

Childcare for Your Group

If any participants in your group are parents with young children, your group may need to come up with a plan for childcare. It's worth it to work out the logistics! Here are some tips that may help as you work out a plan.

1. Provide childcare in a separate home, if at all possible, to avoid distractions for your group and to allow the children to play freely.
2. The same familiar location each week may work out better for the children, even if the group rotates meeting places.
3. Decide as a group if you would all like to pitch in to pay a sitter. Sometimes even those who don't need childcare are glad to contribute so that everyone in the group can be there.
4. If the group can't find a sitter, parents may take turns caring for the children. Missing the group every sixth time to take a turn with childcare may be better than not coming at all.
5. Look into trading childcare. If you have friends in nearby Q Place groups, perhaps some of you could work out a plan with each other so that you never have to miss your own group's discussion.
6. Perhaps a trusted friend from your church who is good with children would volunteer to provide childcare for a couple of hours each week as a ministry.
7. Be sure to give the sitter ideas of what to do during the time. Even a simple structure can help make the time interesting for both the children and the sitter. Here are some suggestions for making the time meaningful for all:
 - Have puzzles or toys ready for the first 15-20 minutes as people arrive.
 - Put all the toys away before changing activities.
 - If it is nice outside, plan a game you can play together or take a walk for 15-20 minutes (or longer if the kids are getting along well).
 - If going outside is not doable, play a game inside (like Duck-Duck-Goose, Hide and Seek, Simon Says, Hide the Thimble, etc.).
 - Take a potty break.
 - Snacks are always a great treat, but are optional. You can always offer water. Be attentive to any allergies.
 - Read a story appropriate to the ages of the children. An engaging Bible storybook is a great option as well. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones is a favorite of all ages.
 - Look for resources like *Little Lambs* or *Show Me a Story* (both from Concordia Publishing House) filled with content such as coloring pages, easy crafts, activities, and songs.
 - You could have a monthly theme for games, songs, crafts, and stories. (For example, in November, the theme could be thankfulness.)
 - Have the children help clean up shortly before the end of the time and finish with a simple game or activity.
8. Periodically evaluate how the childcare plan is working. Be sure that everyone feels comfortable bringing up concerns and suggestions for improvement.