Children's Ministry Launch Kit

15 checklists, worksheets and forms — from first conversation to first Sunday

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The companion guide walks every page of this kit, step by step:

faithfulkids.app/blog/how-to-start-a-childrens-ministry

Free to print, photocopy and adapt for ministry use. Not legal advice — have your safety policy reviewed by your insurer, your denomination's safeguarding office, and local counsel. Requirements vary by jurisdiction.

Launch Timeline

Twelve weeks from decision to first public Sunday

PART 1 · PLAN

WEEKS 1-4 • PLAN

- [ ] Write the one-sentence mission (a volunteer can repeat it)
- [ ] List the actual children and ages — structure follows this list
- [ ] Leadership meeting: permission, protection (policy adoption), provision (budget + rooms)
- [ ] Choose ONE opening format you can staff twice over

WEEKS 2-6 • PROTECT

- [ ] Draft the child safety policy (page 03)
- [ ] Send the draft to your insurer / denomination safeguarding office for review
- [ ] Leadership formally adopts the final policy

WEEKS 4-8 • PEOPLE

- [ ] Write role descriptions (page 04); make the ten-names list; personal asks
- [ ] Screen every volunteer: application, references, background check (page 05)
- [ ] Policy read-and-sign + shadow Sunday for each volunteer (page 06)

WEEKS 5-10 • PROGRAM

- [ ] Compare curricula on the grid (page 08); decide the session shape (page 09)
- [ ] Budget (page 10), supplies (page 11), rooms, check-in table

WEEKS 10-12 • LAUNCH

- [ ] Whole-team training walkthrough; rehearse check-in and emergencies
- [ ] Two or three soft-launch Sundays with core families
- [ ] First public Sunday — one leader floats with no room assignment
- [ ] Debrief the same week; fix the top three problems only

NOTES / DATES COMMITTED

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Age-Group Planning Worksheet

Fewer, fuller groups beat more, emptier ones

PART 1 · PLAN

THE CHILDREN WE ACTUALLY HAVE

Name	Age	Family / contact	Notes (allergies, needs)

PROPOSED GROUPS

Group	Ages	Room	Adults needed	Teacher(s)

THE RULE OF THUMB

Split a group only when it outgrows its space or its teacher — not because a chart says so. Every room needs two unrelated screened adults regardless of size; use the ratio your insurer and denomination specify for each age band.

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Child Safety Policy Outline

Draft here — then your insurer and denomination review it

PART 2 · PROTECT

THE NON-NEGOTIABLES (standard across major safeguarding programs)

- [ ] Two unrelated adults per room, always — no adult ever alone with a child
- [ ] Screening before serving: application + references + interview + background check
- [ ] Waiting period before serving with children (commonly ~6 months regular attendance)
- [ ] Check-in with matching pick-up (numbered tag or signature) — no exceptions
- [ ] Open, observable rooms: windows or open doors, never closed unobservable spaces
- [ ] Bathroom policy: escort to the door, pairs for older kids, two adults for any assistance
- [ ] Written incident reports (page 14), shared with the parent the same day
- [ ] Mandatory reporting: the policy names WHO reports suspected abuse to WHICH civil authority
- [ ] Annual 45-minute re-training with signature on file

VERIFY LOCALLY BEFORE ADOPTING — DO NOT COPY NUMBERS FROM THE INTERNET

Adult-to-child ratios per age band · background-check type and renewal schedule · medication and allergy procedures. Recommendations differ and some are regulated — adopt YOUR insurer's and denomination's numbers, and write them in below.

Our ratios (per insurer/denomination): Nursery ____:____ Preschool ____:____ Elementary ____:____

ADOPTION

Adopted by (board/pastor)	Date	Annual review due
_____	_____	_____

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Volunteer Role Cards

People say yes to clear jobs — hand the card to the person you're asking

PART 3 · PEOPLE

TEACHER *Prepares and leads the session. The storyteller.*

- Owns the lesson for their Sunday (prep ~30-45 min)
- Leads story + response time
- Serves 2-3 Sundays/month, one season at a time

HELPER *The second adult. Zero preparation required.*

- Welcome, seating, crowd care, bathroom escorts
- Runs the arrive-and-settle activity
- The easiest first yes for a new volunteer

CHECK-IN COORDINATOR *The desk. The tags. The roster.*

- Signs every child in and out, matches pick-up tags
- Keeps the allergy list current and posted
- First face a visiting family sees

FLOATER / SUB *On call for gaps.*

- Fills any role on short notice
- Carries the swap list
- Perfect for experienced members with variable schedules

COORDINATOR (season 2+) *Owns the rota. The succession plan.*

- Builds the monthly schedule (page 07)
- Monthly 15-minute check-ins with each volunteer
- The ministry survives its founder because this role exists

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Volunteer Screening Tracker

Every adult, every step — including the pastor's spouse

PART 3 · PEOPLE

One row per applicant. A volunteer serves only when every column is dated. The friction is the point — it is the message that this church takes its children seriously.

Name	App.	Refs ✓	Bkgd check	Policy signed	Shadow Sun.	Cleared by

Background-check type and renewal schedule follow your local law and insurer. Diary the renewals — a lapsed check is an unscreened volunteer.

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Training Checklist & Sign-Off

One walkthrough before anyone serves — about 90 minutes

PART 3 · PEOPLE

THE WALKTHROUGH

- [ ] Mission sentence — can they say it back?
- [ ] Tour: rooms, bathrooms, exits, first-aid kit, supply bins
- [ ] Safety policy read-through + questions answered
- [ ] Two-adult rule and bathroom policy rehearsed OUT LOUD
- [ ] Check-in / pick-up procedure practiced at the actual desk (page 13)
- [ ] Incident form (page 14): where it lives, when to use it, who calls the parent
- [ ] Emergency basics: exits, meeting point, who calls whom
- [ ] The session shape (page 09): arrive & settle → story → respond → send
- [ ] Rota, swap procedure, group chat joined
- [ ] Shadow Sunday scheduled with an experienced volunteer

SIGN-OFF

Volunteer signature	Trainer signature	Date
Shadow Sunday completed (date)	Cleared to serve from (date)	First rota date

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Monthly Rota Template

PART 3 · PEOPLE

Nobody serves more than 2-3 Sundays a month; publish a month ahead

MONTH: _____

Role	Sun 1	Sun 2	Sun 3	Sun 4	Sun 5
Teacher					
Helper					
Check-in					
Floater					

MONTH: _____

Role	Sun 1	Sun 2	Sun 3	Sun 4	Sun 5
Teacher					
Helper					
Check-in					
Floater					

Swaps: volunteers arrange their own swap in the group chat and tell the coordinator — the rota stays true. Thank-yous: twice a year, publicly and specifically. Burned-out volunteers don't resign loudly; they just fade.

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Curriculum Comparison Grid

Score 1-5 per line — compare up to three options side by side

PART 4 · PROGRAM

Criterion (score 1-5)	Option A: _____	Option B: _____	Option C: _____
Scripture-first (real stories, chapter & verse)			
Rookie-proof on a bad week (prep < 45 min)			
Whole-story scope, Genesis → Revelation			
True cost: license + books + supplies			
Something goes home to parents			
Fits OUR actual age groups			
Review built in (quizzes — shows what stuck)			
TOTAL			

THE FREE OPTIONS TO PUT IN A COLUMN

Faithful Kids church access — free for churches and Sunday schools (not a trial): 300+ short Bible video episodes, each ~2 minutes, each ending with a quiz and reflection, Genesis to Revelation. faithfulkids.app/churches

Other free libraries reviewed honestly (competitors we respect included): faithfulkids.app/blog/free-bible-curriculum-for-kids-ministry

HOW TO SCORE HONESTLY

Score with real material in hand: teach ONE sample lesson from each finalist to real kids before deciding. An hour of sampling beats a month of reading reviews — and the kids' faces are data.

NOTES FROM SAMPLING

Session Plan — 45 Minutes

PART 4 · PROGRAM

Four beats, ages 5-11 · left column is the pattern, right column is YOUR Sunday

0:00-0:10 ARRIVE & SETTLE

Activity sheets on tables as kids trickle in (word search / coloring page matching today's story). Check-in runs in parallel.

THIS WEEK:

0:10-0:25 THE STORY

Tell it or play it — a 2-minute video episode anchors it well; then re-tell the key moment yourself. Open a real Bible and show where it lives.

THIS WEEK:

0:25-0:40 RESPOND

Pick ONE: discussion, review game or quiz, or craft tied to the story. Oldest kids get jobs — read the verse, run the game.

THIS WEEK:

0:40-0:45 SEND

One takeaway sentence, said twice. Pray. Hand out the dinner-table question.

THIS WEEK:

Materials needed this week:

Dinner-table question to send home:

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Startup Budget Worksheet

PART 4 · PROGRAM

If money makes screening slip, the budget is wrong — checks go IN the budget

ONE-TIME SETUP

Item	Notes	Estimate	Actual
Supply bins + starter supplies	one rolling bin per room	$	$
Check-in materials	tags, clipboards, signage	$	$
Room setup	first-aid kits, rugs, shelving	$	$
Safety printing	policy copies, forms, cards	$	$

RECURRING

Item	Notes	Estimate	Actual
Background checks	____ volunteers × $____ (+ renewals)	$	$
Snacks	monthly	$	$
Craft + printing	monthly	$	$
Curriculum	annual — free options exist (page 08)	$	$
Volunteer appreciation	twice a year, for real	$	$

	FIRST-YEAR TOTAL	

Ask leadership for a named budget line, even a small one. A ministry funded by whoever-remembers runs out the first busy month.

Supplies Checklist

One rolling bin per room beats a locked cupboard someone has the key to

PART 4 · PROGRAM

EVERY ROOM'S BIN

- [ ] Bibles kids can handle (not the heirloom)
- [ ] Crayons, markers, pencils
- [ ] Paper + construction paper
- [ ] Child-safe scissors, glue sticks
- [ ] Name tag stickers + marker
- [ ] Wet wipes + paper towels
- [ ] A printed stack of backup activities
- [ ] Masking tape (fixes everything)

CHECK-IN DESK

- [ ] Roster + sign-in sheets
- [ ] Matching pick-up tags or stickers
- [ ] Allergy list (posted for adults)
- [ ] Pens that work
- [ ] Incident report forms (page 14)
- [ ] Parent welcome letters (page 12)
- [ ] First-aid kit location sign
- [ ] Coordinator's phone — charged

THE BAD-WEEK DRAWER (print these now, need them later)

Free, photocopy-friendly, no license: word searches (faithfulkids.app/printables/bible-word-search) · coloring pages (/printables/bible-coloring-pages) · Bible maps (/printables/bible-maps) · trivia pack (/printables/bible-trivia-pack). The Sunday the plan falls apart, this drawer is the plan.

Parent Welcome Letter

Adapt freely; keep it one page; send before launch AND stock the desk

PART 5 · LAUNCH

Dear families,

Starting [DATE], [CHURCH NAME] is opening a children's ministry for kids ages [AGES] during [SERVICE/TIME]. Here's what Sunday looks like for your child:

- CHECK-IN at [PLACE] — you sign them in and keep the matching pick-up tag.
- THE STORY — a Bible story told at their level, straight from Scripture.
- RESPOND — a game, craft or quiz that makes it stick.
- PICK-UP at [TIME/PLACE] — only to the person holding the matching tag.

Every adult serving has completed an application, references, a background check, and our child safety training — and no fewer than two screened adults are with the children at all times. Our full safety policy is available anytime; just ask.

Each week we'll send one line about what we taught and one question to ask at dinner. That question is the most important thing we do — it puts the conversation in your house, where faith actually grows.

Allergies, special needs, questions: [NAME], [CONTACT]. We can't wait to meet your kids.

— The [CHURCH NAME] Children's Ministry Team

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Check-In & Pick-Up Cards

Print, cut, tape to the desk — the procedure survives volunteer swaps

PART 5 · LAUNCH

CHECK-IN — EVERY CHILD, EVERY WEEK

- [ ] Parent/guardian signs the child in (name + time)
- [ ] Child gets a name tag; parent gets the MATCHING pick-up tag
- [ ] First visit? Collect: contact number, allergies, authorized adults
- [ ] Allergy? Flag the name tag and tell today's teacher directly
- [ ] Count heads after check-in closes; give the number to the teacher

PICK-UP — THE TAG RULES, NOT THE FACE

- [ ] Release ONLY to the adult holding the matching tag
- [ ] No tag? Check the authorized list + ID, call the signing parent
- [ ] “I'm her uncle” is not a tag — kindly hold the child, call the parent
- [ ] Sign out with time; tags back in the box
- [ ] Two adults stay until the last child is picked up — always

BATHROOM — TAPE THIS ONE BY THE DOOR

- [ ] Young children: escorted TO the door, never inside
- [ ] Older kids go in pairs
- [ ] Any assisted situation: two adults, door open
- [ ] Teacher is told every time a child leaves the room

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Incident Report Form

Anything beyond a band-aid gets written down and told to the parent TODAY

PART 5 · LAUNCH

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location (room/area): _____

Child's name: _____ Age/group: _____

Adults present (names):

WHAT HAPPENED (facts only — what was seen and heard)

ACTION TAKEN (first aid, comfort, separation, etc.)

PARENT / GUARDIAN NOTIFIED

Notified by: _____ Method: _____ Date/time: _____

IF THIS IS A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

If this incident involves suspected abuse or neglect, follow the mandatory-reporting procedure in the safety policy — the report goes to the civil authority it names, not only up the church ladder. This form does not replace that report.

Completed by (signature) | Reviewed by (coordinator/pastor) | Date

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First-Sunday Readiness

Run it the week before — then again Sunday at 7 a.m.

PART 5 · LAUNCH

THE WEEK BEFORE

- [ ] Rota confirmed — two unrelated screened adults per room, subs named
- [ ] Lesson prepped; backup printed activity in every bin (page 11)
- [ ] Video/audio tested in the room it will play in (not a different room)
- [ ] Parent letters sent; welcome copies at the desk
- [ ] Exits walked; meeting point agreed; phone numbers exchanged
- [ ] Debrief scheduled for THIS week (not “sometime”)

SUNDAY MORNING

Time	What	Who
T-60 min	Rooms unlocked, bins out, signage up, temperature sane	
T-45 min	Check-in desk set: roster, tags, pens, allergy list, forms	
T-30 min	All volunteers present — walk the bathroom policy once	
T-15 min	Doors open; floater takes position (no room assignment)	
During	Head count to teacher after check-in closes	
After	Every child out by matching tag; two adults until the last	
Same week	Debrief: fix the top three problems, ignore the rest	

It will not go perfectly. That is fine. The children will remember that someone built them a room in the church — everything else is iteration.