

# UR Kids Guidelines and Policies



## Relationally Driven

We strongly believe in the impact of the relationships that are being built between our leaders and our kids as well as the relationships that are developing among the kids themselves. In fact, we would say relationships are one of the foundations of this ministry. Relationships can't be built without the weekly consistency of BOTH kids and leaders. We have challenged our Groupies leaders to a weekly commitment and we are asking families to do the same. This is especially important for our Groupies. Our elementary age ministry is built on a small group mentoring model that emphasizes the importance of the leaders' weekly contact with the kids in small groups as well as involvement in their lives. It is our hope that these leaders will provide a Christ-like example and encourage kids on this journey of faith. We hope that this will be a place where kids come every week... that the Upper Room is where they would find a consistent community. We trust that as we grow and live out our faith in Jesus together... as a community... we will have greater potential to advance the Kingdom.

## Family Focused

We view parents as the primary faith teachers, mentors, and role models for their own kids. At the same time we know that the journey of faith takes place within the context of community. We want to do all that we can to encourage and support kids and families on this journey. One way we do this is to create space for families to worship together. We see a huge value in this. Therefore, we will have many weeks when we incorporate the Groupies into the gathering as we are thinking of new ways for families to encounter God together. Another way we are offering support to families is through a weekly parent email. We hope this email will encourage parents and continue to help families enter into discussions and experiences that draw them closer to Jesus. Lastly, we are also excited to offer family focused experiences with the hope of connecting families and equipping parents on the journey of faith.

## Dreaming New Dreams

We are continuing to dream new dreams for UR Kids... this is the fun part. We are on the journey of discovering new ways to reach kids and equip parents. One way this plays out is that we do not use a "kid's curriculum." Instead, what parents are experiencing in the gathering is similar to what our kids will be experiencing in an age-appropriate way. We have seen that linking the curriculum and experiences gives families a "jumping off" point to connect with their kids spiritually throughout the week. Each week UR Kids will look a little different. Weekly parent emails serve as important communication tools so families know how each Sunday night experience will work. We are also excited to continue to dream big about how we challenge our UR Kids to think missionally. We are thrilled by the involvement of our kids in experiences like Flood Kids and neighborhood block parties. We are also thankful that our kids are connected to the lives of other people in places like the Congo and El Salvador. And through our UR Kids giving, we are financially contributing to our partnerships here in Minneapolis and overseas. We look forward to the future as we dream about new ways for kids to continue being a part of bringing God's Kingdom to this earth!

## Where does our kids' ministry curriculum come from?

Upper Room Kids has what we would call a non-traditional view of curriculum. Instead of relying on pre-written curriculum tailored toward a Sunday School model we create relationally driven curriculum that follows along with the series in the worship gathering. What parents experience in the gathering is similar to what our kids experience in an age-appropriate way. This also uniquely allows us to incorporate the UR Groupies into the gathering and participate in experiential elements with their parents. We believe there is huge value in providing families opportunities to worship together. We have also seen that linking the curriculum and experiences gives families a “jumping off” point to connect with each other spiritually throughout the week.

With that in mind, we know there are 2-3 series each year that might not be appropriate for kids... one example might be a series on the Song of Solomon. During these times the curriculum for UR Kids will come from a list of Core Topics that we believe kids should learn over and over again as they continue to grow in their knowledge and love for God. These Core Topics were determined by the UR Kids Staff and the UR Kids Development Team (a team that provided ideas and input and accountability for staying in line with the mission and values of UR Kids). These Core Topics fall in one of two categories: The Heart of Jesus and the Bigness of God.

# UR Kids Leadership...

## UR Kids Leadership Application Process

- Step One: Application/References (available online at [urminneapolis.org](http://urminneapolis.org))
- Step Two: Background Check (We require a criminal background check on all of our volunteers who work with kids. Background checks are valid for two years.)
- Step Three: Leadership Training

## UR Kids Leadership Teams

### Groupies (K - 5th grade) Leaders (weekly Sept. - June or for 9 wks in the summer)

- Mission: To develop loving and consistent relationships with kids as you model what it is to be a follower of Jesus
- Tasks: Shepherd a small group of 6-8 kids along with a co-leader; Lead a lesson and facilitate experiences based on the current UR Series

### Tots (2 year olds - Pre-K) Leaders (2 wks on/off rotation Sept. - June or for 9 wks in the summer)

- Mission: To develop loving and consistent relationships with kids as you model what it is to be a follower of Jesus
- Tasks: Spend time with a group of 3-5 year old kids and take part in leading a version of a lesson based on the current UR Series

### Babes (6 weeks - 23 months) Leaders (2 wks on/off rotation Sept. - June or for 9 wks in the summer)

- Mission: To provide an opportunity for parents to experience the worship gathering, knowing their little ones are in a safe place
- Tasks: Care for and nurture the littlest members of our community: holding, rocking, playing with them, and praying for them

### Leaders for UR Kids with Special Needs (2 wks on/off rotation Sept. - June or for 9 wks in the summer)

- Mission: To provide an opportunity for kids with varying levels of need to participate in UR Kids each Sunday
- Tasks: Spend time with kids as a one-to-one leader; Provide encouragement and support for participation in group settings; Adapt UR Kids activities, lessons, and experiences to nurture an environment that fully integrates kids with special needs

## Junior Leaders

We have a limited number of spots on our Tots and Groupies Leadership Teams for Junior Leaders. Tots Junior Leaders are students entering 6th-8th grade in the fall of 2011. Groupies Junior Leaders are students entering 7th-10th grade in the fall of 2011. In addition to the application process, Junior Leaders must also complete the Babysitter's Training Course available through the American Red Cross. For more details visit: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). Click on "Take a Class".

# Policies and Procedures...

## Safety and Security

Safety is our number one concern in working with kids.

- Our drop-off and pick-up process is very important. Babes and Tots will need the appropriate sticker. Groupies will need a hand stamp. Parents will not be able to pick up kids until they have been properly signed out. Children will only be released to properly identified and pre-authorized adults.
- With Babes and Tots... Each ticket stub lists a number. If a child is inconsolable after 10 minutes we will page parents by posting a child's number on the screens in the sanctuary. Parents will still need to present a ticket stub to pick up a child.
- For the safety of all kids, we must adhere to proper ratios: UR Babes (Infant 1:3 / Waddler 1:4); UR Tots (2 year olds 1:6 / Preschool 1:8). Note: There will always be two adults present.
- Supervision will be maintained before, throughout, and after all events until kids are in the custody of parents.

## Volunteer Screening

All of our volunteers have been through an application and background check screening process. UR Kids volunteers can be identified by an orange lanyard/name tag.

## Policy for Well Children

We understand there is no such thing as a germ-free environment. But we do believe that we can take some active steps in slowing down the spread of germs and preventing children from contracting an illness. It is our intention to protect all children from harm while they are in our care. This includes protection from sick children, sick adults, or dirty surfaces or toys.

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be taken from the home when any of the following conditions exist:

- Fever (we ask that kids are fever free for 24 hours)
- Vomiting or Diarrhea (even associated with teething and medication)
- Common Cold from onset through one week
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Fifth Disease
- Any unexplained rash
- Pink eye or other eye infections (All eye infections are contagious. We ask that children be on medication for 24 hours and not exhibiting any symptoms.)
- Cloudy or green runny noses
- Persistent cough
- Any communicable disease
- Any symptoms of childhood diseases, such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, cough, strep throat, flu, etc or other infectious or contagious disease

When in doubt, we ask parents and leaders to please apply the "Golden Rule". Adherence to this policy is important to protect the health of all children.

# Policies and Procedures Continued...

## Allergy Awareness

- Due to the increase of allergy concerns, we ask that NO FOOD be brought into our kids' rooms. Please note, while NO FOOD is our policy, different groups will be using the building as well.
- Bottles with formula or milk are allowed for infants. Sippy cups are allowed in the Babes rooms but may ONLY be filled with water. Please also note kids are not allowed to walk around with sippy cups.

## Abuse Prevention Policy

It is the desire of UR Kids to create an environment that is safe and secure for all children. We are prepared to take an active role in recognizing and reporting possible signs of child abuse if we should encounter them. According to Minnesota Statue 626.556 UR Kids staff members are mandated to report if we have reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused.

The first person who observes the suspected abuse or sign of abuse will contact the Director of UR Kids who will then contact the Associate Pastor. Details of the suspected abuse must only be shared with these people. Information about suspected abuse should be kept confidential.

## Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

Sexual Abuse includes any contact or interaction between a child and another person in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator and/or any additional person. This contact or interaction can include rape, molestation, forcing a child to look at or fondle the sexual parts of another person, and exploitation of a child through pornography and prostitution. Individuals who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse are not allowed to serve as a volunteer with UR Kids.

Expectations and Guidelines:

1. Adult volunteers should observe the "two person rule." This requires that volunteers are never alone or secluded with children without at least one other adult present. If a volunteer and child are left alone, the volunteer should move to an area of public view, such as doorway or hallway.
2. All classroom doors must remain open (or glass windows uncovered) during UR Kids or kids related activities - unless there are 2 volunteers present. There will always be a minimum of two leaders present in our Babes and Tots rooms.
3. The only exception to the guidelines listed above is that leaders who work with kids with special needs often work one-on-one with a child. If doors are closed - windows will remain uncovered.
4. Restroom Policy - See page 7

## Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Contact (with children):

- An arm around the shoulder (side hugs)
- Walking hand-in-hand
- Hand shakes and high fives and pats on the back/shoulder
- Holding/ cuddling/ rocking infants
- Female leaders may hold kids (4 and under) in their laps; Male leaders 3 and under

Never:

- Touch a child in anger or disgust
- Touch a child in a manner that may be sexually suggestive
- Touch a child between the belly button and mid-thigh (with the exception of changing diapers)
- Touch a child's private parts (with the exception of changing diapers)
- Initiate hugs or any other form of physical affection
- Carry a child over the age of 3

# Policies and Procedures Continued...

## Male Volunteer Expectations

Unfortunately, in this day and age, we have to be extra cautious when it comes to caring for children. We feel an extra burden to make sure our male leaders and children are protected so that they can serve our families. Therefore, please be aware of these additional guidelines:

- Do not kiss children
- Do not let children over the age of 3 sit on your lap
- Do not take children to the restroom

## Restroom Policy

For the protection of children and our volunteers, we follow these procedures when taking children to the restroom:

- Volunteers are never allowed in the bathroom alone with an elementary aged child. Elementary-aged kids must use the bathroom independently.
- If children pre-school and younger or kids with special needs require assistance, a female leader will accompany them to the restroom. The top half of the restroom door will remain open.
- Volunteers will assist children with their clothing in the open doorway before they enter the bathroom and after they exit. Children are encouraged to do as much of this for themselves as possible.
- If an emergency situation occurs where a child is sick or needs assistance, volunteers will prop open the bathroom door and ask another volunteer for assistance.

## Hand Washing Policy

Hands should be washed:

- Before and after eating - remember the NO FOOD policy
- Before and after changing diapers
- After helping a child in the bathroom
- After wiping and blowing noses

## Diaper Changing Policy

It is important to follow these procedures to eliminate the spread of infectious diseases. Each child's health and safety is our ultimate priority.

- There will always be two leaders present or the top half of the restroom door open when diapers are changed.
- Diapers will be changed on a changing table.
- Volunteers will wash their hands and use disposable gloves and a disposable changing pad when changing diapers.
- After diapers are changed, volunteers will place the "I've Been Changed" sticker next to the child's nametag.
- Also after diapers are changed, volunteers will dispose of the changing pad, wipe down changing area with a Clorox wipe, and wash hands.
- Trash cans will be emptied after the gathering and wiped down with Clorox Wipes.

# Policies and Procedures Continued...

## Cleaning Policies

- All surfaces and toys in the Babes and Tots rooms will be disinfected at the end of every use period.
- Linens and blankets and burp clothes used in the nursery will be washed prior to being used again.
- In the case of a bathroom accidents - children's dirty clothing will be returned to parents in plastic bags.
- All volunteers must use caution when exposed to children's blood or bodily fluids. Latex gloves must be used in these situations. Hands must be immediately washed with disinfectant soap.

## Incident Reports

In the case that any accident (minor or serious) should occur - volunteers will fill out an Incident Report form. A copy will be given to parents and a copy will be kept for our records as well.

## Emergency Response

The following procedures should be followed during emergency situations:

In case of fire:

- Follow evacuation instructions next to each classroom exit
- Count children - bring attendance sheet to verify the children in attendance
- Volunteer leads children to nearest accessible fire exit
- Children who can walk form a train by placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them to prevent straggling or panic
- Children who cannot walk should be carried or placed in the the pack-n-play
- In case of smoke - enforce the "GI Joe" crawl to exit
- A second leader should be last in line
- Once outside - count children. Stay with children until notified.
- Kids staff are the last to leave the building - calling aloud; checking rooms for lost/hidden children

In case of tornado:

- Follow tornado plan instructions next to each classroom exit
- Count children - bring attendance sheet to verify the children in attendance
- Volunteer leads children to designated room (s)
  - Room 2 (purple room) moves to Room 3
  - Room 4 (red room) moves to Room 5
  - Room 6 (teal room) moves to Room 7 (Resource Room)
  - K - 1st Grade Groupies move underneath South stairwell
  - 2nd-5th Grade Groupies move to Rooms 8 and 9
- Children who can walk form a train by placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them to prevent straggling or panic
- A second leader should be last in line
- Once inside the designated room - count children. Stay with children until notified.

## Frequently Asked Questions...

### **How do we engage kids in the gathering?**

We feel like we are just scratching the surface on this. It has been so exciting to dream of ways our kids can be a part of corporate worship. Each week looks a little different. Some weeks the UR Groupies will begin in the gathering as they worship with their parents. Other weeks the Groupies might participate in the experiential with their leaders or with their parents. On weeks we serve communion kids are able to participate with their families and receive communion or receive a special prayer of blessing from the communion server.

### **Are we doing anything for kids with special needs?**

We are! The needs of each child will determine how this will look. We have a group of leaders who spend time with kids as a one-to-one leader. These leaders provide encouragement and support in group settings and also adapt UR Kids activities, lessons, and experiences to nurture an environment that integrates kids with special needs

### **How are leaders selected?**

We want to provide our kids with a safe and secure environment. Each person interested in serving as a UR Kids leader is required to complete an application. Each applicant is also required to fill out an online form that authorizes Upper Room to run a background check. Once these two steps are completed, leaders participate in a Leadership Training Meeting where we review our policies and procedures.

### **What are the marking moments or milestones UR Kids will experience?**

At this point in time there are two. The first is infant baptism or dedication. Whether you opt for infant baptism or baby dedication, it is our heartfelt desire to support you as you nurture your child's spiritual development. The second is graduation from UR Kids at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Our kids are presented with a Bible and have an opportunity to share with our community how God has been at work in their lives.

### **Will Upper Room offer midweek programming for kids?**

At this time, we have made a strategic decision to direct our time and energy toward relational initiatives. We don't believe kids will grow in their faith, be transformed, or fall in love with Jesus simply through attending a program. We understand these things to happen through relationships. So with that thought in mind, we believe the most important "program" is parents and kids together on a journey of faith. In this next chapter, we are excited to grow in our ability to equip parents as the primary spiritual role models for their kids.

## Leader Statement...

As leaders in our community we humbly aspire to authentically model the heart and lifestyle of Jesus - a life of faith we're calling others to. We recognize that all of us are fragile, broken people on a journey together, completely dependent on God's grace. None of us have ever "arrived" (or will this side of heaven). We are in the process of being transformed - growing in love for God and others through the power of the Holy Spirit. And so we would ask you as a leader to aspire to both external behaviors like self-control, purity and gracious speech and internal heart qualities like humility, servant-hood and patience. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but just some examples of what we mean when we talk about a godly lifestyle. Recognizing that as leaders we are in positions of influence, our expectation is that our leadership builds up others and does not cause them to stumble. More than anything we desire love to be our highest goal. In our brokenness, we recognize that we all have blind spots and will fall short of this ideal. Additionally, none of us can see or judge the heart of another. All we can do is try to prayerfully encourage each other in this endeavor to be godly leaders. Part of being leaders in community is being able to check in with each other in a safe environment without being legalistic; to accept responsibility for our actions in ways that are transformative. Therefore, we as leaders invite others to lovingly and honestly speak into our lives when they feel it is appropriate. We commit to prayerfully leading examined lives and responding as we feel prompted by the Holy Spirit.

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(detach here...)

UR Kids Guidelines and Policies has been prepared for your understanding of the policies, procedures, and philosophies of UR Kids. Please read it carefully.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read a copy of UR Kids Guidelines and Policies which outlines the policies, procedures, and philosophies of UR Kids, as well as my responsibilities as a leader.

By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept and agree to comply with the information contained in this packet. I understand UR Kids Guidelines and Policies is not intended to cover every situation which may arise during my leadership, but is simply a general guide to the policies, procedures, and philosophies of UR Kids.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Leader signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)