



Valley Mills Christian Church Children's Ministry Parent Handbook

The Valley Mills Christian Church Children's Ministry (Valley Kids), serves infants through sixth grades. We offer Valley Kids programming on Sunday mornings during the 9:00am classic service and the 10:45am modern service. Our ministry is provided by volunteers who have had a thorough background check and have hearts to serve the Lord through serving children.

Check-in:

All of our classes run during the designated Sunday morning service times. Parents may drop their children off 10 minutes prior to the start of service, and we request pick-up within 10 minutes after the service concludes.

Once in the system and checked-in, a nametag label prints out to be placed on the child and the parent gets a duplicate tag. Included on this tag is the child's name, a unique identifying number used for secure paging, allergy information, and assigned class. Upon pick-up, the parent must show their identifying tag to get their child. We are unable to release a child to anyone without the identifying tag.

We have a parent digital paging system that will show identifying numbers on a monitor that is posted above the prayer room in the worship center. Parents are asked to keep an eye on this monitor for alerts during worship service(s). If your child's number is shown, please report to the Valley Kids check-in station as soon as possible.

Safety:

The Valley Kids area is a secure zone that only allows authorized volunteers and children during services. Please observe our "restricted area" signs and avoid entering areas that are off limits for the safety of our children.

In the event of an emergency, our Valley Kids volunteers will make every effort to protect the children we serve, including evacuating them out of the building in the case of a fire. Our “safe” meeting place is the Flanner Buchanan Funeral Center next door.

Illness:

Similar to school and other public environments, we respectfully request that you keep your child home if he/she is ill or has had a temperature within the past 24 hours. If a communicable illness (highly contagious) develops within 24 hours of attending Valley Kids, we ask that you notify the church office promptly, so we can evaluate the potential need to communicate any potential health risks to others parents of children who may have been exposed (i.e....hand/foot disease, chicken pox, head lice, etc...).

Our Facebook Group:

We have a closed Facebook group specific to our Valley Kids program. Members of this group must be approved to join. Please send a join request via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/725215244344819/> (Valley Mills Christian Church Children’s Ministry).

Volunteers:

Valley Kids is always accepting new volunteers to serve in our ministry. We offer a variety of ways you can get involved, including but not limited to:

- Teaching
- Teaching Assistance
- Small Group Leader
- Check-in Worker
- Nursery Worker
- Lesson Preparation
- Coordinator of Volunteers (helping with scheduling and making reminder calls)
- Special events planning and coordination
- Missional projects
- Worship Technician
- Substitute servants

We encourage all families with children to commit to some type of serving role in this ministry. You can sign up to serve once per month, a month at a time, or as a back-up/substitute servant. We love having grandparents, teens, empty-nesters, parents-to-be, young adults, and anyone who likes children to consider volunteering!

Classes:

Nursery (available during the 9:00am and 10:45am services)

- Serves infants from birth to age two.
- Diapering and bottle feeding is provided; parents must provide diapers, wipes, and formula/breast milk.
- Offers a private anteroom for nursing mothers.

Two's & Three's Class (only available during the 10:45am service)

- Serves children who are two years old and three years old.
- Children are able to enter this classroom upon their 2nd birthday. We do not require that they be toilet trained, but we are not able to offer diapering in this class. If there is a diapering need, the parents will be paged to assist in this area.
- Children remain in this class until they reach their 4th birthday.
- We ask parents to please take their children to the restroom prior to class beginning to minimize the need to take restroom breaks during class.

Two through Kindergarten Class (available during the 9:00am service)

- Serves ages two through kindergarten during the 9:00am service
- Children are able to enter this classroom upon their 2nd birthday. We do not require that they be toilet trained, but we are not able to offer diapering in this class. If there is a diapering need, the parents will be paged to assist in this area.
- Children remain in this class until they enter 1st grade.
- We ask parents to please take their children to the restroom prior to class beginning to minimize the need to take restroom breaks during class.

Three through Kindergarten Class (available during the 10:45am services)

- Serves ages 3 through kindergarten who have not entered first grade.
- We ask parents to please take their children to the restroom prior to class beginning to minimize the need to take restroom breaks during class.

Kidzone (elementary grades 1-6) (available during the 9:00am and 10:45am services)

- Serves children who are in 1st through 6th grade

5th Sunday Missions:

We strive to instill missional hearts into the children through Valley Kids. Every 5th Sunday, we offer a special missional initiative that allows our children to actively serve in meeting the needs of others.

Promotion Sunday:

Promotion Sunday is held in late May or early June of each year. On promotion Sunday, children advance to the next class based upon their age/grade level. Promotion Sunday only applies to children who have entered structured school grades; children who are not in school advance through classes based upon their actual ages.

Extracurricular programs:

SuperStart:

- SuperStart is a pre-teen program through Christ in Youth that we offer to our Valley Kids 5th & 6th graders each March. SuperStart is a two day experience that includes one overnight stay. SuperStart does involve a fee as well as registration. Information is provided about this program in January and February of each year.

Vacation Bible School (VBS):

- Vacation Bible School is offered each summer in either June or July, and the theme and content vary from year to year. VBS serves children ages 4 through 6th grade, and includes a great time of worship music, teaching, crafts, games, and snacks!

Special Events:

- Valley Kids offers a variety of other special events throughout the year, including but not limited to extracurricular events and our Light the Night alternative Halloween program. We have two groups for special events: 1) Valley Kid Littles—focuses on kiddos aged birth-kindergarten 2) Valley Kids—focuses on kiddos in first through 6th grades

Camp:

- Every summer, Valley Kids have the opportunity to attend summer camp at Camp Allendale. Camp programs are offered as a one day camp for 1st graders, an overnight camp for 2nd graders, and a week-long camp for grades 3-6. Fundraising opportunities are available to help children raise money to assist with offsetting some of their camp fees; scholarships may also be available.

Behavioral Expectations:

Our goal is to create a respectful, fun environment where parents partner with ministry leaders to provide an exciting spiritual experience for children. This discipline protocol is intended to provide the structure and expectations needed to create an environment where all children can safely enjoy Children's Ministry programming.

Behavior Guidelines

- Appropriate behavior is defined as a cooperative spirit on the part of the child.
- Inappropriate behavior is defined as defiant, disruptive or harmful behavior to oneself or others. Inappropriate behavior will be addressed by a children's ministry leader and will be handled in a manner as outlined in this discipline protocol.
- Severe misconduct is defined as harmful behavior to oneself or others, as well as, a disruption to the point where the class/program cannot continue.

To help kids understand what appropriate behavior is, Valley Kids uses the acronym **NORP** to remember our four basic rules:

1. **N**o talking while others are talking (raise your hand to answer questions)
2. **O**bey the leaders
3. **R**espect others and their property (includes keeping hands and feet to yourself)
4. **P**ut things back better than you found them

Discipline & "Pink-Slip" Protocol

There is a three-step process when administering disciplinary action.

1st Offense = Verbal Warning

Adult leader will give verbal warning for inappropriate behavior and will clearly define, without degrading or embarrassing the child, how to alter the behavior so that it is acceptable.

2nd Offense = Time Out and parent is notified at close of service of offense

Adult leader will ask child to move to a different seat or area away from the things or people that are aiding in the disruption. Child will remain in full view of an adult leader for a period of time equal to the child's age in minutes. The leader will remind the child of the inappropriate behavior. The child, along with the adult leader, will make the parent/guardian aware of the offense upon pick-up.

3rd Offense = Pink-Slipped (Child removed from class and parent immediately notified for pick-up)

After the third offense, the child will receive a "pink-slip" and the parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately, with the adult leader explaining the consequence to the parent of the continued poor behavior. Parent notification will take place via the digital number projection in the Worship Center.

Repeat Pink-Slips = Sitting out of Children's Ministry

After the receipt of a 2nd pink-slip within a one-month (four week) period, a child will need to sit out of Children's Ministry for a one-month (four week) period. If pink-slips become common occurrences, the parent may be asked to attend classes with their child for a determined amount of time.

Severe Misconduct

Because we must insist that each child is safe while in the care of the Valley Mills Children's Ministry, we must address severe misconduct swiftly. Severe misconduct will result in the parents being paged immediately, and may include, but are not limited to:

- a.) Behavior that puts the child or another person in immediate danger.
- b.) Behavior that causes disruption to the point where the class/program cannot continue.

Parent/Guardian Notification

An adult leader will make every effort to speak with the parent/guardian in a private manner as soon as possible about the behavior(s); parents/guardians are asked to speak directly with their child/children about the disruptive behavior(s).

The “PINK SLIP”—example below



“PINK-SLIP”



Child’s Name: _____

Date: _____

Your child is returning to sit with you because they were not compliant with the expected rules in Children’s Ministry today. We have four basic rules:

1. No talking while others are talking (raise your hand to answer questions)
2. Obey the leaders
3. Respect others and their property (includes keeping hands and feet to yourself)
4. Put things back better than you found them

We have a “3 strikes and you’re out” protocol. Children get 2 warnings before they are “pink-slipped” out of Children’s Ministry for that day. A repeat pink-slip within a four-week period means that a child will have to sit out of Children’s Ministry for one month. Helping all children grow in Christ is our ultimate desire, so we ask that parents talk with their children and create a plan to resolve disruptive behaviors, so they can avoid future “pink-slips”.