



# A CHILD- FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH

---

NAZARENE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES

## **A CHILD-FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH IS . . .**

A community of believers---men, women, youth, elderly, and children ---who believe in God the creator, in Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and in the Holy Spirit who enables them to live in love and serve as responsible Christian disciples in the world.

A place of worship where children experience God's love, feel welcome and included in every activity, and are given opportunities to grow in their faith.

An institution that welcomes and cares for children regardless of age, race, color, ethnic origin, language, religion, gender and sexual orientation, political opinions, disability, or social status;

Promotes and protects the rights and well-being of children in the churches, in impoverished communities, and everywhere;

Offers services to children in the church, provides opportunities for their growth and development, and nurtures them to love and serve others in the name of Jesus the Christ;

Offers services to children in the community to help meet their needs and promote and protect their rights;

Offers services and protection to children at risk and children in especially difficult circumstances, and serves as advocate for children.

## **THE CHILD-FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH IS COMMITTED TO . . .**

### **Promoting and protecting the rights and well-being children.**

The church recognizes children as full human beings in their own right, but beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations (1). It therefore makes promotions of children's rights and the well-being of children a priority in its agenda.

### **Educating the congregation about the needs of the children.**

The child-friendly local church keeps the congregation informed about the needs and situations of children in the community and around the country, and how the church may respond to these needs.

## **Making church facilities safe and welcoming for children and families**

The child-friendly local church educates the congregation on child abuse, and develops policies and procedures for its prevention and treatment.

## **Helping children grow as faithful disciples**

The child-friendly local church offers a regular program for the faith formation of children and their families. It provides varied learning opportunities in all aspects of life, and nurtures them in the practice of their faith.

## **Involving children in the life of the church**

The child-friendly local church encourages the meaningful participation of children in the life and work of the church. It listens to their views, gives them leadership functions in the worship service as they are able, includes them in the members' home celebrations, and involves them in decision-making process, especially on matters affecting them.

## **Advocating for legislation and public policies that help improve children's lives**

The child-friendly local church helps shape public policy and influence public opinion to promote children's right and well-beings, not just on election time but all the time. It does so by engaging public officials in dialogue, getting them informed about children's issues, involving them in children's programs, or making them accountable for their obligations to children.

## **Reaching out to children in especially difficult circumstances**

The child-friendly local church reaches out in loving service to children in need of special protection. It offers services or supports organizations serving this special group of children, educates the congregation and challenges members to advocate for them.

## Relating to children around the world

The child-friendly local church cares for all children and considers all children as its own. Its concern reaches out to children around the world by sharing information, sending letters and gifts, and participating in worldwide campaigns for and on behalf of children.

## Building administrative supports for ministry with children

The child-friendly local church provides adequate administrative support to its children's ministry program. Child-friendly policies are in place, workers with children are given training and encouragement, and members are challenged to work together towards making their local church child-friendly.

### THE CHILD-FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH RATING FORM

#### A. Educating the Congregation about the Needs of Children (Complete at least two)

1. Assess the needs of children in your church and community by forming a Children's Ministry Committee Working Group, or Task Force
2. Celebrate Children's Month or Children's Day.
3. Hold study session on the needs of children.
4. Have a sermon series on the rights and needs of children.
5. Hold a series of study sessions on children's rights and the needs of children in your community.
6. Hold a series of educational sessions on new studies and researches made on the cognitive development of children.
7. Sponsor or start a "Child Watch" program in your community.
8. Keep the congregation informed regarding children's needs, and the church's means of responding to these needs, through bulletin announcements, newsletters, and / or bulletin boards.
9. Send your pastor and / or your church staff to continuing education events on ministry to children.
10. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. Making Church Facilities Safe and Welcoming for Children and Families (Complete at least one)**

1. Make the church environment hospitable to all children.
2. Evaluate your church facilities and ensure that safety precautions are in place.
3. Set up, or review and implement policies regarding childcare facilities to ensure these are safe and hospitable to children.
4. Put up a children's corner or nursery/toddler room.
5. Have child-size furniture and play apparatus in the educational centers.
6. Recruit and train volunteers to look after the safety of children during worship and all the time they are in church.
7. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **C. Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse ( Complete at least one)**

1. Develop policies and procedures for the prevention of child abuse.
2. Hold adult education series on identifying and responding to different kinds of child abuse.
3. Obtain and use age-appropriate abuse prevention curriculum for children.
4. Organize parent support groups and offer parenting classes regarding child abuse.
5. Provide safe corridors for children walking to and from school.
6. Sponsor before or after school programs that provide safe haven for children.
7. Teach Gender Sensitivity to children.
8. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **D. Help Children Grow as Faithful Disciples (Complete at least any two)**

1. Plan, implement, and evaluate local church programs for the faith formation of children.
2. Provide a regular and dynamic church school program for children, parents, and child caregivers.
3. Provide new opportunities for children to understand and practice the meaning of being disciples.
4. Help children understand and participate in rites of baptism and the celebration of the Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.
5. Include children in understanding and participating in the stewardship program of your church.
6. Have a regular Vacation Bible School program.

7. Offer study sessions for children using child focus curriculum.
8. Provide human sexuality lessons or learning experiences for older children, younger youth, and their parents.
9. Provide learning opportunities for parents on children's faithful discipleship.
10. Carefully match adult faith-parents and child-learners for Christian discipleship.
11. Design and offer study courses for parents on faith development in the home.
12. Others \_\_\_\_\_

### **E. Involving Children in the Life of the Church (Complete at least one)**

1. Regularly involve children in specific ways in worship services.
2. Help children and adult prepare for the two worship of God at home and in church.
3. Have children regularly take part in worship as worship leaders.
4. Include children and youth as members in all church committees.
5. Provide a children's column in your church newsletter, or have a special children's newsletter prepared by children themselves.
6. Have regular seasonal educational and worship activities for children (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter).
7. Institute meaningful multigenerational activities and programs.
8. Include children in faith-shaping and worship activities in church members' homes, such as birthday celebration, memorial services, etc.
9. Others \_\_\_\_\_

### **F. Reaching Out to Children in the Community (Complete at least any three)**

1. Conduct religious instruction for children in the public schools.
2. Offers regular tutoring and mentoring program for school children.
3. Provide supervised "before school or after school programs" for school children.
4. Offer a weekly or monthly "Parents Day (or Evening) Out."
5. Offer drug prevention programs for neighborhood children and youth.
6. Offer Vacation Church School classes to community children.
7. Sponsor a Family Health Fair.
8. Provide school supply kits to neighborhood children whose parents can't afford these.
9. Sponsor community children to attend camps along with the church children.
10. Sponsor summer day camp programs for community children.
11. Develop a community garden on church property for neighborhood families.
12. Offer free music or art lessons for community children.

13. Start a "lending closet" of certain items occasionally needed by families.
14. Provide transportation to needy families to prenatal clinics or for medical attention.
15. Sponsor partnerships between new and experienced parents.
16. Start a mobile library for children in the community.
17. Start a toy library for needy children.
18. Prepare a master list of all children in the community.
19. Conduct a needs assessment of these children (for use in program planning).
20. Others \_\_\_\_\_

### **G. Advocating for Legislation and Public Policies that Help Improve Children's Lives (Complete at least any two)**

1. Join a child advocacy network.
2. Publish child advocacy information and action alerts in your church newsletter.
3. Sponsor a monthly forum on legislation and "offering of letters" (Letters to the editor, public officials, etc.) on issues affecting children.
4. Set up a child advocacy information center or put up a bulletin board in church.
5. Hold a community-wide voter registration drive before election time.
6. Arrange free transportation to voting polls.
7. Challenge candidates for public offices to put children and their families as priorities in their concerns by posing questions to them, or presenting your church or community children's agenda.
8. Hold a "Candidates" Forum on Children and Families.
9. Participate in Child watch programs.
10. Others \_\_\_\_\_

### **H. Reaching Out to Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (Complete at least any two)**

1. Hold a study session on the roots of poverty and how these affect children.
2. Sponsor educational events or a forum series on the impact of war on children.
3. Sponsor educational events on the issue of child labor.
4. Sponsor educational events on the issue of child prostitution.
5. Sponsor educational events with and about street children.
6. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **I. Relating to Children Around the World (Complete at least any two).**

1. Make a study about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Comparing God's view about children and the CRC.
2. Collect stories about children around the world and post them on your church bulletin board, or use them in reports to the congregation.
3. Study the needs of children around the world, and send gifts to them through the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.
4. Have an annual study program on Mission for the Children of the Church.
5. Encourage children to relate with children around the world by becoming pen pals with them.
6. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **J. Building Administrative Supports for Ministry with Children (Complete #1 and at least one other)**

1. Establish a children's Advisory Committee to oversee the children's ministry program of your congregation, as interpreted or implemented by the Children's Ministry Committee, Children's Task Force or Working Group.
2. Evaluate your congregation's ministry with children and make three improvements.
3. Evaluate and improve teacher training for workers with children.
4. Assign responsibility for oversight of children's role as advocate for children and poor families.
5. Hold annual church council meeting to hear from all committees on work with children.
6. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW CHILD FRIENDLY IS YOUR CHURCH?

In rating your local church, remember that a church's child friendliness is not only seen in the congregation's activities or policies but more so in the lifestyle of the members, individually and collectively. Making your local church child-friendly, therefore, is a continuing activity and the collective responsibility of the whole congregation, not only of the church workers or the officers.

Go over the Rating Form Carefully and tick (put a check mark) each item that your congregation did or implement. How did you fare?

**YOU ARE A CHILD-FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH** if you have done the minimum requirement for a child-friendly local church.

**YOU ARE AN OUTSTANDING CHILD FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH** if you have done at least 5 activities more than the minimum requirements for a child-friendly local church.

**YOU ARE A MODEL CHILD-FRIENDLY LOCAL CHURCH** if your church got a rating of OUTSTANDING for 3 consecutive years.

Congratulations!

Jesus Blesses Little Children  
(Mark 10:13-16)

Some people brought their children to Jesus for him to lay his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to the disciples, "Let the Children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these, I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them.

Stephen/PCMN/Feb2004

