



**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 and we have developed and molded Bridgetown Kids with this verse in the forefront of our minds. The reason we invest so much in the kids at Bridgetown is because we believe that Jesus has asked us to introduce them to Him and to partner with their parents in placing the hand of every child into the hand of God. We want these kids to know God and His story and to find their place in that story.

Throughout the rest of this packet we explain what it looks like to serve, love, and protect the kids on Sundays.

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 publishing. We teach each classroom at an age appropriate level and go through the entire 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 one of the Bridgetown Kids staff.
- b. Leaders are required to do all that they can to create a safe environment in their classroom. This means, among other things, 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 classroom experiences each and every week as well as varying our storytelling styles so that kids can learn to encounter God in a variety of ways.
- b. We have quarterly Pizza Parties as well as a summer Family Pool Party to engage with the kids and parents in fun, third spaces.

## **Bridgetown Kids | Why**

### **Why kids are important:**

Through studying the Scripture, we believe that God cares deeply about children; kids are at the center of the Kingdom of God. He sees value in kids in being near kids, in teaching them, 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 talk about God and 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 knowing God and living in his Kingdom. So, if we can, at an early age, introduce them to the exciting story of God and the power of the good news of Jesus, 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 Kingdom should look like in our day to day lives.

We believe that by taking our call seriously to partner with parents in creating an environment where kids can meet God, we will have a huge impact on the way the city of Portland sees and engages with Jesus. 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 and lead the Church.

## **Bridgetown Kids | How**

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

**Step 2:** Attend an orientation

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

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

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

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

**Step 7:** Step into a leadership position in your classroom

### **What to Expect in Your Classroom:**

Each kids leader is required to be on either the 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday rotation or the 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Sunday rotation. There are four months a year with a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday and these bonus Sundays are split even between the two rotations. We ask that all Kids Leaders are checked in and in their classroom 30 minutes prior to the start of the gathering.

Every rotation in every classroom at all the gatherings has one lead person. This person is called the Host. The Host in your classroom is who you will be primarily communicating with going forward. They will remind you when it is your Sunday and they will work with you to select a role for you to lead.

For the Infants/Toddlers - Age 2 class there is a weekly Blessing to read over the kids. In the older classrooms there is curriculum for each week that includes Connect activities to introduce the lesson, the Gather section when the story is read, Respond activities to review the lesson and make it personal and real, and finally the Bless section in which kids receive a verse and blessing read over them by a leader. Additionally, all parents or guardians that check a child into Bridgetown Kids on a Sunday will receive a follow up email with a document called the AtHome Weekly. This document briefly recaps the content from their classroom as well as introduces them to what we'll be doing the following week. The hope in this is that parents will work through this document with their kids throughout the week and the kids show up to class already having learned the lesson from their parents and are ready to encounter Jesus during their time in class on Sunday.

## **Bridgetown Kids | Policies**

With an understanding that kids and leaders all have different learning styles and giftings, we build our curriculum around our leaders. We want the leaders to be able to exercise their God given creativity and identity and help us create an environment where every child can have a personal encounter with the Living God. With our commitment to simplicity 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 wellbeing of all kids at Bridgetown. Please read through these policies before 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 18 years of age and at no time should a leader be alone with a child. If a leader is discovered to be alone with a child, they will be 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. Be sure to bring the iPad with you as that is our class roster. The Host, or person in charge of the class will take attendance as soon as the class is in a safe place.

## **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. You can find these rules on the iPad in each classroom.

## **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.

## **Extracurricular Engagement**

Any outside engagement with kids from Bridgetown Kids must be first cleared through the Bridgetown Kids staff as well as the parent. All engagement outside of a Bridgetown Church sanctioned event is considered extracurricular and Bridgetown Church doesn't assume any responsibility for any incidents that may occur during these extracurricular activities.

## **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 checkout in order to pick up their child. The Guardian Receipt must match the code of any children they are trying to pick up. If a parent does not have the pick-up tag, have someone from the Bridgetown Kids Staff brought to your room to handle the situation from there. For security emergencies, radios are carried by the Safety team, who will be roaming the kid's area.

## **Communication with Parents**

It is exclusively the job of the Host to communicate with parents regarding concerns or incidents in class with/between kids. Please alert your Host or Bridgetown Kids Staff when you encounter a situation that needs attention so that they can discuss things with parents or guardians when the child is picked up and refrain from discussing anything negative with the parent unless invited in by the Host.

## **Classroom Management**

Effective classroom management occasionally requires some level of discipline, but we enforce strict rules and limits when it comes to the type of discipline of the 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 Bridgetown Church.

1. Positive Reinforcement
2. Warning from a Leader/ Leader Intervention / Redirection
3. Removing the child from the situation - sitting away from the kids with a leader
4. Calling the parents for assistance

We strongly believe that we are partnering with the parents in all aspects of what we do, but especially with discipline. 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 your Host 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. These visitors are not allowed to interact with the other kids in the classroom and visiting parents or guardians must display their Guardian Receipt at all times.

## **The Faithfulness Principal**

“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 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. As we have seen leaders come and go, we recognize that our best leaders are the ones who are faithful. They show up and do what they said they would do consistently over a long period of time, they stay loyal and steadfast to God's word and truth and live that way throughout their whole week, not just on Sundays. They show consistent love to kids by showing up each week and becoming a predictable part of their life. These kids will look up to you and follow you and try to become like you, so take extreme care that your life is constantly pointing to Jesus in all areas so that as these kids follow you, they are being lead closer to King Jesus. We encourage all leaders to live into the Faithfulness Principle to the best of their ability.

## **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 two or more approved Bridgetown Kids Leaders.
3. Only Female Leaders can assist kids inside the bathrooms.
4. Male Leaders can escort kids to the bathrooms but cannot enter the bathrooms.
5. No adults including leaders, parents, or older siblings, are allowed to use the Bridgetown Kids Bathrooms on Sundays. Please direct all adults to the main bathrooms in the Bridgetown Foyer.

\*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. Every class must have at least one Leader who is age 18 or older.
2. People under the age of 15 cannot serve as Hosts and can only serve as Leaders in the following rooms: Infants, Toddlers + 2s and Age 3 – Pre K
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.

## **Absence and Sub Policy**

In order to streamline communication, all Bridgetown Kid's leaders are invited to download the Slack app to their phone. On this app you will have access to our "Subs" channel as well as one titled "Important Updates". Any last minute important update will be shared on the "Important Updates" channel and if you are going to miss a Sunday, please post on the "Subs" channel as early as you can to find someone to fill in for you. We understand that you will not be able to make every one of your scheduled Sundays, but we do ask that you give us notice and attempt to find a sub when you will be absent. Please be willing to fill in for someone else from a different rotation if you are going to be gone. If you don't show up without letting your Host know two separate times, we will ask you to step down from Bridgetown Kids.

## **Reading Communication**

Each week you will receive an email with the curriculum attached for that week. Even if you aren't scheduled to lead, please read through that email as they often include important information. By agreeing to be on the Bridgetown Kids team you are also agreeing to stay current on all emails sent by the Bridgetown Kids Staff.

## **Working with Kids 1-on-1 inside the classroom**

If a child in your class requires extra 1-on-1 attention, you could be asked by your Host to be their classroom buddy. The hope is to help these students engage with the lesson, activities, and games with the other students, while also being attentive their specific needs.

## **Bridgetown Kids | Abuse Policy**

### **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 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.”

Your responsibility as a Bridgetown Kids Leader is to contact the Kids Pastor if there is reason to suspect child abuse and they will work with you to make the report.

Please add the number, 1-855-503-7233 to your number to report any suspected abuse.

### **How Do I Respond to a Child Who Reports Their 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 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 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 guardian. This information is collected from every first-time visitor and stored in our check in database. Also include the nature and extent of abuse, including any explanation given by caretakers for injuries. 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.