

**Bridgetown Kids**  
Leader Orientation  
Handbook



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## Bridgetown Kids | introduction

**“Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”**

**Matthew 19:13-14**

We see from Matthew 19:13-14 that Jesus loves kids. The reason we invest so much in the kids at Bridgetown is because we believe that Jesus has asked us to introduce these kids to Him and to partner with their parents in placing the hand of every child into the hand of God. We simply want to do our part in introducing these kids to the story of God.

**“Whoever causes one of these little ones to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea”**

**Matthew 18:6**

Those are passionate words that vividly show Jesus as a protector and defender of children. We live in a world plagued by perversity and abuse, and we have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect these kids that are entrusted to our care. These kids will look up to you, follow you and try to become like you, so take extreme care that your life is constantly pointing to Jesus so that as these kids follow you they are being lead closer to King Jesus.

We have developed and molded Bridgetown Kids with these two verses in the forefront of our minds. Throughout the rest of this packet we explain what it looks like to serve, love, and protect the kids on Sunday night.

Please read through this packet carefully!

Thank you!

## Bridgetown Kids | core values

### **1. Love**

- a. Every child should leave every class knowing that Jesus loves them
- b. Every child should leave every class knowing that their leaders love them.

### **2. Instruction**

- a. Our curriculum is Trû from David C. Cook. We teach each classroom at an age appropriate level and go through the Bible each year.
- b. Leaders are responsible to read the lesson plan each week and come prepared to lead the section that they have been assigned.

### **3. Safety**

- a. Every leader is required to pass reference checks and a criminal background check as well as sit down for a face to face orientation with the Pastor of Kids.
- b. Leaders are required to do all that they can to create a safe environment in their classroom. This means showing up consistently, engaging with kids and staying off of their phones.

### **4. Fun**

- a. Kids learn through play, so we make it our goal to create fun, age appropriate classrooms each and every week and vary our storytelling styles so that kids learn in a variety of ways.
- b. We have quarterly Pizza Parties and movie nights to engage with the Grades K-5 kids in a fun, 3<sup>rd</sup> space.

## Bridgetown Kids | why

### **Why this is important:**

Through studying the Scripture we believe that God cares deeply about children. Kids are at the center of Jesus' Kingdom plans. He sees value in kids and in being near kids, in teaching them, in loving them and protecting them and we have adapted these same values as the core of Bridgetown Kids.

It is unfortunately common for churches to send their kids to a room with flannel graphs and coloring sheets to entertain them while the adults "go to church." At Bridgetown, we think that there is a missed opportunity if this is all that a church does with their kids.

The easiest time to become fluent in a language is when you are young. It is our strong belief that this is equally true when it comes to the gospel message of Jesus. So, if we can, at an early age, introduce them to the power of the gospel they can avoid so many of the growing pains that we go through as adults when it comes to learning who Jesus actually is and what the gospel should look like in our day to day lives.

We believe that by taking our call to educate and equip kids seriously we can have a global impact on the Church. These kids are the future leaders of the Church and Jesus has given us the amazing responsibility of pouring into them, loving them, affirming them, and preparing them to be the Church.

## Bridgetown Kids | how

**Step 1:** Fill out the online forms and documents

**Step 2:** Attend an orientation

**Step 3:** Paperwork is processed, references are checked and background check is run

**Step 4:** Someone from the Kids team will be in touch with you to let you know when everything has been processed and give you your start date.

**Step 5:** Set up your KidCheck account

**Step 6:** Start serving in your classroom

**Step 7:** Become a leader in your classroom

## Bridgetown Kids | policies

With an understanding that kids and leaders all have different learning styles, we build our curriculum around our leaders. We want the leaders to be able to exercise their God given creativity and help us create an environment where every child can have a personal encounter with the Living God. With our limited resources at Bridgetown, we rely heavily on our leaders to create an environment that encourages learning, safety and having fun. Leaders have a lot of freedom to make this happen in unique and creative ways, however, we do have some rules and policies that we have put in place to ensure the safety of each child. Please read through these rules before your first Sunday as you will discuss these rules and policies with your team lead on your first Sunday.

### **Two-Leader Rule**

In every classroom a minimum of two leaders must be present at all times. At least one of those leaders must be over 15 years of age and at no times should a leader be alone with a child. If a leader is discovered to be alone with a child they will receive a verbal warning and any second violation of this rule will result in being dismissed from working with Bridgetown Kids.

There are three purposes for the two-adult rule:

1. It protects the child from any possibility of abuse.
2. It protects the adult from any possibility of a false accusation.
3. It ensures that, in the case of an emergency, there will always be one adult to watch the kids, and one adult to call for help.

## **Leaving the Classroom**

With the location of our church being in the urban core of Portland, Bridgetown leaders have decided that for the safety of the children, we are not to take the kids outside unless it is for a fire alarm or other safety related issues. If the Pastor of Bridgetown Kids or any Safety Team member say that an evacuation is necessary, do your best to keep the kids calm, form a single file line with leaders on both ends and exit the building. The Team Lead, or person in charge of the class should grab the classroom computer and proceed to exit the building.

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact is a healthy way to communicate the love of Jesus to kids, but any and all physical contact must be done in an appropriate manner, and in a public setting. Each classroom has rules for physical contact that are developmentally appropriate for their age demographic.

## **Classroom Transparency**

We want to make sure all of our Bridgetown Kids classrooms are completely transparent. To accomplish this goal, we make sure that there is always a way for parents and guardians to see into classrooms from the outside. If a classroom does not have windows, then we keep the classroom door open. We also keep our classroom lights on at all times.

## **One-On-One Counseling or Instruction**

Any one-on-one counseling or instruction with kids at Bridgetown can only occur with permission from the Pastor of Bridgetown Kids, and must be done with prior written consent from the child's parent or guardian.

## **Classroom Security**

All kids must be checked in and out of classrooms by a parent or guardian. During class check-in, the parent or guardian will

receive a “Guardian Receipt” that they must show during check-out in order to pick up their child. If a parent does not have the pick-up tag, immediately have the Pastor of Bridgetown Kids brought to your room to handle the situation from there. For security emergencies, radios are carried by both the Kids Pastor and the Safety team, who will be roaming the Kids area.

## **Classroom Management**

Effective classroom management requires some level of discipline, but we enforce strict rules and limits when it comes to the discipline of children in our care. We want every child to experience a safe, fun and loving environment at Bridgetown, and we certainly never want to embarrass or harm a child in any way. We never yell at kids, and we do not ever use physical contact to discipline a child in our care.

We follow four simple steps of classroom discipline, as listed below. Any disciplinary measures beyond these four steps are the job of the parent, not the church.

1. Positive Reinforcement
2. Reminder from a Leader/ Leader Intervention
3. Removing the child from the situation
4. Calling the parents

We strongly believe that we are partnering with the parents in all aspects of what we do, but especially with disciplining. We get 90 minutes with these kids each week and the parents are there for the rest. They know their child infinitely better than we probably ever will. If a child is not responding to any of the listed disciplinary steps, talk to the Kids Pastor and they will seek advice from the parents on how to best interact with their child(ren). The more we include the parents in what we do the better atmosphere we can create for these kids to experience Jesus.

## **Classroom Visitors**

It is allowed for parents or guardians to enter the classroom with their kids, but they must follow certain rules. Visitors that aren't parents must remain separated from the classroom as a whole and simply observe the activities. Parents are allowed to participate in

the classroom, but must limit their interaction to their child specifically.

## **Absences**

If you are not able to make your scheduled shift then you are required to let your Host know and/or post to the Bridgetown Kids Facebook page. If you miss two shifts without telling your Host then you will be asked to step down from serving with Bridgetown Kids.

## **Bathroom Policy**

1. The Bridgetown Kids Bathrooms are closed to all public use on Sundays. These bathrooms are to be used only by kids who have been checked-in to one of our Bridgetown Kids Classrooms.\*
2. Kids can only visit the bathrooms when escorted by one or more approved Bridgetown Kids Leaders.
3. Only Female Leaders can assist kids inside the bathrooms.
4. Male Leaders can escort K-5th grade kids to the bathrooms, but cannot enter the bathrooms.
6. Kids must always be taken to the bathrooms in groups totaling 3 or more.
7. No adults (including leaders) are allowed to use the Bridgetown Kids Bathrooms on Sundays. Please direct all adults to the main bathrooms.
8. No families are allowed to use the Bridgetown Kids Bathrooms on Sundays.

*\*On this document, we define an adult as being anybody who is too old to be checked-in to one of our Bridgetown Kids Classrooms.*

## **Leader Age Requirements**

In order to ensure that our classrooms are appropriately supervised, there are a few age requirements for our Leaders:

1. In order to be a Teacher or Host, you must be age 16 or older. Every class must have at least one Leader who is age 16 or older.
2. People under the age of 16 can only serve as Leaders in the following rooms: Age 0-1, Age 0-2, Age 3-K and Age 4-K classrooms
3. The minimum requirement for someone to serve is to be in 6th grade
4. A person under 6th grade is only allowed to be a Leader if he/she serves under the direct supervision of his/her parent/guardian.

## Bridgetown Kids | abuse

### **Responding to Incidents or Suspected Incidences of Abuse**

Oregon law requires us as a church to report any incidences, or suspected incidences of child abuse. We are responsible not only to the State of Oregon, but also to God to do all we can to protect the kids from abuse. Child abuse includes any type of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as well as neglect.

If you see, hear or sense an incident of child abuse, contact the Pastor of Kids as soon as you possibly can. Do not wait any longer than twenty-four hours. After reporting the abuse, you are responsible to fill out a report form and the staff member is responsible to notify the authorities.

### **Questions and Answers:**

The following is taken from the “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect” pamphlet from the Oregon Department of Human Services.

### **Who Do I contact if I Suspect Child Abuse?**

According to the ORS 418.755, “An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Children’s Services Division or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his contact.” (Washington County CSD: 648-8951)

Your responsibility as a Bridgetown Kids volunteer is to contact the Kids Pastor if there is reason to suspect child abuse. The staff will then contact the proper agencies to make a report.

### **How Do I Respond to a Child Who Reports His/Her Victimization to Me?**

Tell the child that you believe them and that you are going to contact people who will help. Respect the privacy of the child. The child will need to tell their story in detail later to the investigators, so don't press the child for details. Remember, you need only suspect abuse to make a report. Don't display horror, shock, or disapproval of parents, child, or the situation. Don't place blame or make judgments about the parents or child. Tell the child that he/she will be talking to people who will help – a CSD Child Protective Services worker or the police. Believe the child if he/she reports sexual abuse. It is rare for a child to lie about sexual abuse.

### **What Information Do I Need to Report?**

If known, reports of suspected child abuse should contain the name, age, and address of the child and his/her parents or other persons responsible for the child's care. This information is collected from every first time visitor and stored in our check in cabinets. The nature and extent of abuse, including an evidence of previous abuse and any explanation given by caretakers for injuries should also be reported. Include all information, which you believe might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse and for identifying the abuser.

### **Will My Report Be Confidential?**

The reporter's identity will remain confidential to the full extent allowable by law. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only people with firsthand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony proving the abuse has occurred.

### **Can I Be Sued If I Report?**

Oregon law (ORS 418.762) provides that a mandatory reporter participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for making the report, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to such a report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.