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at Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church

## ***Growing faith in this generation and the next***

### Introduction

Children are a gift from the Lord! Here at Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church, it is our privilege to minister to, learn from, and love the children of our community. We know that families today are busy, and it is our goal to make the most of every opportunity to support the members of your family as you respond to God’s Spirit.

### Purpose

The purpose of children and youth ministries at HBIC is to encourage the spiritual formation of children and youth by creating an environment that is God-centered, Bible-based, appropriate, safe, inviting, and intergenerational. Our hope is that children will encounter God through the ministries of the church and choose to become disciples of Jesus. The five “keys” of our ministry are:

- **God-Centered**, Bible-based Spiritual Formation: Helping children grow in knowledge and application of Biblical principles, developing an active prayer life, learning the practice of Christian worship, being witnesses of God’s grace in work and deed (service).
- **Intergenerational**: Providing opportunities for children and youth to hear stories of faith from adults and see lives of faith, experience life in a community through shared experiences such as worship, fellowship, and service, and to allow children and youth to share their gifts, talents, and wisdom with the larger community.
- **Appropriate**: Age appropriate (meeting the developmental needs of that age, including physical, emotional/social, and cognitive needs), appropriate to stage of spiritual growth and maturity, appropriate to context (urban, familial, global, etc.), experiential, and FUN.
- **Safe**: Safe & secure environment free of physical threat and danger, nurturing words and actions.

- **Inviting and Welcoming** to guests/visitors, volunteers, parents, & kids; clear communication (handbook, signs, newsletter, etc.), user-friendly facilities, gracious hospitality, consistently inviting others to participate.

### ***Biblical Foundations***

- We believe that God designed us for relationship with him. (Genesis 1, 1Timothy 2:4)
- We believe that God created each person uniquely, with gifts for building up the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:4-27).
- We believe that God welcomes and affirms children and that children are a vital part of the church. (Mark 10:13-16)
- We believe that children learn about God's love for them by being loved by mature and caring adults, and learn about God's love for others by sharing that love with peers and family. (John 13:34-35)

### ***Values***

The formation of values is a very important part of child development. As a Brethren in Christ Church, we hold to the ten core values outlined by the denomination in 1999.

- Experiencing God's Love and Grace
- Believing the Bible
- Worshiping God
- Following Jesus
- Belonging to the Community of Faith
- Witnessing to the World
- Serving Compassionately
- Pursuing Peace
- Living Simply
- Relying on God

These values are woven into every aspect of church life, and we intentionally teach them to our children so that they will have a firm foundation and clear understanding of what it means to be a disciple. It is our hope that children will one day be able to claim these values as their own.

### ***Partnering with Parents***

We believe that one of the church's main jobs in the task of Christian education is to support the spiritual lives of families.

We believe that parents have primary responsibility for helping their children to know and love God, and we encourage parents to take an active role in creating a spiritually nurturing environment at home. A parent representative sits on the Children & Youth Commission and many parents volunteer as teachers, helpers, and chaperones. HBIC seeks parental input and feedback through an annual survey and offers various support groups and parenting classes throughout the year.

### ***Vision***

The Children's Ministry program seeks to support the vision of the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church, which was adopted in 1999 and reads:

*As we think about the future of our church, we believe that God is leading us to become a body of people from different walks of life. We envision African-American, Hispanics, Asians and people of European descent worshipping together and fellowshiping freely with each other. Worship would be lively with a variety of worship styles, inclusive of the people represented. There would be a variety of worship leaders and mixed worship teams.*

*Throughout the week our church would be filled with groups of people who are learning how to walk with God and be empowered by His Spirit. We envision groups of people learning to manage finances, parent their kids, and get help with schoolwork. People would learn how to function as a family, be taught good nutrition, and receive support and guidance to be free from addictions. Together we would be taught ethnic understanding and reconciliation. Above all, we desire a church where people encounter Christ in worship, in demonstrated lifestyles, and through our ministries. We envision a body of believers so saturated in prayer and God's presence that people coming to Christ and giving their lives to Him are natural consequences of being with us. We also envision every member being able to articulate what a relationship with Jesus Christ really means. This desire to fulfill the Great Commission would extend beyond our local congregation by sending people from our church with the message of God's grace to lost people all over the globe.*

*We want to be known in the community at large as a place where all kinds of people can come, be loved, get help for a variety of needs, and hear about the incredible, freeing love of God through*

*Christ for them. In order to do these things, we ask God to make us a healthy, growing, spiritually vital church of 500 plus people in the city of Harrisburg.*

*With God's help, we will be a link between human needs and Christian resources. We hope to partner with already existing resources like Messiah College, Help, and Christian Churches United. We will be available to walk with those who are hungry, or with families who have no heat in their homes in the winter, and link them with community ministries that specialize in these areas. Or we may possibly meet with agencies to create innovative solutions for hurting families.*

*We envision a congregation that helps both urban and suburban churches partner with each other in ways that enable each group to share their rich resources. We hope, as God leads us, to be a training center where Black, White, and Hispanic congregations come together and learn what God is teaching us as we are reaching out.*

*In the end, we envision a church of healed and healing people, set free from Satan's entrapments; a people restored to oneness with God, wholeness of self, and broken relationships mended.*

*We envision a people who can model, both in service and constituency, what the Kingdom of God looks like as a radical alternative to the broken and alienated world around us. With God's grace and power at work in us, we will be a church that models in some small way that place called heaven, where people "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" praise God together.*

### **A Welcoming Family**

Because of the lingering effects of sin in the world, many children are growing up in families that cannot offer children the kind of love they need to form a healthy view of themselves, God, or the world as a whole. We have a special responsibility to reach out to modern 'orphans and widows' and help them

experience the grace of God and the embrace of a loving community of believers.

To this end, we regularly invite non-Christian families and children to participate in the life of the church. All children's ministry activities are free and open to everyone, with parental permission, and we try to plan programs that are appealing to the local community. The church also offers resources such as the Food Pantry, financial counseling, and referral to other social service agencies for those that are struggling with life issues.

### **Organization**

The Children and Youth Commission gives oversight to all children's programs. The C&Y Commission is composed of a chairperson, secretary, the Children's Pastor, the Youth Pastor, and representatives from various children and youth ministries. Also sitting on the C&Y Commission is an advocate to the Church Board, to which the C&Y Commission is accountable. The C&Y Commission usually meets once a month with meeting time and place listed on church calendar. Parent and volunteer input is always welcome.

### **PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

1. Drop off and pick up your child on time. Make sure that your child's teacher knows where you can be reached in case of emergency.
2. Complete and return the Children's Ministry Registration and Medical Information Form. (This needs to be done annually.)

Let the appropriate pastor know if there are any changes to that information throughout the year, especially allergy/medication information.

3. Communicate with the appropriate pastor and/or teacher if there are special circumstances in your child's life, such as illness, significant achievement, faith commitment, rebellion, etc. It is also helpful to know about changes in family life such as birth of sibling, separation/divorce, incarceration, death in the family, remarriage, etc. so that teachers can help children process their feelings about these changes.
4. Make sure your child comes to church ready to learn – appropriately clothed, fed, ready to obey. Please do not send your child to class with toys or snacks unless they have been requested by the teacher for sharing time.
5. Keep sick and/or contagious children at home.
6. Pray for and actively support your child's pastor and teachers. Give affirmation for a job well done and constructive suggestions where improvement is needed.
7. Be responsible for your child's behavior when he/she is at church but not actively participating in a scheduled children's activity (such as during Wednesday evening meals, following dismissal from Sunday School, during worship, etc.).
8. Take the lead in nurturing your child's faith formation. This may include (but is not limited to) modeling a positive attitude about participating in congregational life, providing home-based worship, devotional, and prayer experiences, parenting with justice and mercy, and serving God as a family.

### **Children's Program Specifics (birth through fifth grade)**

#### **Nursery/Toddler**

The purposes of the infant (birth to 15 months and walking) and toddler (15 months to 3 years) nurseries at HBIC are to:

- Provide a safe, clean environment where children can receive loving care,

- Engage children in active learning about the world around them, and
- Provide the opportunity for parents to participate fully in the life of the church.

The nursery is staffed by various volunteers, including many parents. We ask that parents sign in their children weekly, in accordance with our Children and Youth Protection Policy. Your child will only be released to an ADULT/ parent or guardian. Nursery care is available Sunday mornings from 9:00 -12:00 and Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00.

#### **Preschool**

Emotional, mental, and physical development happens rapidly throughout early childhood, especially in the preschool years. Spiritual development is also taking place as children form their impressions of church and the people who represent God to them. The purposes of preschool classes at Harrisburg BIC are for children to:

- Become familiar with the basic characters and concepts of the Bible,
- Understand that church is a family that loves them, and
- Develop healthy patterns of social interaction.

On Sunday mornings, preschool classes are offered during Discipleship Hour, from 9:00-10:15 and from 10:30-12:00 noon. Preschool class is also offered on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00. The Preschool Ministry team meets regularly for training and enrichment.

**PROMOTION POLICY:** Because of space, personnel limitations, and the need for consistency, promotion to toddler and preschool classes happens quarterly, based on age. Please talk to the Children's Pastor or the nursery coordinator if you have questions about your child's promotion date.

#### **Elementary Age** (kindergarten through fifth grade)

Given the short amount of time that children spend at church, it is unrealistic to expect one program to meet all of their needs for spiritual, emotional, social, and physical development. For that reason, the three main programs for elementary age children have different but complementary purposes.

#### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

### *Vision:*

Sunday School is intended to replicate a church service that is child-appropriate, to give children a solid foundation in Biblical knowledge. Stories and cultural context will be presented in age-appropriate ways with attention given to application of Biblical principles.

### *How It Works:*

Sunday School meets from 9:00 to 10:15 every Sunday morning. During the school year, children are divided into classes by grade, with promotion to the next class taking place in September. Each Sunday School class is taught by a team of two teachers. The grade divisions for classes are adjusted annually so that maximum class size is 12. In the summer, a large group format may be used (in which all the children are together) to give maximum flexibility to students and teachers. Special events, such as breakfasts, Bible Olympics, and celebrations may be scheduled throughout the year. The Sunday School Ministry Team meets regularly for training and enrichment.

## **JUNIOR CHURCH**

### *Vision:*

Junior Church (5 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) is intended to be an age-appropriate church experience for children. The purpose of Junior Church is to enable children to do the following things:

- Develop a personal relationship with God. Kids will learn who God is and how a relationship with God can change their lives. They will encounter God through heartfelt worship, learn about the Bible through activities that encourage engagement, wonder, and application, and experience various types of prayer.
- Become part of the body of Christ. Junior Church will prepare kids for worship as adults by helping them become familiar with the songs, stories, and traditions of the church. Relationships with peers and with adults will be developed, and children will be affirmed for the gifts they bring to the church. Opportunities to serve and care for other members of the body of Christ will be offered.

- Become witnesses to God's grace. Children will learn how the church is growing around the world, and will be encouraged to find ways to share God's love with friends and family. Peacemaking and conflict-resolution skills will be taught as one way of sharing God's love. Children are encouraged to bring money for the weekly offering.

### *How It Works:*

Junior Church meets on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sundays of each month. On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5th Sunday, children stay with their parents in the regular worship service and children's bulletins and activity bags are available. On the Sundays when Junior church is offered children go to the worship service with their parents and are generally dismissed before the sermon. Age appropriate activities follow the worship time and help to maximize the learning opportunities. Each summer a different theme (missions, the work of the church, or peacemaking) will be developed. The Junior Church Ministry Team will meet periodically for training and enrichment.

## **KIDS CLUB**

### *Vision:*

Our desire for Kids Club is for children to come into relationship with Jesus and to deepen in that relationship: to know and grow in Christ. Using Matthew 22:36-40 and Deuteronomy 6:5 as foundations, children will learn how they can respond to God's love with their:

- **heart:** by understanding how God's spirit is alive and at work in this world and by learning how to talk with God through prayer,
  - **soul:** by learning about their emotions and how to express their deepest feelings to God and others,
  - **mind:** by learning about God's values through engaging Bible study and by using their creativity and wonder, and
  - **strength:** by making right choices and using their bodies to glorify God.
- Children will be given the opportunity to love their neighbor by developing healthy relationships with adults and peers and by engaging in service to others. They will learn about

loving themselves, and each child will be affirmed and accepted for who they are.

#### *How It Works:*

Kids Club meets on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 p.m. A variety of activities, including special guests, field trips, games, crafts, and drama will be used to meet the needs of different learning styles. Kids Club has two main semesters, fall and spring. The fall semester runs from September through December. The spring semester runs from February through May. From June through August, a special interest session (such as a reading program, a sports camp, or a focus on music) will be offered on Wednesday nights. Children are welcome to join Kids Club at any time.

### **Other Children's Programs**

#### ***Children's Choir***

Music is a great tool for learning! Children in kindergarten through 5th grade are welcome to participate in Sonshine Singers, our children's choir. Practice is usually on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:00 during the school year. Mini-concerts are given throughout the year.

#### ***Kenbrook Bible Camp Scholarship Program***

Kenbrook Bible Camp is a Brethren in Christ camp in Lebanon, PA that offers adventure camps for kids age 5-18. Each summer, many children from Harrisburg BIC participate in Christ-centered programming in a rustic setting. Harrisburg BIC has a scholarship program that will cover up to one half the registration costs for one week of camp. Scholarships are not based on financial need. For more information see the Kenbrook Coordinator or the Children's pastor.

#### ***Stepping Stones***

Stepping Stones is a group for kids in 4th and 5th grade. The purpose of Stepping Stones is to:

- Create Opportunities for development of adult and peer relationships
  - Meet the unique needs of older elementary kids
  - Strengthen children's ties & commitments to the church
- Activities may include hiking, bowling, movie night, hayrides, miniature golf, and cooking class.

#### ***Summer Reading Program***

Part vacation Bible school and part public library, the Summer Reading Program at HBIC is an opportunity for kids to learn about God's love for them, make new friends, and develop literary skills. It usually meets once a week for six weeks during June and July. Children from preschool to 5th grade are welcome to participate.

#### ***Library***

HBIC has a growing library available for your use. It is located in the CE Room and has books for children and youth on a variety of topics, as well as a video collection. You may check out books and videos at any time. Please follow the guidelines located in the library.

#### ***Homeschool Cooperative***

Once a week, homeschooled families meet for a time of fellowship, encouragement, and shared learning. Lin Taylor (232-2029) is the coordinator/contact person.

#### **General Expectations for All Volunteers**

Ministry to children is both a fun and a serious undertaking. Children are such a blessing! We have much to learn from their curiosity, faith, exuberance, and sensitivity. We also need to protect children's minds against false doctrine, keep them safe from physical harm, and gently help them to see themselves and the world through Christ's eyes.

Harrisburg BIC has high standards for people who work with children. To be considered for ministry, volunteers must be Christians with Christ-honoring lifestyles, have demonstrated gifts in relating to children, and have completed the Child and Youth Protection Policy Screening. In addition, the following are continuous expectations:

1. Maintain a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by engaging in personal Bible study and prayer.
2. Worship regularly with the church family.
3. Develop nurturing, encouraging relationships with children and their families.
4. Engage in ongoing teacher education and enrichment activities, including attendance at ministry team meetings.

Most programs are staffed by ministry teams. The coordinator of each ministry team gives direct supervision and support to volunteers on that ministry team, and represents that ministry team at Children and Youth Commission meetings. The following is a list of the current ministry teams:

Nursery	Elementary Sunday School
Toddler	Kids Club
Preschool	Summer Reading Program
Junior Church	

Each ministry team maintains specific job descriptions for its members and offers a more complete orientation. Volunteers who are not on a ministry team report directly to the appropriate pastor (children or youth).

The information on the following pages is intended as a general overview for volunteers.

### **Nursery, Toddler, & Preschool Helpers**

When parents leave their children in the infant or toddler nursery, they are putting their trust in your hands. In addition to using your common sense, please observe the following guidelines in order to create a positive experience for parents, children, and other volunteers.

#### **Arrival/Dismissal**

Please be in your classroom at least 15 minutes before the program is actually scheduled to begin. Some children arrive early because their parents are involved in other areas of ministry; other children come late. Always be prepared with an opening activity that welcomes children and gets them engaged. Also be prepared for the occasions when the worship service will go longer than usual. Children should only be

dismissed to their parents, so at times you may need to fill some extra time at the end. If a child is still waiting for his/her parents 15 minutes after the service ends, you may accompany the child to his parents.

#### **Absences and Substitutes**

Understandably, you may have schedule conflicts during the time when you are scheduled to help. Attempt to find a substitute; if not, let your ministry team leader know when you will be absent.

#### **Guidelines**

1. Introduce yourself to visitors and parents.
2. Sign in each child and mark attendance. Ensure that parents follow sign-in procedures.
3. Ask the parent if there is anything special you should know (food allergies, comfort measures, etc.).
4. Play and have fun! Bubbles, crayons, chalk, and puzzles can be found in the cupboard of the toddler classroom. A cassette player and tapes can also be used, but feel free to sing without accompaniment – the children will enjoy you if you are having fun. Take time to talk about our awesome God through play.
5. Snacks are available in the cabinet. Please use your discretion; we don't want to spoil any lunches.
6. Check diapers at least once an hour and change as needed. Remember to wash hands thoroughly before and after changing diapers.
7. Wash toys as needed.
8. If a child is crying inconsolably, send the youth helper( or find the children's pastor) to locate the child's parent. Do not leave your classroom unattended.

If you have any specific questions about the infant or toddler nurseries, please see the nursery or toddler coordinator.

## **Volunteers with Preschool and Elementary Children**

Whether you are a teacher, a snack helper, a library buddy, or a song leader, you have the potential to influence children's lives and hearts. What an awesome opportunity and what an awesome responsibility! The following information will help you create an environment in which children can be shown God's love.

### **Arrival/Dismissal**

Please be in your classroom at least 15 minutes before the program is actually scheduled to begin. Some children arrive early because their parents are involved in other areas of ministry; other children come late. Always be prepared with an opening activity that welcomes children and gets them engaged. Also be prepared for the occasions when the worship service will go longer than usual. Children should only be dismissed to their parents, so at times you may need to fill some extra time at the end. If a child is still waiting for his/her parents 15 minutes after the service ends, you may accompany the child to his parents.

### **Absences and Substitutes**

Understandably, you may have schedule conflicts during the time when you are scheduled to help. Attempt to find a substitute; if not, let your ministry team leader know when you will be absent.

### **Supplies**

Supplies are in the Christian Ed (purple) resource room. When you are finished, please return items to the supply room and place them back where they belong.

### **Birthdays**

You have a special role in your students' lives. You will be provided with a list of birthdays so that you can encourage and pray for children at special events in their lives. There is a Birthday Box that contains small gifts for children. On the Sunday closest to a child's birthday, he/she may choose one (1) item from the Birthday Box to take home.

## **Visitors and Attendance**

Hopefully, we will have lots of visitors! Plan ahead how to make new children feel welcome in your classroom. Look at your classroom from a child's perspective, keep extra Bibles on hand for children that don't have one, and remember to let new kids know what's expected of them. In many cases, you may be the only adult that has contact with visiting children and their families. Try to get as much information as possible about them, particularly their full name and telephone number/address. If possible, introduce them to the Children's Pastor and to other parents. If that's not possible, at least inform the Children's Pastor of their presence so that appropriate follow-up contacts can be made.

Please take attendance in your class weekly. Your attendance sheets will be collected at the end of each quarter, and are used to keep record of growth, aid in planning for class set up, and help to estimate how much curriculum to order. If you notice that a student has been absent for a while, feel free to call them or send them a postcard to let them know that they've been missed.

### **Salvation and Children**

We hope and pray that all of the children under our care will one day make the decision to become followers of Christ, serving God with their heart, soul, mind, and strength. While some spiritual concepts are too abstract for most children to understand, the basics of faith can be put into words that kids can grasp. Do not be afraid to offer opportunities for children to express their commitment to God. The Holy Spirit is your helper! Do speak to the Children's Pastor and the child's parents about any steps that a child takes, so that he or she can be appropriately supported.

### **Evaluation**

One of the best things you can do for your students is to engage in regular, intentional self-evaluation. To do this, you could:

- Reflect on your time with the children. Are they learning are growing?

- Review your job description and the age-appropriate learning goals.
- Talk to parents about what their children are saying at home.
- Meet with your co-teacher to discuss classroom dynamics.
- Ask children what they like/dislike about their time at church.

### Continuing Education

To be a teacher, you must be a learner. There are many opportunities at Harrisburg BIC to develop your skills and focus your vision for children's ministry. Each ministry team will meet for enrichment, planning, and discussion. Please make these meetings a priority. The Children's Pastor will be putting teaching tips in your mailbox occasionally, and the Children's Ministry Resource Room offers a number of books and ideas for teacher education. You will be informed of local workshops and conferences by the Children's Pastor, and registration fees for such training events are usually covered by the church.

### **Guide to Discipline and Classroom Management for Elementary Age Children**

The church has tried to develop a simple, easy to understand, and easy to use system for helping children get the most out of their time in church activities. Our system is based on the concept that children want to know what's expected of them and feel most secure when given clear boundaries. We also encourage teachers to plan carefully in order to interest children with various learning styles and abilities. When children are bored, they tend to amuse themselves with activities that can be disruptive to others. All children want and need attention. Our goal is to give children enough positive attention and affirmation that they will not need to seek attention in negative ways. To summarize:

- Realistic expectations and clear boundaries
- Careful planning
- Positive affirmation

are ways to develop a classroom management system that works.

The basic ground rules that apply to any church setting are:

1. Obey the leaders.
2. Walk, don't run.
3. Listen when others are talking.
4. Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Some classes need to be reminded of these rules weekly, and it's especially important to let visitors know what's expected of them. It's also important to let children know what the consequences are. If children are disobeying the rules, it's essential to ask why. We generally use the "1-2-3 Magic" system to deal with disobedience.

### The "1-2-3 Magic" System

1. First failure to follow rules: Warning
2. Second failure to follow rules: Warning
3. Third failure to follow rules: Time Out

If you have clearly explained the rules, the warnings do not have to be lengthy explanations or interrogations. A simple statement such as, "Jenny, that's 1," is usually sufficient. In fact, too much talking while giving warnings can reduce the effectiveness of 1-2-3 Magic and become a contest of wills or a distraction to the rest of the class. Here's a brief example of 1-2-3 Magic in action:

- Child enters classroom yelling at a friend.
- Teacher: "Please use an inside voice.:"
- Child ignore teacher and keeps yelling.
- Teacher: "Steve, that's 1."
- A little while later, child is whispering to a friend while teacher is talking.
- Teacher: "Steve, that 2."
- Child stops whispering, but then starts elbowing his neighbor and being disruptive
- Teacher: "Steve, that's 3. Time out."

As you can see, different negative behaviors can be “counted.” Some behaviors, such as fighting, warrant an immediate time out and no warning is necessary. The purpose of time outs is to provide an immediate consequence by removing a child from the activity, denying them the privilege of participating. Time outs are generally based on the child’s age; however, in mixed-age settings (like junior church), a standard 5 minutes keeps things simple and consistent.

If a child receives a time out and continues to be disruptive, they may be dismissed from activities for that day and escorted to their parent/guardian, or parents are called.

If you are experiencing challenges with the same child week after week, it’s probably time to try a different approach. Talk to the Ministry Team Leader or the children’s pastor to see if they have any suggestions. If you’re in a ministry where teachers change every week, check in with other teachers to see if they’re experience the same problems. A visit with the family might give insight into the situation, and some one-on-one time with the child may give them the attention they crave. In exploring negative behaviors, remember that you’re working with a child who has a problem, not a “problem child.” Keep in mind that children are not able to verbalize their emotions like adults, and consider the many factors that may cause stress in their lives. Above all else, remember to pray for God’s protection on their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

### **Children’s Ministry Resource Room** **Resources and Guidelines**

The children’s ministry resources are available in the (purple) resource room. It is open to all people who work with children under the auspices of Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church. In addition to being a storage place for Sunday School curriculum, Junior Church music, the room also has a lot of great resources and supplies. There are four main categories

of supplies in the closet: books/resources, basic classroom supplies, craft supplies, and activities.

Please take some time to explore the supply room and learn how these resources can inspire and supplement your ministry. You will probably agree that a clean and organized room is much more user-friendly than one filled with chaos, so please do your part to maintain it in good order. Please return items to where you found them – most tubs are labeled. And if ever you notice that more supplies are needed, please see the Children’s Pastor.

If you are donating items for the resource room, please place in the designated tub.

## **Guidelines for Children's Snack**

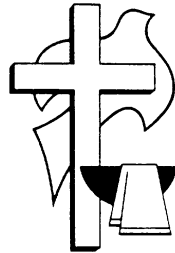
Food, fun, and fellowship—a recipe for good times, no matter where you are. Snacks for children can be an exciting part of the learning experience, giving kids the opportunity to get “hands-on.” Snacks can reinforce a lesson, provide an occasion for teamwork, be an exercise in sharing, and can be part of an overall system of discipline and rewards. Some children may not have eaten breakfast before coming to church on a Sunday morning, and it may be physically impossible for them to concentrate with an empty stomach. However, because of diverse family preferences, the increase in allergies, and the need for consistency, it is necessary to have guidelines regarding snack. If you decide to include a snack in your time with the children (whether as a regular part of the lesson or as a special treat) please note the following suggestions:

- Snack is meant to be a snack, not a meal. Keep it small so that children still have an appetite for lunch.
- Sugar snacks (i.e., cookies, doughnuts, candy, cupcakes, etc.) are to be used on a **very limited** basis. Preferable are healthy snacks, such as fruit, fresh vegetables, popcorn, pretzels, crackers, etc. In general, please do not make juice for the children. Water (whether simply from the fountain or in a cup) is all that the children need to wash their snack down.
- Snack is not meant to be a financial burden to anyone. There is a cupboard in the CE kitchen labeled “Children’s Ministry Snacks.” Help yourself to anything you find in that cupboard.. Also feel free to ask parents, grandparents, and other church folks to bring snack.
- When appropriate, involve children in preparing snack. Be sure to have them wash their hands!
- Be aware of allergies, and try to avoid snacks that kids are allergic to. If this is not possible, be sure to provide an alternative. The children’s pastor will compile a list of allergies and give it to you.
- Remember that snack is a privilege for children, not a right. You always have the option of withholding snack from an individual or class if behavior has not been appropriate.

Thank you for your attention to these details. May God be present at your table!

# Children's Ministry Handbook

*A Guide For Parents and Volunteers*



**Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church  
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