



**Infants - 3rd Grade**

**Children's  
Ministries  
VOLUNTEER  
MANUAL**



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## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

GraceKids is our ministry for kids ages birth through third grade and includes the following:

Preschool: Birth — 5 years old

Elementary: Kindergarten — Grade 3

Our mission is to have a partnership between parents, volunteers and our Children's staff as we strive to live like Jesus. This partnership will help lead children into a growing relationship with God and encourage them to share their faith with others.

In GraceKids Preschool, our infants and toddlers are loved and cared for while in our colorful environment. Children ages two through pre-k participate in singing worship songs, listening to Bible stories in a small group setting, and learning through engaging activities.

In GraceKids Elementary, children in grades K-3 meet friends, talk about God, and celebrate through worship songs in a large group setting. They also meet in small groups to relate the Bible story to their lives, interact with their peers, pray, learn Bible verses, and engage in a variety of fun activities to reinforce the large group teaching.

**God's Word is True**

**God's Word is Alive**

**God's Word is Relevant**

“And all your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.”

Isaiah 54:13

# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## 1. THE PERSON OF GOD

In one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(Matt. 28:18-19; Deut. 6:4; John 17:5; 1 John 5:7-8; Romans 1:20).

### a. GOD THE FATHER

That God the Father is Father over all creation (Acts 17:29), Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 3:17, John 3:16), and Father of all believers (Gal. 3:26). It is He who sent Christ to the world in order to save the world (John 3:16-17). He is our provider (Matt. 7:9-11) and our source of loving discipline and direction (Heb. 12:5-11).

### b. GOD THE SON

That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. He arose bodily from the dead and He ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of God the Father, He is our High Priest and Advocate. (Luke 1:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Romans 5:8; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). From there, He will return to earth one day, take his own unto Him, and establish His eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace. (Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:11-20; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:2-5).

### c. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a person possessing all the divine attributes. He is God. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, seals and sets apart the believer to a holy life. At regeneration, He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ and comes to indwell him permanently. (1 Cor. 2:10-11, 12:11; Isa. 40:13-14; Psa. 139:7; Titus 3:5; John 3:5-7, 14:16-17, 16:8; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 8:9).

## 2. THE WORD OF GOD

That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are verbally inspired of God and without error in the original writings and that the exact meaning of the Scriptures is essentially unchanged in the widely accepted English translations. The Scriptures are authoritative and without error in any category of knowledge, including science and history, and are supreme and final authority in all matters about which they speak. We believe the Scriptures are to be interpreted in a normal and literal way and that they are understood as the believer is guided by the Spirit of God. (John 10:35; Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:18; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; John 16:12-15).

## 3. THE WORK OF GOD

That God created the world (Gen. 1:1) and it was very good (Gen. 1:31). However, because of man's rebellion, God now is in the redemptive process of reconciling his creation to Himself according to His perfect plan and will. (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

# WHAT WE BELIEVE

(continued)

## a. SALVATION

As part of God's perfect creation, we believe that man was created in the image of God, totally compatible with Him. However, man sinned and, consequently, experienced not only physical death but also spiritual death (which is separation from God).

The consequences of this sin infect and affect the entire human race: all human beings are born with a sinful nature and do, in fact, sin in thought, word, and deed. (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:17, 3:6; Rom. 3:23, 5:12-19, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3, 4:18; Mark 7:20-23; John 2:24-25). But God has made provision to reconcile us to Him again:

### 1. GRACE

That whoever, by faith alone, relies on or trust Jesus Christ as Savior instantly becomes a child of God forever. This salvation is not the result of any human effort or merit, at any time, but is God's free gift, purchased at the price of His own Son. (John 1:12; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:28)

### 2. ASSURANCE

That everyone who trusts in Christ as Savior has absolute assurance of eternal life, regardless of future performance, based solely upon the integrity of God's promise that everyone who believes has everlasting life and will not come to judgment. (1 John 5:11-13).

### 3. SECURITY

That all believers are kept eternally secure by the power of God through the new birth, the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit and intercession of Christ. (John 10:28-30, 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 4:30; 1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:38-39).

## b. SANCTIFICATION

That all believers, although born again, still possess a sinful nature in this life, but that God has made full provision for us to overcome this sinful nature and to live for God through identification with Christ, a knowledge of the Scriptures and by yielding in faith to the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Rom. 7:15-21, 6:1-11, 8:11-13; Gal. 5:16-24; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 John 1:9, 2:1-2).

## c. GLORIFICATION

That all who have been justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are not only presently being sanctified, but one day will be glorified (Romans 8:30). This means that each believer is promised a new, perfect body, like Christ's own resurrection body (Phil. 3:21), by which to glorify God forever in His Kingdom (Romans 8:18-23; 1 Cor. 15:35-58).

# SERVING IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

## WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

High school students or older may serve in any capacity in Preschool or Elementary. Middle school students can assist in toddlers through young fives classrooms. Middle school students may assist in the infant room if they are serving with a parent. Completing a babysitter's training course for Elementary, middle school, and high school students is encouraged. Middle school students may also serve on the Worship Team, serve as Student Buddies, or assist in a elementary classroom. Anyone in middle school or older can serve at the Children's Welcome Center.

**\*Students in 3rd through 5th grade may assist in all preschool classrooms except in toddlers and infants as youth helpers.**

- All volunteers must complete a Children's Ministries Volunteer Application.
- All volunteers age 18 and over must complete a Background Check Authorization form.
- All volunteers are expected to attend training events.

We will always strive to place you in areas where your gifts and passions shine, but sometimes you may be asked to step out of your area of expertise to serve.

## VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- Pray!
- Prepare\*.
- Be fully present and committed.
- **Be on time. This means arriving on time for prayer and announcements.**
- Call or email any questions or schedule conflicts/changes in advance.

\*All Children's Ministries volunteers are expected to teach based on the approved curriculum and in line with Grace Community Church's "*What We Believe*".

### When kids arrive:

- Smile! and use a friendly, gentle voice.
- Be recognized as a team player by wearing your nametag.
- Dress appropriately.
- Make sure your area is safe and clean.
- Interact with the kids you are leading.

**Nametags:** Everyone serving in Children's Ministries must wear a nametag when they serve. This is required as a safety measure, so anyone can readily identify strangers in the Preschool/Elementary hallways and rooms. Nametags build community and build confidence in the hearts of our parents who are entrusting their kids to us. Make sure that any observing parents also wear a nametag.

# PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum is named **First Look** because it gives preschoolers their *first impression* of their loving *heavenly Father*. Three basic truths anchor the entire First Look curriculum:

**God made me.**

**God loves me.**

**Jesus wants to be my friend forever.**

Each week, activities are broken down into three sections (Ages 2-5 only):

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**MAKE IT FUN** is designed to:

- Introduce kids to the topic of the day so they're prepared to hear the message.
- Give the Small Group Leader a chance to "hang out" with the kids and get to know them.
- Give the kids a chance to get to know each other.

After a little bit of time for the kids to play, these are the first organized activities you will do each morning. These activities will somehow be related to the Bible story and theme of the day. Be sure to use a lot of enthusiasm to keep the kids interested, and allude to the Bible story throughout the morning to get them interested in what they will hear later.

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**MAKE IT TRUE** (Worship & Bible Story) is designed to:

- Teach our preschoolers how to worship God through song and hand motions.
- Give kids a story from the Bible.
- Relate the Bible story to something from their own lives that helps them understand.
- Remind kids of 3 truths: God made them, God loves them, and Jesus wants to be their friend forever.

Two-year-olds learn the story in the classroom through an interactive DVD which portrays the Bible story with fun, vibrant characters. Snack for our two-year-olds is provided at this time. Three- and four-year-olds learn the story through an interactive DVD in the Preschool Story Room. Traveling to the Story Room introduces them to a large group teaching environment, which is also used in grades K-3. Our three- and four-year-olds may also participate in "Make it Fun" or "Make it Stick" activities in the Story Room. Thanks for sitting with the kids and showing them what listening and participating looks like; it is a big help. There may be times when you need to hold a child in your lap or have them sit next to you in order to keep them from wandering or being a distraction during story time.

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**MAKE IT STICK** is designed to:

- Help kids understand how the day's Bible story applies to them.
- Memorize scripture.
- Interact with other kids.

The activities are varied to impact kids with different learning styles.

The stories in the Bible have many facets to them. Because the kids have heard the Bible story, the Holy Spirit can reveal the truths of it to them as they need it. However, the focus of the curriculum each week comes back to one "bottom line" so the kids can soak in one main concept.

# ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

Our curriculum, called 252 Basics, uses Luke 2:52 as a framework to help kids grow up as Jesus did.

*“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”*

## **Luke 2:52**

The 252 Basics curriculum is divided into three sections, each targeted to a particular type of learning and relational environment:

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### **PLUG IN: Focus the Energy**

(In the classroom/Small Groups, **BEFORE** Large Group; 15mins) is designed to:

- Introduce kids to the topic of the day so they're prepared to hear the message.
- Give the Small Group Leader a chance to “hang out” with the kids and get to know them.
- Give the kids a chance to get to know each other.

There are always fun activities for kids to participate in as soon as they walk in the door. That way, they have something to talk about with each other rather than talking about the “questionable” movie they saw last night, etc. And they are busy with something so you have a chance to walk around and talk to kids individually rather than “managing” the classroom.

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### **POWER UP: Engage The Heart**

(Large Group; 20-25 mins) is designed to:

- Engage kids in worship.
- Give kids a story from the Bible.
- Relate the Bible story to a monthly virtue.
- Remind kids of 3 truths: I can trust God no matter what (**faith**), I need to make the wise choice (**wisdom**) and I should treat others the way they want to be treated (**friendship**).

It's important for your group of children to see YOU engaged and participating in Large Group and worship. When you check out of large group, it tells kids that this time is not very important.

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### **CATCH ON: Make The Connection**

(In the classroom/Small Groups, **AFTER** Large Group, 25-30 mins) is designed to help kids:

- Understand how the day's Bible story applies to them.
- Learn how to pray.
- Memorize scripture.
- Interact with other kids.

The activities are varied to impact kids with different learning styles.

The stories in the Bible have many facets to them. Because the kids have heard the Bible story, the Holy Spirit can reveal the truths of it to them as they need it. However, the focus of the curriculum each week comes back to one “bottom line” or one “virtue” so the kids can soak in one main concept.



# PRACTICES & GUIDELINES

## UPSET KIDS

Some kids are not used to being apart from their parents, or sometimes they are just having a bad day. We will work with the parent to help their child feel comfortable, but if a child is having a difficult time and they consistently cry for ten minutes, we will contact the parents via the call box.

## ILLNESS

**To protect the health of all kids who attend Grace, kids who have a fever or green runny nose will not be allowed in our classrooms.**

Please check each child's nametag for allergy information before serving snacks. **Serve only the snacks that are provided in the classroom.**

If a child becomes ill during service, please contact the Service Manager immediately. The Service Manager can enter the child's security number to call the parents while the Small Group Leader stays with the child. Depending on the situation, the Service Manager may also enter the code 9000. We are fortunate to have several individuals with advanced medical training in our body and have more than one in attendance at all times on a Sunday morning who respond immediately to the 9000 code.

## INJURY

Since the best plan would be to avoid medical emergencies if possible, we need to maintain a safe environment. The kids should never run or roughhouse in the classrooms. This can quickly escalate and result in someone getting hurt.

If a **minor injury** occurs like a paper cut, bumped head, fall on the bottom, do the following:

- Console the child.
- Apply a band-aid\*, a wet rag, etc.
- Pray for the boo-boo.
- Fill out an "**Accident Report**" and give it to a Children's Ministries Staff member.
- Tell the parents what happened when they pick up their child.

\*There is a first-aid kit in each classroom that contains band-aids for a simple scratch. There are blank accident report forms in the binders in each classroom. **Please complete an accident report form after any accident (no matter how small) that occurs and give it to a member of the Children's Ministries staff.**

If a **major injury** occurs (i.e., open wound, broken leg, unconsciousness, etc.), you should:

- Call for the Service Manager to enter 9000 and the child's security number in the call box.
- Console the child.
- One volunteer should stay with the child and the other should take the rest of the children to another location, such as onto the stage in the Large Group room (elementary) or the story room (preschool.).

# PRACTICES & GUIDELINES

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Jesus said, “*let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them.*” (Mark 10:14). As we look at the Children’s environment, we should ask, what might keep a child from coming to Jesus? Let’s eliminate those things so the kids have a clear path to the Savior.

Being uncomfortable (because they’re in a group of people they don’t know), bored (because they’ve already heard this Bible story), or scared (because there are other kids dominating the class) can all hinder a child from engaging during a service. Some things to keep in mind are:

- **Pray, pray and pray some more!** Kids act the way they do for many different reasons, and God can help you see the reasons behind their actions. Some kids will stay busy if you ask them to help with something, such as writing on the easel or distributing pencils.
- **Prepare.** Preparation involves what you will say as well as when and where. The kids will find something to do if they become disinterested between activities so be ready to transition from one activity to the next.
- **Set limits.** Before every activity, tell them briefly what is expected. Such as, “Stay in your seats while I hand out the paper and crayons. If you would like another piece of paper, please raise your hand.”
- **Catch the kids doing the right thing!** Use thumbs up; call out student’s names; use the OK finger signal; use real sign language; smile and point; simply verbalize their actions.
- **To re-direct off-task behavior, try...proximity** (stand near the child while teaching, touch the shoulder or head); *whispering* in the child’s ear (“you sat so beautifully last week; let me see you sitting again.”); *saying*, “Look up. Look down. Look at me.” (repeat 2-3 times); *shifting* gears to your next interesting topic, prop or game; *saying*, “Put your finger on your knees, on your head, on your back, on your lips.”
- **Separate kids if necessary.** They can earn the right to sit next to a friend, or stand next to a friend in line, by not touching others or by not talking when someone else is talking. Split into smaller groups within the room for some activities.
- **If you do correct verbally, reprimand the behavior rather than the child.** Example, “Talking to your friends is saved for the last 10 minutes. It’s not appropriate now.” rather than, “Betty, stop talking now.”
- **Contact parents if necessary.** There are times when a child just refuses to cooperate with the Small Group Leader or with the class. If this occurs, and you’ve already tried to engage the child and have talked to him or her, ask the Service Manager to put the child’s number in the call box. The parent is then welcome to take the child, or to come into the classroom and be with the child there.
- **Build relationships, build relationships, and build relationships!**

## PRACTICES & GUIDELINES

### DISCIPLINE

We never want a child to leave our ministry feeling that they were not loved or cared for, so we have the following guidelines:

1. **Warning:** Clear and calm definition of expectation and consequence.
2. **Consequence:** Discretion of how the instance should be handled—moving the kids apart; giving a time out (1 minute per age); moving a child (elementary) to the hallway, etc.
3. **Support:** If the child continues to choose inappropriate behavior, parents will be notified.

Children's Staff Members are here to handle uncontrollable or life threatening issues. If you are unsure how to handle a child, ask for help.

### Under no circumstance are we ever allowed to:

- Yell, ridicule, or call names at a child.
  - Use profanity.
  - Threaten.
  - Give harsh punishment.
4. **Incident Report:** If there is a situation where a child attempts to harm another student, or themselves, damage property, or needs additional attention, please fill out this form and have a member of the Children's Staff sign for confirmation.

### CLASSROOM RATIOS

It is our goal to adequately staff preschool and elementary classrooms during weekend services; however, in the event of last-minute volunteer cancellations we will post "help needed" signs.

There is a 1:10 ratio for the elementary classrooms. Once we fill the class to capacity, we will close the room.

Service Managers will monitor preschool classroom attendance and will use the following

volunteer-to-child ratios as guidelines for closing classrooms in order to provide the best care and teaching for our little ones:

- (Infants) - 1:2
- (Toddlers) - 1:4
- (2s) - 1:4
- (3s) - 1:5
- (4s) - 1:5

# SECURITY POLICIES

## TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN:

- Everyone who works around the children will be asked to fill out a Volunteer Application. All volunteers age 18 and over must also complete a Background Check Authorization Form. The information will be kept confidential and stored in a locked location.
- Sometimes there is a need to find a substitute for a position. A person may serve up to three times a year before they are required to complete the above forms.
- Close to 300 kids attend Grace each weekend. It is not possible for us to know each child and the many different changes in these unique family situations. We rely on your diligence to protect our children.
  1. As parents check in their child, they will receive a numbered security label which matches their child's nametag.
  2. When picking up their child, the parent must show you the security label in order to receive their child. **If the parent does not have a label, please refer them to the Service Manager, or Children's Staff .**
    - \* **No one under the age of eighteen will be allowed to check out a child. If there are any questions or concerns please have family member speak with someone on the Children's Staff. Some exceptions may apply.**
  3. Please remove the child's nametag and place it on the orange paper provided. You do not need to collect the parent's label.
- Immediately report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect of which you have knowledge or observe within the scope of your duties to a Children's Ministries staff member.
- No child should be outside of a classroom without adult supervision.

## FOR THE PROTECTION OF BOTH CHILDREN AND VOLUNTEERS:

- No one should be alone in a classroom with an individual child.
- No one is to be alone in a bathroom at any time with a child. If a child needs assistance, call the Service Manager, or leave the door open and ask another leader to stand where they can see into the bathroom.
- Feel free to ask another Small Group Leader or the Service Manager for any assistance.
- Only female adults aged 18 and older may change a child's diaper. These volunteers MUST wear rubber gloves (provided) and clean the diaper-changing area with disinfectant spray or wipes after each changing.

## EVACUATION & TAKE COVER

The building will be *evacuated* in the event of an emergency that threatens our safety, such as a fire, bomb threat or gas leak. We would be notified to *take-cover* in the event of a tornado or civil unrest.

There are backpacks on the back of the door in each classroom. They contain a flashlight (for navigating a dark stairwell) and a rope (for younger children to hold onto to stay together).

- In the event of an evacuation or take-cover situation, the Service Manager will notify each Small Group Leader and inform them of which exit to use.
- One of the Small Group Leaders should grab the backpack and the class roster (clipboard with green sheets and nametags attached) and lead the children to the nearest exit. Please be sure you are familiar with the exit in the middle of the hallway.
- Another Small Group Leader should leave the room last and check for children in the room on the way out; sometimes kids may hide under a table or behind a cupboard. Close the door behind you on the way out.
- **NO PERSONAL BELONGINGS (COATS, TOYS, ETC.) WILL BE BROUGHT WITH THE CHILDREN. PARENTS MAY CLAIM THEM AFTER AN “ALL CLEAR” HAS BEEN GIVEN TO RE-ENTER THE BUILDING.**
- In the event of an evacuation, lead the children across the parking lot to Covenant Care Center. A member of the Children’s Staff will open the center and be ready to receive us. All volunteers and children will be directed to their assigned area. Parents will be allowed to pick up their children once we receive an “all clear” notification.
- In the event of a take-cover situation, we will be informed to go to the basement. Designated volunteers will direct us to specific rooms to wait for the “all clear.”
- The Teaching Pastor will dismiss parents with instructions for them to pick up their children. When parents arrive to pick up their children, they will give the child’s security badge to a volunteer. The volunteer will get the child and bring them to the front to be united with the parent.

## OTHER INFORMATION

- Free CD's of the message are available every Sunday that you volunteer. You can get a CD at the Library, which is across from the Worship Center. Just sign your name on the volunteer clipboard so you don't have to pay for it. Messages are also available on the website, Facebook, and through podcasts.
- Hands should be washed before handling food for snack time. Hand sanitizer is provided in each classroom.
- Please avoid bringing up sensitive topics in the group that are not age-appropriate. Topics such as sex and suicide may be appropriate for the church to address with middle school and high school kids, but not elementary kids without prior consent from the parents. Please ask a Children's Ministries staff member if you have any questions.
- We love to celebrate birthdays with kids! Each elementary classroom cabinet has filled party bags. You may give them to kids anytime during their birthday month.
- Elementary classroom cabinets also contain prize boxes. Kids may select a toy from the prize box when they bring in a signed GodTime card or Parent Cue card. You may use your discretion any other time you think kids deserve an opportunity to select from the prize box. To avoid distractions, please give prizes at the end of the service just before kids are picked up by parents.
- We all love receiving mail, especially when it's for no other reason than someone is thinking of us. Every classroom contains postcards. Did a child touch your heart today or make you smile? Did you have a great conversation with a parent? Send a postcard! You put their name on it...we'll add the address and send it for you. Just leave it in the classroom and we'll make sure it gets mailed.





## Please Read and Sign Below

Tear off and return to Grace Kids Staff.



I have read the provided GraceKids Volunteer Manual.

I agree to adhere to the guidelines, policies and procedures stated for the protection of myself and the kids I serve.

Print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



For more information, please email [La Kesia Patton](mailto:LaKesiaPatton), Director of Children's Ministry and NextGen Team Leader, at [lpattton@gracewired.com](mailto:lpattton@gracewired.com) or call [313.449.8074](tel:313.449.8074).