

Kids Mass Ministry Health & Safety Policies

I. Security

One of the goals of Kids Mass Ministry is to provide a safe, secure and loving environment for all children. In an effort to accomplish this, we have several security measures in place to protect our children, their parents, and the church. No child should be left unattended at any time. If you notice a child left unattended, please alert a staff member or the child's parents.

Check-In/Check Out

This Ministry is provided at our Early Learning Center. The Sunday entrance is located along the garden pathway to the Parish Life Center located by the Infant Jesus statue. Doors open at 9:45am (for the 10am Mass) and 11:45am (for the 12noon Mass). A check-in disciple volunteer will issue family number tag to parents. Once a child is checked in, the check-in disciple volunteer will print a nametag for the child with the family tag number. Children must be picked up by 11:30am/1:30pm. In order to retrieve a child at the end of Mass, the parent **MUST** present the family number tag with the matching number. The disciple volunteer matches the code, and takes off the child's nametag. The nametag/receipt may then be thrown away. **NO CHILD SHOULD BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE ADULT THAT HAS HIS OR HER MATCHING ID TAG. NO CHILD IS PERMITTED TO BE RELEASED TO A SIBLING.**

Police Officers

Police Officers are on duty at all Masses as a safety measure for the entire church. They pay close attention to the children's areas to ensure that all kids are safe from anyone who may look suspicious. Additionally, Police Officers are on call to help with any first-aid needs (i.e. choking, bleeding, etc.)

II. Health & Medical

The following procedures are in place in order to minimize the spread of any infectious diseases within the children's ministry, and to ensure the health and safety of all children and disciple volunteer. Please note, we will **NOT** accept any children with symptoms of illness. No child can enter a class or program if they have or experienced the following in the past 24 hours:

- Fever (even low grade)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Cold/Flu
- Sore throat
- Ear infection
- Red watery eyes
- Body rash (other than diaper or eczema)
- Any contagious diseases (i.e. chicken pox, mumps, measles, etc.)

Since it is often difficult to determine when a child is genuinely ill or just suffering with allergies, or even teething, please follow the “beyond a shadow of a doubt” rule. The consideration of others is key.

***A Children’s disciple volunteer reserves the right to NOT accept a child into his/her classroom based on the preceding information due to safety and health concerns.**

First Aid Kits

First Aid Kits will be located in every classroom, to use for minor injuries such as cuts and scrapes. Any injuries will be indicated on an “Ouch Report” and given to guardians at pick-up.

Medication Policy

Children’s disciple volunteers are NOT permitted to administer any type of medication to children in their care. (This includes over-the-counter and prescription medications, as well as diaper rash ointment.)

Food Allergies

There are 3 snacks that we provide that will be used in Kids Mass Ministry. These snacks include: Nilla Wafers, Animal Crackers, and Goldfish crackers. If a child is allergic to any of the snacks that we provide, we ask that their parents provide a snack for them each week that they are present, with the child’s name clearly marked on it. This snack should NOT require refrigeration or preparation.

ALL SNACKS MUST BE STORE BOUGHT (NO EXCEPTIONS).

III. General Procedures

Worker Approval and Identification

- All potential disciple volunteers MUST complete a Ministry Application and complete the Safe Environment training and diocesan FBI/FDLE check and be approved to volunteer in Kids Mass Ministry.
- All Kids Mass disciple volunteers must wear an approved nametag and ministry apron when on duty.

Restroom Procedures

- Disciple volunteers should never take a child alone to the restroom. Another adult or more than one child must accompany them. A child accompanying the adult can stand outside the slightly propped-open door as “bathroom guard.”
- The diaper station is openly located in the baby/toddler area. Parents will be notified that ministers will change kids’ diapers, unless they request otherwise.

Classroom Procedures

- At least 2 disciple volunteers will be present whenever possible. No child should be alone with a disciple volunteer. If a child arrives before other disciple volunteers arrive make sure the door is open. (ALL doors must have windows).
- In most cases, there should never be only youth or teen helpers in a room alone; at least one adult should be present at all times.
- Window treatments or blinds are to be kept open at all times, unless being closed for the proper showing of videos or projected audio-visual equipment.
- Disciple volunteers may not have children sit on their lap while the room is darkened or when other disciple volunteers are not present.

Emergency Situations/Evacuations

- In the event that the building must be evacuated, the ministry team will lead children to the basketball court located at the soccer field/track.
- Parents will meet their children in this area. Normal checkout procedures are required.

IV. Discipline Procedures

While it is our intent to love and care for children in every and all situations, and we understand that all people have days where they feel “off,” there are still some behavioral situations that are unacceptable. We have a “3 strike” policy to deal with difficult behavior. A disciple volunteer will use this policy at his/her discretion.

- 1) Verbal Warning – Give the child a verbal warning that their behavior is unacceptable.
- 2) Reminder – Remind the child of previous warning and let them know that if the behavior does not improve, parents will be informed of their behavior at pick up.
- 3) Parent Contact and/or Removal– Parent will be contacted for unacceptable behavior.

Ensuring a child is not singled out in any way, verbal warnings will be to the side, if at all possible. Positive, encouraging words will be used to assure the child that it is not he/she that disciple volunteer are upset with, but rather his/her behavior. *(Ex: “Johnny, it’s so great to have you in our class. I love it when you _____. However, it’s really hard for people to learn and get to know Jesus when you are talking while the teacher is talking. Please raise your hand, and then I’d love to hear what you want to say.” OR, if “Susie” says something like, “Give me that crayon!” you can say, “Susie, what you meant to say was, “Will you please hand me the red crayon?”*

The following behavior will result in immediate removal from the classroom (NO EXCEPTIONS):

- Physical fighting
- Uncontrollable, Unacceptable language
- Consistent, disruptive, disrespectful behavior.