

Arise Kids in House Church

"May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace." Psalm 144:12

Arise Kids is designed for children ages 1 through 7, who move into the main house church gathering at age eight. Older children are encouraged to take part in the main house church gathering, since our goal is a multigenerational community. Kids Community happens only in house churches that have opted in. Even where it is offered, families and children take part only if they feel comfortable doing so.

How a House Church Opts In

Kids Community is not automatic. A house church chooses it together, as a whole community, because caring well for children takes shared commitment rather than the effort of one person. Here is how it works:

Discern together as a house church. This begins with a shared decision, not a decision the triad makes alone. Talk it through as a community and ask honestly whether you are ready to carry this together. Is your house church ready to serve the children together, with enough people willing to fill the rotation? Does the group as a whole want to offer this? Kids Community works only when the whole house church owns it.

Apply on the app. Once you have agreed together, one of the house church leaders submits the application through Planning Center in the app on behalf of the house church. You will tell us which house church you are, roughly how many children you have and their ages, and who you are nominating as your Kids Community Lead. You will also confirm that your community understands the Arise Kids Community Guidelines and the volunteer requirements, so you are opting in with open eyes about what you are committing to.

Your nominated lead completes a background check. The person you nominate as Kids Community Lead completes a background check before officially stepping into the role. This applies to the lead alone. Your volunteers do not need one, because everyone who serves signs the Arise Kids Community Guidelines, and no one is ever alone with the children. The lead is the one person carrying this on behalf of the whole group, so this is the safeguard we ask for.

Staff review and confirm. Once your application and the lead's background check are in, staff will take a look. This is a blessing, not an audit. We are simply affirming together that the person you have nominated is someone trusted to steward this role well.

Prepare to launch Kids Community. With approval in hand, your Kids Community Lead gets everything ready. That means building the volunteer rotation, making sure every volunteer has read and signed the Arise Kids Community Guidelines form on Planning Center, and having the lesson and supplies on hand. The host home is responsible for providing a safe space for gathering, with any firearms securely stored and a first aid kit on hand. Volunteers keep children in rooms with open doors for the entire session, and never in bedrooms or bathrooms.

Train together as a house church. Before your first session, Allie will lead a training with your whole house church, walking through the Arise Kids Community Guidelines together. This is something the whole community takes part in, not only those who will serve in the rotation, so that everyone understands and shares in the care you are offering these children. You will go through the guidelines as a group and talk through what they look like in your home: keeping two non-family adults with the children, doors open for the whole session, the boundaries around physical contact, how you handle bathroom needs and injuries, the photography and social media guidelines, and securing any firearms in the host home. This is less about passing a test and more about caring for these children with one mind, so that every child is safe and every volunteer feels ready and confident when it is their turn to serve.

Settle into the ongoing rhythm. Your Kids Community Lead runs the schedule from here, staffing each session with two eligible adults who are not from the same family and who have regularly attended an Arise house church for at least six months. The lead holds the rotation but is not the automatic fill-in when a volunteer cannot serve their assigned week. If a session cannot be staffed safely, Kids Community simply does not run that week. That is not a failure, it is the safety floor doing its job. The Kids Community Lead also checks in with Allie once each quarter, so we can walk alongside you, celebrate what God is doing, and help with anything that comes up.

Before the children leave for Kids Community: The Kids Community Lead confirms that two volunteers are scheduled for house church.

Make sure all volunteers have reviewed the Arise Kids Community Guidelines. Each house church has a mandatory form on Planning Center that volunteers complete to acknowledge their understanding of and commitment to these guidelines.

Choose a familiar children's worship song. Consider singing the same song for a whole sermon series so the truths can be internalized, and feel free to add simple hand motions to make it fun. Sing it as a group, then pray a blessing over the children before sending them out.

During the Meeting: Don't forget about the children. Let them feel just as welcomed and just as much a part of the gathering. Children's participation and presence in the temple is something Jesus actively defends. Matthew 21:14-16 says, "The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw

the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant. 'Do you hear what these children are saying?' they asked him. 'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants, you, Lord, have called forth your praise"?"'

For older children who remain in the gathering, encourage them to draw a picture related to the message while they listen, and invite them to share what they've created at the end of the gathering.

A simple format for Kids Community: Song, Verse, Pray, Bible Story, Coloring Page, Play, Retell

Arise Kids Community Guidelines

The Kids Community Lead is responsible for making sure every volunteer knows and follows these guidelines.

We believe children and infants can praise the Lord, and we want them actively participating in All Gatherings and house church. Recognizing that discipleship primarily occurs in the home, our goal is for Arise Kids to come alongside parents and guardians to help children grow spiritually, stand firm in Christ, know God's Word, experience Jesus' love, and find and work out their salvation while being awed by the goodness of God. We want Arise Kids to Love Up and Love Out: to learn to love and be with God deeply so they can love people boldly, passionately following Jesus and courageously inviting others to follow Him.

1. Kids Community activities during house church are optional and not mandatory.
2. Kids Community activities must be supervised by at least two adults. Children should always be in the presence of multiple adults or with their family members, never alone with a single non-family adult. Together, the two volunteers in each session are responsible for actively supervising the children throughout, making sure someone is always able to respond when a child needs help.
3. When two adults volunteer together in Kids Community, they should not be from the same family.
4. Kids Community volunteers do not change and are not responsible for changing diapers of children other than their own. Parents are responsible for their children's bathroom needs, and volunteers will alert parents if a child requires a diaper change or needs to use the bathroom.

5. Kids Community activities should always take place in rooms with open doors for the entire session.
6. Kids Community sessions should never be held in bedrooms or bathrooms.
7. Children who are persistently disruptive or exhibit habitual behavioral issues should remain with their parents during house church instead of participating in Kids Community.
8. Children move from Kids Community into the full house church gathering at age eight.
9. Kids Community volunteers must have regularly attended an Arise house church for at least six months before being added to the rotation.
10. All injuries to children, no matter how minor, must be promptly reported to their parents. All house churches and host homes will be equipped with a small first aid kit.
11. Photography and social media guidelines protect child privacy and safety. Posting photographs or videos of children during Kids Community events on personal social media or any public online forum is strictly prohibited unless authorized by the child's parent or guardian. We will occasionally have photographers and videographers present at our house churches, and Arise reserves the right to use such photographs or videos for organizational purposes. If parents prefer that their child not be photographed, please inform Allie or the Kids Community Lead.
12. Respect, safety, and boundaries guide all physical contact between volunteers and children. Appropriate forms of touch include side hugs, handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, holding hands while walking with small children, sitting beside small children, holding hands during group prayer, and pats on the shoulder, back, or head.
13. The following forms of physical contact are inappropriate with children: inappropriate or lengthy embraces, kisses, wrestling, holding children over three years old on your lap, physical contact with bottoms, chests, or genital areas, showing affection in isolated areas, tickling, any type of massage, piggyback rides, any form of unwanted affection, or giving gifts or money to individual children.
14. When hosting house church, ensure all firearms are securely stored in a locked safe or cabinet, even if they are normally kept accessible for home defense. This is essential for a safe environment for all attendees, especially families with children who may be exploring different areas of your home during the gathering.

May the Arise Kids grow up knowing they belong and are valued, and that their presence matters in the family of God, and may all who serve them do so with joy. From the lips of children and infants, the Lord has called forth His praise (Psalm 8:2; Matthew 21:16), and your house church gets to be part of that song.