

**ROCC**  
**kids**



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY  
**PARENT HANDBOOK**



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# PHILOSOPHY OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Ministry at River Oaks Community Church (ROCC) exists to assist parents in the spiritual formation of their children. Our goal is to help children become followers of Jesus by teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, not just moral lessons or Bible stories, but the good news of Jesus, using methods of instruction and interaction that are both excellent and age-appropriate.

We minister to nursery through elementary age children, primarily by equipping parents (through corporate worship, teaching, adult Sunday school, and small groups) to shepherd their children's hearts well.

We offer Sunday school classes for nursery through fifth grade. The Word of God is the backbone of our ministry for every age group. Our teaching focuses on Jesus as the fulfillment of all of the promises of God through the glorious hope of the Gospel.

Only the gospel can change people – young and old – at a heart level. As we teach and unpack the gospel for our children, we are participating in God's mission of redemption and restoration among our families, neighborhoods, and cities for his glory and our joy.

## ROCC MISSION STATEMENT

- **Declaring** *the gospel of Jesus Christ.*
- **Disciple-Making** *at home and around the world.*
- **Demonstrating** *the Father's love in spirit and in truth.*

# CLASSES AND PROMOTION SCHEDULE

All children's classes are available during Sunday morning services and are divided by age or grade. Because many of our families remain at church for both service hours, we offer a different, gospel-centered curriculum each hour.

CLASS	FIRST SERVICE	SECOND SERVICE
INFANTS	BIBLE STORY	BIBLE STORY
TODDLERS	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
PRESCHOOL	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
PRE-K	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
KINDERGARTEN	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
FIRST GRADE	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
SECOND & THIRD GRADES	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT
FOURTH & FIFTH GRADES	EXPLORE THE BIBLE	GOSPEL PROJECT

**NOTE:** The classroom age/grade divisions are based on the number of children attending a class during a quarter. If necessary we may change a division due to the teacher/student ratio we like to maintain.

## PROMOTION

Each group promotes together to the next class in **June**. Each child is assigned their class based on their age or grade *at the time of promotion*.

## SPECIAL CLASS CONSIDERATIONS

For children needing special class considerations, the children's ministry director will discuss the situation with the parents and determine which class would be best for the child.

## CHECK-IN IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AREA

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Our Children's Ministry Check-in area is located up the ramp, next to our administration office. The check in desk is located at the top of the ramp to the right.

1. If you are a guest visiting our church one of our Children's Ministry Assistants can help you get your child (children) checked-in by guiding you through the process of filling out name tags for your child(children). The tag that your child wears has a number that corresponds to a numbered tag that you will keep and turn in at the end of service. If after a few visits you choose to make River Oaks your home church, just let us know and we will record the pertinent information needed for our church data base and by the following week you can access the electronic check in devices. Please keep your check out sticker with you so you have the proper documentation to check out your child later on.
2. Once your family is in our check in system you would simply enter your phone number on an iPad and the name of your family members will appear on the screen. Check the box next to the child (children's) names that will be attending class that day and their names tags along with your pick up tag will print. If you are checking in a child for nursery you will receive duplicate tags; one for the child and one for their diaper bag. Please keep your check out sticker with you so you have the proper documentation to check out your child later on.
3. When the children are signed in a Children's Ministry Assistant will lead your child to their classroom. If you would like to go with your child to their classroom to drop them off for their first couple of times, you are welcome to join the Children's Ministry Assistant as they bring them to class.
4. Children are NOT allowed to check themselves in. A sibling age 16 or over can check in their younger siblings only if we have a signed permission slip from a parent. Permission slip can be gotten from a Children's Ministry Assistant.

## CHECK-OUT IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AREA

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Our check out desk is located at the top of the ramp in the Children's Ministry area.

The **check-out** steps are as follows:

1. At check-out time a line will begin to form on the right side of the ramp. When you get to the counter please turn in your check out tag to the Children's Ministry Assistant.
2. The counter assistant will then have another assistant retrieve your child from class. As they do so, please step to the left of the ramp to wait for your child.

Children are to stay in their classroom until you pick them up, and are not to roam the hallways. No child may leave with anyone other than their parent or high school age sibling unless prior written instruction is given to the children's ministry assistant team by you. Any medication left with a child's teacher should be picked up when you check-out your child.

***Pick up reminder:*** Please be mindful that our teachers may want to attend service or a Sunday school class. If you would like to visit with someone after service, please remember to pick up your children first.

## ACCESS

Only on duty children's ministry volunteers and security are allowed in the children's areas. Parents are only allowed in the area to help get their child settled in as needed and will be accompanied by a Children's Ministry Assistant. All other adults or students not serving will be asked to leave the area.

For additional security anyone serving in the children's area will be wearing a River Oaks photo ID lanyard while on duty.

Child custody issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and should be discussed with the Children's Ministry Director.

## HEALTH STANDARDS

We want all of our children to learn and play in a safe and healthy environment without fear of getting sick. To assist in accomplishing this goal, you are asked to keep your child at home or with you in the church service if they have had any of the following symptoms in the 48 hours preceding church service:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Earache
- Red or discharging eyes
- Unexplained skin rash

### **Additional health standards:**

#### ***Chickenpox***

Children who have had chickenpox may not attend children's ministry programs until 48 hours after all of the spots are scabbed over.

#### ***Lice***

Children must wait 48 hours after lice treatment and must be lice/nit free before attending children's ministry programs.

#### ***Pinkeye***

Children with pinkeye must be on antibiotics for 48 hours or have a doctor determine they are no longer contagious, and no longer exhibit matting or drainage from the eye before attending children's ministry programs.

### ***Strep***

Children with strep must be on antibiotics for 48 hours or have a doctor determine they are no longer contagious, before attending children's ministry programs.

If a child is admitted into a children's ministry program and then becomes ill or is determined to be ill, you will receive a text instructing you to come checkout your child or a children's ministry assistant will bring your child to you. Your child is welcome to return the next Sunday if they have been symptom free for **48 hours**.

## **MEDICAL CONCERNS**

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If your child has a life-threatening disease, illness or allergy that requires they have an emergency medication on hand, you should bring that medication with your child's name on it, clearly written dosage information and instructions. You should fill out the medication authorization form and submit it to the children's ministry director. You can get the medication authorization form at the children's ministry check-in counter from the children's ministry director or children's ministry assistant.

The children's ministry assistant will place the medication in a plastic bag with the written instructions, give it to the teacher, and give verbal instructions on: who it is for, the symptoms that indicate it is needed, and how to administer the medication. You are welcome to give or assist in giving the teacher the verbal instructions. The teacher will keep the medication with them, but out of reach of other children. Any medication left with a child's teacher should be collected when you pick up your child.

You will be immediately notified if your child is given an emergency medication by the children's ministry team.

Children's ministry workers and volunteers are not to administer medications to children except in life-threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and administer the medication. You are welcome to return to the classroom to administer a regular medication to your child as needed.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN

We use biblical principles to establish expectations for our children that will provide a healthy, safe and spiritual environment. Our prayer is that you will share these expectations with your child, so that we can work together as a team in providing your child with the greatest spiritual experience in our children's ministry.

1. Show respect to others.
2. Show self-control.
3. Show kindness and helpfulness to others.
4. Listen when others talk, especially the teacher.
5. Follow directions.

## DISCIPLINE

In the children's ministry at River Oaks we want to foster an environment for fun and learning. Often, we handle discipline by redirecting the child to a more constructive use of time and energy. Keeping the learning environment active and fun will usually eliminate the need for a lot of discipline.

We believe that discipline is a form of teaching a child to learn positive and appropriate behavior. When discipline is necessary, all children will be treated with gentleness, respect, and understanding. Physical punishment will never be used. The following tools will be tried before time-out becomes necessary, children's ministry volunteers will:

1. Give positively worded directions. For instance, tell the children to walk while inside, instead of telling them not to run.
2. Use a firm but gentle voice to address behavior, and focus remarks on the behavior you want to see.
3. Provide enough space for each child.
4. Redirect bad behavior by offering a positive activity to replace the negative one. For example, telling the child "You may toss a bean bag but we only use blocks for building."
5. If the child is still disruptive, warn them that their next behavior offense will result in time-out.
6. Listen to the child, help them determine for themselves why there is a problem, and help them vocalize their understanding of what is happening. Ask questions like:
  - Do you know why I asked you to stop \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Do you know why you did \_\_\_\_\_?

7. Positively reinforce good behavior. Try to observe the child doing something good, and affirm them in that behavior.

If your child has been given a time-out you will be informed of the situation by the teacher or the children's ministry assistant.

If a child uses foul language, injures other children, or does anything to affect another child in a negative way, the incident will be addressed with the child. The lead teacher and children's ministry assistant will decide if the child will be allowed back into class or if further action is needed.

### **BITING, HITTING AND PUSHING**

On the first and second offenses, and after the hurt child has calmed down, the child will be encouraged (with the teacher's assistance) to confront the perpetrator and tell them how they felt when hurt, and tell them not to do it again.

You will always be informed if your child is bit, hit or pushed, or if your child bites, hits or pushes other children. If a child repeatedly bites, hits, or pushes, the children's ministry director should be informed, and will ask the parents to keep their child in service with them until the behavior no longer occurs. Children often go through phases where they exhibit this type of behavior, and with time and discipline will stop.

*If any of the above actions have occurred, an Incident Report will be filled out and shared with parents of all children involved so you are aware of any injuries or discussion that may need to take place at home.*

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER & EMERGENCIES**

In the case of inclement weather, you should watch for an announcement to be made by church email, and on church social media. In the case of snow or impending snow, a decision should be made either in the evening or very early morning hours prior to church service.

If an emergency arises and children are evacuated from the church, we will evacuate to the large tree at the front of the cemetery, between our building and the neighboring church. If such a situation occurs, you are welcome to come join your children at the evacuation site but please do not take them until the staff has accounted for everyone, and cleared people to leave.

## VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Every week you entrust your children to the children's ministry, and we do not take that trust for granted. In addition to other policies and training requirements, below is the list of requirements and expectations we hold all children's ministry volunteers to.

Those desiring to volunteer with the Children's Ministry must meet the following requirements and expectations:

1. Have a personal relationship with Jesus.
2. Be a member of River Oaks Community Church.
3. Be in agreement with the core beliefs of our church (see ROCC 101 membership book).
4. Complete a children's ministry volunteer application, and agree to a background check.
5. Read the ROCC Children's Ministry Handbook.
6. Complete required training.
7. Be neat and modest in appearance, and adhere to the appropriate dress policy.
8. Be faithful to assigned positions.
9. Treat all children and parents with love and respect.
10. Respect the privacy of those you serve, and hold in confidence information obtained in the course of service.
11. Honor those in authority.
12. Be punctual, and take responsibility for finding a replacement in the case of your unexpected or planned absence.

## VOLUNTEERS

In order to provide a safe, secure and loving environment for your children, our volunteers are required to:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Complete a Children's Ministry Volunteer Application form
- Complete a background check
- Be a member of River Oaks Community Church

## ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM & NURSERY INFORMATION

### CLASSROOM & NURSERY RATIOS

- Nursery – 1 volunteer to every 3 infants
- Toddlers – 1 volunteer to every 5 children
- Preschool – 1 volunteer to every 6 children
- Pre-K – 1 volunteer to every 8 children

### BATHROOM POLICY

For the safety of our children and the protection of our volunteers, no student and volunteer should ever be alone together. For this reason, we follow the rule of three, meaning a minimum group size of three is required at all times.

For children in the toddlers through Pre-K classes, there is a restroom located in the foyer area of their classrooms. Toddler and preschool children are brought to that restroom and the door is left ajar should they call for assistance. Another student and the teacher are just outside the door waiting for them. For children in the kindergarten through 3rd-grade classes, there is a restroom located in their classroom. For children in 4th and 5th grades, their restrooms are located in the hall across from their classroom.

### SNACKS

A snack is provided during the 11:00 hour for students from ages 2 through 5th grade. If your child has any allergies please make sure these allergies are labeled on their name tags. Gluten-free snack options are available.

A snack is provided in the nursery during both hours. Our little ones snack on flavored Puffs. If your child has any allergies please make sure these allergies are designated on their name tags. If you would prefer that your child not have a snack in the nursery, please denote that on your child's name tag or inform the adult nursery worker.

### UPSET OR CRYING CHILDREN

If your child is upset or crying when being dropped off, please be reassured that we will call you if we need you to return to pick your child up. Often children can become distracted with an activity in the classroom as soon as the parent is out of sight. We will make every effort to console them and involve them in an activity, but please rest assured that we have a 15-minute cry rule in place if they are inconsolable. At that time, the children's ministry assistant will notify you if you are needed.

## NURSING MOTHER'S ROOMS

There are two nursing mother's rooms in the church. The first adjoins to the nursery. Enter the nursery and turn right to find it. Located in that room are cribs, blankets and a sound machine should your infant need a quiet place to nap. The second is located on the second floor. To get to this room take the stairwell next to the sanctuary. This room has a television where you can view the service while attending to your child.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

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At River Oaks Community Church we encourage parents and guardians to provide input and suggestions concerning the ministries they participate in, and the overall operation and programs of the church. Please feel free to speak to your child's teachers and volunteers with any ideas, suggestions, or recommendations you have for our church ministry, especially if something is causing you or your child difficulty. Together we make this local church body, and your thoughts and ideas are important.

If you have a sensitive matter that you believe should be addressed privately with the children's ministry director, you are welcome to do so.

***Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.***

***Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NIV)***

Thank you for entrusting your children to our care. We take that responsibility very seriously.



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