

Kid Connect Parent Handbook

Dear Parent,

Thank you for trusting us with your children.

Here at Kid Connect, we don't baby-sit your children on Sunday mornings. We're here to provide a safe and fun environment that will lead your child to follow Jesus. It's our honor to partner with you in this task. We operate with four core values:

1. Safe

We will provide a safe environment for children to enjoy. We want children to be safe and feel safe, and parents to rest assured that their child is well cared-for while they are in the weekend services. For this reason, we obtain background checks on every volunteer.

2. Fun

We want kids to have fun! Our desire is to see kids have such a good time they will be begging their parents to come back the next week. We believe creating this fun environment for kids will help children learn more about Jesus. We use games, crafts, props, and creative stories to communicate the message of Jesus.

3. Age Appropriate

We don't want to simply entertain children, and we're not here to babysit. We want children to learn about Jesus. The content of the kids' environments is geared towards a child's learning level, with specific lessons they can apply in their lives. Kids are wired to move and interact with their environment; therefore, Kid Connect environments are designed to help kids learn about Jesus through interaction. Lessons about Christ and the Bible will be age appropriate and will help them understand God's love and plan for their life.

4. Team

We believe that what happens at home is more important than what happens at church. Kid Connect is partnering with parents by providing resources, support, and encouragement as they lead their families from where they are to where God wants them to be (If you are interested in becoming a Kid Connect volunteer, please see Bryan Martinez).

Sincerely,

Bryan Martinez
Youth & Family Minister
Journey Church Staff

I. Kid Connect Environments

The following shows how kids are divided by age. (In the event a child is home schooled, we will place them according to the grade that they would be in if they were enrolled in public school.)

- Nursery - Infants - 2 year olds
- Ark Park (Pre-K) – Children 3 years old through 5 years old
- Lion’s Den – Elementary children who are in Kindergarten through 5th grade. The Lion’s Den environment features a large group teaching time and activities guided towards our kids joining Journey Student Ministries (Youth Group) when they reach 6th grade.

II. Child Registration and Check-In

1. Please take your child to the bathroom before checking them in. If you have a child that wears diapers or pull-ups, please change them into a clean diaper before taking them to Kid Connect. While we will take them to the restroom/change a dirty diaper if needed, it’s much easier for you to do it before the service begins.
2. If you are new to Journey, please fill out a registration card. We will escort you to the classroom and introduce you to a teacher.
3. Regular attendees do not need to fill out the registration card again. Simply check-in at the Check-In Desk and proceed to the classroom entrance. A volunteer will be at the entrance to welcome you to the classroom!

III. Entering the Classroom

1. If a diaper bag is left with your child, make sure that the diaper bag has a name tag on it. Please write your child's full name using a permanent marker on all bottles, pacifiers, diapers and/or cups that are left with them.
2. If your child is a crawling infant or a toddler, please inform our Nursery Volunteers of any allergies your child has.
3. Please do not send your child with toys, handheld games, etc. Our volunteers have worked hard to prepare for your children, and there are plenty of things to do in each class. You may send “comfort or security” toys to help children feel safe and secure (blankets, teddy bears, etc.)

IV. During the Service

In the event of an emergency, or should any of the staff need to contact you during the service, we will call/text you during the service.

If called out of a service, please make your way to the Check-In Desk, where a staff member or lead volunteer will meet you and escort you to your child's classroom.

V. Checking Out Children

1. Parents proceed to the door of the appropriate classroom.
2. Children will NOT be released to anyone other than the child's parents (Siblings are NOT allowed to pick up their younger brothers and sisters).
3. You may enter the classroom to pick up your child.

VI. Pro-Kid Kid Connect Policy: Children in the Service

The worship service at Journey Church is designed with middle school, high school, college students and adults in mind. We believe it is a great place for adults and students to worship and learn. Kid Connect, on the other hand, is solely designed with children in mind. Teams of committed volunteers work hard all week long to prepare to teach children some of life's most important truths. Because of this, **Children over three months old are to join the Kid Connect environments during Weekend Services.**

There are three primary reasons for this policy:

1. Content

The main service is designed for adults and teenagers. While there are teachings that relate to anyone, we do address things in an adult service that would not be relevant or appropriate for a child, such as sex, parenting, cultural issues, and finances. Most children are not ready to discuss these topics the way we're going to talk about them, and we don't want to do anything that would promote to children the idea that God is boring, church is irrelevant, or that Jesus is not for them.

Kid Connect is an environment designed completely with children in mind. The music, stories, crafts, small groups, and activities are designed to communicate God's truth in their language. The content of the Kid Connect environments is geared towards a child's learning level, with specific lessons they can apply in their lives.

2. Distractions.

Because what we're doing is so important, we want everyone in the main room to be able to focus on the message and participate in worship.

The focus of 1st Corinthians 14 is maintaining a sense of order in a public worship service. If a child attends an adult service with their parent, that parent will have to devote some of their attention on entertaining their child while simultaneously trying

to listen to the message. That is not ideal for anyone involved, whether it is the child, the parent or the distracted adult sitting behind them. If a parent is unsure of where they are leaving their kids, they may acquire a guest badge at the check-in area and be an observer in the kids' environments that day.

* Newborns under three months of age are permitted in the service.

3. Appropriate Environments.

Kids are wired to move and interact with their environment; therefore, Kid Connect environments are designed to help kids learn about Jesus through interaction. If a child grew up only attending a service where they were forced to sit still and the content was irrelevant to their life, then that child may grow up bitter towards the church. Allowing a child to interact in an environment designed for them, with age-appropriate content and fun, they could be dragging their parents to church, which is a win for all! They will learn about Jesus through stories, songs, games and crafts. Some of these things they will remember for life.

At Kid Connect, a loving adult will care for your child. Every volunteer who works with children goes through a screening process that involves a background check and training sessions. We believe that teaching them in ways that they can understand is keeping with the spirit of Jesus and the importance he placed on children.

We will do everything we can to help you be comfortable with what happens on Sunday morning, both in the adult service and in Kid Connect. We will be glad to:

- Give you a tour of any classroom or area
- Give you a guest badge and allow you to stay with your child
- Equip you to serve on a regular basis with Kid Connect.

We will do everything we can to help guests, new parents, and everyone else be comfortable with what happens on Sunday morning. Greeters and ushers will introduce parents to the Kid Connect volunteers. Parents can always obtain a guest badge and observe a child's class, or stay with them for the entire time. Parents are welcome to volunteer in any Kid Connect environment as well!

Our mission at Journey Church is to reach everyone in Cynthiana, KY with the message of Jesus. We want to offer adults a creative, relevant, engaging and appropriate service on Sunday mornings. And through Kid Connect, we want to offer that same type of experience.

VII. Security

In order to keep Kid Connect a safe and secure environment for parents and children, the following security measures are constantly in effect:

1. Only volunteers with the appropriate identification, parents with the appropriate documentation, or Journey Church Staff are allowed in the classrooms during service times.
2. **No adult is allowed to work in an environment without a completed application and background check.**
3. Guests in Kid Connect must check in at the Check-In station and receive a guest badge which must be displayed at all times.

VIII. Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers are required to fill out an application and background check authorization form. We run a background check on every volunteer who works with minors. Students must be in 6th grade or above to volunteer, and they are always under the supervision of an adult. Our volunteers also participate in regular training programs.

IX. Room Openings

For safety and liability reasons, classrooms will open 15 minutes prior to each service. Rooms cannot and will not be opened until the necessary volunteers are in place.

X. Parents in the Room

One of the primary values of Kid Connect is to provide a safe environment for children each week. You may choose to stay with your child during the service to observe the environment or comfort your child. Please check in as a guest and receive a guest name tag. You will not be allowed to be alone with, lead children in activities or small groups, or care for any other child except your own.

XI. General Wellness Guidelines

To ensure the health of children and volunteers, we ask that sick children do not attend Kid Connect Services. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child should not leave home when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever (over 100.4 degrees).
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough.

4. Common cold, including colored runny nose.
5. Sore throat.
6. Croup.
7. Any unexplained rash.
8. Any skin infection – boils, ringworm or impetigo.
9. Untreated pink eye or other eye infection.
10. Any communicable disease.
11. Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits.

These are the guidelines that we follow and we expect that a child or volunteer be free of fever for 24 hours before coming back to church. In the event of a contagious disease (lice, chicken pox, etc.) parents will be notified.

XII. Medication

Journey staff and volunteers WILL NOT administer any medication except in life threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and give it.

In a situation where a child has a potentially life-threatening condition and medication may need to be given, a Medication Authorization form should be completed and signed by the parent.

EACH time a parent drops off a child and his/her medication, clear directions must be written out BY THE PARENT outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed. The form is to be given directly to the Lead Teacher by the parent so the Lead Teacher can read the directions and ask for clarification if necessary. The signed form is to be turned in at Check-In for their records.

XIII. Accidents/Health Conditions

If a teacher encounters a life threatening situation (loss of consciousness, significant blood loss, difficulty breathing), they will immediately call 911 from a cell phone or the phone in the Journey office. Minor accidents (bumps, bites, bruises, scrapes, etc.) will be handled in the room and parents will receive an “Incident Report” when picking up their child.

XIV. Special Needs/Disabled Children

Special needs/disabled children are to be a part of the whole, not separated from the group. The child will be included in all activities offered. We will provide personal

attention and one-on-one care as needed.

XV. Disciplining Children

Kid Connect volunteers are always prepared and will be sensitive to children's needs. Volunteers will never use harsh words, sarcasm or corporal punishment. In the event that a child becomes disruptive, the parent will be notified. Children that bite or hit another child will be isolated from the other children. The Lead Teacher will discuss the situation with parents, but will not reveal the identity of the other child.

XVI. Crying Children

Crying children obviously need care and compassion. We will reassure the child that their parent will come back for them if necessary. We will contact you if **your child has been crying consistently for 10 minutes**. Parents that leave with children may return to the classroom when the child has stopped crying. In the event the same child is crying for 10 minutes or more, the parent will need to stay as a guest in that classroom for the remainder of the service.

XVII. Diapering Policies

Diapers will be checked each service. Parents should send appropriate sized diapers and pull-ups, and possibly a change of clothes. A child is never punished for toileting accidents. Until a child is fully potty trained, parents should send them in a clean diaper/pull-up.

XVII. Feeding

Please write down specific instructions regarding bottles or feeding at the class. Make sure all bottles, diaper bags and containers are labeled. Only adults are permitted to feed children.

XVIII. Bathroom Policies

We observe the following procedures when taking children to the bathroom.

1. A same gender adult should walk child to the bathroom.
2. Once the bathroom is clear, the adult volunteer will wait outside the bathroom door in the hallway with the door slightly open. If the child needs assistance, we will follow the "two adult rule."
3. We will help the child wash their hands and return to the class.

