

Cityside Baptist Church

Guidelines for

Children and Youth Leaders and Helpers

Reviewed December 2016

Deepening connection with God, self and others.

We have an ethos of spiritual formation: giving opportunities and support for children and youth to develop their relationship with God and with God's family at Cityside Baptist Church. Your role as a leader or helper is vital for helping our children and youth feel a connected part of Cityside, and your work supporting them is deeply appreciated.

1. Be yourself and share of yourself when you are with Cityside's children and youth

- Look for opportunities be engaged and present. Seek to connect by listening well; pondering and discussing together; being interested in their world, thoughts and feelings; or even simply sitting alongside a child or youth in comfortable silence, doing an activity together.
- We recognise that different people connect with God in different ways, and that we encompass a range of different stages of faith and life journeying at Cityside. Be open to finding out about and valuing each child/youth's unique way of relating to God and the world, and to sharing your stories, perspectives and God-experiences with them in turn, as appropriate to their age.
- Answer questions with honesty and an assurance that having questions and seeking answers are an important part of life-long learning. Try asking the questioner what they think before giving your opinion. If there are a range of possible answers, say: "Some people think..., and others think.... What do you think?". It's totally okay to say you don't know, and to explore with the questioner how you might find out together, or to acknowledge that sometimes we all have to sit with not-knowing for now.
- Resist the temptation to chat with other adults off-topic or to be on your phone when you are in a leading or helping role.

2. Be respectful and caring of Cityside's children and youth

- Respect their dignity as people and rights to privacy.
- Help children and youth to relate kindly and inclusively to each other and to other adults – gently but firmly remind them of appropriate behaviour if needed.
- Work to give them a safe space to learn and grow in: be alert to put-downs, teasing, leaving out, and all other types of abuse, and act to stop and/or report it.
- Help children and youth to stay in sacred space when applicable by modelling the behaviour you want them to copy and by being a whispering buzz, subtly and positively redirecting those who may lose their focus.
- Participation at Cityside is invited, not compelled. Use invitational language when asking children and youth to engage in activities, and always provide a safe way for people to opt out of participating if they are not comfortable.

3. Be aware of who is in your care and where they are

- Complete the group's roll at the beginning or check that they are all signed in.
- During the Sunday morning service, escort under 14s between their Children's Space rooms and the auditorium. If they are returning to their parents/caregivers during the service, go with them and make sure they connect with their adult.
- Remind Quest and Odyssey children to check in with you before and after leaving the room to use the toilet. Xplorer children should be escorted to the toilet by their parents.

4. Avoid staying alone with an unrelated child or youth

This applies within the Cityside building and at off-site social events or home visits, at camps or when transporting. If necessary, include another child as well, or ensure that you remain within sight and sound of other Cityside adults. If you are unavoidably in a room with a child or youth for a short time, always leave the door open.

5. Do not help unrelated children with toileting

This may be unavoidable with young children occasionally, but if this happens, fetch or inform their parents or caregivers as soon as possible.

6. Safe touching

- Generally, bodily contact should be restricted to hands, arms, shoulders and upper back.
- If a child or youth needs comfort, a leader needs to use their judgement for the situation at hand. Sideways or A-frame hugs are best. If a child/youth indicates a hug or touch is unwelcome, a leader must discontinue it immediately.
- A child may only sit on an unrelated leader's lap if the child initiates the event. It would be advisable for children over the age of five to sit beside the leader instead.
- Do not do anything that could be perceived as potentially sexual in nature.
- Never hold or pull an unrelated child or youth, unless absolutely needed for reasonable self-defence or protection of another person. However in these cases the level of force and duration should be only the amount needed to stop the physical assault.

7. CyberSmart

- Do not let a child or youth have access to the internet via your phone or device, unless it is a carefully supervised part of a programme, and only involves apps and content you are sure are completely appropriate and safe for them. If in doubt, check with a person responsible for the leadership of Children and Youth.
- Encourage children and youth to be present and engaged with those they are with, and not to use their phones or devices during times when Citysiders are together, unless it is for brief, non-intrusive things like taking photos or necessary communications with parents.
- Where possible and practicable, include parents and caregivers in emails or private social media chat groups where you are communicating with their children and youth. Keep individual texts and private

messages to youth brief and professional, and never write anything that wouldn't be perfectly okay for their parent to read as well.

- We have set up private Facebook groups for sharing photos of Cityside children and youth events – please don't share photos in more public forums or tag children in Facebook photos.

8. Accidents and emergencies

- If a child or youth needs minor first aid, use the first-aid kit to administer it if you are confident to do so, or find someone who is. Inform the hurt person's parents/caregivers as soon as practicable. Complete an incident report in the book in the first-aid kit or at a Health and Safety Station (Cityside Kitchen and at the bottom of the stairs by the chapel).
- If the child/youth has hurt themselves badly or has a medical emergency, get help immediately from other adults, and ensure that an ambulance and their parents/caregivers are contacted as soon as possible. Complete an incident report afterwards.
- If you are aware of any 'near-miss' accidents, these are also important to record in an incident report so that we can act to reduce the risk if possible.

9. If you have any concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or youth, act immediately.

Ensure the child is currently safe. Talk to their parents if you feel comfortable doing so, or to a person responsible for the leadership of children or youth, the Church Minister, or a member of the Cityside Council. Act on your feelings - do not just assume that other people already know.

10. If you have any ideas, celebrations or concerns...

For anything to do with Cityside's children and youth or related people and happenings, please contact the people responsible for the leadership of children and youth, the church minister, or a member of Cityside's Council.

11. Roster changes

- Please keep Cityside's Administrator or the people responsible for the leadership of children and youth updated if you have changes in your availability to be a leader or helper – you are not trapped in a life-long commitment :o)
- If you cannot come on a day that you are rostered, please arrange a swap and then let Cityside's Administrator know.
- If finding a substitute becomes difficult or it's short notice, please phone or text the organiser of whatever event is involved.
- If it's the Sunday of your rostered slot and you cannot contact the Children and Youth curator, contact the service curator so that they can ask for an extra helper before the groups leave the auditorium or keep the group in the service if needed.