

## The Children's Ministries Guide to **Reopening Sabbath School:** Post-COVID-19



This guide is designed to be in support of any government laws, public health organizations and your conference. It is not a complete and comprehensive guide, that anticipates every situation, you as leaders will need to assess and make informed decisions that meet the needs of your particular classrooms. Thank you for your leadership and keeping our kids safe and ministering to their spiritual needs during this time.

### **Provide Clear Communication: Engage your church**

- **Work with your church team** that includes the church communication leader to prepare a document that outlines the date your Sabbath School will reopen and detailed information about the safety precautions you will put into place. The question to ask 'is Sabbath School and Church opening at the same time?'
- **Check with your church team** about each Phase of reopening and how you will be complying with your local government mandates and recommendations.
- **Reopening presents a opportunity** for a family celebration event! Promote with announcements that encourage through all your social media platforms and even through 'snail' mail!
- **There will be families that are not ready** to come back to corporate worship. Honor their decision! If you are providing children's Sabbath School online consider continuing your online Sabbath School after you reopen to minister to families that are not ready to come to a group gathering. Continue to be creative and innovative!
- **Post 'Welcome Back' signs** in your children's areas!

### **Important update information Church reopening**

**CDC Child Care Decision Tool:** <https://bit.ly/3gDn2Jt>

Check your **Conference website:** The reopening of your Children's Sabbath School must be performed with the permission and endorsement of your local conference

Check the **CDC.gov** site often for updates

Check your **government site** often for updates

**Adventist Risk Management:** <https://adventistrisk.org/covid19>



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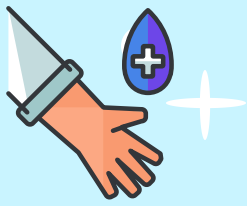
## Prepare Your Church and Children's Areas for Reopening

- **Assess each classroom** and decide what is essential to the teaching of the lesson. Anything that is not essential like extra toys, books or props sanitize each one carefully and then put away.
- **Develop a cleaning plan.** Create a check list. Implement your plan. Maintain and revise your plan. Keep your disinfectant supplies well stocked. To get FDA certified products that do not take from the equipment reserves for our hospital and healthcare works, visit <https://outreach.com/face-masks-sanitizer-stations>
- **Before reopening** give your Sabbath School rooms a **deep disinfection cleaning.** Think Spring cleaning! Start at the top and work down. Sanitize walls, windows, light fixtures, baseboards, chairs, beanbags, doorknobs, doors, counters, light switches, lights, all Audio/Visual equipment including all remotes. Look around your room and see if you forgot to clean anything. End with deep cleaning the carpets. Ensure that there is adequate ventilation during cleaning
- **Sanitize teaching props and toys.** Remove any plush toys that are impractical to sanitize effectively.. Remember the goal is to make the space safe and appear welcoming. This may give you a chance to re-imagine your children's spaces.
- Now that the rooms are disinfected **look outside your room.** Clean the walls and baseboards of the hallways, and stair rails, stairway walls.

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**Public Health Cleaning Recommendations. Your jurisdiction will have available resources, the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides the following** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>)

- **Normal routine cleaning** with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure.
- **Disinfection using EPA-approved disinfectants** against COVID-19 external icon can also help reduce the risk. Frequent disinfection of surfaces and objects touched by multiple people is important.
- **When EPA-approved disinfectants external icon are not available,** alternative disinfectants can be used (for example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours. Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children. Read EPA's info-graphic on how to use these disinfectant products external icon safely and effectively.



## Provide Safe Spaces

Your families are looking to you for responsible safety measures for their children. Be careful and intentional about researching FDA approved protection equipment and trusted suppliers.

- **Touchless Hand Sanitizing Stations:** The touchless feature is important to maintain cleanliness. Provide a hand-sanitizing station at each entrance into your facility, near your children's areas and at the door of your children's classrooms.
- **Water Fountains:** Consider blocking off all water fountains.
- **Safety Signage:** Create signs that clearly communicates your health safety precautions. This reassures parents that you are intentional about their children's safety and reminds your families and volunteers to practice sanitizing procedures. Consider creating fun and engaging signs!
- **Shaking Hands:** Post signs with pictures for creative options for non-contact hand shaking! Consider creating a YouTube video demonstrating a fun and creative greeting.
- **Face Masks:** In many areas face masks will be required or just recommended. Know what your church team has decided. Consider having face masks available for your team and families.

**Keep in mind:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 2 years of age and under do not wear masks or face covering. If your church is requiring Face Masks, it is not time to open your Babies and Beginner class. Masks that are being worn by someone other than the parent can be traumatizing to young children.

- **Physical Distancing:** Set up your Children's classrooms with 'social distancing' procedures (CDC recommends 6' apart) as outlined by your church, conference, and state. <https://bit.ly/3gDn2Jt>
- Check [pinterest.org](https://www.pinterest.org) for creative and fun 'distancing' formats that will lessen the fear and stress for our children.



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## Prepare Your Volunteer

**Be cautious and intentional** about your children's areas and volunteers. If a volunteer (parent or student) is coughing or is feverish ask them to stay home. Be intentional about asking your leaders 65+ years old to wait until you ask them back to the children's area to volunteer due to increased vulnerability and potential health issues.

**Recruit reopening volunteers:** A lot of our churches are small and run by amazing volunteers who are retired people! If someone identifies themselves as being in a vulnerable class or is just uncomfortable volunteering at this time, be respectful of their privacy and request to not volunteer at this time. As you recruit new volunteers please remember they need to go through the appropriate training and screenings before volunteering with children ministries. Consider honoring your older volunteers by recruiting youth, over the age of 18, substitute volunteers until the time is safe for 65+ to come back into the children's divisions.

**If your church has a Check-In process:** It is recommended that you assign one person to manage the check-in system. Please work on a process that is as touchless as possible.

**Share your cleaning checklist and procedures** for reopening with your volunteers ahead of time. Provide training through platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams and make it fun! As a leader you cannot over-communicate. This is an uncertain time but we should take these measures seriously. Remember it is also a time that we can celebrate the goodness of our Amazing God!

**Post Welcome Back signs** in your children's areas!

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Remember the sign posted on a nursery door? "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," 1 Corinthians 15:51. Though this is not talking about COVID-19 or sleeping babies ... it still embraces the feelings we all have been having! "We shall all be changed," Children's Ministry has changed in many ways .... some ways that have strengthened the ministry of children! And some ways we are still trying to grasp. But one thing that has not changed is that our God is still God!

May the Lord bless you as you navigate the unknown, equip families as spiritual leaders and engage your volunteers in a whole new way of reaching the children with the Gospel Message!

NAD Children's Ministries

