

CHILDREN'S FORMATION AND SAFE PRACTICES

FELLOWSHIP OF HOPE MENNONITE CHURCH, Elkhart, IN, Nov. 2021

INTRODUCTION: WELCOMING JESUS and the CHILDREN

CHILDREN: WELCOMED / LOVED / PRECIOUS Welcoming each child is a holy ministry of accompaniment and receiving Jesus into our midst! "Whoever welcomes a little child in my name, welcomes me," (Matt. 18:5). Jesus freely modeled for us God our Heavenly Parent's care for all children by defending, empowering, and showing their belovedness, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kin-dom of heaven belongs to such as these," (Matt. 19:14).

CHILDREN: VULNERABLE / SPIRITUALLY SENSITIVE/ WORTHY Safely nurturing children brings praise and honor to God. By his own passionate example, Jesus insisted that the place of worship be a haven for the vulnerable ones, including children. "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the leaders saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant... And Jesus said to them, "... have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have ordained perfect praise?'" (Matt. 21:12-16)

CHILDREN: HUMBLE / SPONTANEOUS As in the Temple, childlike qualities may erupt in our worship setting! Jesus encourages us adults to "become like little children," so we too can experience the 'kin-dom' of heaven (Matt.18:3). Children show us how to come to God in humility, and freedom, the same qualities that give them their vibrancy, creativity, resilience and joy.

CHILDREN: CURIOUS/ TRUSTING Securely seated in the Temple, the youth Jesus was found listening and questioning the teachers (Lk. 2:41-52). Attending to the total well being of children and youth provides the opening for trust, spiritual formation and childlike initiative.

Claiming the preciousness of all God's children, Fellowship of Hope embraces the commitment to protect and nurture those entrusted to our congregation. In this light the Children's Formation Group commends the Dove's Nest* Child Protection policies to: 1) Practice our belovedness, making Fellowship of Hope *gatherings* and *space* safe environments for the nurture of children and youth. 2) Once a year provide Dove's Nest training for all adults in the congregation and the Circle of Grace, a personal safety curriculum, for children.

We believe that establishing safe practices are important proactive steps in protecting our children, youth, and adults from potential abuse or accusations.

Following are the PRIVILEGES OF THE CHILD and COMMITMENT TO SAFE CARE OF CHILDREN, a summary of the complete CHILD PROTECTION POLICY found at the end of this church website page,

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*Credits: Dove's Nest Resources are found at info@DovesNest.net Copyright © 2021
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PRIVILEGES OF THE CHILD at FELOWSHIP OF HOPE

Elkhart, IN, November 2021



1. To be welcomed in a safe environment.
2. To be called by name by each adult.
3. To be a valued person in the congregation.
4. To give answers without being laughed at.
5. To receive appropriate words and touch of affirmation.
6. To be an active participant in worship and the congregation, not on the sidelines.
7. To move among us, within the care of each of us.
8. To be nurtured to faith by the Christ like love, care, and example of each adult.
9. To be invited into the biblical story in age friendly settings.
10. To have one's birthday celebrated in the congregation.

Credits: (Adapted from "Privileges of the Child" at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, February, 1992)

Commitment to Safe Care of Children and Youth

FELLOWSHIP OF HOPE MENNONITE CHURCH

Elkhart, IN, November 2021

Claiming the preciousness of all God's children, we adults attending Fellowship of Hope share in the responsibility of nurturing our children in a healthy and safe environment.

WE COVENANT TO:

Respond to and engage with children in a way that honors and affirms their belovedness. (Examples: Know their names and birthday, show interest, read a story, play, talk, and interact with them.)

Offer affirmation and support to parents.

Be alert and sensitive to cues given by the child, to what makes a child uncomfortable.

Ask for permission to show affirming touch (side hug, hand on shoulder, pat on head) and respect a "No," or moving away by the child. No total body-to body hug or kissing. No touching of private areas,(except for diapering with parents permission).

Redirect a child with respectful words and ways.

Give careful consideration of gifts when matching volunteers to children's activities.

Make the church building safe and secure. There is a window in the doors to the rooms being used for children's activities.

Having 2 adults in the room during children's activities is desirable. If this is not possible the door will be left open. Parents are always welcome to visit.

Participate in child safety training when offered in the congregation.

Respond promptly if suspecting a child is being abused or neglected. Notify the **Indiana Department of Child Services' Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1- 800-800-5556**. Immediately inform the Pastor and an Elder.

DATE _____ SIGNATURES OF COMMITMENT on back side _____