

Best Practices for Children's Ministry Department (CMD)

This policy covers Nursery-6th grade

In addition to Faith Community Church's official policies that must be followed, there are other guidelines that help protect the safety of children and facilitate an effective ministry with other volunteers and parents.

1) Teacher Prep

Nobody does their best work last minute. When we are given the privilege to present God's Word to His children, that's a job worth doing right!

We recommend spending the week beforehand doing your teacher prep, and having a solid plan (written outline, bought craft materials, etc.) by the Wednesday or Thursday previous so you can communicate it to the rest of your team and all be prepared.

We're simply not giving God our best if Sunday morning is the first time we're looking at the material.

2) Check-in Protocol

When you are placed on the official schedule, it is assumed that you will show up on that day 15 minutes before the event/activity begins. If that is not going to happen for any reason, you should act as soon as possible:

1. Communicate with the Children's Ministry Director and the rest of your team for the day (teacher, assistants, or those who are depending on you).
2. Explain the situation.
3. If you will be unable to fulfill your obligation, contact approved Substitutes to request they step in to take your position for the day. Continue contacting people until you've confirmed a substitute, or found an acceptable solution with the Children's Ministry Director.
4. Update all team workers if the situation changes, so they can act on the latest information.

Please inform others if you will be late. Remember that a single volunteer cannot oversee children, so you may leave numerous families in confusion if you are even five minutes late for your appointed start time.

If your teammate fails to show up at an event/activity, you should communicate with the appropriate ministry leader (Children's Ministry Director, Hall Monitor, AWANA Leader, etc.).

2) Walkie-Talkies

All classes have a walkie-talkie, to allow for quick communication in emergency situations with the hall monitors. In addition, whenever taking the class outside the building (like the sport court), walkie-talkies are mandatory.

Proper use:

1. Upon arrival the teacher or assistant should find your walkie-talkie, confirm operation and sufficient battery charge.
2. When you give a message, identify yourself and who you're trying to reach.
 - a. Cory: "*Cory to Hall Monitor.*"
3. The recipient responds to let the caller know you're ready.
 - a. Hall Monitor: "*Go ahead.*"
4. The caller delivers the message / asks the question.

- a. Cory: *"We're headed to the Sport Court."* (Finish with *"Over"* if you'd like.)
5. Continue as needed, then the recipient confirms they know what they need to know.
 - a. Hall Monitor: *"Okay."* (You can say *"Roger"* or *"I copy"* if you prefer.)
6. The caller closes the discussion.
 - a. Cory: *"Clear."*

Return walkie-talkies to the Hall Monitor at the end of the class.

3) Head Counts

Volunteers should all be aware of the number of children present, and confirm with each other to make sure they've got the correct total. This should be standard practice in all rooms, at all times.

Head counts should be confirmed often and especially at these times:

1. At the beginning of class/activity
2. Every time you leave for a new location
3. After arrival at that new location
4. Right before dismissal of class/activity

4) Additional Visitors

As a rule, the only people who should attend any class/activity are the church staff, approved volunteers, and children of the appropriate age.

There are a few exceptions that are acceptable, as long as they can be supervised by the staff and volunteers present:

1. Volunteers may need to bring their own children. In this case those children should be supervised along with the rest of the class.
(If they are approved Student Helpers, they may assist as additional volunteers.)
2. Parents/guardians of the children present for the activity/event may want to observe. They may do so at the back of the room, allowing the volunteers to run the class in an orderly fashion.
(If they are approved volunteers, they may assist as additional volunteers.)

5) Ownership

Every Children's Ministry volunteer is in a special role, able to touch lives for eternal significance! We want you to take ownership of this ministry.

Your Parents

Please reach out to your class's parents, especially of children who attend regularly. Let them know what their children are learning, when they've been challenging, and when they're showing growth or asking good questions. Be good helpers to them!

You should also let them know when you or your class need assistance. Let them be good helpers to you!

Your Class

Please look to the physical condition of the room you use regularly:

1. Keep it clean, pick up trash, and take care of toys / equipment.
2. Make sure you have the supplies you need.
3. If you need anything make sure to communicate that, or fill the need yourself.

You're the one there every week -- you know what's needed more than anyone! If you don't take the time to inform others or improve things yourself, it's likely no one else will either. That gives you the chance to make a tangible difference. Take ownership!