



# Welcome to the Preschool Ministry



Dear New Teacher,

This document is for you - we want to launch you into this ministry with joy and confidence *because every child matters, even in our smallest churches! Whether you have 2 kids or 20, you are making an eternal impact.*

*"And verily, it was spoken of old, 'When a leader of the little ones doth open the seal on their welcome scroll, the heavens shall resound with joyous celebration, and the angels shall make merry.'*

*~ 2 Hesitations 3:21 🙄 📖*

You won't find that in the Bible; just checking to see if you were paying attention! But here's the point - Just by reading this page, you're walking tall into this calling and about to rock this whole preschool thing. God is smiling!



## TLDR: Remember This

*Children will remember how you made them feel long after anything you tried to teach.*

Your kindness will show them God is kind ❤️ and your patience will show them His love. On those days when your patience is thin, remember that God's grace covers you both—you are not alone in this.

In the child's mind, we become the human example of God's feelings about them.

**YES**, it's a **BIG ASK**, but if you're reading this paper, you are the right person. You've got this, and we're in it together!



# Before Your First Sunday

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Keep your lessons and expectations flexible - some weeks you may have 2 kids, others 10. That's normal in churches of all sizes.

## Pray and Prepare

- Review your lesson and gather supplies in advance.
- Familiarize yourself with church safety procedures.
- Know who to contact for help or questions. You are the "new eyes" who often notice things we overlook, so don't be shy.

## Classroom Setup

- Create a welcoming environment (soft worship music helps).
- Check that supplies are ready and safely stored.
- Post the allergies list where you can see it.
- Set up a simple "parent zone" viewing area.
- Consider a designated quiet or calming area with soft seating and sensory tools.
- These are ideal setups - adapt to your space and make improvements over time.

## First Day Focus

- Arrive 15+ minutes early to center yourself
- Before the children arrive, pray over the classroom and for the students by name. Dedicate the space and time in Jesus' name.
- Greet each family warmly.
- Learn names quickly (both parents and children).

# The Big Three Principles

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## Safety First, Last, and In Between

- Always follow your church safety rules. Even in family-sized churches, parents will understand that safety is not optional.
- Use proper check-in/check-out procedures.
- Keep emergency info readily accessible.

## Stay Positive and Personal

- Preschoolers learn by play, so have fun!
- Your gentle tone reflects God's love.
- Celebrate effort: "I see you working so hard!"
- Share simple prayers: "Thank you, God, for (child's name)."

## Simplify Everything

- Focus on core truths: God loves us, and Jesus is our friend.
- Use your church's preferred Bible translation for scripture readings or the story Bible recommended by your director.
- Use clear, brief instructions.
- Use visuals along with verbal instructions.
- When in doubt, less is more.

# Simple Self-Care Strategies

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## During Class

- Keep water nearby.
- Use bathroom breaks when helpers arrive.
- Take deep breaths as needed.
- Remember to smile.

## Weekly Preparation

- For smaller churches: Create a simple rotation between 2-3 families to ensure coverage.
- Review lessons early and gather supplies ahead.
- Connect with other teachers.
- Rest well Saturday night.

# Nurture Your Spiritual Life

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Ministry is a calling but shouldn't replace loving God and your family. It's easy to get so busy *doing* for God that we neglect *being* with God.

## Put Jesus First

No matter how busy, you can find small ways to prioritize your relationship with Jesus. Make time for prayer and Bible reading. You can't pour from an empty cup.

## Don't Let Family Time Slide

Be present with your children and spouse. They are your first ministry. Set healthy boundaries. Learn to say "no" when necessary.

## Self Care Is Not Selfish

It's okay to take breaks and prioritize your well-being. Remember, even Jesus took time to rest and be alone with the Father.

A thriving spiritual life is the foundation for effective ministry. When you are connected to God and your loved ones, you'll have more to offer the children you serve.

# Safety & Emergency Basics

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Many churches share the following “best practices” for children’s ministry safety: always be aware of your local church policy.

- Safe & Visible Spaces: Many churches install half-doors or windowed doors in children's areas, ensuring teachers and children can be seen while maintaining a secure environment.
- Two Adults Rule: Always have at least two adults present in the classroom. Coordinate with hall monitors and greeters if needed.
- Check-In/Check-Out: Ensure all children are signed in/out by an approved adult.
- Allergy Awareness: Know the children’s allergies and keep the list visible.
- First Aid Readiness: Locate the first aid kit and emergency contacts before class starts.

## Emergency Protocols:

- Stay Calm: Prioritize safety and reassure children if something happens.
- Minor Issues: Apply basic first aid and notify parents afterward.
- Serious Emergencies: Call 911 immediately and inform your ministry leader.
- Child Safety Note: Teachers are required by law to report signs of abuse or neglect. If concerned, speak with your ministry leader.

## Contact Information:

Children’s Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Director: \_\_\_\_\_

# Building Trust with Families

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- Greet families warmly at drop-off and pickup with a smile 😊.
- Share one positive moment about their child from class.
  - "Emily enjoyed the story today, she's so smart!"
  - "Willy loves to sing and do the motions!"
- Address any questions or concerns kindly and briefly.
- Keep conversations about children private—significant concerns? Direct parents to your ministry leader.

## Supporting All Children

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💡 Tip: Every child develops at their own pace. Stay flexible and offer lots of encouragement!

### Quick Age Tips

- 3-year-olds: Keep it moving, simple, and fun
- 4-year-olds: Use their imagination and questions
- 5-year-olds: Let them be helpers and leaders
- Note: In small groups, activities can be adapted for mixed ages – older children often enjoy helping younger ones learn.

### Including Everyone

- Watch for signs of overwhelm (e.g., covering ears, withdrawing).
- Offer choices: "Would you like to color or build blocks?"
- Create a quiet corner with soft toys for overwhelmed children.

# FAQs: Because You're Not the Only One Asking

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Here's a list of common questions we hear about preschool ministry, and we hope these answers will get you on the right track. As always, talk to your leadership team if you need additional guidance or support.

## What if I only have 2–3 children some weeks?

That's completely normal in family-sized churches! Small groups allow for deeper connections and more personalized teaching. Adapt activities into partner games or one-on-one moments. Remember, Jesus said, "Where two or three gather in my name, I am there!" (Matthew 18:20). Some weeks you might have more kids, so keep your plans flexible and embrace the intimacy of these small gatherings.

## What if a child is crying or hesitant to join in?

Stay calm, gentle, and welcoming. Offer the child a choice: "Would you like to color quietly, or sit with me while we listen?" Sometimes just observing helps them feel more comfortable. You could also involve them by saying, "I need a special helper—could you hold this for me?" Always reassure them: "We're so glad you're here!" Small classes make it easier to give extra attention while keeping others engaged.

## What if a child refuses to share or take turns?

Use simple phrases like, "It's [Name]'s turn now; then it will be yours." Celebrate positive behavior: "Thank you for waiting so patiently!" For younger children, distraction or redirection often works well: "Let's play with this toy while we wait!" Remember, sharing is a skill they're learning, and your calm, gentle guidance helps reinforce this important lesson.



## What if a child has special needs?

What a blessing to include everyone! Connect with the child's parents or guardians to learn how best to support them. Adapt activities as needed—for example, offering sensory-friendly materials or quieter spaces. Small touches, like giving extra time or simplifying instructions, can make a big difference. Show every child that they are loved, valued, and part of God's family.

## What if a child asks a question I can't answer?

That's okay! Say something like, "What a great question! I'm not sure, but I'll find out and let you know." This shows humility and models a spirit of learning. You can also explore the question with them: "What do you think?" Remember, it's okay to say, "Let's ask Pastor [Name] for help!"

## How can I incorporate spiritual elements into my teaching?

Nurturing spiritual growth can be simple and fun! Start and end lessons with short prayers, thanking God for His love and the children. Share Bible stories using props or puppets and connect the lessons to their daily lives. Sing worship songs with movements, focusing on God's love and care. Emphasize kindness and love through words and actions, helping children reflect God's heart. Your loving and nurturing presence is a spiritual lesson in itself.

## How do I handle challenging behaviors in the classroom?

Challenging behaviors are a normal part of working with preschoolers. Stay calm and structured, offering clear expectations and consistent routines. Redirect their attention to a new activity, and use positive reinforcement for good behavior. If a child becomes upset, gently offer comfort or a quiet

space.

## What if I'm teaching multiple ages together?

This is common in smaller churches and can be a blessing! Focus on the same Bible truth but allow for different levels of engagement. Older children often enjoy helping younger ones, whether during crafts or group games. For example, let older kids do detailed drawing while younger ones explore simple shapes. Adapt as needed and trust that God is working through you to reach every child.

## What if I don't have all the suggested supplies?

Don't worry—simplify! Use basic supplies like crayons, paper, or blocks that work for multiple lessons. Substitute materials creatively (e.g., draw instead of gluing shapes). Remember, the most valuable tools are your smile and God's Word. Many teachers keep a basic supply box ready for any lesson. The heart of the message matters more than perfect execution.

## What if I run out of time during the lesson?

Prioritize the Bible story and prayer. It's okay to skip or shorten non-essential activities like crafts or games. Conversations in small groups often flow naturally, and those connections are just as meaningful as planned activities. Leave room for God to guide the time and remember, it's the love you share that leaves a lasting impression.

**Suggestions?** We're always looking to improve this guide to better support you. If you have ideas, feedback, or ways to make it even more helpful, please let us know! We truly value your input and love hearing both positive and constructive suggestions. Reach out by email - [tony@sundayschool.store](mailto:tony@sundayschool.store)

# From Our Family to Yours

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Just like those seemingly perfect Christmas photos, the reality of family – and ministry – is way more interesting!

**The Sunday School Store** is a family-led ministry born from our experiences in small churches, mission work in Haiti, and the messy, beautiful journey of family life.

Preschool ministry is no different—full of spilled glue, endless energy, occasional tears, and beautiful chaos! But it's in these moments, amidst the glitter and wiggly bodies, that God's grace shines the brightest.

We know families—and churches—come in all shapes and sizes, and none of us are perfect. But through Jesus, we find forgiveness, belonging, and a place in His perfect family. Together, let's point the next generation to this incredible love—a love that heals, transforms, and lasts forever.

We are praying for you and are confident that God will use your faithful service to make a big impact in the lives of these little children and their families. Thank you for being part of this important work.



**Tony Kummer**

*The Sunday School Store,  
Christmas 2024*