

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY MANUAL

Important Policies and Procedures for All Children's Ministry Workers

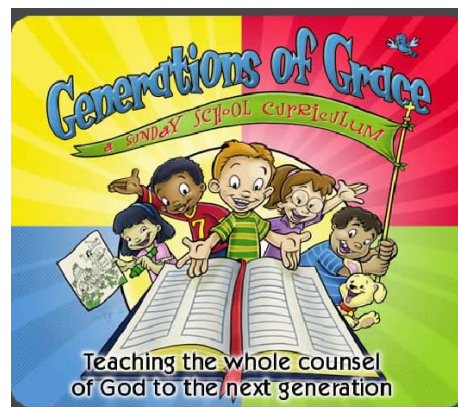


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I. Introduction:

It is an honor and a pleasure to welcome you to the Children's Ministry (CM) at E-Free. We appreciate your dedication to serve the Lord by serving His children.

At E-Free, we see the CM as a vital asset to the growth and function of our church. We believe it is everyone's responsibility to disciple someone in some way. The CM is about developing disciples. Whether the chance is in the nursery or in the elementary, we strive to honor God in developing disciples.

As you will see, there are many facets to the ministry at E-Free and we hope they do not overwhelm you. Whether your role is a helper, teacher, coordinator or CM Team Leader, you will find that your function within the ministry is important to the spiritual growth of the children.

Although the ministry is a significant undertaking, it is rewarding, challenging and fun. Please take the time to know fellow ministers within your area of ministry and strive to be a blessing to them. We encourage you to connect with the families in your area of ministry.

No one person has all of the knowledge needed to be able to develop, teach and administrate a children's ministry program. So, we covet your ideas and suggestions. Although there are some things that we will not be able to change, there are many areas where we can make enhancements.

Thank you for ministering with us. You have accepted a high calling with profound consequences in the hearts and lives of the families of E-Free!

II. Philosophy of Ministry:

Our primary goal and vision statement for CM is *Taking the Heart of the Gospel to the Heart of the Child One Week at a Time*. We approach this vision in a deliberate manner channeling theology into the hearts and minds of our children through:

- **Biblical Theology**- a focus on the storyline of God's plan for His people as it unfolds in each book of the Bible (Generations of Grace)
- **Systematic Theology**- a focus on teaching the big ideas of Biblical doctrine (Praise Factory, HeartShapers)
- **Topical Theology**- a focus on certain truths that lead to practical life application and a better understanding of the entirety of God's Word (AWANA)

Our goal is to glorify God by:

- Introducing children to the God of their world
- Teaching them about Jesus, the One who died for them
- Loving the children
- Training them to serve Him
- Demonstrating to them the relevancy of the Bible
- Aiding them in making wise decisions
- Providing a safe and secure environment for the children
- Offering avenues of service for members of the church
- Adequately training those who volunteer to serve

III. Ministry Snapshots:

Nursery: We have designed our nursery department so that families with young children may feel that they may worship or minister with the understanding that their infant or toddler is well nurtured. There are two areas: 1) newborn babies and crawlers, and 2) toddlers and walkers.

Preschool: We offer two classes for our preschool children during the Sunday school time and the late worship service. The first class (Toddlers) is for 2 - 3 year olds. The class is designed to not only teach the Bible to the children, but also to begin teach them general classroom behavior and discipline in sitting through a lesson.

The second class (Preschool) is for 3 - 5 year olds. We intentionally use the curriculum to teach the fundamentals of the Bible systematically so that the children will remember these fundamentals. Heart Shapers is our current curriculum for preschool.

Elementary: Our Elementary Sunday school curriculum is Generations of Grace, which is a curriculum that takes the children through the Bible in three years. There are three different levels of the curriculum to address the learning abilities of the children: Kindergarten (early childhood), 1st-3rd grade (early elementary), and 4-6th grade (junior).

For children's church, we offer Praise Factory. Praise Factory systematically teaches the attributes of the Bible to the children in sections called Big Ideas. Each Big Idea lasts three weeks and outlines the attributes of God and His world to the children.

AWANA: AWANA meets on Wednesday nights during the school year from 6:30 - 8:00pm. We have clubs designed for children Pre-K through 5th grade. AWANA focuses on Bible memorization and application in each child's life.

Special Events: Each Wednesday night there is AWANA with a dinner prior to the event. The cost is \$3.50/person. The Church also has special events throughout the year to include VBS, Children's choirs or musicals during Christmas or Easter.

IV. General Policies:

Confidentiality:

We understand that the information gathered by the ministry staff and/or the CM Team Leader can be sensitive in nature. Thus, we regard the information as private and confidential. This information will not be shared with any other ministry within the church or with any other entity outside of the church unless required by law.

Definitions:

Abuse: is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody, and control.

Adult: is anyone 18 or older and out of high school.

Background check: is a resource used to determine the criminal history of potential volunteers, ministry staff or compensated workers within the Children's Ministry.

Child: is anyone from newborn to 5th grade.

Compensated worker: is a person who is paid to watch children for different activities within the Children's Ministry.

Ministry staff: is a person or persons who are hired as pastors or directors of ministry within the church. The staff position does not include those people who are paid as administrative aids, clerical help or who are not hired specifically for the work of the ministry.

Neglect: is the failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, nutrition, medical care or any other care necessary for the child's well-being.

Volunteer: is an adult who has volunteered his/her services and talents to further God's will in the children's ministry at E-Free.

Youth volunteer: is a person in middle school, Jr. High or Sr. High who has volunteered his/her services and talents to further God's will in the children's ministry at E-Free.

Application Procedures:

Pre-requisites:

All volunteers and compensated workers must:

- profess Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- complete the application process, which includes filling-out the application form, taking part in the necessary interviews, and submitting to reference and background checks.
- regularly attend the church for six straight months prior to the application process.

Application Process:

1. All volunteers for CM, youth or adult, must complete an application form.
2. A member of the ministry staff or the CM Team Leader is responsible for reviewing the application prior to the interview. The church leader must interview the applicant in person prior to the person serving in the CM. Written notes must be taken of the interview and kept with the applicant's folder.
3. The person who performs the interview will contact the references before the volunteer begins service in CM. Written notes must be taken and kept with the applicant's folder.
4. The Church will perform background checks on all volunteers ages 16 and older.
5. All documents within the applicant's folder will be kept confidential and locked in a cabinet in the Church's office.
6. If a person desires to be a leader within the CM (i.e. Coordinator or CM Team Leader), the volunteer must be a member of the church.
7. All youth volunteers must be at least in the 6th grade and 12 years old. The youth volunteers must have the parent(s) sign the application signifying that they allow their child to work within the CM. All youth workers must be at least 5 years older than the children they serve and will be accompanied by an adult leader.

CM Training and Supervision of Workers:

Training:

E-Free provides training in the various children's programs offered at the church. General dates for the typical training are the second and third weeks of January and the second and third weeks of August. However, these dates are subject to change based on the need of the CM.

Training is mandatory for any paid and volunteer staff during the first year of service. A member of the Ministry staff and/or the CM Team Leader is responsible to plan and organize the training sessions.

Supervision:

For the protection of the students and the teacher, the preference is to have two, unrelated adults within a class at any given time. However, there are times when

only one teacher may be present. If this happens, the door to the classroom will be left open. Periodically, the Coordinators will monitor the classrooms for safety and precautionary measures.

Each room in which an adult will teach a child within CM will have a window in the door. If there is no window in the door, the workers will leave the door open.

If an issue arises regarding one of the CM workers, and it is not an issue of abuse, the Coordinator and/or CM Team leader and a member of the ministry staff will meet to discuss the situation. If the matter is procedural, they will appropriately deal with the situation. If the matter is a conflict between Christians, then one of the leaders will ask the offended party to work out the situation per Matthew 18:15-17.

If the issue is a matter of abuse, the leaders will follow the directives under the "Reporting Abuse" section.

Illness:

Children:

We realize that no one wants their children to miss out on meeting together as a body each Sunday, but we all recognize that we must be considerate of the other children in our classes. The guidelines below will help you determine whether or not to bring your child to class when he or she has been ill. Children will usually recuperate sooner at home, and this also will prevent the "sharing" of their illnesses with others.

Stomachache/Vomiting/Diarrhea:

Please keep your child at home:

- if your child has a stomachache which lasts longer than 4 hours or is severe enough to limit activity.
- for 24 hours after vomiting and fever (if present), and until your child can keep food down.
- for at least 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

Fever:

- Please keep your child at home until he or she has been free of fever for 24 hours.

Rash:

- A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses, such as chicken pox. Please do not bring a child with a rash to class until your doctor has said that it is safe to do so.

Common Cold:

- A cold presents the most frequent problem to parents. A child with a "heavy" cold and hacking cough should be kept at home, even when there is no fever.

Sore Throat:

- Please keep your child at home if back of throat looks red and/or if white spots are present; if child has swollen glands; if fever is present.

Workers:

We expect the workers to use sound judgment when illness may keep them from their duties. Thus, we request that each worker immediately contact the appropriate coordinator if illness precludes any involvement in CM activities.

Visitors:

As a children's ministry, we would like each visitor to know our goals, values and scope of our ministry. We encourage each teacher, then, to be proactive in giving each visiting family the CM brochure. The brochure provides the family with comprehensive information about the CM at E-Free.

Because a new environment may be challenging to children of visiting families, parents are allowed to observe their child in any class. However, if parents desire to observe for more than 2 weeks, they must complete the Application for CM and receive permission from ministry staff or the CM Team Leader.

V. Child Safety**Signed Waiver and Background Checks:**

Each potential volunteer is required to sign a release form, which signifies that the volunteer

- understands a background check will be performed on him/her.
- has read and understands the Policies and Procedures established at E-Free.
- is clear that E-Free will exercise its right to allow or disallow a potential volunteer from serving within the Children's Ministry at E-Free.
- agrees to keep E-Free out of any claim or lawsuit involving alleged wrong doing while a worker or volunteer within E-Free's Children's Ministry.
- has disclosed any information necessary to ascertain the person's fitness as a worker within the Children's Ministry Department.

Prior to allowing any volunteer the opportunity to serve at E-Free, the CM will perform a background check on each volunteer. Once the background check is complete, a member of the ministry staff or the CM Team Leader will notify the potential volunteer of the results. No potential volunteer who has been convicted of any child abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct is eligible to minister within the CM of the Evangelical Free Church of Columbia.

If leadership discovers that a CM worker has been convicted of child abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct after the worker is engaged in the ministry within the CM

department, leadership will work expediently to see the worker removed from any responsibilities within the CM. Those who have been convicted of child abuse, neglect or any sexual misconduct can be forgiven for and cleansed from sin. However, sin still has consequences. While they may prove valuable servants elsewhere in the ministry, they are prohibited from serving in the CM at E-Free.

Emergency Routes:

Fire:

Emergency Routes are clearly marked by the doorway of each room. The color red highlights the route for an exit during a fire. The solid line is the primary route. If this route is blocked, the secondary route(s) are dashed lines. Each teacher is responsible for his/her class and should check to ensure that all children are with him after everyone is safely away from the building.

Tornado:

The color blue delineates the area in which to meet for a tornado. Everyone should line up against the walls of the room or hall, crouched against the walls with your hands over your heads. Again, each teacher is accountable to maintain a count of his/her class.

At any time, if a child is missing, immediately notify the leadership.

Incidents - Minor/Major:

An incident is situation that occurs during a CM activity where someone is injured, property is damaged or stolen, or loud, verbal confrontations are made.

For any incident, a leader will complete the incident report found in the appendices. All incidents where a worker completed a report must be relayed to the parent of the involved child(ren) by the teacher or leader of that class. The CM Team Leader and/or a member of the ministry staff must review and sign the incident report.

We consider these reports confidential. We will keep the reports in a locked drawer within the Church Office, and access to this drawer will be limited to a member of the ministry staff and the CM Team Leader. A copy of the report will be automatically mailed to the parent/guardian within 5 business days of the incident.

Reporting Abuse

At no time will the pastors, elders, staff or ministry personnel at the Evangelical Free Church of Columbia condone the abuse or neglect of children within our ministry.

If abuse or neglect is reported from within the ministry at E-Free, a leader will complete an incident report form. The CM Team Leader and a member of the ministry staff will immediately gather all facts to confirm that the allegation of abuse or neglect fits the appropriate definition. If the leaders can immediately determine that the allegation minimally falls within the definition, then the CM worker will be immediately suspended from his/her duties while the investigation is completed.

The Ministry Staff and the CM Team Leader will perform a more thorough investigation of the matter. The investigation could include, but is not limited to, discussing the matter with the CM worker(s) directly involved and with witnesses of the alleged incident and discussing the matter with the child(ren) involved. Once the investigation is completed, the two leaders will make their recommendations before the Elder board. The Elder Board will make the final decision of resolution for the allegation, and will make a report, if warranted, to the Division of Family Services per RSMo 210.115.

By statute (RSMo 210.115), any person with “the responsibility of the care of children” is responsible to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Division of Family Services. If any CM worker suspects that any child has been abused or neglected, the worker will give this information to the member of the ministry staff or the CM Team Leader, who will immediately confer with the Elder Board in order to make the appropriate report to the Division.

If the offending party is a member of E-Free, the Elder Board may decide to bring the matter before the congregation in order to institute church discipline. We remind each worker that church discipline is not meant to ostracize any member of our congregation. Instead, Jesus instituted church discipline to bring the offending brother or sister back into fellowship with God and with E-Free (Matthew 18:15 - 17).

VI. Resources

Resource cabinets are located in the hallway outside Room 38. All worship find there all necessary supplies for their classes. If a particular item is used up or is close to being used up, please write that item on the clipboard hanging on the wall in the resource room. If you need an item that is not normally part of the resource room, you may purchase the item and submit a form for reimbursement.

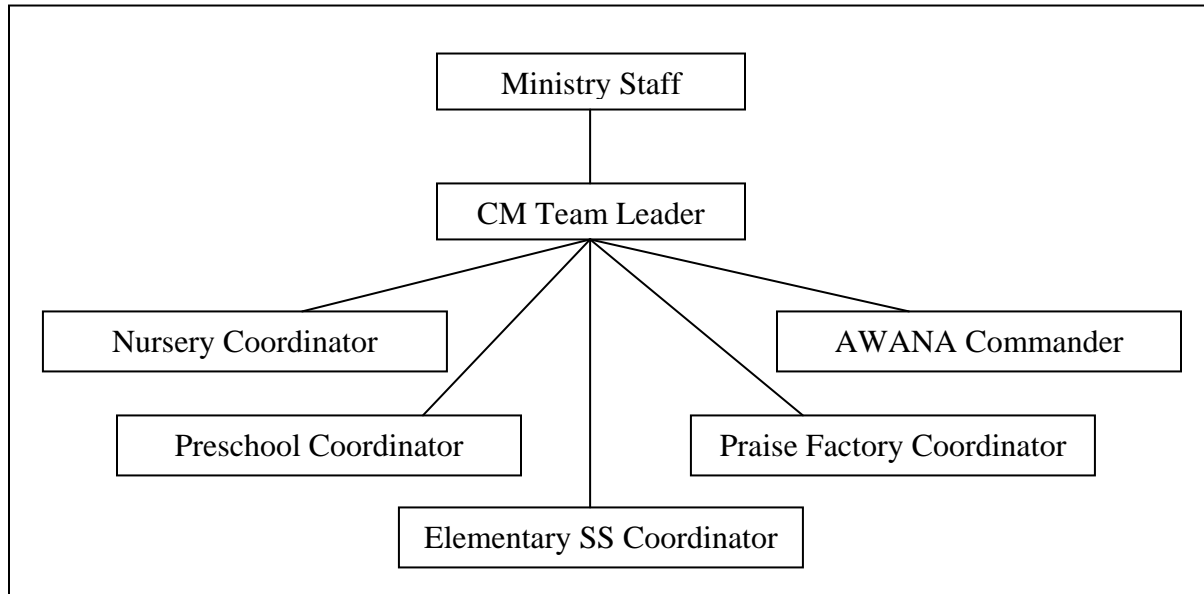
Note: per E-Free’s By-Laws, the CM Team Leader must pre-approve all purchases over \$50.

As a courtesy to others, we ask that you return all unused materials back to the Resource Room to the correct basket or container, and leave the room in the same or better condition than it was prior to your use. Further, do not allow your students to go into the room to gather supplies!

VII. Appendices

- Children’s Ministry Team
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Children's Ministry Team:



Ministry Staff: This position is one or more personnel from the ministry staff that helps to provide direction for the Children's Ministry

CM Team Leader: This position is a member the Church Board and is responsible for the recruiting and training of individuals who devote themselves to the CM at E-Free. The Team Leader is also responsible for the CM's budget and authorizes expenditures as allocated within the budget.

Nursery Coordinator: The Nursery Coordinator is responsible for the recruiting, training and scheduling of nursery workers for all of the normal church services.

Preschool SS Coordinator: The preschool Sunday School coordinator is responsible for scheduling teachers for the program during the Sunday School hour, training them when necessary, and maintaining a substitute teacher list. The Sunday School coordinator and the Praise Factory Jr. coordinator should work together so that the transition between the two hours is consistent each week.

Praise Factory Jr. Coordinator: The PF Jr. Coordinator is responsible for recruiting adults and teens for the program, training them when necessary, putting together the curriculum folder, and scheduling the teachers/helpers for the church hour.

Elementary SS Coordinator: The Elementary SS Coordinator is responsible for recruiting teachers, maintaining a schedule and substitute list, and taking care of the

curriculum as it comes in. The ideal person should have a servant's heart, a love for children, an eye for detail, and good communication abilities.

Praise Factory Coordinator: The PF Coordinator is responsible for recruiting teachers for the PF program, training teachers when necessary and maintaining the schedule and substitute list for PF. The ideal person is someone with a servant's heart, a love for children, an eye for detail, and good communication abilities.

AWANA Commander: The Commander is responsible to recruit and train directors for the AWANA program in its entirety and assist the directors in recruiting for needs within each club. Along with the directors, the Commander will establish the schedule, agenda and goals for each year.

Evangelical Free Church of Columbia
Application Form for Children's Ministry

All applicants for volunteer or compensated positions within the Children's Ministry at E-Free must complete this application form. Failure to complete this form voids your availability for service within the Children's Ministry at E-Free.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date: _____ Name _____
Last First Middle Initial

Present Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone # _____ Cell Phone # _____ DOB _____ SSN _____

Please attach a copy of state driver's license or other photographic identification.

Occupation _____ Employer _____ Work Phone # _____

Marital Status _____ Spouse's Name _____

Children's Name(s) and age(s) _____

Which position(s) interest you? _____

Where are you currently serving in Children's Ministry? Please check all that apply:

____ Nursery ____ SS ____ Praise Factory/Jr. ____ AWANA ____ Youth ____ Childcare ____ Other (please specify) _____

What gifts/abilities do you have that would benefit the CM at E-Free? _____

List any training/education that has prepared you for the CM: _____

How long have you attended E-Free? _____

List other churches (Name and City) you have attended regularly or were a member of during the past five years:

Briefly describe your relationship with Christ, and how your faith influences your daily life: _____

Yes

No

Have you or your spouse ever been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or arrested for child neglect, child abuse, or any sexual misconduct? If yes, please explain.

Do you have any health conditions that may affect how you minister to children? If yes, please explain.

Is there anything existing in your lifestyle or a situation in your past that would important for us to know? If yes, please explain:

Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor? (Optional)

PRIOR CHILDREN’S/YOUTH WORK

List all previous church work involving children or youth for the last five years. Then list non-church work involving children or youth. Use back of form if you need additional space.

Name (Church or Organization)	Address	Type of Work Performed	Dates
1)			
2)			
3)			

Personal References (Not former employers or relatives) List 2 references

Name	Address	Phone#
1)		
2)		

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children’s ministry at E-Free. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by the Evangelical Free Church of Columbia, I hereby release any individual, church, organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability and/or negligence for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. E-Free considers any information obtained as strictly confidential and will not share or disclose this information with any person or entity unless required by law.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Printed Name _____ Date _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

Permission to Obtain a Background Check

*(This form authorizes the church to obtain background information and must be completed by the applicant.
The church must keep this completed form on file for at least five years after requesting a background check.)*

I, the undersigned applicant (also known as “consumer”), authorize _____ through its independent contractor, LexisNexis, to procure background information (also known as a “consumer report and/or investigative consumer report”) about me. This report may include my driving history, including any traffic citations; a social security number verification; present and former addresses; criminal and civil history/records; and the state sex offender records.

I understand that I am entitled to a complete copy of any background information report of which I am the subject upon my request to _____, if such is made within a reasonable time from the date it was produced. I also understand that I may receive a written summary of my rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Identifying Information for Background Information Agency (also known as “Consumer Reporting Agency”)

Print Name: _____

First

Middle

Last

Other Names Used (alias, maiden, nickname): _____

Current Address: _____

Street /P. O. Box City State Zip Code County

Dates

Former Address: _____

Street /P. O. Box City State Zip Code County

Dates

Social Security Number: _____ Home Telephone Number: _____

Driver’s License Number: _____ State of Issuance: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Gender _____

CHILDREN AT RISK VOLUNTEER RELEASE FORM:

By signing below, I understand the following to be true:

1. I volunteer to serve in the Children/Youth Ministry Department of the Evangelical Free Church of Columbia (hereafter known as “Church”). I volunteer to serve the Church of my own free will and sign this release with complete understanding that the Church will perform a background check on me.
2. I am aware of the policies and procedures that the Church has established for the Youth Ministry Department. I am also aware of the Church’s By-Laws. I have read both documents and I understand them. I agree to follow the policies and procedures and the By-Laws, and agree to refrain from any unscriptural conduct while working within the Children/Youth Ministry.
3. I understand that if the Church reasonably suspects that I have acted or contributed to any abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct toward any child or other participant in the Church’s ministries, the Church will follow its own policies and procedures, comply with the Missouri Revised Statutes and cooperate with law enforcement concerning any charges against me.
4. I agree to hold harmless, defend and indemnify the Church for any costs relating to claims or lawsuits for allegations of abuse, negligence or sexual misconduct of which I am accused, charged or convicted as a worker or volunteer in E-Free’s Children/Youth Ministry.
5. To the best of my knowledge, I have disclosed any and all information that may be deemed necessary to ascertain my fitness to work with children and have not kept pertinent information (i.e. past allegations, convictions or misconduct) hidden from the Church.

_____ Printed Name

_____ Signature

Date: _____

Incident Report

Date: _____ Time: _____ Ministry: _____

Names of individuals involved: _____

Adults present: _____

Type of Incident:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Abuse by Child | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Abuse by Adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abuse by Child | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Abuse by Adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage | <input type="checkbox"/> Bodily Injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theft | <input type="checkbox"/> Violation of Rules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Description of Problem: _____

Actions Taken: _____

Reported By: _____ To: _____

Discussed with parent by: _____

Additional Comments: _____

CM Team Leader Printed Name

Children's Ministry Signature

Date: _____

Pastoral Staff Printed Name

Pastoral Staff Signature

Date: _____

Evangelizing Children

All those working with children, in the area of children's ministry, in an official capacity (teacher, leader) in the ministry of Evangelical Free Church should have a saving faith in Jesus Christ. This is defined as trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as well as having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This involves an ongoing desire to grow through reading the Word, prayer, worship, fellowship and witnessing to others.

It is desirable for each teacher or leader in the Children's Ministry to understand how to lead a child to have saving faith in Jesus Christ as described above. A child should understand that:

- Heaven is a free gift. (Romans 6:23)
- It cannot be earned or deserved. (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- Man (everyone) is a sinner. (Romans 3:23)
- We cannot save ourselves. (Matthew 5:48)
- God is merciful and doesn't want to punish us. (I John 4:8b)
- But God is just and must punish our sins. (Exodus 34:7b)
- God provided Jesus Christ His Son to die for our sins.
 - He is both God and Man. (I John 1:1,14)
 - He died on the cross and rose from the dead, to pay the penalty for our sin and to purchase a place in heaven for us. (Isaiah 53:6)
- This gift is received by faith.
 - This is not a faith that is based on head knowledge or is temporary. (James 2:19)
 - Saving faith is trusting alone in Jesus Christ for our salvation. (Acts 16:31)
 - Coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ involves:
 - Transferring our trust to Jesus alone for what He did on the cross for us.
 - Receiving the resurrected and living Christ as Savior. (Revelation 3:20)
 - Receiving Christ as Lord.
 - Repenting from sin.

It is recommended that leaders consider being equipped in Evangelism Explosion to gain confidence in sharing the Gospel. Child evangelism tracts are also available.

Teachers may also choose to share the Gospel with younger children using colors. See the following site for more info:

http://www.kidology.org/zones/zone_post.asp?post_id=120