

Children's Ministries Volunteer Handbook 2010 -2011



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OUR MISSION AND VALUES

Our mission is "To teach children to know, love, and serve God through a life-changing relationship with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit" and to help them:

- Know that they are valued and loved by God.
- Experience a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Learn foundational Biblical truths of God's plan, commandments, and promises.
- Be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as God calls them.
- Feel connected, supported, loved, and valued in the Body of Christ.

We value an environment and ministry that is:

- Loving and welcoming, as Jesus was with the children when he said, *Let the little children come to me.* Matthew 19:14.
- Physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe.
- Biblically-based, providing an accurate and solid foundation and overview of the Scriptures and God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Age appropriate and relevant to children's lives.
- Creative, interactive, and fun, accommodating a variety of learning styles.
- Experiential. Children can experience God through authentic worship, prayer, and through the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- Equipping children to serve others in ministry and love through the guidance and gifting of the Holy Spirit.
- Supportive of children as they cope with the struggles of real life.
- Positive and celebratory, helping children understand the grace and riches found through Jesus Christ.
- In partnership with families to spiritually nurture their children.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Relationship to God

It is not just **what** we teach (curriculum), but that we teach **who** we are. *You show that you are a letter from Christ ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.* 2 Corinthians 3:3.

- Spend time daily in God's Word, devotions and prayer.
- Attend worship services regularly.
- Take time to actively seek the Lord about your particular ministry and the children you minister to.
- Practice the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.)

Relationship to the Children

- Pray for the children's needs, spiritually and otherwise.

- Help each child experience just how special he or she is to God and to you. You can do this by getting to know the children's interests, hobbies, concerns, etc. Remember that birthdays are special occasions! Facilitate a community spirit with children, helping them to get to know each other.
- Be alert to any special needs or concerns.

Relationship to the Program

You are needed to volunteer (teach, lead, assist) regularly, or as agreed upon, arriving at least 15-20 minutes ahead of time, prepared and ready to greet the children.

Attend trainings and staff meetings as scheduled.

Substitute Policy: If you are unable to volunteer when you are expected, follow the procedures below for securing a substitute:

- Notify your ministry leader of your absence.
- Provide your substitute with needed materials and instructions.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Registration:

Children cannot be checked into any NHLC program unless they are registered and wearing a current/official identification tag.

This is important, as we must have each child's information about allergies, medications, and emergency contact information. It is also necessary to implement check-in and out procedures. If a child has not been registered, please make sure they do so at the designated registration area or through a Children's Staff Team member.

Child Check-in and Check-out Procedures

NHLC believes that each child's security is very important, and we are aware very real potential risks to their security. That is why we have spent countless hours and dollars in preparing check-in and check-out security systems for children. However, it will only be as effective as the volunteer staff who implement them. Please make every effort to enforce the following procedures, regardless of how well we know the children or their families. No exceptions.

Check-in: Children cannot be accepted into a classroom if they are not registered and do not have a current identification tag. For the safety of all children, please strictly follow the procedures provided for your area. (also see *Child Registration*).

Check-out: This is the most important part of the process! An adult or designated teen (13 and older) must present the current check-out tag when picking up the child in order for the child to be released.

The **only** exception is when the adult (must be an adult) who drops off the child provides written consent to have another adult or teen (13 and older) pick up the child without a check-out tag.

If the adult does not have a check-out tag, do not release the child. Please contact the ministry leader for your area. The ministry leader will:

- Ask the adult to present a driver's license and complete the check-out identification form.
- Check the church database to make sure there are no check-out restrictions or warnings or call the phone numbers listed on the child's registration to verify the check-out.

Note: A teen without an ID (i.e. driver's license) cannot pick up a child without a check-out tag or Child Check-out Authorization Form at the time the child is dropped off.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Fire, accident, or severe weather procedures are posted in each classroom. Please familiarize yourself with the procedures and designated exits. Each leader should complete a trial evacuation training exercise. It is extremely important that child-security is maintained during an evacuation:

- Remain calm.
- Count the children before anyone leaves the classroom.
- Check all areas, under furniture, in bathrooms, etc. to ensure that all children are accounted for.
- Follow posted evacuation routes. Only use stairs.
- Gather all children and volunteers in a safe area and count children again.
- DO NOT release children to anyone other than the parent or guardian.
- Wait for "all clear" from the designated Church Staff person before returning to classrooms.

For program cancellations due to severe weather or other reasons, please check www.NHLC.org for updates, or call 651-797-7800. When possible, we will also try to email all staff, volunteers and participating families of program changes or cancellations.

Injuries

In all cases, an **Incident Report** should be completed and returned to the Children's Ministries staff in your area to document exactly what happened.

For minor injuries please calmly follow these procedures:

- Listen to and reassure the child.

- Determine the injury needs. You can wash off the area with **water only**.

First aid kits and instant cold packs are available in the nurseries, many of the classrooms, and in the resource room. Please familiarize yourself with their locations to be prepared in case there is an emergency.

For serious injuries please calmly follow these procedures:

If immediately life-threatening, call a first responder or have someone capable call for you, if available on site. You may secondarily call 911.

If not life-threatening, notify a Children's Ministries staff member. Medical personnel on the premises will be contacted as necessary.

Serious injuries should be cared for in this order:

- Administer first aid/CPR if you are trained in first aid/CPR and the situation requires it.
- Do not move a child if there is the possibility of a back or neck injury.
- Continually reassure the child.
- Do not administer any further first aid until parents and medical authorities arrive.
- Never administer any oral medicine (aspirin, Tylenol, etc.) or topical medicine (bacitracin, first-aid cream, etc.) to any child. Contact the parents and have them do it if it is necessary.
- Assist in completing an Incident Report form. These are available kept with first aid kits and the Children's Ministries offices. Turn it in to your Children's Ministries staff leader.
- For injuries requiring hospital attention, a NHLC staff member is to accompany the child to the hospital if a parent is not available.

Infection Control

In order to minimize the spread of any infectious diseases and to insure the health and safety of all children and caregivers:

Strict hand washing is of utmost importance in the prevention of the spread of infection. Therefore, caregivers are required to wash their hands after each diaper change, after accompanying a child to the toilet, after assisting a child to wipe his/her nose, after contact with blood (e.g. a cut or bloody nose), after using the toilet, after contact with nasal secretions, and before food preparation.

Disposable gloves shall be worn by a caregiver when cleaning a cut, bloody nose, or other bodily secretions. Dispose of gloves and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.

Caregivers should make sure that a child's hands are washed after using the toilet, after use of tissues for wiping eyes or nose, and before eating. Disposable towels

will be used after hand washing. Waterless hand disinfectant is also available in the early childhood classrooms or the resource room.

A disinfecting solution, which is available in the early childhood classrooms and resource room, shall be used for wiping up all spills, blood, urine, and feces; cleaning play equipment and toys, and all equipment used by children in the preschool area.

Parental Responsibility: Parents will be requested to refrain from bringing their child to a specific session if the child has a temperature greater than 100.5 degrees (rectally) or 99.5 degrees (orally), has a rash, or if diarrhea is present.

Volunteer Screening and Risk Management

The following procedures are to help manage potential risks to children in our care.

Volunteer Requirements

For Screened Volunteers, all must:

- Have attended North Heights for at least six months, unless approved by the Children’s Ministries Director for a specific responsibility.
- Complete a Children’s Ministries Volunteer Application (forms from August 2005 or after). A background check and reference follow-up will be performed on these applications and stored in a secure location. This form will need to be completed every three years.
- Attend a Risk Management Orientation Session.
- **Adhere to the following policies** (pages 6-8).

Non-screened Summer and Special Parent Helpers

Occasionally parents and misc. volunteers will assist in a classroom or with an event. Non-screened volunteers are never to be left alone with children or assist children to/in the bathroom. Department Heads/Team Leaders and Coordinators will have a list of which volunteers are screened.

Touching

- Hugging, holding, back-rubbing, and patting are acceptable and important ways of communicating love and care for a child.
- Children should only be touched from the shoulders up, or on the upper back and arms.
- Children should not be tossed in the air, swung by their arms or legs, or tickled.
- Children have the right to refuse touch, except for safety or cleansing.
- Touching should be something the child wants and should be done respectfully.
- Workers may not have children sit on their lap while the room is darkened or when other workers are not present.

Classroom Supervision

- Two adults in each classroom is recommended. If there is only one adult present, the classroom door is to be kept open.
- The sightlines through the windows should remain unobstructed at all times. Teachers and assistants are never to be alone in any closed room with a child.

Outside of the Classroom Supervision

(i.e. on the playground, in another room, etc.)

- Leave a note on door (using the white tacky backing) to inform parents of your location in case a parent picks a child up early.
- If an adult picks up a child outside of the classroom, he or she must still present the child's matching check-out, following the *Child Check in and Check-out Procedures* listed previously.
- Two or more screened adults must be present and supervising the children. A screened teen (13 or older) can replace one of the adults if approved by the designated Children's Ministries Staff.

Lavatory Visits

- Children should have as much privacy as possible. Enter a bathroom stall only when absolutely necessary to assist the child, keeping the door open.
- *Children grade two and younger* should be accompanied by an adult to the lavatory, and the adult should wait outside the stall door.
- *Children grade three through six* may be sent in pairs to the restroom without the supervision of an adult. Teachers should monitor this situation closely.
- Genital areas should never be touched except diaper changing or toileting as needed.

Leaving Church Visits with Students

If there are any North Heights-related activities through the Children's Ministries, there must be:

- Notification/consent of the Director of Children's Ministries or one of the Campus Coordinators or Kingdom Kids Directors before the event is initiated with students and their families.
- Written consent of the guardian.
- Two unrelated adults present at all times.

Identification Badges

All volunteers will receive an identification badge. Please wear this each week for security purposes, and so that we can all begin to know one another better – children, parents, and volunteers.

Child Abuse Awareness

North Heights Lutheran Church has a church-wide policy that all staff and volunteers must receive training about child abuse and the way alleged child abuse is processed.

- All Ministry volunteers must report any suspected abuse situations to the Director of Children’s Ministries or ministry staff leader as soon as possible. Ministry volunteers are not to report directly to public authorities any suspected abuse situations prior to review by North Heights mandated reporters.
- If the review determines suspected maltreatment, the pastoral care pastor will, within 24 hours after the suspected situation was initially noted, contact the ministry volunteer who made the report and urge that the situation be reported to the county child protection agency.
- In case of emergency only, the report shall be made to the local police department.
- Avoid the appearance of child abuse by sharing all disciplinary actions with your ministry supervisor, documenting any out-of-the ordinary conduct, and by following the risk management procedures outlined in this guide (immediately preceding this section).

Behavior Redirection Policy

Our philosophy emphasizes the need for children to have “inner discipline.” We believe discipline comes from the root word “disciple,” which means “one who follows out of love.” Our purpose is to encourage each child in the unique way God has created him/her and seek to help a child to do what is appropriate.

Behavior Guidelines for Children:

- Be kind and respect others.
- Listen and follow directions.
- Speak in a way that pleases God.
- Walk in the halls.
- Be respectful of church property.

Preventative Measures:

- **Pray** for each child – that they would have a teachable and peaceful spirit.
- **Arrive early.** Be prepared so your attention can be focused on the children as they arrive.
- **Provide a stimulating environment.** Use preventative rather than corrective measures whenever possible. Use a variety of activities which are suitable for children’s interests and abilities.
- **Enforce rules in a positive way.** Be consistent, firm, and fair. Make clear suggestions. Use “do” rather than “don’t.”
- **Follow a routine.** Children feel more secure when they know what comes next. Give advance notice to younger children. Post a schedule for substitutes.
- **Reinforce and praise positive behavior.**
- **Gain children’s attention.** Give directions and explain rules in a cheerful manner to make them understandable and acceptable.
- **Avoid threats.** Let the child learn from the logical consequences of his/her actions. If he/she hurts another child, remove him/her from the other children for awhile.

- **Protect feelings.** Correct a child’s behavior with love and respect. Avoid embarrassing a child.
- **Try to understand** underlying causes for the negative behavior. Inability to perform activities, “too childish”, lack of direction, boredom with the activities, hunger, family issues, etc. can all trigger negative behaviors. Consider these potential “triggers” as you prepare for your session, or as you interact with a misbehaving child.
- **Redirect the negative behavior** by engaging the student in another activity or positive discussion.

Children are never to be physically disciplined. Discipline as a means of control, is only *necessary control* to keep children from:

- Hurting or disturbing others either physically or verbally.
- Damaging equipment or property.
- Placing themselves in dangerous situations.
- Disrupting the whole group.

If a child deliberately disobeys you, take the child to an area of the classroom where other children cannot hear (try not to embarrass the child or draw attention to negative behavior).

- Make it clear that you still love and care for the child.
- Be firm, but loving and gentle.
- Ask the child to tell what she did wrong, and then what her actions should be. When the child genuinely describes how she will behave positively, then allow the child to join the rest of the group.
- Younger children may not be able to articulate proper behavior. Tell the young child what behavior was wrong and how they should behave. When the young child genuinely agrees to whatever positive behavior you suggest (keeping hands to themselves or not hitting, listening, etc.), then allow the child join the rest of the group.

The only time a disruptive child may be touched is to secure restraint when he is in danger of escape or is hurting himself or others. And then use as minimal restraint as necessary (such as holding of an arm or hand), keeping in mind the policies for “touch” in this handbook.

If you would like someone to observe your classroom to help you understand the group of children you are working with, please ask for assistance.

If parent contact is necessary, please talk to your ministry leader.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Our ministry newsletters, brochures and website will give you an overview of the current Children's Ministries programs. Some of the programs and miscellaneous procedures that we feel volunteers need to be aware of are:

Special Needs Ministry

We want all children to participate in our programs, regardless of physical, cognitive, or developmental limitations. If you have a child who may need special assistance in order to participate in your classroom, please contact the Children's Special Needs Coordinator. She can help assess the need, provide suggestions for classroom activities and management, or even a one-to-one coach.

New Students and Visitors

On both Sunday mornings and for other programs (as needed) there will be a designated table for registration. Please make sure all new students and visitors are registered before participating in our programs. This is important for security reasons and so we will know if there are allergies or any other medical concerns, and have emergency contact information.

Resource Room

Our resource room is provided to make your ministry experience more effective. Most of the supplies are stored categorically on shelves. Please take only what you anticipate needing for your class and return the extra at the end of your session **to the same bin or location you got them.**

Sign out a-v equipment, visuals, puppets, games, toys, costumes, videos, books, and other reusable items, on the Checkout/Check-in form near the entrance to the Resource Room. **Return borrowed resources exactly where you found them** (reusable items) as soon as you are finished with them. Sign them back in on the Checkout/Check-in form. Other staff and volunteers often need to use these same resources, so it is important that we know where they are, and that they make it back to the place they belong.

If an item is not stocked, list the item needed on the form posted near the entry to the Resource Room. Allow two weeks for special orders to be filled. To help facilitate your request, please contact the ministry leader for your program.

Classroom/Facility Use and Care

You are welcome to give your ministry leader any special setup plans for your classrooms or areas you volunteer in. You may also request to decorate assigned bulletin boards and areas. Your requests will be accommodated as much as possible.

Please keep in mind that other classes and ministries use these same rooms. The following are ways you can help:

- Put away all of your materials in designated storage areas.
- After your session, tidy and restore the room to the way it should be.
- Do not staple, pin, tape, or glue items to the walls. Anything going on the walls must be attached using the white, tacky adhesive available in the Resource Room. Or, use designated bulletin boards or sign out easels, bulletin boards, etc.
- Items banned at Arden Hills by Maintenance: Duct tape on the carpet, walls and woodwork; and glitter (please use glitter glue instead).
- Pick up any small pieces of modeling clay before it hardens in carpeted areas.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

There are many ways volunteers serve on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and Saturday evenings. The following are job descriptions for the largest numbers of volunteers.

Sunday Morning Teaching Staff/Small Group Leaders

- Start praying and planning early in the week.
- Arrive prepared and ready to go at least 20 minutes before your session to pray with others in your department, and greet early arrivals and engage them in learning activities and discussion as soon as they arrive.
- Welcome students as they arrive and let them know you are glad they are there. Note: **Every student must have a nametag before admitting them.** If registered, the child and parent/guardian should get the nametag and pickup tag from the automated check-in terminal. If not registered, they must go to the registration area to register and get the tags. (This includes visitors.) Please follow the system for your particular ministry area. A parent/guardian must present the pickup tag to pick up their child. Be sure to stay in the classroom until all students are gone. *Also see “Child Check-in and Check-out Procedures” section in this handbook.*
- Take attendance and collect offering. Turn these in to your department head/team leader.
- Have students recite the “Verses for Life” memory verses for the week.
- Enthusiastically participate in all parts of the morning with your students. For example, sit with your students in large group assembly. Sing, do actions, etc. Help your students to be good listeners by being a good listener yourself.
- Establish standards of good student behavior from the start: Respect for others and their belongings, listening, walking in halls, etc.
- Incorporate and emphasize the importance of prayer in your time together. Ask children for prayer requests and pray for them. Invite children to also pray, as they are willing and able to do so.

Also see “Volunteer Expectations” section in this handbook.

Sunday Morning Department Heads/Team Leaders

The Department Head/Team Leader is a “team builder,” and is responsible for the spiritual atmosphere and needs within their department. They will work under the direction of designated age level or campus staff.

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before class begins. Pray over classroom areas. Encourage teachers to join you.
- Check your bin for handouts, attendance cards, and requested supplies.
- Arden Hills 9:00 hour – unlock learning centers before the hour and at 11:00 – lock learning centers when teachers are done.
- Distribute handouts and check in with teaching staff as they arrive. Make sure they have any information or supplies.
- Greet students and families as they arrive.
- Make sure check in and check out procedures are specifically followed. Receive new students and visitors. Introduce them to their teacher.
- Collect attendance cards from classes and turn in with offering to the registration staff.
- Observe classrooms/small groups and continue to pray for the leaders and students. Provide assistance to teachers as needed.
- Help supervise hallways and other areas to make sure children are safely within their classrooms.
- Help clean up rooms, and encourage teachers to put things back where they belong.
- During the Week: Keep in contact with teachers. Contact them frequently by phone or email, once per week at first. Offer assistance and prayer for any requests.
- Other Times: Help make arrangements for special speakers, service or craft projects.
- Serve as the communication link between teachers and your ministry staff leaders(s).
- Plan and lead department meetings (with your ministry leader).
- Help and participate in the Christmas Program as needed.
- Be acquainted with emergency procedures, and help calmly facilitate procedures in an emergency.
- Keep a list of substitute teachers available for teaching staff. Some departments have found it useful to have a “sub on call” for each week. Assist teachers when it is necessary to find a substitute.
- Make sure teachers follow up on student absentees as outlined in “teaching staff guidelines.”

Also see “Volunteer Expectations” section in this handbook.

Wednesday Evenings Leaders

- Arrive early enough to prepare for your class and pray.
- Check in and help with nightly preparation.
- Make sure child check-in and pick-up procedures are followed.
- Understand the lesson and your role regarding facilitating the object lesson, craft, and memory games as directed by your leader.
- Make God’s Word come alive!
- Sustain attention and interest by being creative and allowing the children to be creative.
- Keep accurate attendance records.
- Communicate with your ministry leader.
- Give constructive suggestions to your leader.

Also see “Volunteer Expectations” section in this handbook.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Prayer Support

While great curriculum, resources, and planning help immensely, God instructs us to rely on Him through prayer and through the prayer support of other believers for true spiritual results! We want you and your students to be supported, and here are a couple of our suggestions:

- **Prayer teams** (either on site or off campus) meet to pray and intercede for your ministry. Give prayer requests and praise reports to your ministry leader or put them in the prayer box on the registration table. The ministry leaders will give these requests to the prayer intercessors, so they can pray for your requests.
- **Prayer partners:** Volunteers are strongly encouraged to find someone (possibly a parent of one of your students). You can assist the prayer partner by sharing weekly requests (calls or emails), providing a list of the children in your group, inviting the prayer partner to your class and introducing the children to him, and asking the prayer partner to be a substitute for you if possible.

Support by Staff

For all of our various summer programs, Children’s Ministries Staff members will provide you with direction and support.

Please feel free to call the leader of your ministry area for assistance, or for prayer requests both for your ministry with children or for yourself personally. We want to support you!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES STAFF DIRECTORY

(as of September 2010)

Director of Children's Ministries

Vicki.Heagerty@NHLC.org

651-797-7853

ARDEN HILLS:

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Elementary Large Group Coordinator (gr. 1-5)

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Elementary Small Group Coordinator (gr. 1-5)

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Nursery Ministry

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NOT CAMPUS-SPECIFIC:

Kingdom Kids Co-Directors

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Ed.Jenkins@NHLC.org (<i>All Castles</i>)	651-797-7886
Anita.Otto@NHLC.org (<i>Support</i>)	651-797-7855

Special Needs Ministries for Children

Lori Michaud	651-797-7824
Children.SpecialNeeds@NHLC.org	

Puppets, inC.

Erik & Cheryl Peterson	763-568-3031
glances1@msn.com	

Redemption Cards

Bill Voigt	651-779-6690
bfvoigt9@msn.com	

Little Earth Sunday School

Director still being determined

E-mail: Children@NHLC.org

