

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND THOSE WHO WORK WITH THEM**

PREFACE

Trinity Lutheran Church is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment for every young person to whom we minister. We believe that simple, yet effective steps can be taken to promote a safe environment for our children/youth and those who volunteer to work with them.

The guidelines of the booklet are intended to assist our church in:

1. Creating a safe place for all children while attending church activities.
2. Reducing the possibility of child abuse.
3. Protecting Trinity's volunteers and employed staff.

INITIATING THE GUIDELINES

Definition of Terms

Pastors and ministry directors are employed staff of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Ministry leaders are volunteers who chair ministry committees.

Committees are composed of Trinity Lutheran Church members and participants.

Group leaders are teachers, mentors, or chaperones.

Children includes ages birth through 18 years.

Trinity Christian Preschool, Noah's Ark, is subject to Wisconsin licensing rules for group day care centers.

The ministry director shall make reasonable efforts to see that the following guidelines are followed for each children's ministry program in their respective area.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING OF CHURCH WORKERS

Application Forms

Volunteers and employed staff of children and youth ministry positions shall complete the following forms:

- C Application for Volunteers and Employed Staff
- C Covenant for Children's and Youth Ministry

Volunteers and employed staff of children and youth ministry positions who have an application form on file shall complete the Application Update for Volunteers and Employed Staff form on a yearly basis.

It is the responsibility of the pastors and the ministry directors/leaders to review applications for approval, determine if a background check, criminal check, and/or personal interview is needed, or contact references. Authorization for reference checks is given when the applicant signs the application.

Among the possible reasons for evaluating the need for doing a personal interview, reference check or background check are:

- C Length of local residency
- C Current job status
- C No previous home church or any affiliation
- C No previous experience in working with children
- C Not known by any current member of Trinity

Personal Interviews

Volunteers and employed staff may be interviewed by pastors, ministry directors, leaders, or committees. Refer to Interview Guidelines For Volunteers and Employed Staff.

Reference Checks

Pastors, ministry directors/leaders, or both are responsible for reference checks. References contacted are recorded on the Trinity Lutheran Church Reference Contact Form and kept with the application form.

Background Checks

A background check will be completed for each employed staff member whose position involves working with children.

Other

Trinity Lutheran Church has taken a position against sexual misconduct and child abuse. A volunteer with a criminal conviction or a guilty plea for a sexual offense, no matter how long ago it occurred, will not be permitted to work with children. They should be directed to serve in other areas of the church. Adult leaders or employed staff will not date or be romantically involved with children in their care. Church sponsored events for children are drug, alcohol and smoke free. Possession of, or in the presence of any of these substances may result in removal from the event. Being in a one on one situation with a child is discouraged.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Registration Information

Parents/Guardians shall provide the ministry director with the following information at the time of registration: emergency contact information name (not parents) and phone number along with parents'/guardians' work number(s) or cell phone number(s); medical information (such as medical problems, special needs, medications, allergies; medical release consenting to treatment and transporting in the event of an emergency; transportation release authorizing vehicle transportation for off-campus activities; name of the parent/guardian or person(s) authorized to take the child (nursery - grade 6). This information may be shared with group leaders when appropriate.

Parents/guardians shall keep this information current by providing written notice of changes to the ministry director. Trinity Lutheran Church shall make a reasonable effort to follow parental directives, but reserves the right to make decisions based on reasonable judgment, especially during times of emergency. A reasonable effort will be made to obtain registration information for a guest attending on campus events.

Architectural Precaution

It is recommended that classroom and office doors, with the exception of restrooms, eventually have windows which provide easy viewing by parents and directors. These should not be obstructed.

Drop Off and Pick Up Guidelines

As part of the registration process for any preschool-grade 6 program, the parent/guardian shall identify with whom the child is to be dismissed or if the child can leave independently. If a child needs to be picked up at a different time or by someone not listed as an authorized pick-up person, parents shall call the church office or send a written note verifying the change. If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up the child, the teacher, ministry director or leader shall make a reasonable effort to clarify the situation before the child is released after obtaining information such as the name, relationship to the child, and description of the individual. Verification of the information with a driver's license is also encouraged.

Trinity Lutheran Church will make a reasonable effort to notify parents of class or event times. Parents shall not drop their children off early because Trinity Lutheran Church will not be able to provide supervision or insure the safety of the children.

Preschool-grade 2 children are to be dropped off and picked up at the classroom. Children in grades 3-6 are also encouraged to be dropped off and picked up at their classroom. Possible exceptions are those children who are riding their bikes, walking home, or have arrangements to meet at another designated place in the church as indicated on the pick-up information. Children are not to leave the facility without the group leader's permission. Group leaders are not to leave the classroom or building until all students from their class have been picked up or other appropriate arrangements for classroom supervision have been made.

Students in grades 7-9 may be dropped off and picked up at the church entry on Trimble Street. Following confirmation classes, students will be released from their small groups to the exits on Trimble Street. Parents shall have signed the form indicating that they acknowledge and understand that they have made arrangements for their child's safe trip home.

Restroom Guidelines

Parents/guardians are responsible to inform the group leader if a child has a problem with bladder control, diarrhea, or any other medical problems. Parents are encouraged to take their child(ren) to the restroom prior to class. Group leaders are encouraged to designate which restrooms are to be used for each program or activity. Volunteers under age 12 years are discouraged from helping children in the restrooms.

If a restroom time is needed for preschool-grade 2, the following procedure is recommended: If one child must use the restroom, the leader has the option to take the whole class along or to ask for help from another group or ministry leader or director who may escort the child to the restroom or supervise the rest of the class. Do not leave the classroom unsupervised. Screen the restroom to make sure that everything is in order before the child enters. If a child needs assistance in the restroom, leave the stall door open. Never be alone with the child in the stall with the door closed. If a child does not need assistance, it is suggested that the leader remain at the outer door to monitor the area.

If a restroom time is needed for grade 3-12, use of a buddy system is encouraged with the group leader directing which restroom is to be used.

Classroom Supervision Guidelines

The following ratios are suggested staffing guidelines:

- C Nursery: 1 adult for about 4-5 children
- C Preschool: 1 adult for about 6-12 children
- C Grade K-6: 1 adult for about 10-15 children
- C Grade 7-8: 1 adult for about 18 children
- C Grade 9-12: 1 adult for about 18 children

Child care that is provided for a non church sponsored event, should be registered in the church office. All volunteer and employed staff are encouraged to wear identification. Volunteer and employed staff are encouraged to be alert to strangers in the building. If there is a question about an unidentified individual, a ministry leader, director or staff member should be contacted.

Mentor Guidelines

The Trinity mentor program is carried out entirely on-site. Off side activities may be arranged through the student's parents.

Special Events and Off-campus Activities

The following ratios are suggested staffing guidelines:

- C Grade K-6: 1 adult for about 6 children
- C Grade 7-8: 1 adult for about 7 children
- C Grade 9-12: 1 adult for about 7 children

Written permission and registration information is required for participation in off campus activities. In extenuating circumstances, verbal permission with a third party witness may be accepted. Registration information and the medical release should accompany the group leader. For overnight and out of town events, a completed medical release and health history form for each child will be carried by the group leader. Note: Registration Information page 3.

Transporting Children

Drivers need a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance with a minimum of suggested liability coverage in the state of Wisconsin (see Application for Volunteers and Employed Staff). Vehicle must be in good running condition with working seat belts. Seat belts are to be used by each occupant in the car and the number of persons per car are not to exceed the number of working seat belts. Children in seat belts and car seats must be in compliance with current Wisconsin law. It is recommended that children under five feet tall not be seated in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with air bags.

No person under the age of 18 may drive to a youth outing in the Eau Claire area unless the parent has given written permission or verbally requests this, per discretion of the ministry leader. No person

under age 18 may drive to a youth outing that is outside the Eau Claire area. Rental vehicles will be driven by a designated group leader(s).

Anyone transporting children or youth shall obey all traffic laws, such as speed limits.

Proper Display of Affection

Touch is essential in nurturing lives. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. Be aware and sensitive to differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs.

Appropriate Displays of Affection	Inappropriate Displays of Affection
Asking permission before touching.	Any form of unwanted affection
Hugs	Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”.
Pats on the shoulder or back	Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas.
Hand-shakes	Laying down or sleeping beside children.
“High-fives” and hand slapping	Massages
Verbal praise	Patting children on the thigh, knee or leg
Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms	Tickling, wrestling or “piggy back” rides
Arms around shoulders	Touching or hugging from behind
Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset.	Games involving inappropriate touching
Holding hands while walking with small children.	Kisses on the mouth
Sitting close to small children	Showing affection in isolated areas of the building such as bedrooms, closets, restricted areas or other private rooms
Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child	Compliments that relate to physique or body development
Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger	

Constructive Discipline

Discipline needs to carefully consider a child’s dignity and fragile life, and reflect Christian values. Gentleness, respect and understanding should guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, training and correction. Physical punishment is inappropriate.

Suggested procedures for constructive discipline: Whenever an inappropriate behavior is observed, the child will be positively redirected into other activities to stop the inappropriate behavior.

When the appropriate expectations are not met, it is suggested that the group leader use the following steps: (1) Give a verbal warning; (2) Notify ministry director and/or parents/ guardians; (3) Meet with parents or guardians, ministry director to work towards resolving the problem.

Missing Children

If a child is missing, the group leaders shall assign another group leader, director or employed staff person to supervise the remaining children within the classroom or immediate area. Search the immediate vicinity or interior building. This may include closets, bathrooms, storage rooms, and any other enclosed area. If outside areas need to be searched, additional individuals will be organized in an area search. Each person will be designated a specific area to cover. Consider immediately notifying security (if available) at off-campus events. If the search is still unsuccessful, the local police will be notified for further assistance and the parents or emergency contact person will be contacted.

Medication Guidelines

If any medication needs to be administered to a child, the parent/guardian will complete a medication consent form. Dispensing medications in the classroom is discouraged.

When middle or high school students are away from home at a retreat or other youth gathering, and prescription medications are to be administered, parents will give the completed medication consent form along with instructions to the ministry director or adult group leader. All prescription medications shall be in the original container and administered in the prescribed dosage by, or in the presence of, the responsible adult as per written instructions of a custodial parent, guardian, or physician. Emergency medications such as inhalers or bee sting kits may be carried and administered by the student. Trinity staff does not administer over-the-counter medications.

Medical Emergencies/Accidents

Volunteers and employed staff may administer basic first aid measures. It is suggested that first aid kits be available in several locations throughout the building. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify a parent/guardian of an injury. If medical care is seen as necessary beyond first aid measures, reasonable efforts will be made to notify a parent/guardian for transportation to a local emergency room or medical clinic. If the situation is life threatening, emergency professionals, through 911, will be immediately contacted. Volunteer and employed staff are encouraged not to transport the child. The accident report form must be filled out in the church office for situations as noted

A first aid kit is recommended to be taken along on off-campus activities. For medical emergencies when out of town, the group leader will refer to the medical release/health history form.

Emergency Evacuation Plans

Fire: Exit the building as diagramed on the floor plan which shall be posted in each classroom or activity area. Shut the door of the classroom when everyone is out. There should be one way traffic in the hallways. Take the class well away from the building and make sure all of your students are with you. Group leaders are encouraged to have available their class roster to take with them. Students should not go looking for parents, brothers, sisters or the family car. Once it has been determined that

the danger is past, the group leader will direct the children back into the building or other designated area. If it is ascertained that there is a fire or definite danger, the children will be taken across the street to a safe location. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child(ren). Group leaders are encouraged to review and practice the fire safety rules with their class.

Tornado/Severe Weather:

- Tornado Watch: Tornadoes and severe thunderstorms are possible.
- Tornado Warning: Tornadoes detected, take shelter immediately.
- Siren: A steady wail of the siren means take cover.

Upon a city tornado warning siren or other notification, the group leader will take students to areas that have no windows and are interior rooms or to the basement areas. The group leader will account for all children. The ministry directors, leaders or office staff as directed will make reasonable efforts to check the bathrooms and then take shelter. The group leader should instruct children to crouch down on the floor, heads down, with hands over their heads.

Bomb threat: In the event of a bomb threat to the building, children will exit the building the same as for fire evacuation.

Nursery

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedure: Parents/guardians are responsible for completing the nursery sign in form and using the pager. Parents/guardians should clearly label diaper bags with the child's name.

Sick children should not be brought to the nursery.

Diaper changing procedures: The nursery attendant/appointed adult or parent shall change diapers. A child should never be left unattended on the changing table either in the nursery or attached bathroom. Change the diaper using either diapers and wipes supplied by the nursery or those supplied by the parent. After the diaper change is completed, clean the changing table with a clearly labeled disinfectant spray or disinfectant wipe. WASH HANDS with warm water and soap.

Nursery committee members or other designees, will make a reasonable effort to clean and sanitize the toys on a regular basis. Volunteers and employed staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently while working in the nursery. Every reasonable effort shall be made to remove broken toys or those that pose a choking hazard to younger children.

**MANDATORY REPORTING
OF
SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE OR THREATS OF CHILD ABUSE**

Wisconsin Law and Church Policy

Wisconsin law requires that allegations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect or threats of abuse must be reported to law enforcement. There are no exceptions to this mandatory reporting requirement for volunteers or employed staff.

It is the policy of Trinity Lutheran Church that it and its volunteers and employed staff comply with the law.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse to a child can occur in a variety of forms. It can be physical or emotional abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, or neglect. To help volunteers and employed staff to comply with the law and church policy, “abuse” is defined as a non-accidental physical injury inflicted on a child or sexual contact with a child and “neglect” is defined as a failure to properly provide for the children’s physical needs (i.e., food, clothing, etc.) or normal development (i.e., bullying, verbal attacks). These definitions are to assist the volunteer or employed staff in determining if there might be abuse or neglect, but you are not required to make legal distinctions in order to make your report.

Mandatory Reporting

If a volunteer or employed staff suspects that a child has suffered abuse or neglect or may suffer abuse, you shall report your suspicion in accordance with the procedures explained below.

Reporting is legally mandatory. The suspicion of abuse or neglect may be based on your observations of or interactions with a child or if a child tells the volunteer or employed staff of past or threatened events that suggest to you abuse or neglect. Understandably, where abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur is not always clear. However, you should still report the suspicion because the protection of the child is of paramount concern. Moreover, the reporting signifies only a suspicion of abuse or neglect. The actual determination of whether or not the child was abused or neglected will only occur after an investigation by appropriate law enforcement. Even marginal cases may be found to be valid. You can anonymously discuss whether or not a report should be filed with law enforcement by contacting the Department of Human Services at (715) 831-5720 Monday through Friday.

Confidentiality

The reporting of a suspicion of abuse or neglect shall be confidential and the reporter’s identity will not be disclosed.

Immunity from Liability

To encourage protection of children, the Wisconsin law provides that any person who reports a suspicion of abuse or neglect in good faith will be immune from any civil or criminal liability. Good faith will be presumed.

Penalty for Not Reporting

Whoever intentionally fails to report a suspicion of abuses or neglect may be fined by to \$1,000 and/or imprisoned by to 6 months.

Reporting Procedures for Volunteers and Employed Staff of Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect

If a volunteer or employed staff suspects child abuse or neglect, you must:

- Immediately tell the ministry director, group leader or pastor; and
- Fully complete and sign a Trinity Lutheran Church Suspicion of Abuse form and give it to the ministry director, pastor or Trinity's council president.

On behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church, the pastor or the council president will report the suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services/Child Abuse and Neglect at (715) 831-5720 Monday through Friday and (715) 839-4972 evenings and weekends, or in cases of emergencies to the Eau Claire Police or Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department.

The pastor or the council president will inform the volunteer or employed staff member if the report of abuse or neglect has been reported to law enforcement within 7 days following the submission of a completed and signed Suspicion of Abuse form.

If the church has decided not to report your suspicion of abuse, you may make your own report to Eau Claire County/Child Abuse and Neglect. You also may make your own report even if the church has reported the matter for investigation.

Guidelines for Gathering Information and for Conduct After Making the Report

If a child tells you that he or she has been abused or neglected or fears abuse, take him or her seriously. Calmly listen without denying or discussing the child's claim. This is an important opportunity to gather as many facts as possible so let the child tell his or her story in his or her own words. Under no circumstances should you promise not to tell anyone. Provide emotional support and stress to the child that he or she "has done nothing wrong" and that coming to you was "the right thing to do." If the child is willing, have another adult listen to the conversation. **Immediately write an account of the conversation, date it, and report it on a Suspicion of Abuse form.**

Because suspicions of child abuse or neglect are so serious in nature and to protect all involved, particularly the child and the person(s) suspected of the abuse or neglect, all information

will be handled in a confidential manner and you will not discuss the matter with anyone because the reporting needs to be properly investigated by law enforcement. It is not your duty or responsibility to investigate or resolve the matter. The best thing to do after completing the Suspicion of Abuse form is to do and say nothing pending law enforcement's investigation.

Other Reporting Obligations

If you observe questionable behavior by another volunteer or employed staff or have safety issues, you shall notify the ministry director or group leaders.

TRAINING OF VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYED STAFF

Volunteers and employed staff members are encouraged to be familiar with or receive training with the following:

- Trinity Lutheran Church Guidelines For Protection Of Children, Youth And Those Who Work With Them.
- Wisconsin child abuse and neglect law.
- How to identify children who have been abused or neglected.
- The process for reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- Additional training will be provided as determined by the ministry directors, leaders or pastors.

Application for Volunteers and Employed Staff

Trinity Lutheran Church
1314 East Lexington Boulevard
Eau Claire WI 54701
Phone 832-6601
Fax 832-6700

Children & Youth Ministry

All persons working in positions involving the supervision of minors are to have this form on file. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth who participate in our programs.

Personal Information

Name:	Date:
Address:	City State Zip:
Home Phone:	Work Phone:
Date of Birth:	Gender:
E-mail Address:	
Social Security	Profession/Occupation
Are you presently a member of TLC?	If yes, how long?
If no where is your membership (list address):	
Previous residences (for last five years) including city and state:	
Current memberships (ie. community, business, labor, etc.):	
Experience working with children/youth:	
List any gifts, callings, training or education you may have related to children/youth work:	

Personal References: List 3

(List someone other than an immediate family member.)

Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
City State Zip	City State Zip
Phone () Relationship	Phone () Relationship

Name: Address: City State Zip Phone () Relationship	
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Additional Information

Do you use illegal drugs? Yes No

Have you ever been accused or convicted in a court of law for child abuse or any crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation: Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been convicted of any other criminal offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Driver's information needed for transporting children:

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

Do you have automobile insurance with a minimum of \$100,000/\$300,000 liability coverage? Yes No

Is your vehicle in good running condition with working seat belts? Yes No

Are there any moving violations on your record in the last five years? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Drivers License#:

To the best of your knowledge is there anything from your past that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Applicant's Statement

The information I have given in this application is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I agree that false information or significant omissions may disqualify me from further consideration for service with children or youth and may be considered justification for dismissal if discovered at a later date. I also authorize Trinity Lutheran Church to contact references and to conduct background checks that could include review of personal records such as driving, police, etc. This information will remain confidential.

I agree to be bound by the constitution and policies of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Reviewed January 2008

Application Update for Volunteers and Employed Staff- Trinity Lutheran Church

Children & Youth Ministry

(for 2007-2008)

All persons working in positions involving the supervision of minors are to have the completed form, *Application for Volunteers and Employed Staff*, on file. This form is used to update information and reaffirm the covenant.

Personal Information

Name:

Date:

New Address/Telephone Information

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Driver's Information Needed for Transporting Children

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

Do you have car insurance with a minimum of \$100,000/\$300,000 liability coverage? Yes No

Is your vehicle in good running condition with working seat belts? Yes No

Are there any moving violations on your record in the last five years? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Additional Updated Information

To the best of your knowledge is there anything that has changed from your original application that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Reaffirmation of Covenant

I believe that each child is unique and a wonderful gift from God. I will do my best to make Trinity Lutheran Church a place where children and youth will grow in Bible knowledge, develop friendships, and most of all strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ. I will be a role model to them with full commitment to the task that I have accepted. I will give the position the time it deserves such as attending worship and meetings, preparing and teaching and joining in fellowship. I have completed the application form and have read the **GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THOSE WHO WORK WITH THEM**. I will notify the ministry leader if I cannot fulfill this commitment so that a transition to a new person can be made.

Signature:

If at any time you need support, please speak to your ministry leader or ministry director.
Thank you for your willingness to serve.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
COVENANT FOR CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

We ask that you read the following information and reflect on the role you are ready to fill. We provide this covenant so that you can show your commitment to the ministries of Trinity Lutheran Church.

I believe that each child is unique and a wonderful gift from God. I will do my best to make Trinity Lutheran Church a place where children and youth will grow in Bible knowledge, develop friendships, and most of all strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ. I will be a role model to them with full commitment to the task that I have accepted. I will give the position the time it deserves such as attending worship and meetings, preparing and teaching and joining in fellowship. I have completed the application form and have read the ***GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THOSE WHO WORK WITH THEM***. I will notify the ministry leader if I cannot fulfill this commitment so that a transition to a new person can be made.

Signature

Date

We at Trinity Lutheran Church appreciate the commitment you are making and we are eager for you to serve and grow in the body of Christ. If at any time you need support, please speak to your ministry leader or ministry director. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

