

Peace United Methodist Children's Ministries

Parent Handbook

2009-2010

Welcome to Peace United Methodist Church Children's Ministries. We look forward to being part of your family life and the development of your children. Please review the following handbook for information regarding our ministry opportunities and guidelines. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact The Director of Children's Ministries Julie Chatfield 407-438-8947.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to plant the Word of God in the hearts of children everywhere and to provide a safe place for our children to learn and grow in their relationship with God.

Children's Ministry Age Range

A child is anyone 11 years old or younger. This begins at birth and continues to 5th grade. If your child fits within this age range they are automatically considered part of our Children's Ministries.

Organizational Structure

The Director of Children's Ministries communicates regularly with a variety of Children's Ministry Teams. The teams consist of any parent interested in the direction and development of our Children's Ministries Programs. The Director of Children's Ministries reports to directly to the Pastor.

Enrollment/Registration

In order for us to maintain a safe environment for all children, it is necessary to keep at least one Enrollment/Registration form on file for every child. The information included on this form will require name of parents and child/children, phone numbers, address, email, emergency contact, and medical information. It will also assist us in contacting you about Children's Ministry activities and volunteer opportunities. This form is located at the Children's Ministry Table.

Programs

Bible Studies are offered on Saturday Nights at 6.00 p.m. and Sundays at both the 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. We have a variety of monthly Children's Ministry activities. For more information regarding these opportunities, please pick up a Children's Ministry Calendar located in the Church Office. Or go to www.peaceumcorlando.org.

Child Protection Policy

Each person being considered to work or volunteer on a weekly basis with children will fill out an application and will be interviewed by the Director of Children's Ministries.

Each person applying to work or volunteer with children shall complete an Affirmation of Good Moral Character and authorize the church to conduct a criminal background check. Once approved, the background screening will be valid for up to 5 years.

Each person beginning to work or volunteer with children will sign a statement that they have read, understand and agree with the Child Protection Policy.

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After the interview and background check have been accomplished, the decision will be made to accept or reject the applicant who will work with your child.

Adult volunteers and staff who work or volunteer regularly with the Children will be trained on the child protection issues prior to beginning their regular involvement with children. The training will occur for each volunteer and staff on an annual basis.

All application documents will be kept in a locked cabinet to be accessible to the Director of Children's Ministries in case of an emergency.

Supervision and Safety of our Children

All activities involving children will be supervised by at least one screened adult.

There will be at least two supervising volunteers with at least one screened adult in Nursery- Grade 1, and one adult and one teen assistant for ages 2nd-5th. One screened adult will be present all children's activities. And, one screened adult will periodically check all classrooms throughout the activities.

Children will be escorted to and from bathroom facilities and when otherwise leaving the classroom. This will be with an adult screened volunteer.

During non-classroom activities at least two screened adults will be present for all activities that involve children.

Parent Expectations

We are working to provide engaging, age appropriate activities that support the spiritual development of your child. If your child does not wish to participate in these activities, or no age appropriate activity is available, they are to remain with you. No child is to hang around unsupervised in the hallway, playground or other area of the church without adult supervision.

We invite you to encourage your 2nd-5th grade child to attend worship with you and then also participate in an age appropriate Bible Study. See specific program opportunities listed in this handbook. **All children must be supervised by an adult while playing on the playground.**

Sign-in/Sign-out procedures

Adults responsible for children who are in the Nursery should sign-in their child and indicate the names of the authorized person/s to whom the child may be signed-out. Adults responsible for Pre K through 5th grade should also sign their child in and out of Bible Studies and other children's activities. This will be done prior to entering the church service. You may sign them in at their classroom location, or at the Children's Ministry Table on the portico. Picking up children by **non-authorized** adults or approved older siblings is forbidden. 4th and 5th grade students may have parents sign a waiver allowing them to leave class without a parental pick-up and signature. This form will be kept on file for one year.

Open Door Policy

Parents, volunteers or staff of the church will be permitted as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.

Time Following Group Events

Following child events, it is inevitable that occasionally a child's transportation arrive after all other participants have departed. In those circumstances a child will be supervised by at least one screened adult.

Discipline

We view discipline as guidance, not punishment. We are dedicated to helping children develop inner discipline by providing reasonable rules and logical consequences for breaking rules. Other discipline strategies we use are positive reinforcement, active listening and redirection. A child may be given a period of "time-out" from the group if he or she continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. "Time-out" is not a punishment, but a time when the child can calm down, remember the behavior the teacher expects, and decides when he or she will rejoin the group with appropriate behavior. The Director of Children's Ministry or Supervisor in charge will be notified by the teacher if a problem occurs. Corporal punishment will not be used. Children will not be hit, slapped or spanked. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened or verbally abused. Food cannot and will not be used as a form of discipline. This is in accordance with the Florida Department of Children and Families.

If a behavior problem persists, the parents will be asked to attend a conference to discuss possible techniques for motivating the child to behave in an acceptable way.

Health and Safety Procedures

If your child becomes ill or is injured at church, we will contact you. If we cannot reach you, we will isolate and care for your child until you arrive for pick up. Please keep your child home if he/she:

1. Has a fever of 100 degrees or more
2. Has had a fever during the previous 24 hours
3. Has a cold that is less than three days old
4. Has an unidentified rash
5. Is fussy, cranky, and generally irritable
6. Has had an upset stomach and/or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
7. Has any contagious condition or symptoms of such condition

Please notify the Director of Children's Ministries immediately if your child has a communicable disease. Your child may attend church if: (1) the cold is over and minor nasal discharge remains; (2) there has been exposure to a communicable disease but the Director has been notified and incubation dates discussed; (3) your child has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours and has been cleared by your physician.

In Case of an Emergency

All children must have a completed enrollment form on file with up to date emergency numbers and other pertinent information.

If your child is injured while participating in our Children's Ministry Programs we will practice the following procedures. If the injury is a minor cut or scrape, the wound will be cleaned with soap and water and a band-aid will be applied. Ice will be applied when necessary. An accident report will be filled out which will require your signature stating that you have been informed of the situation. In the case of a more serious injury, we will locate or contact you immediately, and inform you of the situation. An ambulance will be called if necessary. Please be sure to keep all records up to date.

Additional Safety Rules

For additional safety guidelines regarding transportation, trip and retreat supervision, please adhere to the Child Protection Policy available in the office or from the Director of Children's Ministry. This policy is provided by the United Methodist Conference and is adhered to by our church.

Mission Outreach

We support a variety of age appropriate mission projects through our classrooms and other Children's Ministry activities. For more information regarding missions, please pick up our Children's Ministry Calendar in the office, or contact the Director of Children's Ministries.

Snacks

We enjoy snacks during our Children's Ministry Activities. This provides a wonderful social opportunity for the children. Snacks may consist of pretzels, crackers, ice pops, and fruit and we drink Country Time Lemonade or Juicy Juice Products. Occasionally we have snacks that involve ice cream or candy. If your child has a food allergy, please notify the teachers and Director of Children's Ministry.

If you would like to make a snack donation, it would greatly be appreciated. Please deliver to the office in a bag labeled Children's Ministry Snack, or give to the Director of Children's Ministries for proper storage.

Dress Code

Please keep in mind that our children here at Peace are actively learning about God. We provide a variety of learning experiences that may involve getting messy. In addition, they do have the opportunity to play outside. If you are uncertain as to what type of clothing to dress your child in, please contact the Director of Children's Ministries for assistance. Additionally, we require shoes to be worn at all times. This is important for health and safety reasons. We appreciate your understanding and support with this matter.

Volunteer Opportunities

We need you to participate in all aspects of your child's Christian development. There are unlimited opportunities for you to reach, teach and serve as a Christian parent and to support this very important ministry. For a complete list of volunteer opportunities, please see the Children's Ministry Calendar, contact the Director of Children's Ministries or attend a Children's Ministry Support Meeting. There is always a place for you.