

Trinity Presbyterian Church

Children's Ministry & Nursery Policy

The children's ministry of Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC) aims to glorify God by providing a safe and secure environment for our children to receive care and instruction on Sunday mornings. We believe that parents are primarily responsible for instructing their children in the ways of the Lord, and we delight in walking alongside them in this endeavor. Children's ministry offerings are not a substitute for sound Biblical teaching at home but are a complement to existing care and teaching done by parents.

Parents are by no means required to utilize the children's ministry offerings. We value children (including infants) participating in the worship service through exposure to corporate worship with their families. We also recognize the value of having a dedicated space for our younger children to learn and play in a more child-oriented environment. Our goal is to help parents eventually teach their children how to become active participants in our worship practices. We exist to help and support parents – whether through specific programs or simply prayers and encouragement.

TPC asks all physically able members to sign up for a minimum of two child care slots each year in order to help fulfill their membership vows to support the church in its worship and work. Volunteers should endeavor to serve willingly, with a joyful heart. To that end, TPC does not place a requirement on members and regular attenders to volunteer in the children's ministry, although it is our hope that they choose to volunteer.

Sunday Morning Classes

Children's Ministry offers the following classes on Sunday Mornings.

Sunday School (9am – 10am)

- o **Sunday School Nursery:** We offer a nursery space for children ages 0-3.
- o **4s-1st Sunday School:** We offer a Sunday School class for children ages 4 – 1st grade. Children move into this class, on promotion Sunday, after their 4th birthday. Promotion Sunday is the second Sunday in September. Children may move into this class early, on a case-by-case basis, if parents feel their child has outgrown the nursery and their behavior and social skills allow them to participate and follow directions accordingly.
- o **2nd – 5th Sunday School:** We offer a Sunday School class for children in 2nd – 5th grade. Children move into this class on promotion Sunday when they start/are in 2nd grade. Promotion Sunday is the second Sunday in September.

Worship Service (10:30am – approximately 12:30pm)

- o **Worship Service Nursery:** We offer a nursery space for children ages 0-2 during the worship service. Once children turn 3, we ask parents to keep their children with them during the worship service or use YWIT when available.
- o **Worship Service Cry Area:** We offer an area for parents and children who need to step out of the worship service. This area is located in the hallway outside the auditorium and is not staffed by volunteers. Parents are welcome to spend time with their children in this area, as needed. This area includes a soft mat, a box of toys and books, and a rocking chair.
- o **YWIT:** Young Worshipper in Training (YWIT) is an occasional (twice per month) age-appropriate program to help our young ones understand each element of our worship service. It is offered on the first and third Sundays of each month during a portion of the worship service. Parents may escort their children to the YWIT classroom during the pastoral prayer and children will be returned to them after the sermon. YWIT is available for children ages 3-5. Once children turn 6, we ask that parents keep their children with them for the entirety of the worship service.

Before You Serve

1. Volunteers need to be background checked at www.ministryopportunities.org prior to serving in children's Sunday School, nursery, or providing childcare at a TPC sponsored event. The Children's Ministry Administrator (CMA) will process the background checks and notify the volunteer once they have been cleared to serve. If issues arise during the background check, the CMA shall notify the clerk of session. In accordance with the law, TPC does not conduct background checks on minors (under age 18).
2. Youth (ages 12-18) volunteers are welcome in the nursery as well, and are a crucial part of keeping our children's ministry running. Upon turning 18, the CMA shall process their background check.
3. Background checks shall be renewed approximately every 10 years.

General Guidelines

1. TPC strongly encourages all able-bodied members of the congregation to serve in some capacity (children's ministry, youth ministry, music team, sound team, etc.). However, we do not require parents whose children attend children's ministry offerings to volunteer in the children's ministry.
2. There shall be a minimum of 3 volunteers, at least 2 of whom are adults, serving in the nursery during both Sunday School and the worship service. There should be a minimum of 2 adult volunteers serving in the children's Sunday School classes. There should be a minimum of 2 volunteers, one of whom is an adult, serving in YWIT. Paid childcare workers over the age of 18 are counted as adult volunteers, for the purposes of maintaining these ratios.
3. Volunteers should arrive 15 minutes prior to their shift to make sure classrooms are set up properly and prepared for children to start arriving on time. For Sunday School, volunteers should arrive at 8:45am in order to be prepared for a 9am start time. For the worship service, volunteers should arrive at 10:15am to be prepared for a 10:30 start time. Please alert the CMA of any missing items prior to the start of class.
4. If a volunteer cannot make an assigned time slot they should endeavor to find their own replacement and alert the CMA of the change. In the event of a last minute cancellation due to illness, etc. the volunteer shall contact the CMA.
5. Married couples may serve together in the nursery, provided there is at least one other adult (over the age of 18) in the nursery with them. Married couples may teach children's Sunday School together without another adult present.
6. Volunteers should alert the CMA when items such as snacks, sign-in sheets, diapers, etc are low and the CMA will restock/replace them.
7. Doors to the nursery and all children's ministry offerings shall be left unlocked at all times. If the doors automatically lock, please use the blue tape in the nursery supplies box to tape the latch down or use the door stop in the nursery supplies box to keep the door open.
8. Parents should notify volunteers if their child has any relevant food allergies (wheat, peanuts, dairy, etc), in addition to marking this on the sign-in sheet.
9. Parents are welcome to bring their own snacks for their children. Goldfish are also provided in the nursery each week and a variety of snacks are provided in the 4s-1st Sunday School class.

10. If a child is injured during class or while in the nursery, parents must be notified of the incident at pick-up. If the injury was severe, parents must be notified immediately. Volunteers should use their judgment on whether an injury is severe, but always err on the side of caution. As a general guideline, if the child has a head injury or is bleeding, the parents must be notified immediately.
11. Children should not attend children's ministry if the child meets any of the following:
 - a. runny nose that is not clear
 - b. productive cough
 - c. fever in the last 24 hours. The child should be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medication, for at least 24 hours before attending children's ministry/nursery.
 - d. vomiting or diarrhea in the last 48 hours.
 - e. known bacterial infection (ex: strep throat, ear infection, urinary tract infection, conjunctivitis). If the child has been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours and has at least 24 hours of antibiotics, they are allowed to attend children's ministry/nursery.
 - f. infectious rash (ex: impetigo, MRSA, ring worm etc). After 24 hours of antimicrobials, the child may attend children's ministry/nursery, if all active lesions are covered, in order to prevent spread.
 - g. chicken pox, measles, mumps, or rubella. The child may return to children's ministry/nursery when all of the lesions have crusted over and there have been no more new lesions for 24 hours.
12. If the child is diagnosed with the flu, RSV, or a gastrointestinal illness within 48 hours of being in the nursery, we ask the parents to notify the CMA, so parents of other children in the nursery can be notified of the exposure.

Nursery Guidelines

1. In addition to having a minimum of 3 volunteers serving in Nursery, TPC shall maintain a child-to-volunteer ratio of 1 volunteer for every 4 children. Once this ratio is met, additional children will not routinely be accepted into the Nursery if doing so would exceed the ratio, without reasonable attempts to find additional volunteers.
2. Parents must indicate on the nursery sign-in sheet if volunteers are allowed to change their child's diaper and/or assist their child to the bathroom. If volunteers do not have permission to do so, parents shall be paged for all diaper changes and bathroom trips.
3. If volunteers have permission to change diapers, please follow these guidelines:
 - a. Only female volunteers may change diapers.
 - b. Use a new disposable changing paper for each diaper change.
 - c. Wear rubber gloves.
 - d. Place dirty diapers in the disposal bags and throw the bag, changing paper, and gloves away.
4. If volunteers have permission to take a child to the bathroom, please follow these guidelines:
 - a. Only female volunteers may take children to the bathroom.
 - b. Wait outside the stall door. If a child needs help inside the stall, the door must remain unlocked and, if possible to do so without exposing the child to other individuals using the restroom, the door should be propped open.
 - c. Wash your hands and the child's hands before returning to nursery.
5. Nursery volunteers must wipe down toys, books, and mats with Clorox wipes at the end of the church service each week. If any toys need to be more thoroughly washed, please notify the Children's Ministry Coordinator (CMC), who shall wash them during the week.
6. Nursery volunteers should set up play equipment and toy bins prior to Sunday School, and they should pack up the play equipment and toy bins after the church service ends. Nursery volunteers should assist the deacons in taking the nursery equipment out to the truck to be loaded, as physically able.
7. If diaper bags, backpacks, water bottles, and snack cups are not already labeled with the child's name, nursery volunteers shall label them with provided labels.
8. Volunteers are not required to read a Bible story or sing songs with the children in the nursery, but they are welcome to do so using the provided Bible story books.
9. Children should be dropped off and picked up by a parent/guardian. Volunteers should not release children to older siblings, friends, etc., unless specified by the parents at drop off.

Children's Sunday School/YWIT Guidelines

1. In addition to having at least 2 volunteers serving in children's Sunday School classes and YWIT, TPC should maintain a child-to-volunteer ratio of 1 adult for every 8 children. Once this ratio is met, additional children should not routinely be accepted into Sunday School or YWIT if doing so would exceed the ratio, without reasonable attempts to find additional volunteers.
2. Sunday School/YWIT volunteers should set up their classroom areas prior to the start of class and pack up equipment after the class ends. Volunteers should assist the deacons in taking the supplies out to the truck to be loaded, as physically able.
3. Sunday School/YWIT teachers should endeavor to follow the curriculum provided by the CMC.