



**Children's Ministry
Handbook**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION AND VISION

Mission statement

Bible Verse

Role of our church

Role of Parents

ORANGE STRATEGY

WHAT TO EXPECT AT GATHERING KIDS

Visitors

Sundays at GatheringKids

Gathering Sundays

Gathering Wednesdays

Bible Studies and Special Events

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

General Purpose Statement

Selection of Workers

- Six Month Rule

- Teenage Volunteers

- Background Check

- Staff Approval and Personal Interview

- Volunteer Requirements

Check In

Check Out

Secured Areas

Classroom Procedures

- Nursery

- Preschool

- Elementary

Discipline Policy

Diaper Changing Procedure

Restroom Policy
First Aid
Incident and Injury Procedure
Sick child Policy
Medication Policy
Food Allergies
Bites

CHILD PROTECTION

Responding to allegations of abuse
Two adult rule
Physical interactions
Verbal interactions
Visibility
Allegation of Abuse at Church
Photography and media policy
Training

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Intrusion
Missing Child
Tornado
Fire

FORMS

Incident
New child
Nursery information

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION

MISSION AND VISION

Mission Statement

GatheringKids strives to connect kids to God by encouraging a heart-transforming personal faith in Jesus Christ through biblical teaching and relational discipleship.

Our Bible Verse

“You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” Deuteronomy 6:7 ESV

Role of our Church

Although development of a child's faith begins with the family, it also relies on the support of our church family. GatheringKids and the family should partner to introduce children to Biblical truths as well as the ways and teachings of Jesus. We are committed to providing a safe place where kids can ask questions and share ideas with their peers. Age-appropriate Bible stories through our Orange curriculum teach the Word of God and the integrated lessons allow kids to apply the truths to their own life. Additionally, we want to equip parents with the tools they need to be the spiritual leaders in their own homes and be a source of encouragement and support along the journey.

Role of Parents

Whether you want to believe it or not, you, as a parent, are the number one influence in your child's life. An average child will spend just 40 hours a year in church related activities, but they will spend at least 3,000 hours per year with their parents. Just on math alone parents have much more potential to impact the life of a kid than any church related program. The family is God's plan to pass along the faith to the younger generations as we are told in Deuteronomy 6:7. Learn to see every phase your child goes through as an opportunity to train up the next generation in the ways of Jesus. Parents, we believe in you! You can do this! We want to help you win!

ORANGE STRATEGY

Orange is more than just the curriculum we use to teach kids at The Gathering...Orange is a strategy. Parents have roughly 936 weeks from when their child is born until they graduate from high school...that's it! That time flies by and becomes a blur doesn't it? One day they are cute cuddly infants and the next day they are asking for the keys to the car and moving off to college. The Orange Strategy encourages parents to understand each phase of their kid's life and to not miss out on opportunities to leverage this phase in their life for a better future. The Orange strategy is divided into 4 phases: Preschool, Elementary, Middle School, and High School.



The Church + Home = greater impact
Light (yellow) + Love (red) = Orange

Our strategy is to combine the two primary influences that impact a child's life, the family and the church. When you combine yellow (church) with red (home) you make ORANGE. Our strategy at GatheringKids is to think Orange. Two COMBINED influences will make a greater impact than just two influences. Our goal is to partner with the family to have a more lasting impact on the faith of the next generation.

By age five your child will understand...

1. God made me.
2. God loves me.
3. Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

By the time your child transitions to Youth Ministry they will understand...

1. I will make wise choices.
2. I will trust God no matter what.
3. I will treat others the way I want to be treated.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT GATHERING KIDS

Visitors

- First time families must either fill out a child information sheet or create an account in the check in system. At least one contact number is required for each family.
- First time visiting children may receive a visitor bag and card from the Children's Ministry Director.

What to Bring

Nursery and Preschool

Please bring clearly labeled diapers, wipes, bottles and pacifiers. Don't forget to provide details about feeding and nap schedules. If your child is potty training, please bring a change of clothes in case of an accident.

Elementary

Please bring a Bible, notebook and pen. Extras will be available but it is a great habit to begin.

Sundays at GatheringKids

The Gathering is a multi-site church with two locations serving Independence and Blue Springs. The strategy and operations of our kids ministry are the same at both campuses. Our Corporate Worship Service is at 9:30am followed by Sunday School at 11:00am. The Nursery is available during the service as well as Sunday School.

During Sunday School, age appropriate lessons, snacks, crafts, and activities will help them learn about God and His Word.

Elementary students are encouraged to sit with their families during worship services. We want kids to be a part of our congregational worship and teaching times because kids aren't the church of the future, they are part of the church now. We provide "busy bags" at the parent resource kiosk. These bags are filled with quiet toys and activity pages to help them keep their hands busy and minds focused on the sermon. During the school year, Children's Church is offered during the sermon portion of the worship service.

Gathering Sundays

Every fifth Sunday we will meet at one campus for one worship service. Families will worship together. Childcare and age appropriate Bible lessons are provided in the classroom for Infants through Pre-K students. Busy Bags will be provided for elementary students at the GatheringKids check in station.

Gathering Wednesdays

Our church family from both campuses meet one Wednesday a month for Gathering Wednesdays. It is a family experience with dinner and age appropriate lessons. We alternate campuses each month so check out our app and website for details on which campus and which date Gathering Wednesday is taking place.

Bible Studies and Special Events

Childcare is provided for Bible studies and Special Events at the church as needed.

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

General Purpose Statement (Safety)

The Gathering Baptist Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. The safety of our children and the assurance of safety for the parents is of utmost importance to us. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of The Gathering from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations. These policies and procedures are put in place to ensure the safety of the child, to give confidence to the parent/guardian, and to give our volunteers at The Gathering a guide on our policies in ministering to children.

Selection of Volunteers

Six Month Rule

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until he/she has been involved with The Gathering Baptist Church for a minimum of six months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

Teenage Volunteers

- Must be at least age 16.
- Age exceptions may be evaluated on a case by case basis by the family ministry team.
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all employees and volunteers, regardless of position. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked for written permission to run the check. If an individual declines to give permission, he or she will be unable to work with children. A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Pastoral team at The Gathering Baptist Church and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The background check authorization and results will be maintained in confidence on file at The Gathering Baptist Church.

Staff Approval and Personal Interview

Upon completion of the form, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

Volunteer requirements

- Prior to serving all volunteers must read through Gkids classroom handbook.
- Arrive on time for scheduled volunteer day.
- Wear Gkids name tag while serving in the children's department to identify you to the safety team and new families.
- Use the provided material to ensure all children are learning about the gospel on their educational level.
- Complete the Gathering Baptist Church children's department training, CPR, and abuse awareness training when provided.

Check In

The Children's Ministry Director or approved GatheringKids volunteer will be available to greet you and welcome your children. We utilize an electronic check-in system. Each time they check in, you will receive a pair of unique ID tags—one for your child and one for you. We will use this tag to learn your child's name, check for their allergies, and make sure they are picked up by the appropriate person.

- All children birth-5th grade and volunteers must be checked in and wearing a name tag before entering their classroom. Children in nursery and Pre-K may wear their name tags on their backs and elementary students may wear their name tags on the front of their shirts.
- An approved children's volunteer or staff member may allow a parent in the room under special circumstances. (anxiety, first time visitor, never being away from parents, etc.) This parent shouldn't interact with other children and should be monitored during their time in the classroom. If a parent wishes to continue to stay with their child for additional weeks, a background check must be run to ensure the safety of all children in the room.
- Only under special circumstances may an older child (5th grade and under) be checked into a younger classroom and only for a limited amount of time. (anxious younger siblings, behavioral issues, learning disabilities etc.)

Check Out

- Upon pick up, teachers will ask for a claim tag and verify the matching number on the child's name tag.
- If a child is being picked up and the teacher is not familiar with the parent or guardian picking up the child, they may request their pick up tag or ID.
- If a teacher has any questions or hesitations, they will keep the child in their care and immediately radio the safety team and the Children's Ministry Director.

Secured Areas

GatheringKids classrooms are located in secure areas. We have volunteers and a safety team in place each week to make sure your child has a safe environment.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Nursery Procedures

Teachers will:

- lay babies to sleep on their back, ensuring that there are no blankets or toys in the crib with the child.
- use equipment only as directed, swings, bouncers, etc. This will ensure that the child is safe by fastening all buckles in swings.
- only hold one baby at a time while standing.
- sanitize all used toys and surfaces before leaving the room. Only nontoxic sanitizers or baby wipes will be used.
- always be aware of the number of children in their care.

Preschool Procedures

Teachers will...

- use positive reinforcement at all times to help children to be kind and safe.
- be patient and calm when dealing with behavior issues.
- always be aware of the number of children in your care.
- see biting procedures for instructions on handling biting incidents.

Elementary Procedures

Teachers will...

- use positive reinforcement at all times to help children to be kind and safe.
- be patient and calm when dealing with behavior issues.
- always be aware of the number of children in your care.

Discipline Policy

- It is the policy of The Gathering Baptist Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if the parents have suggested or given permission for it.
- There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Volunteers should consult with the Children's Ministry Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.
- The following is the procedure for dealing with a disciplinary issue:
 1. The teacher talks with the student about the inappropriate behavior.
 2. Students are reminded and warned about the consequences of 3rd behavioral infraction.
 3. Students are removed from activity and if possible, the parents are contacted.

Diaper Changing Procedure

- Diaper procedures are posted above each changing table.
- Diapers will only be changed on changing tables.
- Children will not be unattended on the changing table.
- A new pair of gloves will be used for each child.
- The teacher will ensure the child is completely cleaned before placing a new diaper.
- A Diaper Change Sticker will be placed on the child's diaper or back to inform the parents of the change.
- Diaper changing stations will be sanitized after each change.

Restroom Policy

- When assisting a younger child in the restroom, the door must be left open.
- The child will be properly cleaned.
- Any soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag.
- Clean clothes or spare clothes provided by the church will be used if needed.
- The teacher will inform parents of any restroom accidents.
- Elementary students may be dismissed one child at a time to the restroom and the teachers will be mindful of their return.

First Aid Procedure

- If a child is hurt or requires basic first aid, please fill out the incident report form and hand it to the parents or guardian upon pick up. Inform the Children's Ministry Director of all injuries.
- If the child requires more than minor first aid, immediately contact the parents and/or guardian and Children's Ministry Director. If warranted by the circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

Sick Child Policy

To ensure the health of all children, Gkids volunteers should not accept any child showing any of the following symptoms.

- COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or awaiting test results
- Fever (101 degrees or higher) within the last 48 hours
- Diarrhea (more than 2 episodes) within the last 48 hours
- Vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Pink eye within the last 24 hours
- Lice within the last 48 hours
- Green runny nose within the last 24 hours
- Mouth sores within the last 24 hours
- Chicken pox within the last 48 hours

If a GatheringKids volunteer feels as though the child is not well enough to attend church, they will inform the Children's Ministry Director and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Medication Policy

- No medication, either prescription or over the counter, may be administered to a child while under the care of a Gathering Baptist Church volunteer.
- Medications should be administered by the parent or guardian at home.
- Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted to children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or an allergic reaction). Parents of such children should address their situation with the Children's Ministry Director to develop a plan of action.

Food Allergies

Due to severe peanut allergies that may be present in children under our care, we will not be serving any peanut based snacks at any of our church activities. Parents should inform the Children's Ministry Director of any allergies. An updated Allergy Alert sign and a list of snack ingredients will be posted by the snacks in each classroom. Teachers must contact the Children's Ministry Director immediately if evidence of a food allergy is present. Parents will be notified immediately or at pick up of any food allergy reactions. For the safety of all children, outside snacks will not be permitted. Labeled bottles and sippy cups for infants and toddlers are allowed..

Bites

Teachers will:

- separate the biter and the bitten child.
- tend to the bitten child first. The bite will be cleaned with soap and water immediately.
- notify the Children's Ministry Director and fill out an incident report to give to parents and or guardians upon pick up.
- calmly talk to the biter and try to understand what caused them to bite.
- fill out an incident report for each child involved.
- not reveal the name of the child to either set of parents.
- calmly explain the situation to both sets of parents.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Childcare workers and volunteers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under their care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of the children at The Gathering becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, this should be immediately reported to the Children's Ministry Director for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

Two Adult Rule

Children will never be left unattended or unsupervised. At least 2 church approved child care volunteers will be present at all times during church programs or activities. Teenage volunteers must be at least 16 years old and screened as specified above in order to serve. Teenage volunteers are required to be under supervision of an approved adult and will never be left alone with children. Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Physical Interactions

Using appropriate judgment, the following are **approved** ways to touch children

- An arm around the shoulder
- Walking hand-in-hand
- Carrying small children piggyback
- Short hugs
- Handshakes, high fives, fistbumps

The following should **never** take place. All physical contact should be above reproach.

- Never touch or interact with children in anger or disgust.
- Never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Never touch a child between their belly button and their knees.
- Never touch a child's private parts (with the exception of diaper or bathroom procedures).
- Never force any kind of physical contact or touch if a child is reluctant.
- Never roughhouse/wrestle/or tickle a child on the floor.
- Never swing a child by the arms.
- Never discipline by laying a hand on a child, use harsh or loud words.

Verbal Interactions

- Verbal interactions with children should always be positive and uplifting.
- Gkids volunteers should always strive to be encouraging, constructive and mindful of their mission to share the gospel with children and their families.
- We should always be careful to speak words of encouragement, kindness and love, even in difficult situations.

Visibility and Security

- All Gkids volunteers should wear a name tag for identification.
- All interactions with children should take place in an open area in the site of other approved Gkids volunteers.

Allegation of Abuse at Church

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at The Gathering or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker or church member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
3. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. The insurance company will be notified, and the organization will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse and neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the congregation.
All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Photography and Media Policy

- The following policy is in place to ensure the safety and protection of all minors in our care at The Gathering Baptist Church.
- Only The Gathering Baptist Church Staff are approved to take or publish videos or pictures in a Gkids environment with the permission of the child's guardians.
- If there is not a documented photo release for a child, their face or any other identifying information may not be published.

Training

The Family Ministry Staff will lead training sessions several times a year for teachers. This includes going over the handbook, curriculum training, child protection training, and CPR training.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Intrusion/Active Shooter

- If a teacher sees any individual that gives cause for suspicion or concern, they will immediately radio the safety team and notify them of the issue and lock the classroom door.
- If the safety team radios that there is an intruder in the building, teachers will
 1. Quickly assess the situation. If the intruder/active shooter is not in the children's area, gather the children and exit the building safely
 2. If the intruder/active shooter is in the children's room, lock and or barricade the classroom door.
 3. Turn off the lights and move the group where they can not be seen through the classroom door window.

Missing Child

The Children's Ministry Director or teacher will Immediately radio the safety team of the missing child including the following information. They will not leave children unattended to search for the child.

- Child's name and age
- Location last seen
- Clothes the child was wearing the last time they were seen

Tornado

Teachers will keep children in their care and proceed to the basement classroom with no windows, to shelter in place. They will radio the safety team of their location once they are safely in the basement.

Fire

Teachers will keep the children in their care and exit as soon as possible as far away from the building as possible. They will group together and radio their location to the safety team.

Forms

Incident

New Child

Nursery

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Facebook: **GatheringKids Parent Page**

YouTube: **Gathering Kids**

Church website: <https://gatheringkc.com>

Parent Cue website: <https://theparentcue.org>

Bible App: <https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>



Parent Cue

Parent Smarter, Not Harder
Designed for iPad. Not verified for macOS.

OPEN

Each week we teach your children the truths of the Bible through age specific lessons. We don't want it to end there, so each week we provide you the parent handout with what we talked about on Sunday, as well as practical things you can do throughout the week to teach these truths at home. These are called "Parent Cues." We have these available at our Parent Resource stations at both campuses. Want it digitally? We have you covered. You can download the free Parent Cue App in your favorite app store!



Are you about to be a new parent, wondering if you have what it takes to take care of another human being? Is your child about to enter "the terrible twos", or are you about to enroll your 5 year old in Kindergarten? Are you wondering how in the world you will handle the strange phase of middle schooler or how to handle the drama of high school? We've all been there. Our Phase materials come from the work of hundreds of experts in child development with hundreds of hours of research on how the average parent can understand kids better. We have materials for every phase of a child

from birth through graduation filled with helpful tips and strategies to understand and influence your kid no matter what Phase they are in. These free materials can be found at each campus at the Parent Resource booth.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like more specific details about our children's programs than what is outlined in this handbook, you can contact our Children's Ministry Directors.

**For the Gathering @ Noland Road contact – Marsha Tronstad at marsha@gatheringkc.com
Family Pastor - Matt Brown at matt@gatheringkc.com**