

REDEEMER KIDS

Shepherding Redeemer's Children on
behalf of our Children's Redeemer

Children's Ministry & Nursery Usage Policies

The Nursery Coordinator at the church will coordinate all care for children (0-3 years old) while using the church property. If a ministry would like an event to include our Nursery Ministry, that request will go to the Children and Youth Committee for approval. If approved, the Nursery Coordinator will ensure that adequate child care is onsite to take care of the children in the Nursery.

Process for requesting the Nursery or Redeemer Kids:

1. Contact the Children and Youth Committee by submitting the event request form. The request must be submitted and approved by the committee at least 3 months prior to the event. Please include as much information surrounding the desired event on the event request form (e.g. date, estimated attendance, number of children expected, etc.) Nursery cannot be offered for less than 5 children, so communicate with us as you receive registrations.
2. Once the request is received, it will be brought to the next scheduled Children and Youth Committee meeting for approval (currently the Children and Youth Committee meets on the third Monday of each month – please consider this when submitting the event request.)
3. Once the Children and Youth Committee approves or denies the event, the ministry leader will be notified within 3 days. If approved, the leader(s) involved will follow up with the ministry leader who submitted the event request and work together to create a ministry event for the children.

The Nursery and Redeemer Kids will not be available without the approval of the Children and Youth Committee, so please be sure to coordinate with them before the event is scheduled to occur. We want to accommodate whenever it is possible!

If there is a need for a sitter for children four and older, parents are responsible for providing their care outside the church property. Babysitting *on church premises* must not be offered for children 4 and older. Children may not be left unattended in any of the rooms in the church or on the church playground, regardless of age. If parents bring children four or older to a

meeting, they should remain with the parent in the room for the meeting and should not roam the building or the church playground unaccompanied, regardless of age.

We all share a concern for the safety of our children and the efficient operation of the The Redeemer's School and we believe this policy is in the best interest of our church and its families. Should you have any questions or concerns about the policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

What is the Nursery?

The Nursery is available for children 0-3 years old, and is active during Worship services, Sunday School, Wednesday mornings (MOMS Bible Study), Wednesday evenings (multiple ministries) and for other Churchwide ministry events as approved by the Children and Youth Committee.

What is Redeemer Kids?

Redeemer Kids serves children 4 years old – 5th grade, and is active during Sunday School, Wednesday evenings (Upside Down) and for other Churchwide ministry events as approved by the Children and Youth Committee.

Further clarification for ministries seeking to care for 4 through 12 year olds:

If a ministry wants to accommodate children, we encourage these ministries to plan ministry events for these children (4 to 12).

For example, Abba's Hope, MOMS, Engaging Disability, and the Choir have all hosted children's ministry events. Here are a few things that made them official ministry events (as opposed to childcare):

- Volunteer leaders manned the event, with the majority of responsibility falling on members of the actual ministry that planned the event. They recruited volunteers, but a member of the ministry was present to lead the event.
- All leaders present were screened and certified through MinistrySafe (our abuse prevention/training system). Anyone teaching children completed Redeemer's Teacher/Leader Agreement.
- Each ministry event had a definitive schedule, including a spiritual formation component (i.e. a devotional). Other things included crafts, music, recreation/playground, or watching a movie.
- Each ministry event was supervised by at least 2 adults per 15 kids.
- The ministry and the church office coordinated the location of the ministry event (playground, SS classrooms, etc.)

Off-site sitters

We realize that in order to attend events, some families may not have the ability to leave a child at home (single parents, working parents, etc.). Redeemer is glad to help facilitate in-home childcare for all ages on an as-needed basis if we are unable to host nursery and/or children's ministry.

Due to very low attendance when we have planned nursery and children's ministries for non-church wide events, we are asking that ministries use funds from their ministry budget to pay for in-home sitters on an "as needed" basis (registration form can include an inquiry about whether the person would not be able to attend without the church's help with coordinating care for their child(ren)).

By way of example, Growth Groups use our approved sitter list to care for kids during their meetings. Multiple families can pool together to host a group of children in various homes. If someone would like to have a babysitter added to the approved list, simply contact our Nursery Coordinator.

Each sitter will need to fill out a timesheet on our website (at this time, we cannot reimburse individuals for sitters). The church pays \$15.00 an hour, and checks are mailed on the 15th and 30th/31st of each month. 2 sitters are needed for each home (one must be female), for up to 10 kids. 3 sitters are needed for 11 or more. Sitters must be 14 years or older. Contact the Nursery Coordinator to get a sitter approved, or to receive a list of pre-approved sitters.

Rationale:

The policies outlined above were enacted by the Children and Youth Committee in 2014, and updated in 2023, after careful consideration of the needs/liabilities of our church, as well as input provided to us by Children's Ministry leadership of other similarly sized churches (who have almost identical policies). The following factors contributed to the adoption of these policies.

1. **Safety of our children** – Our screening and supervision standards, as well as our facility usage policy, is primarily designed to protect children. Nursery rooms are designed for children of a particular age. As Redeemer grows, the disruption of allowing an older sibling to stay in the nursery has grown to be a significant issue for our nursery staff. Having children of all ages and babysitters in the very large church building in multi-use rooms not designed for the purpose of child care is not wise. Realizing that potential abuse of a policy does not preclude proper use, we still found it beneficial to make our event standards uniform.
2. **Facility usage** - One of the ministries of our church is The Redeemer's School (TRS). TRS operates Monday through Friday in the entire church facility. Facility usage is complex. We must be aware of who and how the Redeemer facility is being used—particularly during school hours, at night and on weekends.

3. **Stewardship of Time, Energy, and Finances** - As our ministries grow, it is simply not sustainable to pay for childcare for all ages. Nor is it sustainable to recruit volunteers for Sundays, Wednesdays, and an event almost every weekend. As Redeemer creates more and more ministries, each meeting throughout the week, we have and will continue to receive requests for the Nursery and Redeemer Kids at these events. As a committee, we believe it is appropriate and good for the responsibility of taking care of children to rest primarily with parents, but with enthusiastic support coming from Nursery, Redeemer Kids, and the many ministries of our church. We hope to encourage parents and ministry leaders to take ownership and pitch in to help with caring for Redeemer's children on behalf of our children's Redeemer, in both its financial cost and coordination.
4. **Care for our staff** - Our Nursery and Redeemer Kids staff provide our church with multiple weekly opportunities for children. The periodic hosting of special events is part of their job description, but this must include appropriate advance notice and limits on time and frequency.
5. **Care for our ministry leaders** - Many Redeemer volunteers work behind the scenes to recruit and retain sitters for any number of ministries, or find a sitter solution for their own children, all while trying to lead and serve. We realize this can be very difficult, and want the use of our Nursery and Redeemer Kids to encourage and facilitate ministry and to help our church thrive.