

St. Patrick Catholic Community

Little Lambs Nursery

Parent Handbook

Policies and procedures for nursery services

“...permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” - Mark 10:14

Important Contacts

Church Office: 214-348-7380

Associate Director of Children & Family Ministry: Erin Evans

Phone: 214-341-1607

Email: E.Evans@StPatrickDallas.org

Child Abuse Hotline:

Phone: 800-582-4000

Website: txabusehotline.org

TX Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS):

Phone: 800-582-6036

Website: dfps.state.tx.us

Purpose of the Little Lambs Nursery Program

What is Little Lambs Nursery?

The Little Lambs Nursery provides childcare for children ages 1 through 3 years of age during the 10:00AM Mass at St. Patrick Catholic Community. The nursery is staffed by a team of at least 2 workers and volunteers from the church community.

Where is Little Lambs Nursery located?

The Little Lambs Nursery is located on the level below the sanctuary. Parents may access the nursery two ways:

- The interior door between the bottom of the ramp to the altar and the chapel.
- The exterior door at the back of the sanctuary by the St. Vincent de Paul Office. Please ring the doorbell to let the staff know you are here. It is advised that you park in the parking lot by the school playground.

The goal of our program:

- To help each child feel comfortable and special.
- To help each child feel secure with adults who care for him/her.
- To help each child have positive feelings about coming to Church.
- To encourage active participation of parents in Mass.

Safety and Registration

Your child's safety while visiting Little Lambs Nursery is our top priority. All our staff and volunteers have completed the mandatory Safe Environment training as well as necessary updates required by the Catholic Diocese of Dallas. Part of the Safe Environment program includes background checks as well as a personal interview.

Before your child attends the nursery, we ask that you fill out our Little Lambs Nursery Registration Form. This provides our staff and volunteers with valuable information to provide the best care for your child as well as important information for our records.

When you bring your child to the nursery, you must sign in your child on the Nursery Registry. When signing in your child, it is necessary to include your cell phone number that you will have with you during Mass. **Your cell phone should then be placed on vibrate** so you can either be called or texted should your child need you during the service. Please be sure to keep your cell phone in a place where you may notice the vibration, in the event you are being called.

When signing in your child on the Nursery Registry, it is extremely important that the information is accurate and complete. Please use the “Special Instructions” space to write anything you feel the caregiver should know about your child during his/her stay at the Little Lambs Nursery.

Parents will be given a “ticket” to take with them to Mass after leaving their child in the Little Lambs Nursery. This “ticket” will serve as a means of identification when returning to pick up their child. Please safeguard this “ticket” while you are attending Mass.

When you return to pick up your child, you will need to sign your child out.

Emergency Evacuation: In the unlikely event that the sanctuary needs to be evacuated due to an emergency, parents will exit the building through the sanctuary doors with the church congregation. Little Lambs Nursery workers exit through the lower staircase doors and will bring the children to the parking lot by the St. Patrick School playground. Parents will walk over to this area to retrieve their child.

General Policies

1. Little Lambs Nursery opens 15 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
2. Children are to be brought to the nursery by their parents and will only be released to their parents once they have been signed out.
3. The Little Lambs Nursery is limited to a maximum of 12 children ages 12 months to 3 years old. Admittance is on a first come, first serve basis. Please plan your arrival accordingly.
4. Parents are **not permitted to leave the St. Patrick campus** while their child is in Little Lambs Nursery. If you need to leave the church property, you must pick up your child and take him/her with you.
5. Parents should pick up their children immediately following the Mass they have been attending.
6. Please have your child’s belongings properly labeled. This includes sippy cups, pacifiers, coats, etc.
7. Children should not bring personal toys to the nursery.
8. Please bring your child in a clean diaper or take them to the restroom before entering the nursery.
 - a. Little Lambs staff and volunteers will not change diapers. If a caregiver notices that your child’s diaper has been soiled, they will call you on the listed phone number to notify you.
 - b. Caregivers will not bring your child to or assist them with toileting. If your child requests to use the restroom, you will be called on the listed phone number to notify you. You will then be able to take your child to the restroom located outside the Little Lambs Nursery room.

- c. If your child is potty trained, please bring a change of clothes or a pair of “pull-ups” in case of an accident. If your child has an accident, you will be called on the listed phone number to take your child to the restroom to be changed.

Health Policies

1. Food is not permitted in the Little Lambs Nursery. Please be sure they are fed before arriving.
2. Children may bring a sippy cup or water bottle to have with them during their stay. Please be sure to label all cups and water bottles.
3. For the protection of your children and the other children, parents are requested not to bring a child who appears to be ill. A child should not be placed in the nursery when any of the following exists:
 - a. Fever (100 degrees or higher) – currently or within the previous 48 hours
 - b. Vomiting or diarrhea
 - c. Significant, persistent nasal drainage which is green or yellow in color
 - d. Common cold
 - e. Sore throat
 - f. Unexplained rash
 - g. Any skin or eye infection
4. Medications cannot be given by the nursery staff or volunteers. Please do not put any type of medication in your child’s sippy cup or water bottle.
5. If a child develops fever or other symptoms of illness (see list of symptoms above), the parent will be called on their cell phone to take the child home.
6. If your child develops an infectious disease (chicken pox, Covid-19, etc) after he/she has been in the nursery, please contact the Associate Director of Children & Family Ministry so that we may notify other parents and personnel of their exposure.
7. Toys used by the children are cleaned/sanitized at the end of each session and other times that are necessary.
8. Covid-19 Protocols: The following procedures are in place to help mitigate the spread of the Covid-19 virus.
 - a. All nursery staff and adult volunteers will wear a facial covering that covers both the nose and mouth.
 - b. Children are encouraged to wear a facial covering, if able.
 - c. A portable air filtration system is installed to help eliminate airborne viral particles.

Classroom Management

The behavior of children while in the Little Lambs nursery will be managed in a manner that will protect their self-esteem, respect their personal space, and maintain a safe environment for all children. Any correction needed will be done in a positive manner. Parents are expected to encourage their children to follow age-appropriate directions given by a caregiver. If a child's behavior is not able to be redirected with positive feedback from the caregivers or is considered inappropriate or hurtful to others, the parent will be contacted on their cell phone. The parent will bring their child back to Mass with them or home. The child will be welcome to return to Little Lambs Nursery on the following Sunday.