handbook.





HEY THERE!

So you want to volunteer with children and teenagers, huh? Some people might think you're crazy... but we know better. Young people are awesome. They're hilarious (sometimes on purpose). They're dramatic. They're complicated. They're a ton of fun. And it is so much more than childcare!

But most importantly, children and teenagers alike are each at a stage in life when they desperately need someone like you to **spend time with them**, **love them** (and **like them** too), and show them what it looks like to **serve Christ with their heart and hands**.

Whatever your role is in our ministry this year, this Volunteer Handbook will show you some of the ways you can begin making a lasting impact in the lives and faith of young people.

Thanks for being willing to serve. Thanks for caring about the next generation. And thanks for letting God use you.

THE BASICS

Our Staff



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Let us know if there's anything you ever need. We're here to help!

Sunday Morning Formation Schedule

SUNDAY FORMATION | SUNDAYS AT 10:20 A.M. September 12, 2021 - May 15, 2022

September 12, 19, 26 October 10, 17, 31 November 14, 21 December 5, 12 January 9, 15, 23 February 6, 20, 27 March 13, 20, 37 April 24 May 1, 8, 15

"SABBATH" (OFF) DATES

(Trying to create healthy rhythms of rest and play in parish life):

October 3, 24
November 7 and 28
December 19, 26
January 3, 30
February 13
March 6
April 3, 10, 17
May 22, 29

Our Big Win

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in children's ministry and youth ministry, you know? Like, is anything we're teaching actually sinking in? Are kids really growing in their faith? That's why we decided to go ahead and define the big win for our ministry. It's the one thing that we, as a ministry team, want to achieve. It's the goal we want to keep in mind at all times. And it's what motivates and guides everything we do. It goes like this...

WE WIN WHEN A KID TAKES A STEP TOWARD OWNING THEIR FAITH AND PLACE IN THE CHURCH

TAKING A STEP

Now, we say "takes a step" for a reason. It's because there's no finish line or certificate of completion when it comes to spiritual growth. Instead, spiritual growth is a journey (a life-long journey) and no two journeys are identical. That's why our big win doesn't have anything to do with a specific skill or achievement. Instead, we win anytime we see a kid take a single step closer to owning their faith and their place in the church.

OWNING THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for a kid to own their faith? Well, we've described four possibilities:

- 1. **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** This is an obvious one, right? Sometimes it's the only spiritual habit we can name. After all, isn't "growing spiritually" synonymous with "spending time with God"? Well, not exactly, but it's still pretty important. After all, if kids are ever going to make their faith their own, they've got to start spending time with God on their own. It means opening the Bible on their own, having conversations with God on their own, and discovering how they best connect with God through worship on their own.
- 2. **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** Engaging in healthy community can, and should, be a spiritual habit we help our kids develop. But "healthy community" doesn't just mean hanging out with Christians. This spiritual habit is about growing in Christlike relationships with everyone.
- 3. USE THEIR GIFTS TO SERVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR: Kids need to know that God made them unique, and special, and with really specific gifts, talents, passions, and resources. Then they need to use those gifts to love God, love others, and influence the world around them. Because when kids begin to discover who God made them to be, and then use their unique identity to love both God and others, they grow.
- 4. **SHARE THEIR STORY:** Kids need to learn how to talk about God. Sharing your story is the spiritual habit of making faith a regular, everyday, go-to topic of conversation in our lives. Because when we talk about God and God's place in our story (or, better yet, our place in God's story), it helps us believe, helps us understand, and helps us take ownership of our own faith.

We count it as a win whenever a kid takes a step toward owning their faith by practicing one, or maybe even all four, of these spiritual habits.

Forming Young People

Do you know the last thing that Jesus said to His followers while he was on earth? Some people call it The Great Commission: "Go and make disciples." Duplicate yourselves. Go and make more of you. Take your faith and pass it on to someone else. When we talk about helping kids begin to own their faith, we're really just talking about formation. So what is formation? Here are three thoughts...

FORMATION IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT JUST LEARNING

LEARN IT AND LIVE IT. Rather than only asking, "What can we teach a kid about God?" we ask, "How can we help a kid live out their faith?" It's not just about teaching them about Jesus — it's about modeling what faith in Jesus looks like. That's why relationships are such a key part of our ministry. Because discipleship isn't taught in a classroom — it's modeled in everyday life.

FORMATION HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the Gospels, you don't often see Jesus doing one-on-one teachings. That's because formation often happens best and most effectively in a community of people. That's why we focus so much energy on getting kids plugged into consistent regular gatherings, why we emphasize the role of parents and families in "the village." Because formation takes all of us!

FORMATION IS A PROCESS

Formation is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a lifelong process. And because we know it takes time, we want to put people in the lives of kids who are in it for the long-haul. That's why our formation leaders and core volunteers are asked to make a commitment for at least a year — because it's a process.

Engaging with Parents

As a volunteer, you are making a huge impact in the lives of the kids in our ministry. But do you know who's making an even bigger impact in the lives of those kids? Their parents.

Before we explain any more about what our ministry is all about, we want to make sure one thing is super clear. (We even drew a picture to help you remember it.) We believe that, in every child's life, this is true: the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.



Jim Burns, author of *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry*, says it this way: "Long after students stop attending youth groups, they are still connected to their families."

No matter what, a kid's family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives. So doesn't it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in a kid's life in order to influence their faith?

That's why our ministry is committed to serving, supporting, partnering with, and engaging the parents of the kids in our ministry.

As a volunteer, caring for kids isn't your only responsibility. Engaging with parents is part of your job, too.



The Win

We already talked about the big win for our ministry — seeing kids take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished.

Formation Leaders (Sunday School Teachers), though, have a very crucial part to play in seeing that goal accomplished. Here's what we think the win looks like...

FORMATION LEADERS WIN WHEN THEY <u>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS</u> WITH KIDS AND HELP THEM <u>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS</u> WITH EACH OTHER.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH KIDS

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a kid's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for formation leaders to build strong relationships with the kids they lead. You can't make a kid own their faith, but you can build a relationship with that child that allows you to love them and influence their faith.

So a formation leader leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the kids God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their relationship to lead kids, rather than relying on their position. They win when a kid sees their formation leader not as just an authority figure they have to obey, but someone they trust and want to follow.



As important as a kid's relationship with a formation leader is, it's not the only relationship that matters. Formation leaders win when they help kids build relationships with each other because (remember) formation happens best in community. A formation leader isn't the only person a kid needs to influence their faith. They need each other, too!

The Expectations

QUALIFICATIONS

- Love God and Young People
- Stick to our Code of Conduct.
- Commit to lead the same group for at least one year.

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up to our weekly program every week you are assigned. (By 10:05!)
- Wear your name tag.
- Look over the curriculum ahead of time. (It won't be hard, we promise!).
- Engage with parents during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Build relationships with the kids in your group.
- Attend worship on a regular basis.
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for volunteers.
- Attend the pre-formation huddle for volunteers every week you're scheduled to serve.
- Participate weekly debrief sessions TBD as available.
- Read, follow, and enforce all policies and procedures.



RESOURCES

Realm App

We will be making increasing use of the **Realm App** for communication with formation leaders. Please download it today! Instructions at

www.allsaintsaatlanta.org/hub

Formation Leaders' Page

Visit our formation leaders page for curriculum schedules, icebreaker game resources, and other pertinent links and info!

www.allsaintsatlanta.org/FormationLeaders



COVID

- Masks are to be worn indoors by all people at all times.
- Those under 12 must remain 3 feet distanced while inside.
- Those under 12 may sing only outdoors.
- No food or drink inside.
- If experiencing symptoms, stay home.
- If quarantined at school, stay home.

SAFEGUARDING

Safety Guidelines Summary

SAFEGUARDING GOD'S CHILDREN

All Volunteers must complete Safeguarding God's Children in person or online every three years. The next online dates are:

- September 28, 6:30 8:30 p.m.
- October 9, 10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.

Register online at tinyurl.com/safeguardingfall2021

As a member of our ministry team, it is absolutely essential that you practice healthy boundaries with kids at all times, for their safety and yours. These guidelines exist to protect kids from harm and to protect you from false allegations.

NEVER BE ALONE WITH A CHILD

No volunteer should ever be alone with any number of children at any time. There should be a minimum of two unrelated adults (who have been screened) in a room at all times.

DOCUMENT ALL INCIDENTS

If a child in your care is injured or falls ill, or an incident occurs, an incident report must be filled out and signed by you, our staff, and the child's parents.

PRACTICE APPROPRIATE TOUCH

Showing affection is a natural part of ministry and working with kids. Here are some guidelines for showing appropriate affection to kids while maintaining integrity.

HUGS: Hugs should be brief and should be side-hugs. Kids should always initiate any hugs — not adults.

HANDS: High fives, handshakes, and fist bumps are always appropriate. Hand holding is acceptable only for kids in 2nd grade or younger.

HOLDING: A child over the age of 2 should not be held unless the child is being transported. If a child wants to sit on your lap on the floor, gently move the child to a sitting position beside you.

AVOID AND REPORT ALL INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

The following forms of affection are inappropriate in our children's ministry in any circumstance:

- Lengthy or full-body hugs
- Kisses
- Holding children over the age of two
- Kids sitting in your lap
- Touching genitals or helping a child in the bathroom
- Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Any form of unwanted affection

REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Our church policy is to report any signs or suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Contact a staff member immediately if you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect. Do not attempt to gather information from the child or speak with the parents about your concerns. Do not talk with other team members about your concerns.

DEFINING ABUSE

Sexual abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor. It could be contact behavior (touching) or non-contact behavior (pictures, spying, exposure, or conversation).

Physical abuse is any contact intended to cause physical pain or injury to a child. The law does permit parents to use corporal punishment, but the discipline has to be reasonable.

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or supervision. Neglect can also include exposure to harmful substances or situations.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Contact a staff member immediately if you see signs of abuse, such as Depression, sudden changes in behavior, paranoia, fear of their caregivers or others, aggressive behavior, anxiety, bed-wetting or accidents in their underwear, imitating or talking about sexual behaviors, wounds or pain, unexplained bruises, or untreated illnesses.

BE AWARE OF ALLERGIES

Parents should let a staff team member know if their child has a medical need or allergy. We cannot administer any medications. Peanuts are of particular concern this year.

KNOW WHEN TO PAGE PARENTS

If you need to get ahold of parents at any point during the service, let a member of the host team know, and they will locate the parents.

Parents can be notified if children exhibit symptoms of illness, are crying inconsolably for more than 10 minutes, or if a child behaves in a violent manner.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

We will soon have emergency procedures posted in every classroom and regular trainings for weather emergencies, medical emergencies, evacuations, and predator situations.

If an emergency occurs, kids will not be released to parents until the area is cleared.

Discipline Policy

Discipline should always be done in a positive, patient and grace-filled way that focuses on helping the kids instead of enforcing punishments. When discipline is necessary to keep a safe and effective environment for everyone, here are three steps to take:

REDIRECT

- Get on the child's level and look them in the eye.
- Give a verbal warning, explaining why the behavior is not acceptable.
- Give a suggestion for the right way to act or behave and help them do it.

REMOVE

- If the child does not follow directions when you give them a redirection, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin the service.
- Place them in an area away from the other kids for no more than one minute per year of age. We no longer use "time out" but suggest that children might "take a break," for instance.

REFER

 If the child is still not obeying, refer the child to your ministry leader for assistance.

Never attempt to physically discipline a child, belittle a child, or administer corporal punishment.

To limit the amount of discipline needed, here are some tips:

1. PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Become familiar with the curriculum and gather supplies before kids enter the room. When they arrive, be prepared to greet and engage them.

2. ESTABLISH RULES AND EXPECTATIONS EARLY

Communicate the rules and expectations consistently at the beginning of every service. Remind the kids often.

3. BE PROACTIVE

Follow proper ratios and make sure there are enough adults to maintain order in the room. Look for kids who may talk too much around each other, and split them up. Encourage kids who have trouble listening to be leaders, and look for ways to include them in the service.

4. TALK TO PARENTS

If you have to take disciplinary action with a child, let your children's ministry leader know. If you have to talk to parents, always do so in an encouraging, gentle and positive way. Ask the parents how you can help their child.

If a child exhibits violence to the teacher or other kids, parents will be contacted immediately, and the children's ministry leader will talk with the parents.

Check-in and Check-out

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES

Kids are under the care and supervision of their parents until they are checked in to our children's ministry. We require all kids 5th grade and under to be checked in by a parent or guardian and escorted to their class by the parent or guardian, and that the following steps are taken

- Kids must be checked in for services by parents, using our check-in system.
- A child may not be picked up by anyone under the age of 16 years old.
- If a child has a special need or medical issue or allergy, parents should alert a staff team member and the child's teacher.

Code of Conduct

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by. Here they are!

ALL VOLUNTEERS

WORK HARD: You are so important to our ministry! We need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

BE KIND: Ministry is all about people, so to be effective in ministry, you'll need to reflect God's heart for people. With kids, parents, other volunteers, and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love.

IMITATE JESUS: While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every volunteer to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God in their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day - especially in key areas like their treatment of others on our team, social media presence, and drug or alcohol use in order to provide a positive example for our young people.

Commitment

My name is and I'm ready to serve!
I promise to follow through on my responsibilities. If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to keep our staff and my fellow volunteers informed and to give them as much notice as I possibly can, knowing they'll need to find a replacement for me and that takes time.
I promise I've read this Volunteer Handbook. I understand the mission and strategy of our ministry and will support the vision and leadership of the staff.
I promise I've read the Safety Guidelines and will abide by them, for my safety and for the safety of our kids.
I promise I've read the Code of Conduct and will abide by it. If I mess up, I promise to be honest with our staff about my actions and will accept whatever consequences they think are reasonable and necessary, knowing that, while they must always act in the best interest of kids, they are committed to treating me with respect, love, and grace.
I promise I understand the expectations of my role and will work hard to fulfill them. If I'm having trouble fulfilling any of my expectations, I promise to communicate with the staff and ask for help, knowing they're here to support me. And finally
I promise to do my part in making a huge difference in the lives and faith of the kids who walk through our doors. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.
SIGNATURE:
DATE:

