



At St. Mary Church
Sundays during the 10:30am Mass

Volunteer Handbook Policies and Procedures

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

The purpose of our "Little Angels Club" faith nursery is to enable parents to attend mass while their 6-month to 4-year old children are cared for and nurtured in the basics of our Catholic faith. Our faith nursery volunteers minister to the youngest members of our parish to help them live, pray, and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The volunteer's role is to provide safe, nurturing, Christ-like care to the children of our parish. Your ministry responsibilities include leading the children in prayer and activities that help them to know Christ and His love for them, as well as providing for their basic needs while in your care. This handbook is a guide so that each faith nursery volunteer will feel equipped to provide a safe and engaging experience for each young guest.

Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities:

The various volunteer responsibilities for our faith nursery are divided into separate roles based on volunteers' preferences and ministry needs. All ministry volunteers must be CORI and Safe Environment Training compliant; adults must be Pedi-CPR certified.

Co-Director: Adult nursery team coordinator who pre-plans prayer and play activities, oversees the safety and welfare of the children, directs volunteers, ensures adherence to policy and procedure, interfaces with parents, and ensures reliable sign-in information.

Leader for 6 month to 2 year olds: Adult who leads the volunteer helpers in the care of the younger children to ensure that all are properly cared for, entertained and helps them to participate in the prayer activities.

Leader for 3 & 4 year olds: Adult who leads the volunteer helpers in the care of the older children to ensure that all are properly cared for and helps them to participate in the prayer activities, crafts, music, and movies.

Helpers: High school youth who help the leaders. Teen helpers are not to be left alone with a child except in an emergency when this is the only way to provide proper care and notify parents.

Except for an emergency, children in nursery care will always be supervised by at least two people, including one adult. Additionally, a Co-Director may be present in the nursery throughout the session. In most cases, it will be only 1 adult and 1 teen covering the nursery.

Volunteer Policies:

- In addition to loving our children, safety is our main priority! Keep your eyes and ears on the children at all times.
- Arrive on time (30 minutes prior to Mass).
- Make every effort to honor your schedule commitment. If unable to work, notify a Co-Director as soon as possible. **Last minute replacements may be difficult or impossible to find, and may cause the nursery to be closed for the day.**
- Only scheduled nursery volunteers or others trained volunteers should be in the nursery while it is open. No friends or guests are allowed to "hang out" in the nursery.
- Engage the children with a Christ-like, positive and loving attitude.
- Confidentiality must be respected. Do not discuss the emotional, physical, medical or intellectual condition of any child outside the nursery.
- Refrain from telling a parent about bad behavior. If necessary, the Co-Director will meet with the parent to discuss a child with a persistent problem. Avoid giving a parent advice, opinion or judgment. Remember that the parent is always right!
- Do not lift a baby or toddler by holding their hands and lifting their arms in the air as this may cause a shoulder dislocation.
- Do not poke, prod, or tickle a child. Many children don't like it and cannot communicate their dislike to an adult.
- Children should not be taken out of the nursery, except for an emergency or a bathroom visit.
- Cell phone use in the nursery is not permitted, except to contact a parent or to call 911.
- Remain for the duration of mass and until all children have been picked up and the nursery has been cleaned. The only reason to leave the nursery is during an emergency to locate a child's parent during mass, as instructed by the Co-Director.

Diaper Changing and Bathroom Trips:

- Parents should provide diapers, wipes, and a change of clothing for each visit.
- Adult volunteer should periodically check for wet or soiled diapers, unless the parent has indicated different instructions.
- Rubber gloves, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing surface spray should be at the changing table for the safety of the child and the volunteer.
- Keep all items out of the reach of children.
- Dirty diapers should be kept in a sealed diaper pail until the end of the session.
- The disposable changing table pad should be changed after each use to prevent germs from spreading.

Emergency Policy:

In the case of a medical emergency, a volunteer will go to get the parent in the church. In event of a fire or other emergency, volunteers will follow the emergency plans posted in the nursery. Children will be led to the far side of the upper parking lot. Please discuss any questions or concerns with the nursery co-director on duty.

Illness Policy:

To keep our children healthy, a child with any of the following will not be permitted in the faith nursery:

- Runny nose (colored discharge)
- Head lice (child should be free from all nits)
- Inflamed mouth or throat
- Coughing/sneezing
- Chest congestion/labored breathing
- Diarrhea/vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Fever within the past 48 hours
- Listlessness/unusual fatigue or irritability/excessive crying
- Open sores
- Contagious disease (such as chicken pox/pink eye)

If a child is taking any antibiotics, he/she should have received treatment for at least 24 hours before coming to nursery care. To prevent accidental overdoses, our nursery policy prohibits volunteers from administering any medications.

General first aid, such as applying bandages to minor scrapes or diaper rash cream is permitted. Call 911 immediately for any serious injury and contact the parent.

Inconsolable Children:

Nursery volunteers will make every effort to engage unhappy children. If a volunteer feels that a child is inconsolable, she/he will follow the instructions on the child's registration form. These efforts will be attempted to console the child as age appropriate:

- Check and change diaper if needed
- Offer baby a bottle
- Swaddle and rock baby
- Distract child with a toy/book
- Attempt to interact child with others
- Ask another volunteer for assistance

Discipline:

The safety of children must be maintained at all times. No throwing, biting, hitting, kicking or foul language will be used. If a child expresses this behavior, remind them to follow the nursery rules. Use of time-out is not permitted, unless the parent authorizes its use. Use of physical force or yelling is never allowed.

Any correction should address only the behavior ("no hitting") and never the character of the child ("bad boy/girl"). Also, we will tell the child the behavior expected ("no hitting, please use your words to say what you want").

Sign-In & Out Policy:

- Every child must be signed in by a parent upon entering the nursery. No children will be allowed to stay at the nursery unless they have a registration form on file. You can find the registrations forms in the binder in the locked chest.
- If a child has special needs, the parent should make sure they are addressed when dropped off and signed in.
- Do not permit a sick child to attend the nursery that day.
- All diaper bags and personal items must be marked with their name and given directly to nursery volunteers.
- Children will not be released to anyone not listed on their registration form. Older siblings are not allowed to pick up children.

Emergency Plans:

If a child is experiencing a medical emergency, at least one volunteer will stay with the child while another goes directly to the church to locate a parent. If a volunteer cannot locate the parent, he or she will call the listed cell phone number. The Co-Director will determine if 911 should be called, while waiting for the parent to arrive.

In case of a fire, take the sign in sheet and have all children quickly assemble and follow the evacuation plan posted in room. Wait in the back parking lot at a safe distance from the church, until parents arrive for their children. Take attendance and have one volunteer go into church to notify parents immediately, if safe to do so.

First Aid:

A first aid kit will be available in the nursery. Adult volunteers are allowed to administer bandages for minor injuries only. All other injuries should be reported immediately to the on-duty Co-Director, who will advise the parent (and call 911 when necessary). The Co-Director and witnessing volunteer will make an incident report after the nursery closes for that session.

Opening Procedure:

- Volunteers should arrive 30 minutes prior to the mass time.
- The Co-Director should be at the door to monitor sign-ins and interact with parents.
- Ensure that all needed supplies are out for the day.
- Review the agenda for the session; turn on the music.
- Check that the premises is safe (proper doors locked, outlet covered, etc.)
- Lovingly and respectfully greet all children and guide them to the play area.

Closing Procedure:

- Be sure children are only released to the parent who dropped them off or an adult listed on their registration form.
- Put away all supplies used for the day.
- Wipe down/sanitize all supplies (changing table, rockers, pack-n-play, toys, etc.)
- Empty all trashcans into one bag and have one volunteer take it to the dumpster. Replace new bags.
- Make any necessary notes for Co-Director on the back of that day's sign-in/out sheet.

Acknowledgement Form

I _____ acknowledge that I have read and understood the policies and guidelines as they pertain to me as a volunteer. I hereby confirm I will abide by the policies and guidelines.

Signature: _____ Date: __ / __ / ____