



**In caring for the children of St. Luke's and their families,  
we seek to nurture and develop faithful loving lives, modeled after the Love,  
Acceptance, Justice, and Hope of Jesus, through relationship and learning.  
We strive to create sacred spaces and experiences for children to discover and share our principles  
of GRACE, COURAGE, WONDER & BEYOND inspired by God's love.**

## **Children's Ministry Servant Training & Safe Sanctuary Procedures**

May 2026

Dear Children's Ministry Servant,

Thank you for choosing to serve at St. Luke's. You are part of a most critical team to the life of our church. Bringing children to know God's love begins with you. Without you there would be no Sunday School!

This ministry not only serves children but feeds us adults as well. Children bring love, passion and energy to the church. They openly embrace the teachings of Christ and are accepting of God's Grace and tuned in to spirituality. Children are true witnesses as to how Jesus taught us to live and from them we learn so much about love, the scriptures, and our relationship with God and each other. What a gift! We hope that serving our children will help you along your spiritual journey and be a fun and meaningful experience.

Any loving parent wants their child to grow up in safe, warm, nourishing environment and St. Luke's wants the same for its own children. The following will outline the policies to provide such an environment at St. Luke's.

If you have any questions regarding any of the policies/procedures contained in this document please ask.

**THANK YOU FOR SERVING OUR CHILDREN!**

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## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### A. SERVANT ROLES IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Below is a list of the roles we have for servants in Children's Ministry that need to abide by our Safe Sanctuary policies. This does not include anyone who would participate in Behind the Scenes Help, Family Camp, Church Picnic, Fall Festival, Family Movie Nights, Playgroups, Easter Fun Day and other situations where children are supervised by their own families or Nursery staff. Although these guidelines are good to follow when working with children in any capacity.

#### 9:30AM SERVANTS:

- SUPERINTENDENT/GREETER
- PRESCHOOL/KINDIE SERVANTS:
  - JOY TREK LEADER
  - JOY TREK SHEPHERD
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SERVANTS:
  - PEAK CLASS LEADER
  - PEAK SHEPHERD
  - TWEENS LEADER
  - TWEENS SHEPHERD

#### SLY, JR. 5<sup>TH</sup> & 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE SLY, JR. SERVANTS:

- SLY, JR. CHAPERONE
- SLY, JR. BUS DRIVER
- SLY, JR. FOOD HELPER

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

*(CHRISTMAS PAGEANT, CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY SHOP, VBS, EASTER FUN DAY, FALL FESTIVAL, OTHER)*

#### PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

#### 9:30AM SUNDAY SCHOOL SERVANT

##### TYPICAL AGENDA:

***(FIRST – BEFORE SUNDAY – SIGN UP ONLINE!)***

- Arrive 15-20 minutes EARLY
- Get servant name tag
- Set up room, use Sunday School (not Little School) resources
- Check in with staff on SS activities
- Greet families at the purple kiosk upstairs, Kids sign in/get name tags
- Bring children downstairs after Children's Time in worship
- Gather for large group opening
- Check attendance/offering
- Keep kids focused, safe, engaged
- Help large group activity as needed
- Return to classrooms
- Check attendance again
- Classroom activity time
- Keep kids focused, safe, engaged
- Close with discussion recap & bonding
- Send off:
  - blessing box (bless each child)
  - hand out take home sheets/crafts
- Monitor parent pick up, sign out sheet & removal of name tags
- Clean up room(s), gather any extra supplies
- Recap with staff
- Turn in servant name tag, SMILE, enjoy your day
- Know that you are awesome & made a difference!



## Children's Ministry Safe Sanctuary QUICK REMINDERS

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1. **CLASSROOM SAFETY:** Keep your personal items out of reach of the children.
2. **NAME TAGS:** All Sunday School servants must wear their Children's Ministry name tag. All children attending Sunday School must wear a name tag. (Parents keep one to show at pick up.)
3. **SIGN IN/OUT:** All children (even "helpers" & visitors) must be signed in on the class roster sign in sheet. Take roll before and after opening. **Make sure your sign in sheet matches all of the children in your care.**
4. **BATHROOM:** An adult should accompany all **PRE-SCHOOL** children to the bathroom. Keep one foot in and one foot out of the bathroom. If a younger child needs help be sure not to close the bathroom door. If a child has an accident that would require a clean up, they may be brought to the Nursery. **ELEMENTARY** children can go to the restroom unattended. Have a Shepherd monitor their trip to and from the door of the classroom.
5. **INJURIES:** Minor Injuries - you may wash with clean water **ONLY** and apply a Band-Aid. A first aid kit is available in at the Superintendent Station. Serious Injuries - Stay calm - Get the Superintendent or staff person.
6. **ALLERGIES:** No food will be offered in the preschool classrooms. Food is strongly discouraged in K-4 with the exception of Cinema and Cooking rotations. Check and be aware of allergy notations on children's name tags.
7. **FIRE ALARM:** Get **ROSTER** and escort children outside and move at least 100 feet from the building (west of the grassy area). Wait for instructions.
8. **LOCKDOWN:** Strobes will flash and a high-pitched alarm will sound. Close door and cover the window in the door by the piece of foam core located on the back of each door. Close blinds. Wait for all clear code word and instructions.
9. **GRACIOUS SPACE:** Honor Your Commitment. Arrive 15-20minutes Early and Be Prepared. Be Welcoming.
10. **DISCIPLINE:** Redirect behavior. Engage children directly and refocus attention. If a child is becoming increasingly upset, notify the staff. Feel free to recommend our Holy Listening program to parents and children for any child experiencing a crisis.
11. **TEACHING:** Praise and encourage. Be patient and understand that children are not the same and may need a different type of support than another child. Fidget toys available. **NEVER:** Belittle or embarrass or hurt a child.
12. **SUPPLIES:** Basic supplies in each classroom. Sunday School copier code is 20329. The copier is located upstairs in the main Church Office. We have a Craft Closet in the David area and a Resource Room and a Library in the Goliath area for you to use as needed.
13. **CLEAN UP!** Leave room as you found it.
14. **PREVENT ABUSE:** Two Adult Rule/Open Classrooms. Never be alone with a child. (Abusers thrive on secrecy, isolation, and ability to manipulate victims.)
15. **THANK YOU!** Relax and enjoy the experience, you are a blessing!

**PART I. CREATING A SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

**A. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Sunday School is held in our weekday preschool (St. Luke's Little School) classrooms. These rooms are managed by preschool staff and under routine inspections for licensing. However, if for any reason you are unsure about the safety of an item in a classroom do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of a Children's Ministry staff person. If the item in question is something that can be easily moved, you may move the item out of children's reach, but please inform a Children's Ministry staff member. One thing to please be aware of is keeping your handbag/personal items out of reach of the children. There can be many items in a purse or pockets harmful to children (medicines, cosmetics, etc.) so please be mindful of where you place these items.

**B. PLAYGROUND ENVIRONMENT**

The Playground is also subject to routine inspection for preschool licensing. As stated above, if for any reason you have a safety concern do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of a Children's Ministry staff member. To ensure safety on the Playground and to aid in the upkeep of Playground equipment please see attached Playground Rules and Procedures.

**C. REGISTRATION/IDENTIFICATION/NAME TAGS**

Each year we require all families to register their child for Sunday School. This can be done online or via a written form. This enables us to update all of our data (current contact info, allergy info, etc...) and purge information that is no longer needed. We add name tags to the class bin and names to the check in sheets once the child is registered for the year. Name tags are required for all Teachers/Shepherds/adults and children participating in Sunday School.

1. **Adult name tags:** All adults facilitating in Sunday School should wear their Children's Ministry name tag. This name tag identifies you as an adult responsible for the class. Adult name tags can be found at the Superintendent's Station. Please turn them back in after serving.
2. **Child name tags:** All children attending Sunday School should be wearing a name tag. Name tags in the Joy Trek (preschool) area are found hanging on the walls across from the classrooms. PEAK and Tweens name tags are in the class bins that are out in front of each classroom. They should be pinned on the back for children in preschool (for safety reasons) and pinned on the front for children grades K-6. Name tags are color coded by class and a duplicate name tag is for the parent/guardian to show when picking up their child. Each name tag has a number to be used when a child needs their parent/guardian for any reason (see paging procedure below.) If a child has lost/misplaced their name tag or has not registered for the year please direct them and their parent to the Superintendent to obtain a temporary tag.
3. **Guest name tags:** All guests should check in with the Superintendent to receive a name tag and paging number. The Superintendent will also record the parent/guardian information and note any allergy/medical conditions applicable to the child's safety while in Sunday School. If a guest arrives at your classroom without a name tag, kindly direct them to the Superintendent. Temporary name tags can be returned to the Superintendent at the end of class or left in the front of the class bins.

**D. PAGING SYSTEM**

Each child in Sunday School has a number on their name tag, as well as on their sign in sheet. If a parent/guardian is needed for any reason, contact the Superintendent or a staff member to page the parent/guardian. The number will be displayed in the Sanctuary to alert the parent/guardian that they are needed. If you don't see the parent within a few minutes, send a staff member or extra Shepherd to go find the parent/guardian.

**E. CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT**

Each classroom has a class roster with sign-in/sign-out for the parent/guardian. As you greet each child please remind the parent/guardian to sign in their child and retain the child's duplicate name tag. If you have a guest in your classroom, make sure they have first checked in with the Superintendent, then have the parent/guardian write their name in on the roster. Once class has begun, double check your roster and initial by any children names that were not signed in properly. At the end of class do not have children gather by the door. It is best to keep the children engaged during pick up. The parent/guardian should sign out their child and show their duplicate name tag. This ensures the child is in the care of the appropriate adult. We strongly discourage siblings from picking up other siblings. If you see this happening please inform the children that a parent is needed or direct them to the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person. If there is any question at all during pick up do not hesitate to contact the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### F. WANDERING CHILDREN

During services children are not allowed to walk around the facility. If you see a child wandering around unattended, please approach them and ask if they need assistance then contact the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person. They can assist in taking the child to their appropriate class or the Worship service where they may sit with their parent.

### G. WANDERING ADULTS

If you see an adult wandering around the hallways, please approach them and ask if they need assistance and notify the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person. They can offer to assist them or direct them as needed.

### H. BATHROOM SAFETY

All doors to the bathrooms downstairs should be propped open during Sunday School.

#### 1. Preschool (Joy Trek) classes

An adult should accompany all children to the bathroom. Keep one foot in and one foot out of the bathroom at all times for children old enough to use the bathroom independently. If a younger child needs help be sure not to close the bathroom door (exterior or interior). If a child has an accident that would require a clean up, they may be brought to the Nursery where Nursery staff will change them. If clothing was soiled, have the parent/guardian paged to attend to their child. Adults should make sure that children wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and adults should wash their hands thoroughly if they have assisted the child.

#### 2. Kindergarten through sixth grade (PEAK and Tweens R.O.C.K.)

Elementary aged children can be allowed to go to the restroom unattended. Have a Shepherd monitor their trip from the door of the classroom. Should they stay in the restroom longer than you feel is necessary, find a gender appropriate adult to check on them.

### I. MEDICAL SAFETY

#### 1. Minor Injuries

Typically an injury can be treated with a little loving attention. If the injury is minor you may wash with clean water only and apply a Band-Aid. Do not wash with soap or apply any medication. A first aid kit is available in at the Superintendent Station. Please treat the child and complete an "ouch" report form located in the Superintendent notebook. The report needs to be filled out in duplicate. One copy is to be signed by the parent and turned in to a Children's Ministry staff person or Superintendent to be forwarded to the Pastoral team. The other copy is for the parent to keep. Please talk with the parent upon their arrival letting them know how the "ouch" occurred and how it was treated. In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parents will be notified, immediately.

#### 2. Serious Injuries

Broken bones, convulsions, fainting, unconsciousness or other serious bodily injury should be treated as follows:

- Keep calm and keep children and the injured person as calm as possible. Speak calmly.
- Do not move the injured child and do not leave them.
- Send a fellow teacher to find the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person.
- The staff person will contact the parents and the church executive administrator.
- If needed, the staff person or executive administrator will call 911 and any medical personnel on site.
- If a child needs to be transported to the hospital and the parents cannot be notified in time, a staff person will accompany the child to the hospital.
- A staff person will follow up with the parents as needed.
- All teachers involved in the emergency should complete an accident report immediately following the emergency.
- Take time to talk about the incident with the children in your class and pray with them.
- Communicate with the parents what the incident involved and how it might affect the children.

#### 3. AED Device/CPR

We have 2 portable AED devices in the church building. One is located downstairs just next to the central stairs across from the Superintendent's Station and the other one is located upstairs just outside of the Sanctuary next to the coat rack. If needed for a child, pediatric pads are located next to the AED device. When the unit is opened it automatically begins to lead the user through step by step instructions.

**If it is determined CPR is needed, all Nursery and Children's Ministry staff are trained and current in CPR.**

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### 4. Allergies

Children with extreme allergies: Some of these are food allergies that helpers in the classroom need to be aware of to avoid potentially dangerous life threatening conditions. Some of our children have allergies to food that within a few short minutes of eating or coming in contact with the food, the child could enter anaphylactic shock, a serious life threatening condition.

**Below is a list of precautions. Following these will hopefully prevent any life threatening situations.**

- No food will be offered in the pre-school classrooms. If a child brings a treat to share, hold the treats until the end of class and hand them out to the parents.
- Food is strongly discouraged in Tweens and K-4 with the exception of Cinema and Cooking rotations.
- Check and be aware of allergy notations on children's name tags.
- If you are offering any food in your room, please be sure to put out a Food Notice sheet with all listed ingredients. Remember it is not only food that children can be allergic to.

**Typical symptoms that occur in a child who is having a severe allergic reaction:**

- Change in breathing patterns
- Sudden redness on face, neck or hands
- Sudden listlessness or paleness
- Sudden onset of coughing or sneezing, or increase in coughing
- Swelling or puffiness anywhere on the body
- Sudden itching
- Vomiting

If any of these symptoms should occur, notify the Staff person immediately. The parent will be notified and if the child is having difficulty breathing 911 will be called.

### 5. Wellness Policy

All children's programs at St. Luke's UMC are staffed and equipped to care for "well" children only. Therefore, we ask that parent/guardian's keep children home if he or she is ill, particularly if he or she:

- a. Has a fever above 99 degrees. Children should be fever-free for 24 hours before being in our care.
- b. Has yellow/green nasal discharge, drainage from the eyes, conjunctivitis (pink eye), a questionable rash, a contagious cough, diarrhea or vomiting. Children should be symptom-free for 24 hrs before being in our care.
- c. Has been prescribed an antibiotic. Child may be in our care 24 hours after first dose.
- d. Has chicken pox. Child may be in our care when pox are 14 days old and scabbed over.
- e. Has a communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, salmonella, or giardia. Parents should report these illnesses.

Children in our care should be well enough to participate in all activities. If a child becomes ill while in our care, or if the Teacher feels the child does not meet the wellness policy, the parent/guardian will be notified.

## J. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Fire Alarm Procedures: Whenever the alarm sounds, always assume that it is an emergency, NOT a false alarm, or a drill. Superintendent assists with Joy Trek classrooms. St. Luke's Youth assist with Nursery evacuation at back of church building as they are able. Each adult in the classroom must assume emergency role A or B:

**Role A:** Have children hold hands and lead the line to an area away from the building.

**Role B:** One adult will be at the end of the line while exiting the room. Retrieve the sign-in sheet/pen.

- a. Do not panic.
- b. Know the exit route designated for your classroom (posted by the door and in attachments). Take a few minutes every Sunday you are in the classroom to walk this route so you know exactly where to go if an emergency arises. Close doors behind you.
- c. Know how many children are in your room at all times.
- d. Do not allow children to remove their shoes due to the possibility of an emergency.
- e. Regardless of outside conditions we MUST exit.
- f. Once outside, move at least 100 feet from the building (west of the grassy area).
- g. Remain outside until a staff representative gives you permission to reenter.
- h. Parents are not to pick up their child until all children of the class are accounted for at their class evacuation area. The parent must sign the child out on your sheet.

*\*Familiarize yourself with the attached Emergency Evacuation Plan.*

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### 2. Lockdown

If an emergency situation warrants a lockdown, strobes by the Superintendent Station, Church Office and Sanctuary will flash and a high-pitched alarm will sound. Teachers should close their doors and cover the window in the door by the piece of foam core located on the back of each door. Keep children calm and quiet until you are instructed otherwise by staff person or emergency personnel. If exiting the building is a safe possibility, Christ Lutheran Church next door (just south of us) is a designated gathering location.

### 3. Lost child

If a child is suddenly missing from your class please notify the Superintendent or a Children's Ministry staff person immediately. If a child wanders into your classroom that is not signed-in for your class, check for a name tag and escort the child back to their class and notify the Superintendent or staff person.

## **PART II. CREATING A SAFE EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

If the child learns nothing else in Sunday School it should be that church is a safe, warm, fun place to be. Below are some guidelines to achieve that emotionally safe environment.

### **A. HONOR YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

If you choose to facilitate in Sunday School, no matter what capacity, please take the commitment seriously. Plan accordingly to prioritize your commitment on your scheduled dates. It is important that we have Teachers, Shepherds, Superintendents and Greeters in place every Sunday morning to greet and teach our children. It is, also, a fact of life that unforeseen events that require our attention arise. In the event you are unable to teach on your scheduled day, contact a Children's Ministry staff member as soon as you know of the conflict. If you are on a PEAK workshop team, contact your team members as soon as you know of the conflict.

It is important to notify Children's Ministry staff if you will not be able to make your commitment. Even if your situation happens late Saturday evening or early Sunday morning, please call a mobile contact number (preferred), send an email, call the church and leave a message or all of the above.

### **B. ARRIVE EARLY AND BE PREPARED**

It is important the ALL Teachers/Shepherds, Superintendents and Greeters arrive 20 minutes before class starts. This gives you sufficient time to set up your classroom, organize the activities and supplies, ask questions/receive important information to/from staff, and be ready to focus on the children as they begin to arrive. This also allows for Teachers in other classrooms to sign-in their children to the appropriate classroom. When a child shows up to a class where there is no Teacher or Shepherd it can be very unsettling and it sends many mixed messages to the children and the parent/guardian. The only message that should be conveyed is one of welcoming and preparedness to receive St. Luke's children!

### **C. CLASSROOM STRUCTURE/MANAGEMENT**

Each Teacher is blessed with their own unique style of teaching and leading a class. Sometimes it is dependent on the activity or the mix of children in your class as to whether your class will be that of boundless energy or calm and reflective. No matter the "personality" of your class, each child needs to feel emotionally safe. If energy tends to escalate, remain calm. Never shout or raise your voice in anger or frustration. In fact the louder you try to speak "over" your class, the louder they will become. Some suggestions to refocus your class can be:

- having prayer time, tell a personal story
- flicking the lights, playing music
- rhythmic clapping
- repeating a phrase/breath

Once your class has refocused, calmly explain the next activity or instruction. And always, pray for God's love for each child and your leadership in teaching them.

### **D. UPSET CHILDREN**

Sometimes children are reluctant about attending Sunday School. The best thing to do is to engage the child. Ask the child about something personal to let them know you care about them and focus their attention on something other than the separation from their parent/guardian. Some good conversation starters include:

- siblings, shoes, pets, vacations, favorites (food, characters, songs, etc)

If a child is becoming increasingly upset, this not only upsets other children, but may turn Sunday School into a negative experience. Don't hesitate to notify the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person to page the child's parent/guardian.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### E. DISCIPLINE

Discipline can be defined as training that produces orderliness, obedience and the capacity for cooperation. Therefore, it is both appropriate and an essential ingredient in the Christian classroom. It is helpful to review with the students the Code of Conduct and can be expected of them.

1. Student Code of Conduct
  - a. Obey your teachers
  - b. Follow directions
  - c. Use kind words with your classmates
  - d. Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself
  - e. WALK in the hallways and classrooms
  - f. Take care of church property and materials
2. Appropriate actions to prevent distractions
  - a. Redirect behavior with nonverbal techniques such as eye contact, facial expression, body position and gently resting a hand on the child's shoulder.
  - b. State class rules/expectations on a regular basis.
  - c. Engage children directly. Know their names to call on them and refocus attention.
  - d. Change activity when restlessness sets in. Introduce a finger play or play a stretching game.
  - e. Begin teaching only after you have child's attention.
  - f. Make sure that anything brought from home (toys, baseball cards, etc.) be kept out of sight during class.
  - g. Praise and encourage. Recognize children's accomplishments and positive attitudes and actions. Honest praise reinforces acceptable behavior, instills self-confidence, focuses on the positive and builds loving relationships.
  - h. Recognize the value of work. Make sure the children write their names on items that are to be taken home.
3. Appropriate consequences when problems occur  
State desired behavior. If the child doesn't comply, state it again. If he still doesn't cooperate, state the consequence and be prepared to carry it out. The following consequences are permissible:
  - a. Change seating arrangements
  - b. Separate children
  - c. Have a child sit by the teacher
  - d. Speak to the child individually stating what is expected of their behavior (do not shame in front of class)

*\*If you have tried the above and nothing seems to work, notify the Superintendent or Children's Ministry staff person and they will page the parent to come remove the child. If biting, hitting, kicking or other physical inappropriate behavior occurs notify a Children's Ministry staff person or Superintendent and they will page the parent to come remove the child.*
4. Ineffective and Inappropriate Consequences:  
\* Sitting in the hall \* Belittling \* Embarrassing a child \* Lecturing \* Threatening \* Physically hurting a child

### F. FELLOWSHIP

Giving children the opportunity to build friendships not only encourages their participation in Sunday School but adds to the emotional security of the child. Take advantage of "down time" by talking with the children in circle time, sharing joys and concerns, praying with the children, playing simple games, using the provided activity pages, free play, or Playground.

### G. CURRICULUM/SUPPLIES

The CM staff provides all curriculum, activity pages and there are basic supplies specifically designated for Sunday School in each classroom. If a servant needs to make copies – our Sunday School copier code is 20329. There are copiers located downstairs by the Youth Office and upstairs in the main Church Office. The curriculum offered at St. Luke's provides a great foundation to find joy in serving the children. The CM staff supports our servants incorporating their own ideas into the provided curriculum as long as it stays within the spirit of the lessons and St. Luke's core values - we welcome creativity. Servants can also be reimbursed for any resources purchased out of pocket as needed. Turn in receipts to a CM staff person. Please contact CM staff before making a purchase or drastically changing up curriculum. We have a well-stocked craft closet in the David area and a Resource room in the hallway to the Choir room and a library for you to use as needed. Please leave the classroom nice and neat – just as you found it - for Little School to use throughout the week.

**PART III. REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE**

**A. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION**

Child abuse and violence against children is an abomination of our society. Tragically it is a fact that these crimes continue to occur on a daily basis and have happened in every imaginable environment, including churches. The below information as well as the Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedure document are in place to protect our children and servants, and to prevent any seeds of thought of opportunity by a potential abuser.

**1. The Church Environment**

We tend to feel that our church is an extension of our home. While emotionally this may be true, the church environment is still very much a public environment, same as a shopping mall or public park, and should be treated as such when supervising children.

**2. Abusers**

We must recognize that more often than not, abusers of children are adults who are known and trusted by the child. Recent statistics indicate over 80% of child abuse cases are perpetrated by someone the child knew. Just as abused children cross all segments of our society, so do the abusers. Abusers can be found in every racial, ethnic, economic and social group. In addition another growing area of concern is minors as perpetrators.

**B. TWO ADULT RULE**

Teachers and other volunteers will be assigned in teams of two or more for each class of children. Concerted effort will be made to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers to permit such team teaching. In certain situations an assigned adult “roamer” who is free to enter and exit the classrooms at will, may serve as the second person. If an adult needs to leave a class or activity with a child, that person shall inform another adult or nearby teacher. This simple rule is instrumental in protecting our children physically, emotionally, and from abuse. With at least two adults in the classroom children can be properly watched to safeguard them from harm, it enables them to obtain the attention and care needed to thrive, and drastically reduces the possibility of an incident of child abuse. A married couple or two relatives that are serving together is considered “one adult” under this rule and another adult not related to them needs to be serving with them.

**Abusers thrive on secrecy, isolation, and their ability to manipulate victims. When abusers know they will never have a chance to be alone with potential victims, they quickly lose interest in “working” with the children.**

**C. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

We cannot ignore the possibility that abuse could happen here. For the sake of our children and the protection of those serving in Sunday School, we need to intentionally work to prevent abuse and to avoid situations prone to abuse. By diligently working to prevent abuse and abuse situations by following the below procedures, our children can continue to grow and flourish in a safe environment.

1. Staff and Volunteer Screening (Required Background Check for those 18 and older)
2. Staff and Volunteer Training
3. Two Adult Guideline
4. Appropriate Classroom Discipline
5. Open Classrooms
6. Age Restriction for Volunteers
7. Reporting Child Abuse

**D. SIGNED AFFIDAVIT**

The above procedures are explained in detail in the following St. Luke's United Methodist Church Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures. Each volunteer must sign a statement indicating they have read and understand the St. Luke's United Methodist Church Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures and return to Children's Ministry staff. It is the last page of this document.

ST. LUKE'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

*Jesus said, "whoever welcomes a child... welcomes me" (Matthew 18:5).* Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, and our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.

**I. PURPOSE**

- A. To help St. Luke's United Methodist Church provide a caring and secure environment for children in all phases of church life.
- B. To help St. Luke's United Methodist Church reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

**A. Child**

For the purpose of this document, a child is a person less than 18 years of age. It includes both the children and youth at the St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

**B. Abused Child**

One who is less than 18 years of age, whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care create or inflict, or threaten to create or inflict, or allow to be created or inflicted upon such a child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or create a substantial risk of death or disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions. This includes the following: failure to provide care necessary for health, abandonment, committing or allowing sexual exploitation, endangerment or neglect. Child abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or mental, and may be the result of actions or the failure to act.

**C. Definitions of Abuse**

1. Physical Abuse: Infliction of a physical injury, threat of injury, or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non accidental means. Examples: asphyxiation, bone fracture; brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma; burns; cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, internal injuries, poisoning, sprains, dislocations; gunshot, stabbing wounds.
2. Physical Neglect: Failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, or supervision for a child if the child's health or safety is endangered. Physical neglect may include multiple occurrences or a one-time critical or severe event that results in a threat to health or safety, such as a toddler left alone. Other types of neglect include abandonment, inadequate supervision, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, inadequate personal hygiene, inadequate food, and malnutrition.
3. Sexual Abuse: Includes any act defined in the Colorado Statutes and the Book of Discipline that is committed, or allowed to be committed, upon a child by his/her parent or other person responsible for the child's care. Examples of such abuse are: sexual exploitation, sexual molestation, intercourse/sodomy, and other sexual abuse.
4. Medical Neglect: Refusal or failure by a caretaker to obtain and/or follow through with a complete regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated could result in illness or developmental delays.
5. Mental Abuse/Neglect: A pattern of acts or omissions by the caretaker that results in harm to a child's psychological or emotional health or development.
6. Bizarre Discipline: Any actions in which the caretaker uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures, or devices to modify the child's behavior.

**D. Approved Volunteer**

A volunteer who has completed a "Volunteer Affidavit", completed a background screening, and has been approved by the Director of Youth or Children's Ministry.

**E. Paid Staff**

All employees of St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

### **III. REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE**

In an effort to create the safest possible environment within St. Luke's United Methodist Church, several abuse prevention measures will be utilized. These measures include screening of paid and volunteer workers for past child abuse convictions or expungements, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to paid and volunteer staff members, use of the two-adult guideline, standards for appropriate classroom discipline, and open classrooms. Please note that these are minimum church requirements. Individual situations and groups may have additional rules based on the situation (i.e.: Little School, SLY, Sunday School, Retreats, etc).

#### **A. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING**

Every person employed at St. Luke's United Methodist Church and all volunteers in a program involving children and youth under the age of 18 (e.g., children's teachers, child care workers, preschool teachers and aides, youth leaders, etc.) will be asked to fill out an employee/volunteer application as appropriate and agree to a criminal record background check. Where appropriate, St. Luke's United Methodist Church also may require a valid state driver's license, other photographic identification and/or fingerprinting to confirm identity. No one who has had a child abuse conviction or who has ever had such a conviction expunged, or who refuses to complete this screening form, will be permitted to work with children at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. In addition to the screening process described above, every person hired for a paid staff position shall first have undergone a criminal history background check, the cost of which shall be borne by St. Luke's United Methodist Church. All completed screening forms and criminal record checks shall be secured along with any other personnel records for use by management personnel on an official business need to know basis. The records for those working in the preschool shall be maintained and stored by the preschool in keeping with state regulations. The records for those who are in a paid staff position will be kept with their personnel records. Additionally, each ministry (Children's & Youth) will require an application for any volunteer who does not have one on file or is volunteering for the first time in that ministry area. The screening forms are good for both children and youth ministries.

#### **B. TRAINING**

All persons employed by St. Luke's United Methodist Church and all approved volunteers will be required to read St. Luke's United Methodist Church's Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Safe Sanctuary Procedures and sign an affidavit indicating that they have read and understand the policy and agree to abide by it. Anyone failing to sign this statement will be contacted. If the teacher or worker does not sign the statement after being contacted, that person will not be permitted to serve until the policy has been read and the form signed. Such persons also will be required to attend one training session related to the church's abuse policy during the course of their first year of service following the adoption of this policy. These group training sessions will be offered by the church through the Children's Ministry departments conducted by Clergy or paid staff members, and held at least once throughout the year. Individual one-on-one training sessions with staff will also be offered.

#### **C. TWO ADULT GUIDELINE**

Teachers and other volunteers will be assigned in teams of two or more for each class of children. Concerted effort will be made to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers to permit such team teaching. In certain situations an assigned adult "roamer" who is free to enter and exit the classrooms at will, may serve as the second person. If an adult needs to leave a class or activity with a child, that person shall inform another adult or nearby teacher. Other church-sponsored or community groups of children who meet at the church should have two or more leaders present whenever possible. If the group stays overnight at the church, or if a church-sponsored group leaves the premises, two or more leaders must be present and should include at least one male and one female, if the group is mixed gender.

#### **D. CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE**

All teachers and workers will use the following discipline measures. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., "We do not throw the blocks. We use blocks for building." If this measure is not effective, the child will be guided to another activity. If the child's disruptive behavior continues the child's parents will be notified. No physical punishment or verbal, abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time. If removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation will be discussed with the child's parents or guardian.

#### **E. OPEN CLASSROOMS**

Classrooms or child care rooms may be visited without prior notice by church staff, parents, or other volunteer church workers. Windows on the classroom door should not be obstructed. Brief observations of child care rooms and classrooms of children may be conducted by children's/youth ministry staff, pastoral staff, and/or the Sunday School Superintendent during Sunday School hours.

#### **F. AGE RESTRICTION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Persons, under the age of 18, working in children's programs will be under adult supervision. Volunteers under the age of 18 will be allowed to serve with an adult and will be asked to provide 2 personal references.

**G. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Any and every allegation of child abuse will be treated seriously. Should there be an allegation of child abuse occurring at St. Luke's United Methodist Church or at church-sponsored activities, the matter should be reported immediately to the director of children's or youth ministries (depending in which ministry the alleged event occurred) who will then notify a Lead Minister and the Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson (unless the allegation involves a clergy person, in which case the matter should be also be reported to the District Superintendent or the presiding Bishop.) Together, these individuals shall ensure that an appropriate investigation is commenced and that the following procedures are followed:

- A. Pray for the church and all persons affected by the allegation.
- B. Immediately begin documenting all procedures observed in the handling of the allegation. Use documentation form (in church office).
- C. Immediately notify government authorities of the allegation. It is advisable to have the complainant present with the reporter at this time.
- D. Immediately notify the parents. A member of the investigating team should have first hand knowledge that the parents are aware of the issue.
- E. Immediately notify the District Superintendent
- F. If the accused has assigned duties within the life of the church, that person must be temporarily relieved of his /her duties until the investigation is concluded. Pay will be determined by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- G. It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the alleged victim. This should be the pastoral objective from the moment the allegation is received or otherwise made known.
- H. Observe confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused.
- I. If the media is involved, a Lead Pastor will be the person in charge of media communication.

## PART IV: CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY CHILD

### **A. STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT TOOLS**

We are always looking at ways to enhance our environment, care and support of all children at St. Luke's. Recent statistics show that 1 in 88 children have autism, 7% of children have ADHD, 8% of children have learning adversity, 10% of children have anxiety disorder and 12% of children have developmental disabilities. The Children's Ministry team is looking for ways to support and engage all learners and welcome every child at St. Luke's. Here are just a few examples of some the ways we are expanding our ministry.

We have incorporated **sensory and fidget toy boxes** in each of our classrooms. These fun sensory toys can serve as a constant occupier or calming influence for all children when asked to sit still or adjust to a new environment. We have also included these sensory toys on the upper branch of our children's worship bags in the Sanctuary.

Additionally, our Sunday School classrooms have available **visual schedule cue cards** as a way to improve communication between children and teachers.

And our Nursery now has **fluorescent light covers** which help cut the intensity of the light to help those who may be visually sensitive.

We want all our families to know they have the love and support of their congregation and our team. If you have a child who has a specific challenge attending Sunday School, please let us know, our childcare staff can try to provide a **Sunday School Buddy** for the morning with advanced notice.

We don't have all the answers but through prayer, reading and learning we are committed to making St. Luke's a place of inclusion for all children and their families.

Tips to remember:

- Be patient and understand that all children are not the same and may need a different type of support than another child.
- Routine is important.
- Increase use of visuals, allow children to see by use of visual cue cards or write out schedule on chalk or white board.
- Allow for movement within the classroom - act out a story.
- Use fidget toy box as distraction, reinforcement or to keep hands busy so a child can focus.
- Be clear and direct with direction and expectation.
- Incorporate reinforcement, use praise and positive feedback.
- Use the child's name when addressing them or a gentle touch of the shoulder.
- If a child seems overwhelmed with a project, divide it into manageable steps.
- Prevent challenging behavior - rather than reacting, redirect their attention or focus if possible.
- Share observations and ideas with Children's Ministry staff so we can support you with additional servants or classroom resources. Sunday School Buddies are available at a parent's request. We are here to best support you in any way we can.
- Relax and enjoy the experience, you are the channel God uses to support the spiritual growth of the children at St. Luke's.

**B. NOTES FROM “LEARNING DIFFERENCES IN SUNDAY SCHOOL”**

*Presented by Amy Antinoro, M.A., CCC-SLP at St. Luke's Children's Ministry: Infotopic Night – January 27, 2010*

Amy mentioned that there is a wide variety of learning differences but wanted to stress it is not our job to monitor or diagnosis these issues that may be seen in children but to make sure we provide an atmosphere in Sunday School that is safe and nurturing to all children. We are all part of a care “team” for our Sunday School children.

In general, the ideal situation is that there is at least one adult who knows the children of the classroom well enough to relay information to other adult leaders in the classroom about the individual needs. It is important to realize all children have different needs and some require more individual attention than others. That being realized, it is important to make those connections with the children using eye contact, being at eye level with them, and showing genuine interest in their needs.

Amy focused on several scenarios that one may encounter in a typical Sunday School classroom:

**WANDERING** - This child just can't seem to stay seated. They may need an adult to really focus on them. Again, make sure an adult establishes a connection; this may help them stay seated when they specifically know what is expected of them. Some children just learn better if they move about a bit or even hold a “fidget” (small toy, ball, book) that they can interact with while listening. Make sure the child knows it is okay as long as they are not disruptive, most will understand this and other children in the class understand the concept that we all learn differently - if explained, the other children understand this is not a “free pass”.

**RUNNING/BOLTING** - In this situation the child clearly wants to leave the classroom. The first priority is to ensure the child's safety. Make sure the classroom door is closed and ask for another adult helper. Sometimes standing near the door, acting as a barrier, can help.

**INTERRUPTING** - This child is very enthusiastic to share a multitude of information with you! Validate the child that you want to hear what they have to share but you will have to get back to them after the lesson. If they just can't wait, it may work out well if you suggest that they share quietly with another adult or child so that the lesson may continue. Often, giving the child a time limit to share with the class can work and will give them a chance to focus in on their “main idea”.

**DEMANDING** - Somewhat similar to interrupting but instead of information to share they need your attention in more disruptive ways, possibly playing inappropriately or not sharing, etc. State what the classroom expectations are and redirect the child in a positive way, give them a specific job to do, etc. Make that connection through conversation and eye contact.

**BREAKS** - This child wants numerous bathroom and drinking fountain breaks. A good strategy is to put them in control. Give them two “tickets” - paper clips or similar items - then each time they need to leave the classroom they hand over a ticket, once they are out they are done with breaks.

**EMOTIONAL** - This child easily becomes upset. For this child you really want to make sure they know that you are their friend and are there to help them. Always ask first if they would like a hug, often they do, sometimes they don't. Often this child responds well if given a specific job or acts as “teacher's helper”. Re-motivating can do miracles!

**WITHDRAWN** - Again, make that extra effort to make a connection with this child. Ask about hobbies, interests, pets, etc... or if they could choose, what would they rather be doing now? A simple conversation can go a long way! Pairing up with another child can help as well.

**PHYSICAL** - This child may need constant hugs and want to sit in your lap. With pre-school children this is fine as long as you are comfortable with this. However, with older children it may be uncomfortable and even inappropriate. State clear boundaries for the child: “You can give me one big hug now, and one more before leave” or “I'll sit next to you but be sure to keep your hands to yourself.”

**NON-COMMUNICATIVE** - Always directly talk to the child, they may not be able to answer in words but can do so in body language or signing. Don't assume they do not want to participate, or that they do not understand. They are listening more than you realize. Be sure to always include them in activities and discussions.

These are just a few examples, but again always try to make the connection with the child. Do not ignore them, state clear expectations and be in tune to their needs or feel free to ask their parent if there is anything you can do to enrich their Sunday School time. If a child had a rough day be sure to tell the parent, they want to know and this opens up conversation to always improve a child's experience. Also use staff and other teachers as resources, they may be familiar with what works well with different children and can help.

### C. EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN

*By Susan M. Isbell from Ministry Matters website*

**Unrealistic expectations of children is one of the most common difficulties facing new teachers in any classroom.** Each child grows and develops at an individual pace, but each stage of development offers some similar characteristics in physical, social, and cognitive abilities. Here are some characteristics upon which to base expectations.

#### **TODDLERS AND TWOS**

Teachers of toddlers and two-year-olds may spend a great deal of time helping children feel happy away from their parents. One of the most significant learnings a very young child can grasp is that church is a happy and safe place to be with teachers who will love and take care of them.

These children are just beginning to learn self-control. They are still self-centered and engage better in parallel (side by side) play than in interactive or cooperative games. Large-muscle coordination is developing rapidly in young children, so teachers can expect greater participation in activities that call for lots of whole-body movement than in manipulative activities that require hand-eye coordination that has not yet developed.

Probably the most important thing for a teacher of toddlers and twos to understand is that their attention spans are very short. For these children, sitting still for any length of time is impossible, so teachers will be well served to plan fast-paced lessons that mix quiet activities with more active ones.

Young children love music. Music can be used effectively with these children both to offer a calm, soothing atmosphere and also to encourage active movement and joyful singing.

Most of what two-year-olds understand about God comes from their relationships with others. Children of this age can begin to experience prayer and may begin to associate the name Jesus with specific pictures and stories from the Bible. Older twos may begin to realize that the Bible is a special book that tells about God and Jesus and may recognize that it is used in church and by parents at home.

#### **PRESCHOOLERS/PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

Three-year-olds, four-year-olds, and five-year-olds are becoming more active but continue to have relatively short attention spans. Children of this age have great imaginations and enjoy interactive stories that involve physical movement. These children appreciate routines and like to know what to expect in their classroom each week.

While fine-motor skills such as writing and cutting are still being developed, many skills that require coordination, such as skipping and hopping, have been mastered. During ages three to five children progress markedly in their desire and ability to learn cognitive skills such as reading and counting.

Threes, fours, and fives are capable of learning simple words in other languages, although they have little understanding of cultural or historical differences. They develop a strong sense of belonging to a group and can learn acceptance of those who are different.

These children begin to experience worship in their own way and are capable of repeating Bible verses. They are growing in their understanding that God loves each person, and they enjoy hearing short stories about persons who tried to live as God wanted. As with younger children, music is a most effective teaching tool. Preschoolers enjoy singing, moving to music, and playing rhythm instruments.

#### **KINDERGARTEN, FIRST AND SECOND GRADERS**

As children enter Kindergarten and the first and second grades, they become more aware of what they can and cannot do. These children are still concrete thinkers and will continue to be such until around age eleven. They may have great difficulty with concepts that do not have tangible examples.

Most first and second graders are eager to share their developing reading and writing skills but become anxious and frustrated when attempting things beyond their abilities. Children of this age work well in learning centers and find great satisfaction in completing a task. They are accepting of almost everything they are told about God and Jesus and may begin asking how and why questions. Children at this age are capable of spontaneous prayer but may find comfort in familiar memorized versions. Although they cannot think logically about God or express their feelings in words, they can experience appreciation in relationships and growth and can relate these to God as creator.

**THIRD AND FOURTH GRADERS**

Third and fourth graders are expanding their knowledge of the world around them. They grow in their understanding of geography and history and can begin to explore how God has worked throughout the Bible and how God's work is accomplished today in other countries. These children are greatly affected by peers and are seeking answers to questions that help them determine right and wrong.

Third and fourth graders have cognitive skills that make study of the Bible easier. Indeed, many churches give Bibles to children at this age. These children are growing in their understanding of the relationship between the Bible message and the God they know. They can learn to locate Bible references and can become acquainted with different sections of the Bible. Questions about the nature of God become deeper, and religious ideals are directly related to their decision making.

Children of this age are competitive. They enjoy the challenge of individual and group games.

**FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADERS (TWEENS)**

Fifth and sixth graders are beginning to develop some abstract thinking skills. Greatly increased attention spans allow teaching activities or discussions that may last a long while.

Children of this age are becoming increasingly independent and are willing to challenge authority. Justice and fairness are primary characteristics of these students, who strive to make their own decisions while still accepting the values of their peers.

Fifth and sixth graders are able to express religious thoughts in words and begin to identify with the broader religious community. They begin to comprehend church history and events that have brought them to their place in time. They grow in their ability to use the Bible as a personal-growth tool and may begin to determine their own moral behavior in terms of God's will and the teachings of Jesus.

Children of this age are beginning to explore their commitment to God and what it means for each one individually to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As they seek their place in the church, they grow in their understanding of and appreciation for outreach and mission projects. Hands-on projects are effective with this age group.

**COMMON CHARACTERISTICS**

From the active two-year-old to the pondering sixth grader, all children have some characteristics in common. Children at every age respond to personal and group affirmation. They want to feel that they contribute to their class, that they are loved and respected by their teachers, and most of all that each is a unique and special child of God. By better understanding the characteristics of children, a caring teacher can provide more-age-appropriate activities for those in his or her classroom. The result is happy children and a much happier teacher.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVANT TRAINING & SAFE SANCTUARY PROCEDURES

### PLAYGROUND RULES AND PROCEDURES

#### **FOR ALL WHO USE THIS SPACE**

1. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
2. All Church Groups must have 2 adults on the playground at all times.
3. Children are NOT to climb on top of any playhouses.
4. All large riding/pushing/wheeled toys must be used on the cement.  
(This saves our grass from extra wear and tear.)
5. Cars are for children in Kindergarten and younger. (Please keep older children off these.  
They are not built for heavier/larger children.)
6. Sand and sand box toys need to stay in the sand box. When your child/group is done, please return toys to the storage containers and replace lid. Adults need to closely supervise children in these areas.
7. Please help children keep sand in the sand box and bark in its area.  
(This will help keep our grass areas growing/looking nice.)
8. Balls should be used in the grass areas or on the cement by the shed.  
(Please keep them away from the church windows.)
9. Playground climbing structures are for children under the age of 13.  
They are not built for older children to run/jump/play on. (Weight causes extra stress/breakage.)
10. Keep ALL toys off climbing structures. Children should have both hands free for climbing. This will also prevent toys from being dropped on children below, or toys crashing into children at the bottom of the slides. Adults need to closely supervise children coming down the slide/climbing up the slide.
11. If the large playhouse is open; play food and dishes need to be kept in the house or on the grass area by the house. (Please make sure children are not carrying these around the playground.  
They tend to be forgotten and not returned to the house.)
12. Before the playhouse is locked; make sure all play food/dishes are returned to the cupboard and the windows are closed and locked.
13. Keep the cement swept. (Children can slip and fall if there is sand/bark on the cement;  
causing them to skin knees/elbows.)
14. Children may not "dig" in the bark. (Holes are left and children running can twist an ankle.)
15. All "grass toys" may only be used on the grass and then returned to their containers when the children are done playing with them.

**Please do your part in keeping our playground in working order.**

**We want all of our children to have a safe and fun time while they use this area.**





AFFIDAVIT

I have read and understand the St. Luke's United Methodist Church Children's Ministry 2026 Servant Training & Safe Sanctuary Procedures document and the St. Luke's United Methodist Church's Child Abuse Prevention Policy (included within this document) and agree to abide by it.

\_\_\_\_\_ printed name

\_\_\_\_\_ signed name \_\_\_\_\_ date