

# First Pres Children's Ministry

We are here to provide loving care, Biblical teaching, prayer, support, fellowship and opportunities for spiritual growth to parents and their children from birth through 5th grade.

I can have  
no greater  
**J O Y**  
than to hear  
that my children are following  
the Truth.

3 John 1:4

***Mission statement:***

To weave the thread of spiritual growth into the child's world.

To supplement the family and its primary role as chief cultivator in a child's development.

To demonstrate to children of all ages that a relationship with Jesus Christ is an essential part of even a very young person's life.

To prepare children to discover God's mission for their lives.

Our vision is to foster within each child the desire to discover God in a personal way, leaving an eternal impact of God's love on his or her life.

# **Welcome to First Pres Kids**

To all of our Children's Ministry Families, both old and new:

Welcome! Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. In the Bible, God says, "Children are a blessing and a gift from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). We believe this whole-heartedly.

Our ministry strives to do much more than just provide childcare to these precious little ones. We believe it is possible to share the love of Christ with a child from the day of his or her birth. We want to partner with you in teaching your child about God's amazing love, world, plan, and His Son, Jesus.

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce our staff, our ministry philosophy, programming, policies, and expectations. We pray that as you read this handbook it will be obvious that our goal is to glorify God. We will do this by working to instill the Word of God and a relationship with Jesus in the hearts and minds of children through loving and age-appropriate methods.

Please know that we consider it an honor and privilege to serve and support all of the families in our ministry. If we can help your family in any way, please let us know. We would love to meet with you and answer any questions you may have about our curriculum, our policies or just to sit and get to know each other better and pray.

Blessings,

Tina Jones, Karen King, Evelyn Penkert & Heather Tomlinson

# **In This Handbook:**

## **Philosophy**

**Page 4-6**

## **Check In Procedures**

**Page 7**

## **Wednesday Evenings**

**Page 8**

## **Sunday Mornings**

**Page 9**

## **Nursery Care**

**Page 10**

## **FPNS**

**Page 11**

## **Meet Our Staff**

**Page 12**

## **Discipline**

**Page 13**

## **Health Precautions**

**Page 14**

## **Security**

**Page 15**

## **Emergencies**

**Page 15**

## **Resources**

**Page 16**

## **Maps**

**Page 17-19**

# Philosophy

First Presbyterian Children's Ministry recognizes what a privilege it is to share God's love with the children of First Pres and their families. We strive to make Children's Ministry at First Presbyterian Church a place where our parents feel good about leaving their children. We feel that since you are entrusting your precious children with us we need to make the following commitments to you, our families.

## **We commit to teaching the Bible, God's Holy Word, in age appropriate ways.**

**Because the Bible says...** "Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Psalm 119:105

**We believe...** that these are the years that are most critical for reaching our children and hiding God's word in their hearts and minds.

**We do this by...** teaching Bible truths using a variety of engaging and age appropriate methods.

Setting realistic expectations for our children.

Teaching Bible concepts and encouraging children to memorize Bible verses.

Using worship, small group/large group times.

Communicating with parents.

## **We commit to equipping and encouraging parents as the primary faith leader in the lives of their children.**

**Because the Bible says...** "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:5-7

**We believe...** God intends for parents and primary caregivers to be the primary faith leaders in their children's lives.

**We do this by...** praying for our families.

Providing resources to help parents.

Offering family friendly events.

Offering parenting events and special speakers.

Encouraging parents to serve in Children's Ministry.

# Philosophy

**We commit to prepare volunteers to serve God through our ministry.**

**Because the Bible says...**“so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” 1 Thessalonians 2:8

**We believe...**servicing God by sharing His love and word with our children is both a privilege and a responsibility.

**We do this by...**having a growing relationship with Jesus and accepting our role as a spiritual leader and role model for children.

Attending professional development opportunities, reading books and articles, and keeping up with current trends in ministry.

Giving our volunteers training through various methods including conferences, web casts, articles, and shadowing opportunities.

Providing all curriculum, resources and supplies.

**We commit to providing a clean, safe and loving environment for all our children.**

**Because the Bible says...**“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23-24

**We believe...**a child’s perception of church, God and followers of Christ are determined by his earliest experiences at church.

**We do this by...**providing and maintaining a clean and safe area.

Having age-appropriate supplies and toys in each room.

Providing background checks and training for all volunteers. Maintaining proper ratios in each room and having at least 2 volunteers at all times.

Striving for consistency in each of our classrooms, especially with the preschoolers.



# Philosophy

**We commit to offering opportunities for families to connect, fellowship and experience spiritual growth within a community of faith.**

**Because the Bible says...**“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

**We believe...**God uses a community of faith to help families grow in their relationships with Jesus, family members and friends.

**We do this by...**providing opportunities for families to network, fellowship and get to know one another.

Connecting families who can mentor and support one another through specific life stages and/or issues (Infertility, miscarriages, pregnancy, blended families, special needs, terminal illnesses, developmental or emotional issues).

**We commit to glorifying God and sharing His love through missions and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**Because the Bible says...**“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28:19-20**

**We believe...**God calls all Christians, young and old, to share the gospel and to extend grace and care to all people.

**We do this by...**offering service opportunities for children and their families through VBS, and family missions, both local and away.

Providing resources for mission projects.

Teaching our children that they can tell others the good news of Jesus and how much He loves them, anywhere and anytime.

# Check In Procedure

There are three different check-in locations:

\*At the nursery suite entrance

\*Across from the nursery suite and

\*At the ground floor of the Children's Wing

Upon arrival, proceed to any of the above stations. Each kiosk should have a Check-In attendant who can assist if needed.

If you are new or just visiting, the Check-In attendant will enter your information into the computer (*which may take a few minutes.*)

If your family is already in the system enter the last 4 digits of your phone number and your family information should show up on the screen.

Select the children that are with you and click '**check-in**' at the bottom right corner of the screen.

## **Labels:**

**Nursery:** If you have a child in nursery, 4 labels will print. One to be placed on the back of your child, one is given to the Check-In attendant, one goes on their diaper bag, and the last one is to be kept by the parent/guardian picking up the child. Parents may take their child to the classroom door.

**Preschool:** Same as above except that a volunteer will take the child to their classroom.

## **Elementary:**

**Grades 1-2:** Three labels will print – one is to be placed on your child, one should be given to the check-in attendant, and one is for the parent/guardian picking up the child (*please give pick-up receipt label to attendant when picking up your child.*)

**Grades 3-5:** Students have permission to check themselves into the system Three labels will print – one is to be placed on your child, one should be given to the check-in attendant, and one is for the parent/guardian picking up the child (*please give pick-up receipt label to attendant when picking up your child.*)

\*\*Please note that labels are not only used for attendance but they are also used in emergencies. Children are to wear their nametags during the entire Sunday School hour. Swapping of nametags (which older elementary like to do) **is not permitted.**

\*Pickup: Return to the check- in area and an approved volunteer or staff member will assist you.

# Wednesday Evening Advantage

Nursery opens at 5:45pm and closes depending on when the last class ends.

**2/3's** are in room 215D of the nursery suite from 6:00-7:15pm.

They will have a story, craft and playtime.

**4/5's** participate in choir from 6:15-6:45 then Bible study from 6:45-7:15.

**1st/2nd grades** participate in Bible Study from 6:15-6:45 then choir from 6:45-7:15.

**3rd-5th grades** have Bible Study in room 318.

For more nursery through 2nd grade info contact Evelyn Penkert at  
**[epenkert@firstpresgreenville.org](mailto:epenkert@firstpresgreenville.org)**

For more 3rd through 5th grade Bible study info contact Karen King at  
**[kking@firstpresgreenville.org](mailto:kking@firstpresgreenville.org)**

Contact Allyson Southerland at [asoutherland@firstpresgreenville](mailto:asoutherland@firstpresgreenville) for more choir info.



# Sunday Mornings

## **8:30 am Service**

### **Nursery**

Nursery provided for children up to 4 years old but not yet in the preschool area.

Children will be taken to their correct rooms for the Sunday school hour.

### **Sunday School hour (9:30 am - 10:40 am)**

All preschool and elementary children may be checked in at the check in desks on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the Children's Wing.

Preschoolers-1<sup>st</sup> graders can be picked up at 10:30am to go to service with their parents, or are welcome to stay for Kids Church.

### **Kids Church 10:40-12:15**

This hour is offered only for those children in first grade and younger whose parents feel they are not ready to attend church. Kids Church ends after the last service. Music and a lesson will be taught and usually a small craft.

You may also prefer to have your younger children join the worship portion of the service with your family.

Nursery is open until the end of the last service.

# Nursery

## **When to bring your baby to church**

At First Presbyterian Church, we do not have an official policy as to when you can start bringing your baby to the nursery. Most parents wait until their children have gotten their first shots but it is totally up to the parent.

## **A few things you need to know...**

Our paid workers are CPR certified and have gone through a class on protection and emergency preparedness.

We have a 2 person rule, which means there must always be at least 1 adult over age 18 and another person over age 16 in a room when a child is present. All volunteers ages 16 and up are required to have a background check performed every three years and complete a Stewards of Children training to ensure the safety of both our volunteers and the children in our care.

Make sure your child's allergies are listed in our computer system.

Each time you bring your child, make sure you check in and print out your labels. Allergies will appear on the label.

Remember to bring bottles, diapers etc.

Label all of your belongings and make sure to write down any special instructions for your child.

Please try to feed your child before you bring them on Sunday. We do not mind giving bottles but sometimes it can be very difficult to feed a baby food/breakfast.

There is a room in 215B for nursing mothers.

Proverbs 22:6 says,

“Train up a child in the way he should go,  
even when he is old he will not depart from it”



## **FPNS & Summer @ 1st**

First Presbyterian's Nursery School Ministry is a registered program that serves parents of children ages three months through two years. Our goal is to help infants and toddlers feel happy and secure at church, feel good about themselves, and learn that God loves them. We provide opportunities for their spiritual, social, and developmental growth through play activities in a Christian environment.

### **Meet Our FPNS & Summer @1st Staff**



**Beth Plyler, Director of  
FPNS & Summer @ 1<sup>st</sup>**

Beth is married to Wes and they have four fun, crazy children: Counts, Reese, Elsie and Caelan. Beth & Wes have also been called as foster parents! She loves working with kids and loving on their families. She has a can-do personality, is a caring, approachable director, and feels incredibly blessed to be a part of this amazing team!



**Cami Lewis, Assistant Director of  
FPNS & Summer @ 1<sup>st</sup>**

Cami, originally from Indiana, has been married to her now retired Navy husband, Andy for 28 years, and has been stationed throughout the country. They moved to Greenville almost 9 years ago with their now adult daughters Cali and Caysi. Cami has been working with children the majority of her adult life, and considers it a blessing to be a part of the children's ministry program.

# Meet Our Children's Ministry Staff



## **Tina Jones, Children's Ministry Director**

Tina loves her position as "Our Fearless Leader", and when you are working with this crowd being fearless is a good thing! Tina is married to John and they are the parents to a mix of 7 biological and adopted children, 5 boys and 2 precious girls. On any given Sunday you will probably find Tina doing any number of things, helping in a classroom, participating in a skit or preparing for a Bible study. She is passionate about caring for the "least of these" and invites everyone to partner in our Foster and Adoption Ministry.



## **Karen King, Director of Elementary Education (1st-5th grade) & Family Missions**

Karen was born with Children's Ministry DNA! She has been serving children for more than 30 years. She is married to Rusty & they have 2 biological children and probably more than 50 other kids who know her as "Momma King". You can always recognize Karen on a Sunday morning by her voice. She has that Travelers Rest drawl and is always calling everyone "sweetheart" and "precious." Karen is our prayer warrior and feels it is an honor to pray for people.



## **Evelyn Penkert, Director of Early Childhood and Primary Education (Birth-5K)**

Evelyn loves children and babies! She is our resident baby whisperer, and if you are ever looking for her on Sunday morning a good place to start is the nursery. Evelyn is married to Rip and they are the parents to four adult children, and have started over with one adopted son. They also continue to welcome children into their home as foster parents, where they feel God has led their ministry. Evelyn loves the volunteers she serves with and feels blessed to work alongside such wonderful women on the CM team.



## **Heather Tomlinson, Children's Ministry Coordinator**

Heather joined the CM after working 5 years in FPNS. Heather is married to Graydon, our fantastic Ignite worship leader. They have three beautiful children; Mallie, Lincoln, and Tucker. She and Graydon decided that chaos was not enough, so they have also starting welcoming foster children into their family. Heather, who is a very organized and a detail oriented of person, definitely has her work cut out for her, especially working with Evelyn, the polar opposite. Our prayer is that Heather will not give up on us and will use her gifts to help us win the most "put together" ministry at First Pres.

# Discipline

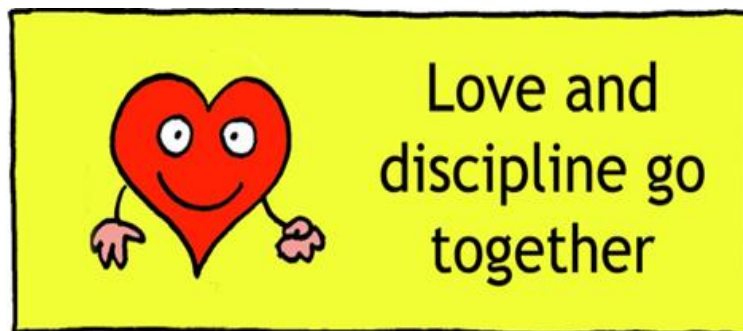
## Introduction:

Discipline provides a set of limits of acceptable behavior for the individual. For children, parents are the primary source for setting these limits. Adults working with children need to support parent's discipline. As children mature, the limits established become self-defined and self-enforced. Discipline's primary goal, therefore, is one of self-discipline.

As Christians, the Bible defines many limits clearly. Discipline helps people to live within biblical limits. God also disciplines us as we grow in Christ. If you have a special needs child that needs individual attention— please call or text Evelyn (787-8182), Karen (884-9824) or Tina (551-1101).

## Technique:

Corporal punishment is not to be used in the Sunday school setting. Frequent screaming or threatening with no follow-through is not effective. A "time out" or "thinking chair" might be helpful in assisting a child to control his or her own behavior. This is most effective when a teacher can quietly explain why the child is there. It is especially helpful if the child can tell the teacher why he/she is there. A rule of thumb for length of time in a "time out" chair is the number of minutes equivalent to the child's age.



# Health Precautions



In the event that your child is hurt while in our care the following procedures are in place:

- Parent will be notified if the teacher and/or CM team feel it is necessary.
- Report will be filled out and signed by volunteer who was in the room and the parent. A copy will be made for parent and CM file.

During Sunday School we do not regularly serve snacks but sometimes give out treats. All food products that we use have written on them that they are not made in a factory where peanuts are processed.

## Wellness Policy

If your child shows signs of feeling unwell before you arrive at church, please stay home! If you have any questions please read our policy below or call someone on the CM team.

We cannot administer medications.

**A child will not be admitted into Sunday school  
when any of the following exist:**

Fever\* - Vomiting or diarrhea - Common cold - Sore throat - Any unexplained rash - Runny noses with green or yellow discharge that does not look like allergies - Any symptom of the usual childhood diseases - Pink eye

**When dealing with these symptoms, most children would rather be at home resting. And most families would rather germs not be shared.**

**\*Your child should be fever free for 48 hours without fever-reducing medications**

## Security & Emergency Plan

Please understand that our biggest concern is for the safety of our children. We ask that you adhere to our policies.

Make sure you check your child in and that she/he has their nametag on.

In the nursery and preschool area, make sure you give the second label to the attendant.

To pick up your child in the nursery and preschool you need to have the pick-up label. Do not assume that the worker will know who you are and just give you a child. **We do this for the safety of your child.**

Make sure we have the correct cell phone number on the label so we can reach you if needed.

Please pick up your child immediately after the service or event is over. Please don't linger to chat, etc. By the time the service is over our volunteers are ready to go home or to attend church themselves.

Unless they are in high school or have been given permission by someone in Children's Ministry, siblings are not allowed to pick up in the nursery or preschool area.

Pre-school area. We ask that parents drop their children off at the desk and not walk their children back to their rooms. This helps to minimize all of the confusion and keeps the separation anxiety to a minimum.

If your child has a special need or requires extra help, we encourage you to contact the CM staff person over that area before you come. This way we can make sure we have someone on hand to help. Of course, your child is always welcome. We would love the opportunity to prepare for a smooth transition.

**Each room has a map by the door to show where to take the children in case of a fire. Church leadership and teachers are trained on what to do in case of an emergency.**



# Resources

Bibles we recommend for different ages:

The Jesus Storybook Bible (ages 4 & up), NIV Discoverer's Bible (1st and 2nd grades), and the Teen Study Bible for 3rd through 5th grades

