



Christ the King Lutheran Church Nursery Handbook

The Children's Nursery Ministry of Christ the King Lutheran Church is part of the congregation's overall faith formation ministry. Its program and leadership is provided through a collaboration of ministry staff, professional care givers, parents and volunteers.

The mission of the Children's Nursery Ministry at Christ the King Lutheran Church is to provide a safe and loving environment for children and to support parents as they nurture their child's faith formation.

This Nursery Policy Handbook provides administrative, health and safety information for nursery caregivers and parents. The handbook will be reviewed annually. Feedback from parents is encouraged and can be provided by contacting the pastors, Robert Moore and Karin Liebster, the director of congregational care Beverly Davis, or the congregational nurse Linda Schoene.

Last revision: August, 2015

Spiritual Nurturing for Nursery Age

Children are born with an innate knowledge of God, an active experience of God, even before they can speak. As they learn to speak, naming the most important persons in their lives, naming themselves, naming the things around them, so in time they acquire language to speak about experiences. In the pre-language stage, parents and other caregivers confirm and strengthen the deep knowledge of trust and love in the presence of God by keeping the child safe, warm, fed and at peace.

To children four years old and younger, faith is relational rather than cognitive. Faith does not depend on thinking ability. Baptism does not await intellectual capacity. The nursery child is powerfully and permanently influenced by models and examples, by moods of environment and adults in those environments, by actions, and by stories of visible faith of adults. All of this is the substance that contributes to a child's image of God. At this age, the foundation is laid for the kind of image the child will have of God, which may be: God as scorekeeper, judge, indifferent, threatening and/or angry.

God is a loving presence, forgiving, a secure haven, a safe place. It is not easy for children this age to differentiate between parents, or adults, and God. Mental images of God are similar to persons with authority.

Throughout our life time we continue to reconcile our life experiences with the images of God that developed during the earliest stage of childhood. When we as parents and caregivers provide quality, loving care that contributes to a sense of belonging, safety, security, sense of well-being, cooperation, happiness, abandonment of joy, love and care, we are truly doing God's work in a way that is appropriate to these little ones.

Families are invited to attend worship in the big church with their children as much as possible, carefully judging stress levels of both parents and children. Being acquainted with the place of worship, singing, prayer, baptismal remembrance by touching the water, receiving Holy Communion –these are healthy, important routines that complement the cornerstones of deep trust and love first communicated through the love and trust of the parents, which we call the gift of faith.

At Christ the King Church children are welcome in worship, to baptism and Holy Communion. They absorb deeply the rhythms of the liturgy even if they seem to be distracting themselves with quiet toys or books. Parents are encouraged to keep an open eye and heart for the wellbeing of the child, be in touch with their own levels of comfort or stress, and that of the surrounding worshipers in case noise levels rise above a certain level that may begin to distract from participation in worship. Parents are invited to speak with the pastors about any individual concerns or share ideas.

How do children birth through two years learn about God and experience faith?

- Through the actions of others (more than words).
- Bond to parents' faith (Belonging Faith).
- Newborns sense a loving presence and safety through touch and care.
- Imitate responses to God in prayer and praise.
- Experience a sense of belonging in church.
- Experience reliability and constancy to grow trust.
- Given images that can be invested with meaning.
- Share in simple, truthful concepts.
- Watch and enjoy the created world: nature, animals, water, food etc.

Bring your faith to the crib! An infant can sense your joy, peace, and reverence! Ideas:

- Sing or hum to the child.
- Pray while holding a baby.
- Praise God.
- Use religious symbols and Bible pictures.

Express your trust in God when children learn language by:

- Thanking God for giving parents, grandparents, siblings, caregivers, etc. to love and care for me.
- Appreciating the world God has made.
- Expressing happiness when going to God's house.
- Being reverent about devotions, prayer, and worship.
- Taking opportunities for spontaneous free prayer to God.
- Telling simple, single-focus stories.
- Listening to child's sharing, understanding, and ideas.

How can young children past the infant stage participate in worship?

- Through touching the water in the baptismal font and making a sign of the cross on their bodies naming God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Through praying with the adults when we pray for the world, the church and all people in need. The parent may whisper suggestions of persons and causes to pray for.
- Through looking at bible story books when in worship.
- Through singing with the adults music pieces that are repeated often.
- Through being shown every visible sign and object in worship with simple explanations what they say.

Parent Involvement in the Nursery Ministry

Parents are welcome to take an active role in our nursery ministry by volunteering their time during worship service. Parent volunteers may bring their child regardless of age into the nursery. Volunteers often enjoy leading group activities such as storytelling, music or craft time. Craft supplies and tables and chairs can be used in the two- and three-year-old classroom (room 109).

Parent Feedback Form

We invite comments from parents about what they like and what they would like to improve in the nursery. Parents may complete the feedback forms located in the nursery or speak with a member of our ministry staff at any time.

Facilities – Usage, Scheduling, Cleaning

The entrance to the infant room remains locked at all times. Access is only through the main nursery door (room 111), which stays locked unless the nursery is open for worship or other events. The ministry, maintenance, nursery and office staff members hold keys to these doors.

The nursery consists of the main nursery room (room 111) and the infant room (room 113), located along the courtyard. During worship times on Sunday the nursery is available to all healthy children four years old and younger. The nursery is consistently staffed with two adults.

If the nursery is requested for use outside regular church activities, scheduling for these rooms must be coordinated through the ministry staff and church administrator. Nursery caregivers during special events must be either the church nursery staff or caregivers that meet the requirements of the Safe Haven Policy.

All groups using these rooms must leave the rooms in good order and all toys/supplies put away.

The maintenance staff handles cleaning of these rooms each week.

Breastfeeding mothers are always welcome in the nursery.

Equipment & Supplies – Purchasing, Donations

Nursery staff members inform the ministry staff when supplies are needed. The church office staff handle purchasing supplies. The ministry staff must approve the purchase of large equipment, such as furniture.

Annual fundraisers help to meet special furnishing needs.

The church accepts donated equipment, such as swings, high chairs, and toys. The ministry staff inspects the items and decides whether to keep items for the nursery or to include them in the church's annual Tag Sale.

Procedures

Check-in Procedures

Parents/Guardians must complete a **Registration Form** upon their first check-in to the nursery. This form includes important information about the child/children and gives consent should medical attention be required. Be sure to note the child's allergies. Registration forms are kept in a binder near the safety kit.

Parents complete the **Sign-in Sheet** located near the front door each time a child is left in the nursery, regardless of the day of the week or the event. It is essential that caregivers have a record of every child left in their care and that caregivers know how to get in touch with parents quickly. Parents should provide an emergency contact phone number at check-in. Siblings in middle school and above may drop-off their younger siblings.

Diaper bags and other necessary items may be left in the cubbies. Each item should be labeled with the child's name.

Parents are asked to place a nametag on their child.

Parents can use check-in time to share current information about their child with the caregivers.

Check-out Procedures

Parents should pick-up the child as promptly as possible and sign out on the sign-in sheet. Siblings in middle school and above may pick-up their younger siblings. Parents may desire to use this time to discuss how their child did with a caregiver.

Supplies to Bring

Please bring one personal bag for your child (children) that is clearly labeled on the outside with their name(s). Supply suggestions: diapers, bottles, pacifiers (if needed), spare set of clothing plus socks, special foods and drinks, a comfort toy or blanket.

Labeling

Labeling on all items is important. Label diaper bag, diapers, bottles, sippy cups, pacifiers, bibs, extra set of clothes, etc., with child's name.

Emergencies and First-Aid

Contacts

Parents leaving their children at the nursery must remain on the premises at all times. Nursery caregivers must always know parental location. A completed Nursery Registration form for each child should be on file in the nursery. This form communicates pertinent information about the child's health history, how to contact parents and child preferences. It is

the responsibility of parents to update the Nursery Registration form as information changes.

Nursery staff members are trained in pediatric first aid, CPR and managing choking. The Congregational Nurse monitors this preparedness.

Safety Kits

Safety kits are located in key areas around the church facility. A complete list of these locations is posted throughout the church. The nursery first-aid kit and first aid reference manual are located in the main nursery room (room 111) in the cupboard under the sink. The congregational nurse checks the first-aid kits every six months and adds supplies as needed.

Emergency Telephone List

An emergency telephone list is posted in the nursery by the telephone. Contacts include important phone numbers, such as EMS, Poison Control Center, police, fire, the nursery telephone number and church address.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of injury the nursery caregivers will render first aid as needed and contact the parent/s. In addition a nursery caregiver will complete an Accident/Incident Report and submit it to the church administrator. The report should include a picture of any injury. The nursery caregiver will personally explain the incident to the parents of the child involved.

Fire Preparedness Procedures

In case of fire, all children and caregivers evacuate the nursery through the door that provides the safest exit (the main nursery door, the infant room door or one of the other two classroom doors – rooms 109 or 107). A caregiver will count each child registered and confirm they are

evacuated. Nursery staff should guide children to the playground and remain with the children until they are picked up by their parent.

EVACUATION ROUTES ARE POSTED IN EVERY ROOM.

Tornado Preparedness Procedures

In case of tornado, caregivers should move children to the STORAGE CLOSET in the nursery and remain with them.

Health and Safety

Diaper Change

Caregivers should check each child's diaper at least once each hour, changing diapers when wet or soiled. The caregiver should wear gloves while changing a diaper and wipe the diaper changing with an antiseptic wipe and wash hands after the diaper change.

Potty Breaks

For toddlers who are being potty trained, parents are asked to continue bringing the child to the nursery in diapers or in disposable training pants. Caregivers will help with training by facilitating use of the potty, using the toddler-sized toilets and sinks available from the two- and three-year-old classroom.

Caregivers will:

- 1) Encourage the child to help themselves to the extent they are capable.
- 2) Leave the door open when the child is on the toilet.
- 3) Make sure the child wipes himself or herself.
- 4) Make sure the child washes and dry hands.

Infant and Toddler Sleep Safety

Infants and young toddlers should sleep in the porta crib, not on the floor. Caregivers should follow these safety steps:

- 1) Lay babies on their backs.
- 2) Ensure soft bedding or stuffed animals are removed from porta cribs in which babies are sleeping.
- 3) Never put a baby down to sleep with a bottle. The sugars in the milk or juice will pool in baby's mouth and cause serious tooth decay.
- 4) Don't place children over 35 inches tall (usually older toddlers) in porta cribs. They'll probably be more interested in playing than sleeping, and they could possibly climb or fall over the sides.

Children with Special Needs

Parents are encouraged to communicate a child's special needs on the registration form and verbally to the caregiver before leaving the nursery.

Safety Precautions

Do keep in mind that accidents most often occur when adults are tired, daydreaming, busy talking to one another or underestimating a child's ability. Accidents are less apt to occur when caregivers are rested, watchful and alert.

Child growth proceeds from head to toe. A child's head develops more rapidly than the rest of his body and is, therefore, more susceptible to injury. This is why toddlers are often referred to as "top heavy." These are some areas that every caregiver needs to keep in mind at all times when working with young children.

- 1) Always keep in mind the number of children in your immediate group. Know where each child is and what he or she is doing. Be aware of the "blind spots."

- 2) Do not leave a group for whom you have assumed responsibility without telling another adult that you are going. Do not visit outside the nursery unless it's agreed upon with the other caregivers that you are not needed for a few minutes.
- 3) Maintain order to prevent children from harming themselves or others.
- 4) If taking children onto the playground, caregivers should stay near the equipment while in use. Help younger children who are a bit unstable to help prevent injury.
- 5) If necessary, remind children not to run or climb while holding toys or other sharp objects.
- 6) Help keep the floor free of scattered blocks and toys not in use. Encourage children to remove toys from places where other children might stumble over them.
- 7) Store all scissors, knives and other sharp implements out of reach of children.
- 8) Keep all poisonous cleaning supplies, matches and plastic bags out of the reach of children.
- 9) Have children sit for snacks to avoid the risk of aspirating food, which may occur if they eat while running and playing.
- 10) Children and caregivers should wear shoes to protect feet from injury.

Administering Medicine

Caregivers may not give medicine to children. Parents must administer medications to their child/children

The Nursery is Peanut Free

Many children experience food allergies and the incidence of food allergies is increasing. Symptoms can range from skin rash and itching to anaphylaxis and death. The peanut is the source of the majority of severe food-related allergic reactions. Peanut allergies present early in life and are generally not outgrown. Severe allergic reactions can occur with exposure to trace amounts of peanut protein. One peanut contains 200 mg of protein. Symptoms can occur after the ingestion of 2 mg. For

children with severe peanut allergy, just sitting next to someone eating peanuts can trigger a reaction. One bite of a snack prepared with peanut products can be fatal.

Avoidance strategies are particularly problematic in very young children. These children cannot read a label. They do not have an understanding of what an allergy is or the verbal ability to ask, “Does that snack have peanuts in it?” Sharing is a concept that is encouraged in young children. However, young children do not understand the danger associated with sharing a peanut snack with a child who has a peanut allergy. For these reasons, adults caring for children must be vigilant in monitoring what children in their care are eating and implement policies that will create a safe environment for all.

As a result, the nursery does not supply peanuts or peanut-related snacks to children, and we ask parents to be sure peanut snacks are not included in their child’s personal bag when dropped at the nursery.

Well-Baby Policy, Contagious Diseases & General Illness

To provide a healthy environment parents should keep their child at home when observing any of the following:

- Fever within the previous 24 hours (We consider a fever to be a calculated temperature over 101 degrees. A child must be fever-free without medicine for 24 hours before coming to the nursery.)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Discharge in or around the eyes
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Excessive coughing (dry hacking or wet coughs)
- Sore throat
- Questionable rash or skin infection
- Pink eye and other eye infections
- Head lice

- Any symptoms of childhood diseases (scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough)

If child is being treated with an antibiotic, it is preferable that a child have received the medication for at least 24 hours prior to arriving in the nursery and be free of fever during that time frame. For the children's protection, caregivers must follow these same health/illness guidelines. Any child suffering from a stomach virus should remain home for at least one day after all symptoms are gone.

A child is returned to the parent if symptoms of illness are apparent. If illness occurs while a child is in our nursery, caregivers will locate the parents and take the child out of the nursery immediately.

Parents of children attending the nursery are asked to notify the church office immediately if their child has symptoms of a contagious disease such as a stomach virus, chicken pox, head lice, etc. after being in the nursery. The church staff will work to alert other parents of children who were in the nursery with the ill child. . Privacy will be honored. Special cleaning procedures will be implemented as needed.

Preventing the Spread of Germs

Hand washing is the best prevention from the spread of infections.

Nursery staff and volunteers should wash their hands when they arrive in the nursery.

How to Properly Wash Hands

Use warm water and antibacterial soap to create a lather and rub front and back of hands together, scrubbing between fingers and under nails, for 15 to 30 seconds. Turn tap off while scrubbing. Rinse hands thoroughly and dry hands on individual paper towels.

When to Wash Hands

- Before handling food or bottles
- After using the toilet
- After assisting child in toileting
- After changing a diaper
- After wiping a runny nose
- After containing a sneeze or cough

Staying with Children and Separating from Children

At about six months of age, the child shows signs that he or she has formed a genuine attachment, usually toward a single person and usually a parent. A child of this age will use “the most important person” as a safe base from which to explore. It is to be expected that the child will begin to show some fear of strangers and anxiety and/or clear protest when he or she is separated from his or her favored person. Both are rare before five or six months, and then rise in frequency until about 12 to 16 months, and then decline.

The separation process is one instance in which the nursery staff and/or volunteers’ job is to help the parent as much as the child. Separation is a process that requires warm, comforting and continual reassurance from the caregivers for both parent and child. It also requires a certain firmness and confidence on the part of the caregiver to help the parent through the initial “goodbye” and to help the child struggling with anxious feelings.

Caregivers will assure the parent that he or she will help the child adjust to the nursery. Parents can request being notified if the child experiences prolonged crying. There is a practical lesson for parents whose infants or toddlers show fear or wariness toward strangers. The child is more likely to accept the stranger if he or she sees the parent talking and smiling to the stranger first.

If your child is distressed feel free to stay and comfort him or her. However, we find in most cases, crying stops a few moments after you depart. Parents are welcomed to check on their child whenever they see fit.

Discipline

Nursery Staff and/or volunteers are not allowed to administer corporal punishment (spanking) or use loud voices in the nursery. Our method of discipline is timeout or, in worse cases, expulsion for remainder of the event. In the latter case, caregivers must locate parents to pick up the child.

We understand that parents may find various levels of discipline effective, and we respect these different parenting styles. If parents choose to use another form of discipline (spanking or extensive lectures), they are asked take it outside the nursery and out of earshot of other children.

Parents are asked to pick up their child if called by nursery staff or a volunteer. Caregivers may use their discretion in determining if they can control the situation.

CHRIST
THE
KING 
LUTHERAN

CHVRCH

2353 RICE BOULEVARD
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005-2696
713-523-2864 FAX 713-523-6578
ctk@ctkelc.org www.ctkelc.org