

fellowship kids



It is with deep gratitude that we welcome you to the Fellowship Kids family. Many of us have been connected to this family for decades and some are just joining. Together, we are a mixture of students, professionals, moms, dads, retirees, musicians, bankers, writers, engineers, realtors, teachers and nurses, doctors and lawyers. We come to this melting pot of Nashville from all over America and from various walks of life. And, yet we have one thing in common.

We all have met Jesus.

Meeting Jesus changes the way we see and experience EVERYTHING. And, meeting Jesus begins an adventure of introducing others to know Him too.

So, together, in this family called Fellowship Kids, we – serve, proclaim, glorify the One who chose us for this mission. And, together we teach, play, pray, nurture, sing, grow, go and serve one another so that every child has a chance to experience the transforming work of Jesus Christ. We are poised to serve you and write new stories of great faithfulness.

We thank God for you.

Marty Schwieterman
Pastor of Children's Ministries

Ally Gann
Fellowship Kids Director

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1.0

Mission, Vision, and Values

As a community of faith, we seek to grow in Christ and to be transformed by Him. While endeavoring to transform others, we invite transformation of ourselves. Our mission is very simple. We are united toward one purpose – to do whatever it takes to cultivate the hearts of children for Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As a church, we believe that children are gifts from God and should be treated as such (Psalm 127:3). We have very high expectations, and are committed to God’s plan for passing His love down through the ages “so the generations to come might know” the love and forgiveness of Christ (Psalm 78:5-8).

Fellowship Kids is the main arm of Fellowship Children’s Ministries (FCM). Children’s ministries is one of three essential ministries of Fellowship Bible Church and our mission is to provide the environment, leadership and content for children (Birth - 6th Grade) to hear, believe and live out the gospel.

To implement this mission, we focus on the following values:

- **Prayer** –to proclaim our dependence on the work of God in and through our lives, and to illustrate that our efforts are futile if we are not being led by the Spirit of God.
- **Biblical Truth** – to anchor our class environments in the inspired, inerrant Word of God so that each child has a sure compass of Truth for life’s journey.
- **Life-Change Oriented** – to translate God’s Truth into relevant, authentic experiences for each child so that each one becomes an irresistible and influential, evangelistic disciple of Christ.
- **Relational** – to provide a nurturing environment that fosters genuine, emotionally attached relationships among volunteers and children so that everyone feels connected to the story of God.
- **Child-Focused** – to appeal to each child’s personality and talents as well as age-level development so that each child is uniquely honored and celebrated as God’s personal creation.
- **Innovative** – to develop imaginative, creative learning experiences so that each child is actively engaged in effective, memorable explorations of God, His Word, and His people.
- **Fun** – to have a blast while expressing the wonder of God and His Truth so that each child will eagerly seek out the things of God and will personally experience the joy of being a Christian.

To accomplish these things, we seek partners/volunteers who:

- Model godly principals in word and deed.
- Practice the five essentials of life-change at Fellowship Bible Church: worship, community, growth toward maturity, service and generosity.
- View the teaching of children as a ministry and are committed to excellence in the classroom.
- Are committed to be timely and maintain an attitude of flexibility and teamwork.

2.0

Weekend Programs

Fellowship Kids has a strong plan for accomplishing spiritual growth and biblical competence among children. Here are our programs:

Toddlers - Pre-Kindergarten

We use *First Look* curriculum that is very child-focused, volunteer-friendly and utilizes an interactive approach to teaching.

Kindergarten –1st Grade

The Gospel Project for Kids is a Christ-centered curriculum that follows a chronological timeline of Bible events. It presents the story of redemption through Jesus.

2nd-5th Grade

Each weekend these classes use *Tru* curriculum. *Tru* helps kids connect to God, find their place in His grand redemptive narrative, and respond to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

6th Grade

Yukon Ho! Leads the students through the traps of adolescence.

K2

As a service to parents who serve on campus Sunday morning, we offer K2, an extended program for our volunteer kids. These classes are uniquely designed to offer age appropriate, fun and engaging activities through recreation, fun, refreshment, and relationships.

3.0

Policies and Procedures

3.1 A Typical Routine for Volunteers

Here is a snap shot of a typical day for a Fellowship Kids volunteer.

Before Service

1. Check-in at a kiosk, receive a nametag, and plan to arrive at your assignment 15 minutes prior to the service of which you are scheduled to serve, or directly after the worship service you attend-- whichever comes first. In general, here are the timeframes you need to target.

<u>Sunday:</u>		<u>Saturday:</u>
• 7:45am	(1 st service)	4:45pm
• 9:20am	(2 nd service)	
• 10:55am	(3 rd service)	

2. Check to ensure that the room is in order.
3. Pray for yourself and your children.
4. Prepare to receive students immediately. TWO VOLUNTEERS (at least one being an adult) are required in order for you to begin receiving children into your classroom. *Never be alone with a child.*

During Class

- Receive the children. Verify each child's class assignment on their nametag to ensure they are in the correct class. A child can only be received if they are wearing their own security tag that has the correct class location and service identified.
- Take attendance after the attendance rosters have been delivered, and
 - before returning to the class after visiting the playground
 - before returning to the class after visiting the restrooms
- Collect donations for Compassion Kids.
- Teach the lesson.
- Change diapers and/or take the younger children to the bathroom for potty breaks.

- Put the classroom back in order. Sanitize counter tops and toys if necessary.
- End in prayer.

After Class

1. Verify parent security tags and return children to their parents. ONLY 6th graders may leave on their own.
2. Take children to their next class only if their nametag directs you to do so.
3. Keep children in the class whose parents have not yet arrived. Notify the coordinator and the next set of volunteers of these children.
4. Update the attendance roster to show which children were transferred to their parents.
5. After parent's have picked up their children, volunteers from each classroom should escort all remaining children to their K2 class. Similarly, K2 volunteers will need to escort their children to their regular class.
6. Update the attendance roster again to identify where the remaining children were taken.
7. Put supplies away neatly.
8. Clean your room. Make sure the floors are picked up if snacks or messy crafts have been used.
9. Don't forget to pick up your own kids if applicable.

3.2 Class Size Limits

Our goal is to never turn away a student from a class. And yet, as we grow, we will experience times when classes must be considered full and no other students should be accepted unless additional measures are taken. "Full" is a relative term that is primarily determined by the volunteers of the class and the class coordinator.

If you think that you may need to close your class, it is very important to contact your Fellowship Kids Coordinator as soon as possible. The coordinator will consider two options.

- Add a volunteer to your class so that additional students may be received.
- Divert additional students to another age-appropriate class.

** Special Note: NEVER turn away a child who has already been checked-in.

3.3 Finding a Substitute for Yourself

For the life of a Fellowship Kids student, your consistent presence is vital to the process of their life-change. As you build relationships with them, you will discover that no one can actually take your place. But, we understand that it is sometimes necessary to take a weekend off due to illness or a planned vacation. Finding substitutes can take some time so please give as much advanced notice as possible.

SUBSTITUTE POLICY: As soon as you know that you need to miss a day of class, please try to find someone who can sub for you. Spouses, community group members, Bible study classmates and friends are great resources as well as parents of the children in your class.

SATURDAY VOLUNTEERS: Try to find a substitute from the volunteers on the opposite team and swap with them. This helps us to keep things as consistent as possible for our kids and eliminates the problem of having a substitute that is unfamiliar with your curriculum. If your fellow team cannot switch with you please try to find someone else to fill-in.

Once you have found a replacement please email your coordinator and let them know when you will be out and who is filling in for you. If you are unable to find a substitute, please email your coordinator as soon as possible. Please know that if you do not call out before Thursday, it is unlikely that we will be able to find a sub for you, but it helps us to be aware of your absence before your class begins.

3.4 Finding a Parent

If a child becomes ill or does not stop crying after **10 minutes** you should inform your Fellowship Kids Coordinator who will take immediate steps to contact the parent.

3.5 Diaper Changing and Nursery Care

1. Only trained female adult volunteers may change diapers.
2. All children wearing diapers should routinely be changed mid-morning in addition to any other needs that arises. Gloves are provided for our use in an effort to eliminate the transfer of germs. **Use non-alcoholic wipes on the children's skin.**
3. Please use germicidal lotion or wash hands after every change.
4. Never move away from the changing table without taking the child with you.
5. There must be two people present when changing diapers.
6. Diapers must be changed with a sheet of waxed paper under the child. **Change the wax paper between children.**

7. Make sure you fill out and give each parent a Nursery Note sheet for each child.
8. A disposable glove needs to be worn on the hand you will wipe with and thrown away after each diaper change.
9. Replace all lap pads in cribs that have been used. Use a clean lap pad for each baby. After the third service, take all dirty linens, blankets and sheets to the laundry room.

3.6 Kiosk Check-In Problems

There are times when our kiosk computer system goes down and our normal check-in system must transition into a manual mode. In manual mode, parents will handwrite name tags and then take children to their normal Fellowship Kids class. When we transition to manual mode you will be notified immediately and instructed to open a white box that is located in your class, labeled "Stop. Open only in case of Computer Emergency." You will find detailed instructions, sharpies/pens, blank rosters for each service, laminated tags for each service and a class closed sign.

When these children arrive at your classroom, here are your steps to follow:

1. Make sure when the child arrives he/she is wearing a label(s) with their name, class and allergies. If not send them with their parents to a kiosk station to create a tag.
2. Take one of the laminated security tags from the envelope for your service.
3. Clip the tag on the child and give the other to the parent. This is their security number for that child only.
4. Next to the corresponding number on the blank roster write in the child's name. If you receive children who already have K2 tags, cross out one of the numbers on the roster and write in their number from their K2 tag and name. *Do not use the corresponding tag of the number you crossed out.*
5. Once you have filled in all the lines or used all of your tags for your service, **YOUR CLASS IS CLOSED!** Please do not use tags from another service.
6. Close door and place Closed Class sign on doorjamb.
7. When class is over take tags from children who have been picked up and put back in envelope in box. Leave tags on children who are attending K2.

If a child has attended K2 first, we will try to get them into your class if it is their regular class. If your class fills up they will go to another. **DO NOT OVERFILL YOUR ROOM!!**

If there are any questions or problems notify your coordinator immediately.

The Fellowship Kids team strives to show Christ's love to children in all situations including the way we engage various behaviors. We practice a grace-based approach that seeks to do more than modify behavior. We seek to transform the heart and mind.

All behavior is a form of communication; therefore, it is important to listen to what a child is saying through their actions.

The following are some recommended guidelines for engaging children whose conduct is disruptive, disrespectful, or dangerous. Coordinators can assist in this area and offer ideas and advice.

1. **Re-direct** – Using a positive tone, re-direct the child's interest, if possible.
2. **Affirm** – At every opportunity, affirm acceptable behavior.
3. **Give Perspective** – With grace and a humble heart, seek to understand the child's perspective. Ask the child to use their words to describe why they are behaving poorly. Help the child see the situation from the other's point of view (especially when an act of violence has occurred against another child).
4. **Get Help** – If a child becomes belligerent or fails to respond to simple directions by you – contact your coordinator immediately. The coordinator will deal with the child so you can focus on your class. As a volunteer, you are always to be a child's safe place. It is never your role to use physical, emotional, or psychological force on a child unless they are a danger to themselves or others. Never touch any student in a disrespectful manner or make derogatory remarks. Never spank, yell at or intimidate a child in an angry or fearful manner. If you reach the point of anger, you are out of control. Contact your coordinator immediately.
5. **Pray** – Praying for your students outside of class will make a difference during class. Here are some ideas:

Sample Prayer for an Individual – Lord Jesus, I thank you for (child's name). We are having a difficult time today in class. We ask for your peace in our hearts and minds and your help as we finish our time together. Please forgive us for our actions that hurt you or others. I thank you that you have made (child's name) with his/her own special talents. I am so glad that he/she is part of my class. Please bless our relationship. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Sample Prayer for a Class – Heavenly Father, I thank you for the opportunity to be with these students. Lord, we ask for your Holy Spirit and His peace to be in our classroom and our hearts today. I thank you that we have this time together and we ask that what we do today would be pleasing to you. Help us to learn from each other and to become the men and women you want us to be. In Jesus Name, Amen.

The safety and security of our children is a BIG deal!

We realize that terrible threats exist in our culture, and that our job is to provide the children with the feeling of a threat-free environment. That means that we, as care-givers and protectors, must be trained and alert to the dangers that exist. For these reasons, we enlist several levels of safety and security in the Learning Center.

At Fellowship we have specific policies and procedures regarding our day-to-day Learning Center operations and we take them very seriously. Volunteers are formally trained in these areas to maintain utmost safety and security of our children, and we regularly communicate with our volunteers to keep security awareness at the forefront of our minds. Our practices include the following:

5.1 Classroom Safety Procedures

5.1.1 Two Volunteers – As a deterrent to child abuse and to protect the volunteers from erroneous child abuse accusations, two volunteers (at least one being an adult volunteer) are required to be with the children at all times. If the volunteers are related (parent/child or husband/wife) an additional volunteer should be present at all times. **Never be alone with a child.** If two qualified volunteers are not present, notify your coordinator. He/she will consider three options:

- Get another volunteer or Fellowship Kids staff member to help.
- Combine your class with another one.
- Close your class.

5.1.2 Child Drop-Off and Pick Up Procedure – To insure the safety of our children, parents are to personally drop off and pick up children at their classroom. During services, all persons must enter the classroom area from the Learning Center lobby, all Arcade doors are locked during service. These doors will be opened at the conclusion of service so parents can pick up their children.

Nursery - 6th Grade – We use a security tagging system for infants through 6th grade such that each child can be easily identified with their parent and, in case of an emergency, the parents can be paged in the main service. A child can only be picked-up if the parent has a matching security tag. Here are the specific procedures:

Babies – Parents can request a three-part name tag system. One paper tag will be attached to the child. One paper tag will go to the parent. And, another paper tag will be placed on the diaper bag.

Toddlers - 5th Grade – We use a two-part nametag system. One tag is attached to the child, and the other is to be taken by the parent. Only receive children who have a nametag. Each tag has a unique number. The parent must have the matching tag in order to pick up their child.

6th Grade – Only receive children who have a nametag, however parents are not required to pick up their 6th grader. They will be dismissed at the conclusion of class.

5.1.3 Lost Security Tag – If a parent has lost their tag, please send them to the volunteer check in desk. We will confirm that they are allowed to pick up that child and provide them with the necessary tag.

5.1.4 Bathroom Breaks – Children will need to use the restroom during class.

- If your classroom has a bathroom attached, let children go to the bathroom alone if possible. **If assistance is needed a female adult volunteer** should offer necessary assistance with the door open, but not linger in the bathroom.
- When children (toddlers - kindergarten) need to use the restroom during class, and a restroom is not attached to the classroom, notify Fellowship Kids staff that you need assistance. **Two volunteers must stay with the class, and either two volunteers or one adult volunteer and a Fellowship Kids staff member must escort the child to the bathroom.** Children will use the women’s restroom during class time. Two people (not including the child) ARE REQUIRED when taking a child to the bathroom. **Student volunteers may not escort children to the bathroom.**
- When taking the entire class to the bathroom following the playground, adults should remain outside the bathroom. If it becomes necessary to enter, two volunteers are needed (or staff member).
- When older children (1st - 6th graders) need to use the restroom during class, you may let them go to the restroom alone but monitor them from the doorway of the classroom. The hallway monitor will make sure the bathroom is empty before allowing the child to enter. If a child needs help, the hallway/bathroom monitor will notify a staff member. **Never escort a child to the bathroom alone.**

5.1.5 Sitting in Laps – It is understood that babies and young children often find comfort in the lap of loving volunteers. But, it is not wise for volunteers (men especially) to have children (2-years-old and older) in their laps. Here are our rules:

- No child (Pre-K and older) should ever sit in a volunteer’s lap.
- 2- and 3-Year Olds may sit in a volunteer’s lap for only a minute or two and then be moved to a seat. This seat may be right next to the volunteer. If a 2- or 3-Year-Old child needs more physical hugs and attention, then a female volunteer should provide this comfort.

5.2 Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

We must be prepared for two different kinds of emergency evacuation procedures. The first one deals with the process of getting the children out of the building. This would be required in case of a fire or gas leak. The other scenario requires us to find safety within the building itself. This could occur if a tornado warning was issued.

5.2.1 Learning Center Evacuation Plan

These procedures should be observed for your own safety and protection in the event of a fire, fire drill, or gas leak. Be certain your students know what to do if such an occasion arises. The evacuation routes posted inside your door and in Learning Center common areas should always be used during fire drills and, if possible, in the event of an actual emergency. *IF YOUR PRIMARY EVACUATION ROUTE IS NOT PASSABLE DURING AN ACTUAL FIRE, USE THE SECONDARY ROUTE AVAILABLE.*

WHEN THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS

REMAIN CALM The children will mimic your attitude in an emergency.

Grab **CLASS ROSTER** and **EVACUATION MAP/INSTRUCTIONS** from wall near the door.

ASSEMBLE CHILDREN Appoint an adult to serve as lead volunteer (with map & class roster) at front of line of children. Position one volunteer behind the children and other volunteers alongside the children to assist with stairs, doors, etc.

LEAVE IMMEDIATELY No matter what you are doing. Leave your valuables, books, etc., in the room. Follow your primary or secondary routes to exit the Learning Center. ***DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.***

CHECK DOORS BEFORE OPENING

1. Feel the door and observe cracks around the door. If the door is warm or there is smoke, DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR. USE ALTERNATE EXIT FROM ROOM, IF POSSIBLE.
2. If door is not warm, open it cautiously, checking both for smoke and for noxious fumes. If the hall is clear, follow evacuation route on map. Wear shoes and coat. Carry whatever is available (towels, coats, etc.) to protect your face from flames or smoke.
3. If you find yourself in a hallway, suddenly enveloped by smoke or fumes, the safest spot is close to the floor and against the wall. Cover your nose and mouth and proceed to exit.

FOLLOW EVACUATION ROUTE and EXIT BUILDING

- Walk single file - don't run or stampede.
- Assist children safely down stairs, if applicable, with one volunteer at base of stairs and other volunteers assisting on stairs.
- Assemble in the area between the Learning Center and the pond. Learning Center staff will be in the assembly area to organize classes according to their age level.
- Locate classroom ID flag, gather children in orderly group or line, and report to your coordinator. Take roll of children. Do not release children until *All Clear* signal is given.
- ONLY the lead volunteer will check security tags from parents, mark off roster and release children.
- Remain at the assembly area until all children are picked up by parents or an *All Clear* signal is given.

5.1.2 Learning Center Tornado Plan

Living in middle Tennessee makes us all acquainted with the powerful, destructive effects of severe weather. In case of severe weather capable of producing tornadoes, Fellowship Kids staff will monitor the weather situation and will notify volunteers of the potential of a tornado warning so classes can be prepared to take cover.

If a tornado warning threat is determined, Fellowship Kids staff will notify volunteers immediately. Everyone will take shelter within the Learning Center, 1st floor, in the internal hallways, staying away from outside doors and windows. Grab your class roster, and upon exiting your classroom, close your door behind you. Make sure your class stays together, and maintain our security procedures.

All children and adults are to sit facing a wall, and must assume the safest body posture (as shown below) if we begin to take a direct hit.



Fellowship Kids staff will continue to monitor the weather, and will perform damage inspection. Staff will give verbal *All Clear* notification for children to return to their classes.

If, by chance, parents arrive, we must adhere to our security plan and verify security tag information before releasing children to their parents.

6.0 Health and Wellness

6.1 Sickness/illness

If you or your child is sick, please stay home and get well. Please call your coordinator so that she will be aware of your absence prior to the start of class.

We ask that parents keep their child home if they have any of the following symptoms/or illnesses:

- Fever
- Questionable rashes
- Runny nose (*anything other than clear*)
- Diarrhea

- Lice
- Pink Eye
- Active Chicken Pox
- Measles
- Mumps

Please, do not accept any children into your classroom with these symptoms. If you need help explaining this policy to a parent, ask your coordinator to help you.

If, however, a child becomes ill during class, contact your coordinator immediately. He/she will page the parent(s), and if necessary seek medical help.


6.2 Snacks and Drinks (No Nuts and Beware of Allergies)

THE LEARNING CENTER IS A NUT-FREE FACILITY AT ALL TIMES


At no point, should nut-products be brought into the Learning Center. Not for lunches, meetings, receptions, weddings, or any other event. We have children in our church family who will go into shock by simply touching or smelling a product made with nuts, or touching or smelling a wrapper that contained a nut product, or by smelling the breath of a person who recently ate a peanut butter sandwich. This is VERY SERIOUS!

Many of our classes provide snacks each week. Typical food allergies include nuts of any kind, wheat, and fruit juices. If you discover a food allergy that is not on the sign-in sheet or nametag, please notify your coordinator.

All snacks that we provide are safe for those children with a nut allergy. All children's nametags identify their food allergies. Also, this information is listed on the class roster. Make sure you check each tag before giving any snack.



**As a Learning Center safety measure,
we must never serve or use any nut
(or their derivatives – oil, butter).
This includes peanuts, walnuts, pecans, etc.**



For babies, all foods given should be given in small portions to prevent choking. Children should never be left alone while eating and watch that babies with allergies do not consume food or drink from other babies.

6.3 First Aid

If a child needs simple first aid, there are basic supplies in the Learning Center. If, however, a child needs advanced medical attention, consider the following steps:

- Stay calm.
- One volunteer should stay with the child to provide comfort. The other volunteer should notify the coordinator or director and return to the class immediately to care for the other children. The coordinator will page the parents, find medical personnel in the building to help, and notify the Fellowship Kids director.
- **Call 911 if immediate medical attention is necessary.**

As a general rule, we will not administer any medication to the children while they are in our care.

6.4 Reporting of Potential Child Abuse

All volunteers and paid leaders of Fellowship Bible Church involved with children shall report child abuse or neglect to the local authorities. In the event that allegations of abuse arise, sexual or otherwise, which would necessitate a notification to DCS and/or law enforcement, Fellowship Bible Church will demand verbally and in writing that DCS and/or law enforcement interview any potential child victims and notify any and all parents of the incident. Alternatively, Fellowship Bible Church will request permission in writing to make such notification itself, and to request to receive immediate authorization to hire a private child counselor to interview each potential child victim at Fellowship Bible Church's expense.

Potential indications of abuse include the following:

- has an unexplained injury – a patch of hair missing, a burn, a limp, or bruises
- has an inordinate number of “explained” injuries such as bruises on arms and legs over a period of time
- gives verbal testimony
- makes drawings in conjunction with verbal testimony
- alludes to incidents in writing or through prayer requests, etc.
- exhibits an injury that is not adequately explained
- complains about numerous beatings
- complains about others “doing things to them when others are not at home”
- is dirty and smells or has bad teeth or hair falling out
- wears long-sleeved tops during the summer to cover bruises on arms.

If you have a concern about any of the children in your class, please contact your coordinator.

6.5 Reporting Accidents

It is of utmost importance that accidents be documented and reported to the Fellowship Kids staff. If a child is involved in an accident, an Accident Report must be filled-out. These forms may be found at the Volunteer Check-in station. Accidents include, but are not limited to incidents involving: cuts, bruises, concussions, sprains, broken bones, and allergic reactions.

The volunteer should notify the parent(s) of any accident and follow-up the same day with a phone call to see how the child is doing.

Appendix A

Top 10 Tips of Fellowship Kids

1. **Be prepared.** Take some time to read your lesson before the class. Don't wing-it.
2. **Be on time.** Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of class.
3. **Be a protector.** We shall have NO NUTS in the Learning Center at any time.
4. **Have fun.** Get to know the kids personally.
5. **Be smart.** Protect yourself. You shall have TWO volunteers (at least one adult) present before accepting students into a classroom. You shall not take a student to the bathroom alone.
6. **Maintain safety.** You shall only dismiss students to the person with the matching ID tag.
7. **Be a team player.** Call your coordinator when you are going to be absent.
8. **Practice good stewardship.** Clean up your classroom at the conclusion of class – leave it like you found it. Have the student help. Notify your coordinator of missing or damaged items.
9. **Love each other.** Foster kindness, respect and genuine compassion with students, and among themselves.
10. **Get help.** If you have a sick, anxious, or disruptive child, contact your coordinator immediately, or call the x137 (the Volunteer Check-in station).

Appendix B

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT SALVATION

Guiding children to take those first steps toward faith can be the most rewarding opportunity of life for both parents and volunteers. The journey toward faith is filled with teachable moments where influential adults answer questions, teach biblical truths, model Christian values, and share personal testimonies that further the child's understanding.

When talking to a child about salvation:

- **Ask follow-up questions.** When a child asks a question, often he/she does not know exactly what to ask. Get clarification before deciding how to answer a question. For example, you might say, "Tell me more about what you are thinking." or "What made you ask that question? Where did you hear about this?" Remember, many times the question a child asks may not be the actual question for which they need an answer. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no."
- **Avoid giving more information than a student needs.** Adults can be tempted to tell all they know on a subject. When a child asks a question, only answer what the student is asking. If a child asks for more information, be more specific with your answers.
- **Don't jump to conclusions.** A student may ask, "Why did Andy get baptized?" This question may be only a request for information, not a request for the gospel presentation.
- **Speak in clear terms.** Avoid symbolic analogies that may distract from discussion and understanding.
- **Use simple wording.** Rather than using the phrase "accepting Jesus into your heart," say the words "believe in Jesus."

Steps in talking about God's plan for salvation with a child:

1. **God loves you. (Psalm 139:13-16).** Talk about these truths: God made people; God made you. God wants to have a relationship with people, and God wants to have a relationship with you. Say, "Tell me one way you know God loves you."
2. **We have all sinned (Romans 3:23).** Everyone must understand that he is separated from God. Sin is best understood as choosing to do things our way instead of God's way. (Give some examples of sin such as disobedience, ungratefulness, untruthfulness, etc.) Then ask the student: "Have you sinned? What does God think about sin?" Point out that everyone has sinned.

3. **Even though we choose to sin, God still loves us and offers to forgive us (Romans 5:8).**
Ask, "How do you think it makes God feel when you sin?" Focus on the fact that God loves the student even when he sins. Say: "God promised that one day a Savior would come and not sin and would die for all people. Do you know who that Savior is? Did you know that He died for you?"
4. **Jesus died for us (John 3:16).** Talk about John 3:16 and explain that because sin separates people from God, everyone needs a Savior. Ask, "Do you know why Jesus died?" Say, "Jesus loved you so much. He willingly died for you, so you could be with God forever." If the student is old enough to understand the resurrection, say, "Jesus rose from the dead, so we could have eternal life."
5. **Becoming a Follower of Christ.** Explain to the child that a person becomes a Christian by believing in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, by believing that His death on the cross was payment for his sins, and by confessing that Jesus is his Savior and Lord. Ask the child if he believes these things. If so, then ...
6. **Review and Pray.** Encourage a student to tell you in his own words what he understands and believes. Ask the student if he wants to talk to God about his new faith. A sample prayer might sound like "Dear God, I love you. I know you love me. I am a sinner and I need someone to save me. Jesus is the only one who can do this. So, by faith, I believe in Jesus and that His death on the cross payed for my sins and gives me eternal life with Him. Jesus is my Savior and Lord."

Appendix C

Spiritual Development of Children

Babies and Toddlers

The primary needs of children at this age are safety, nourishment, and care. Children are developing their perception of the world and this information is being hard-wired into their cognitive and sensory development. This is the age of beginnings. Spiritual learning begins here and is best developed in an emotionally warm, healthy, and safe environment. The feeling of being loved provides the foundation for her understanding of the biblical truth that God loves her.

Ages 2-3

This is the age of trust. These children believe what they are told and this makes it easy to teach spiritual truths. For example, a two-year-old will easily believe that God created the world, Noah built an ark, God loves them, and Jesus died on a cross. He also can understand right from wrong and that there are consequences for bad behavior. Since he is made to think in concrete terms, he cannot understand more complex and poetic terminology. Phrases such as “ask Jesus into my heart,” “Jesus is the Bread of Life,” and “Jesus is the Light of the world” are not concrete enough to understand.

Storybook Bibles are great for kids at this age. They love to hear the stories, and can begin to relate personally to some of the characters. They will have a very hard time understanding pain, death, and injustice.

Ages 4-5

At this age children are developing greater cognitive and language skills. They know what they want and can articulate their needs. They can memorize short phrases and songs. At age four and five they are experiencing the emergence of a conscience and can have strong feelings of how things ought to be in life. Spiritually, they can sense God’s greatness, wonder, power, and goodness. They also can understand the concept of evil. They can understand forgiveness and what it feels like to have a best friend. If these children are brought up in a home where unconditional love and forgiveness are shown, they will have no problem understanding that God the Father shows His children unconditional love and forgiveness all the time.

Ages 6-7

At age six and seven children can read and write. They are full of energy. Words come easy for most girls, and physical action dwells in the bodies of most boys. At this age, they can begin to question what they have been taught. They begin to think for themselves and can determine when logical gaps exist in a presentation. This is the age when general faith can become personal faith. If he has been raised in the church, he will want to know more about the Bible stories he has been told. The subject of God can be brought into any conversation without resistance.

He can believe and love God without question. He can also begin to read the Bible on his own and memorize longer passages of Scripture. His friends will start to become a major influence.

At this age, a parent or a volunteer can pressure a child into action. It is important to let the Holy Spirit lead and direct the child. The role of the parent and volunteer should be to create an environment where the child learns to personally experience God on their own. Encourage the child

to pray, read, listen, and obey what God commands. It is also important for parents and volunteers to tell their own real-life stories so a child understands that God is living and active – now.

Ages 8-11

In today's culture, children of this age group have more worldly experience than ever before. Their access to the internet, cable TV, and cell phones has interrupted their innocence. Their values are increasingly shaped by the peer group, and they can begin to lead double lives where they represent one person at home and another person at school or with their friends. They begin to feel invincible and think they know more than the adults around them.

It is important at this age to teach spiritual truths without clichés or worn-out stories. Parents and volunteers must engage these kids with deeper experiences and understanding. They will want to act on their faith and create their own stories. Knowledge of God must go from the head, to the heart, to the hands in this age group. It's got to be real to them. If they have committed their lives to Jesus, they will want to identify with Him, and they will want to identify with others who have a radical example of faith. Being sufficiently "cool" and loving is so important for parents and volunteers at this age. Lead by example. Demonstrate a living faith. They will follow.