmanuel about the Gospel. We ask that volunteers commit themselves to the responsibility of building a strong spiritual foundation in the hearts of the children.

## B. Scheduling

1. We ask our Teachers to commit to teaching 13 Sundays in the course of a year split up into two blocks, one 7-week block and one 6 week block. For example, if a Teacher teaches 7 weeks in the Fall Quarter, he/she will teach again for 6 weeks in the Spring Quarter. This concentrated time allows for more continuity with children and will improve the quality of the teaching as teachers get more familiar with the material by teaching in consecutive weeks.
2. Nursery volunteers and Assistants will be on monthly rotations.
3. Volunteers (teachers or assistants or nursery), as soon as you know you will not be able to teach or assist on a scheduled day:
  - **Please arrange for a substitute by contacting other volunteers to see if someone can cover for you.**
  - Email Tim Chang ([cm@emmanuelnyc.org](mailto:cm@emmanuelnyc.org)) to let him know of the change.
  - If you cannot find anyone to sub for you, email Tim for further assistance (with plenty of notice, please).

4. In case of an emergency causing the volunteer to be late or unable to serve, please notify Tim at [cm@emmanuelnyc.org](mailto:cm@emmanuelnyc.org).

### C. Arrival and Setup

#### **Nursery Staff:**

1. Arrive at 10:00 to set up mats, gates, and wipe down the mats and all the toys.
2. Lay out sign-in sheets and post Evacuation Route.

#### **Teachers:**

1. Arrive at 10:00 to prep for the lessons in your respective classrooms. Please be on time! Please keep in mind that tardiness has a domino effect, affecting the leaders, fellow teachers, children, and families.
2. Post the Classroom Rules and the Evacuation Route. If these are missing, please request a copy from Tim Chang. They should be stored with the classroom materials.
3. Set out any materials needed for class.
4. Make sure you put away your own food or drink so that it is not out during class time.
5. At 10:25, proceed to James Chapel.
6. Proceed to the back of the sanctuary during the last worship song and pick up the sign-in sheet for your Sunday school class from the Welcome Table. This will tell you which children you can expect to pick up after the last worship song. Once the pastor dismisses the children, gather the children of your class and proceed to classroom.

### D. Class Time

1. Review the classroom rules with the children every week. Repetition and consistency are very important, especially since the children only come to church once a week.
2. Caregivers and children will only leave the classroom to use the restroom. Otherwise everyone should remain in the room until communion.
3. During the last five minutes of class, assistants start putting things away into bins and cleaning up while teachers debrief the lessons. Bring the class bins down to the Stewart Room.
4. We require a no cell phone policy, other than checking the time to make sure your lesson is on schedule. Please do not have your cell phone out for personal use while with the children.
5. Enjoy being with the kids! Remember that this is not babysitting...but ministering to each child and guiding them closer to the Lord.

### E. Pick-up Procedures

**Nursery:** Please hang up the sign-in/sign-out sheet on the wall with a pen. Have parents both sign-in and sign-out when dropping off and picking up their child. Please make sure that all children are accounted for at the end.

When all children have been picked up, put away gate and toys and stack bins by the door of the nursery. Please do not start cleaning up until all the children have been picked up.

#### **Toddler/PreK Class:**

1. At the dismissal, gather at the back of the chapel and walk to the classroom as a group. Parents may either walk with their children or have them walk with the teacher or the assistant. Once

class is over, stay in the room until parents come to pick children up.

**All other classes:** Upon receiving a text that the sermon is over, teachers will walk children to the outside of chapel. Teachers will do a headcount before children walk into the chapel. Then the children will be dismissed to walk into the chapel to reunite with their parents.

## **F. Classroom Management**

1. Come to class prepared! Make sure you have all your materials and lesson ready to go before class so that you are free to welcome and engage the children. Over planning and reducing down time will help you maintain discipline in your class.
2. Remember that younger children work best with routines.
3. Deal with disruptions with as little interruption as possible. Be careful to keep disruptions from hurting your momentum in class. Stopping the flow of your lesson to deal with disruptions robs students of their precious learning time.
4. Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
5. Establish and communicate realistic expectations for children.
6. Focus on positive actions.
7. Be fair and consistent with children.

## **Crying Policy in Toddler Class:**

We understand with great sensitivity the separation anxiety two year olds can often face during their transition to the toddler class. 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.

For the sake of the rest of the children, if a toddler has been crying uncontrollably for 10-15 minutes or longer and to the point where it is upsetting the rest of the class (use your discretion), have the Assistant text the parent to come join in the class until the child settles down. Usually the presence of the parent will be enough to calm the inconsolable child and allow for all the other children to engage in the lesson. Then parent can attempt to leave again. Be patient, in time, the child will feel more comfortable being without their parent as the weeks go by.

## **G. Discipline**

1. Classroom Rules
  - Obey the teacher.
  - Listen.
  - Be kind; be safe.
2. Corrective Actions
  - Try to handle any issues individually, not in front of the whole class.
  - Give a warning when a child does not follow the rules.

- i. Remind the child of the rules.
  - ii. Explain to the child why the behavior is unacceptable.
  - iii. Redirect the child to something positive.
  - iv. Tell the child the correct way to behave.
- If the child repeats the action, guide him/her to a quiet place separate from the others for a short but designated time.
  - After a third time, make note to report the facts, without words of judgment, to the parent(s) of the child. If you are uncomfortable doing so, speak to Tim Chang who will speak to the parent(s) on your behalf.
3. Aggressive Behavior
- Biting, hitting, pushing, scratching, or pulling are considered aggressive behavior and will be addressed.
  - If a child is displaying any of these behaviors, he/she will be removed from the class and the parent will be notified.

\*\*Gentle correction and modeling are sometimes more important lessons than the actual lesson at hand. Pay particular attention to balance modeling loving behavior and teaching the content of the lessons.

## VI. Parent Responsibility

### A. Arrival

1. Please aim to arrive between 10:15 and 10:20.
  - If you have children age 2.5 and older, sign your child in at the Welcome Table right outside the sanctuary. Make sure to obtain a nametag for each child, as this will help the volunteers get to know the children.
  - If you have children between 6-30 months, please drop off your child in the Nursery.
2. **Visitors to the church and parents of children entering Nursery for the first time:** Please fill out a registration form for your child(ren). These forms are on the Welcome Table.
3. Parents are strongly encouraged to take their potty-trained children to the restroom prior to the start of the worship service.

### B. Items you bring

1. If desired, you can send your child with a water bottle to his/her class.
2. Please make sure all of your child's belongings are labeled, including the diaper bag, bottles, coats, etc.

### C. Pick-up

1. Parents of children in the Nursery or Toddler/PreK class may pick up their children after the sermon.
  - If you have a child in the Nursery, please pick up from the Nursery (AD-30).
  - If you have a child in the Toddler/PreK class, please pick up from the Stewart Room.
2. For parents of children in all other classes, children will be dismissed outside of chapel and walk into the chapel to reunite with parents.

### D. After the Lord's Supper

The worship service ends with a closing hymn, prayer, benediction, announcements, and dismissal. It is important to have children as part of our worship service and they should be part of these elements of the worship service. The service does not end with the participation in the Lord's Supper so please return to your seats with your children until the dismissal.

### E. Discipline

Please read and be familiar with the guidelines for discipline under the "Volunteer" section of this manual (Section V. Point G).

We would appreciate your cooperation in helping your children follow the rules and supporting the volunteer teachers in enforcing discipline when rules are not followed, to ensure a safe and nurturing Sunday school environment for all Emmanuel children.

God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11. It is not punishment, but guidance, training and molding of character. We do not seek to merely control behavior, but to partner with parents to help shape a child's character to be more like that of Christ.



## VII. Sunday Schedule

10:00	<p><b>Teachers</b> arrive early to setup their classrooms.  <b>Nursery Staff</b> arrive early to set up nursery.</p>
10:15	<p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop off children in Nursery</li> <li>• Take their children to the restroom</li> <li>• Sign-in at the welcome table outside James Chapel.</li> </ul>
10:25	<p><b>Volunteers</b> make their way to worship.</p>
10:30	<p>Worship starts.          During last song of worship, volunteers make their way to back of sanctuary and pick up sign-in sheets.</p>
*10:55	<p><b>Pastor</b> dismisses children.  <b>Volunteers</b> group their classes and head to their respective classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toddler/PreK Class – Stewart Room on 2F</li> <li>• Younger Elementary Class – Room 305 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Administration Building</li> <li>• Older Elementary Class – Room 307 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Administration Building</li> </ul>
After sermon ends	<p><b>Volunteers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place class bins outside of Stewart Room.</li> <li>• Bring the children to the outside of chapel.</li> <li>• Do a headcount before dismiss children</li> <li>• Once dismissed, children should walk into the chapel to reunite with their parents.</li> </ul>

<p>Communion time</p>	<p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents of children in the Nursery or Toddlers class may pick up their children after the sermon.</li> <li>• If you have a child in the Nursery, please pick him/her up from the Nursery.</li> <li>• If you have a child in the Toddler/PreK Class, please pick him/her up from Stewart Room.</li> <li>• For parents of children in all other classes, children will be walked back by the teacher to the outside of the chapel. Once dismissed, they will walk into the chapel to reunite with parents.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nursery Staff + Volunteers</b> put away gate and toys and stack bins by the door of the nursery.</p>
<p>11:45-12:15</p>	<p>Communion  <b>(Parents + Children, please return to your seats after Communion until Dismissal)</b>  Closing Hymn  Prayer  Benediction  Announcements  Dismissal</p>

\* These times are approximate.