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Manual

Policy & Procedure

Guidelines for Working with Adults in Faith Formation Activities

WELCOME TO ADULT FAITH FORMATION!

HELLO!

Welcome aboard! I would like to thank you for giving your time to serve God by serving the families of Lord of Life. Know that you are making an eternal difference. What’s more, you will be blessed in the process. The Lord of Life staff is committed to praying for you weekly that as you serve, your relationships with God and others will flourish, and that all God has planned for you will come about with ease and grace. Enjoy the journey!

Peace be with you,

Mark Ruch *Director of Adult Faith Formation*

ADULT FAITH FORMATION GOALS

*Provide an Adult/Family-Friendly Environment*

As members of the Adult Faith Formation team, everything we do is done with the purpose of reaching hearts with Jesus’ message. From special events to weekly services, our goal is to present the Word in an exciting and age-appropriate manner. We are committed to providing environments and experiences for adults and families.

*Provide Relevant Teaching*

We believe God’s message stays the same, but the way it is expressed and carried out can vary. Our intention is to create a fun and exciting atmosphere where adults and families can learn, grow, and apply God’s Word in everyday life.

*Provide Varied Experiences*

As part of the Adult Faith Formation team, you will strive to make learning and worship exciting, accessible, and relevant by incorporating a variety of experiences - including small groups, Sunday School, Bible studies, camping, fellowship, and service.

*Provide a Safe Environment*

A top priority of the Adult faith Formation team is to develop and support a caring environment for all. Therefore, every volunteer and staff member is required to undergo a background check and complete a training course prior to serving. All of us are committed to following the policy and procedures outlined here and in the Safe Sanctuary policy manual to ensure a welcoming and safe setting for all activities hosted by Lord of Life.

TEAM MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

*Basic Requirements*

The Adult Faith Formation team includes a wide variety of people, but we all have a couple of things in common: We are all at least 16 years of age and we all find joy and value in working with adults and families.

*Setting a Positive Example*

Adult Faith Formation team members are church leaders as well as role models; setting a good example through appropriate behavior and language use is critical to our ability to nurture faith and share God’s love. At all church sponsored events and within the church environment, Adult Faith Formation team members will:

* Use positive, encouraging language that reflects a caring and loving attitude
* Be professional, friendly, responsive, and accessible
* Be an active participant in Lord of Life’s congregational life
* Refrain from using foul, offensive, derisive, or sexualized language
* Refrain from gossiping or engaging in conversations involving adult-only behavior
* Refrain from using tobacco products, alcohol, recreational drugs, and over-the-counter medications that can impair judgment
* Refrain from engaging in romantic or sexualized behavior with another adult (spouse or otherwise)
* Refrain from engaging in any abusive behavior that violates Lord of Life’s Safe Sanctuary policy

*Communicating Difficulties*

Honest and timely communication is a cornerstone of a successful team experience. If you are experiencing any sort of difficulty with a specific person, equipment or materials, other team members, or anything else that impacts your experience as a member of the Adult Faith Formation team, please bring it to the attention of the Director of Adult Faith Formation or other Lord of Life staff member. It is important to not let difficult situations fester and grow worse by not addressing them or by discussing these with people who cannot help resolve them.

*Please note that procedures for recognizing and reporting suspected abuse is discussed in the Safe Sanctuary manual and training.*

*Being Absent*

Life is busy and messy and sometimes it is difficult to fulfill our volunteering or work commitments. Please make the Director of Adult Faith Formation aware of planned and unplanned absences by calling, texting, or emailing as soon as possible so coverage can be arranged.

*Being Prepared and Punctual*

We recommend that group or event leaders and helpers plan on arriving 15 minutes before the start of any scheduled event or Sunday program. You will feel more relaxed and your time will go more smoothly if you are ready and waiting for your event to begin.

Most Adult Faith Formation events and programs do not require much outside preparation on the part of the volunteers unless you are part of the preparation team. For Sunday school leaders, it is important to familiarize yourself with the week’s Bible story and lesson plan.

*Obtaining a Background Check*

Criminal background checks will be performed on anyone over 18 years of age seeking to serve on the Adult Faith Formation team. Semi-annual background checks may be performed on team members or as deemed necessary. Only qualified members of Lord of Life staff will have access to the criminal background check report. Recommendations will be given by this individual(s) to the Director of Adult Faith Formation regarding each person seeking to serve.

Any prospective team member who has prior incidents of abuse, neglect, endangerment, or misconduct will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where he/she would have contact with minors. Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the criminal background check, the following will automatically disqualify a person from participating in any activities or program that would give him/her access to minors:

* Criminal homicide
* Aggravated assault
* Sexual abuse
* Sexual assault (rape)
* Aggravated sexual assault
* Injury to a child
* Incest
* Indecency with a child
* Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child
* Possession or promotion of child pornography
* The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor
* Employment harmful to children
* Abandonment or endangerment of a child
* Kidnapping or unlawful restraint
* Public lewdness or indecent exposure
* Enticing a child

*Completing Training*

We provide two main training opportunities for volunteers and staff who work with children: Safe Sanctuary training, which focuses on maintaining an environment free of abuses of sex, violence, and harassment, and Adult Faith Formation training, which focuses on equipping leaders with the tools and techniques they need to make their efforts effective and enjoyable. Other meetings might be called periodically to discuss matters pertinent to specific situations or events.

Safety and Security

*Child Supervision*

Lord of Life follows the “two unrelated adult” rule, meaning no adult shall be left alone with a child. Every attempt shall be made to provide at least two adults or teens aged 16 or older for each group of children during any class, event, or activity. However, if limited resources allow for only one adult or teen to supervise a group of children, the following precautions shall be taken:

* Doors to rooms shall be kept open or left ajar so that the interior of the room is visible from the hall.
* Under no circumstances shall one adult or teen be left alone with one child for any length of time.

At a minimum, the Children’s Ministry will abide by the adult/child ratios as defined in the Texas State day care licensing regulations:

* For children ages 3 years: 1/15
* For children ages 4 years: 1/18
* For children ages 5 years: 1/22
* For children ages 6 -13 years: 1/26

In counseling sessions with minors, parental permission must be obtained prior to a Lord of Life staff member or volunteer meeting privately with a minor. Approved one-on-one counseling will be held in a room with internal windows and/or an open door. Prior permission may be granted by the parents to cover a particular time period (i.e. school year) for their child to receive counseling from a Lord of Life staff member.

*Movies and Media*

Adult Faith Formation team members may use movies and other media as part of program activities. Lord of Life maintains copyright licensures allowing us to view most commercial movies. All movies and media *presented when children are present* should be age-appropriate:

* G-Rated movies may be shown without prior parental permission;
* parent permission must be given to show movies rated PG; and
* PG-13 and R rated movies are not allowed.

Incident and Emergency Procedures

If a medical emergency arises, send an assistant to notify the Director of Adult Faith Formation or other Lord of Life staff member, remove the person from the group, and make him/her as comfortable as possible. If a life-threatening emergency arises, have someone call 911. Administer first-aid as you are able (first-aid kits are located in each Kids of the Kingdome classroom and in the Lord of Life kitchen).

Below is a list of possible emergencies and actions that may be taken while waiting for help to arrive:

* Profuse Bleeding – Apply pressure to the wound until bleeding stops
* Choking – If the person is not moving air, perform the Heimlich maneuver
* Seizure – Protect the person from injury by removing all objects from around him/her that he/she may bump into or knock over. Do not restrain or put any object in their mouth.
* Broken bones – Support the affected limb/area and keep stable
* Fainting – Lay person flat with legs elevated approximately six inches
* Unconscious – Lay person flat. Check for breathing and pulse. Administer AR/CPR if necessary and you know how, or find someone who does.

In all instances, complete an Incident Report and return it to the Director of Adult Faith Formation.

*Incident Report*

If an incident such as an injury (real or near) or sickness occurs in your group, let the Director of Adult Faith Formation or other Lord of Life staff member or committee leader on duty know. Complete an Incident Report and return it to the Director of Adult Faith Formation.

*Severe Weather*

If severe weather such as hail, tornado, high winds, hurricane, rising waters, heavy rain, or lightning occurs:

* Move everyone indoors and into the center of the room, away from windows and doors
* Keep everyone calm by maintaining order and a calm, reassuring demeanor.

*Fire Evacuation*

When a fire or smoke emergency arises, volunteers should begin the appropriate intervention procedures:

* Maintain control and a calm, reassuring demeanor
* Remove everyone from immediate danger
* Call 911, if necessary
* Contain fire by using a fire extinguisher and closing doors, if necessary
* Account for each person in your group (count/ roll call)
* If fire alarm is sounding, follow the evacuation route that is posted in your classroom or move everyone to the nearest building exit
* Use staircase, not the elevator
* Keep everyone in a group at least 100 feet away from the building

Resources

*Media Carts*

Lord of Life has several media carts that house a computer, projector, and audio amplifier. The carts and screen are available for use on a first come, first served basis. Adult Faith Formation leaders are welcomed and encouraged to use the media carts with their groups or during other events. Lord of Life also has two TV/DVD carts available for use. Contact the Director of Adult Faith Formation or the Lord of Life front office to reserve a cart, projection screen, or TV/DVD cart.

Communication Channels

Open and honest communication is a cornerstone of successful ministry. As a member of the Adult Faith Formation team, you are encouraged to communicate your ideas and concerns to any member of the Lord of Life staff. If you have an idea for an event or a way to improve on an existing program, please share it with us. Likewise, if you are experiencing a problem with another team member, a particular person, or an element of one of the programs, you are encouraged to communicate your concern with the Director of Adult Faith Formation.

*Email*

The Adult Faith Formation team uses email as our primary means of communication. Sunday school leaders will receive weekly emails containing information about upcoming events, lessons, schedules, and program information. Team members are encouraged to use email for communications that are not personal in nature, such as looking for a substitute for a particular Sunday. Because so much information is communicated via email, one’s personal email address is generally made available to other members of a particular team or group. Personal email addresses will not be given out to non-team members, Lord of Life staff, or congregation members without explicit permission.

*Website*

Adult Faith Formation team members and the general public will find general information about Lord of Life sponsored events and programs at <http://www.lordoflifeonline.org/index1e.htm>.

*Phone, Text, and Face-to-Face*

Urgent or personal information is best communicated face-to-face or via phone. Because urgent information, such as an unplanned absence, is frequently communicated via phone, the personal phone numbers of Sunday school or other specific team members will be made available to other team members. Phone numbers will not be given out to non-team members, Lord of Life staff, or congregation members without explicit permission.

Receipt & Acknowledgement Policy and Procedure Manual

Please read the following statement, sign and date on the lines provided, and return to the Director of Adult Faith Formation.

*I have read and understand the policies and other information contained in the Adult Faith Formation Policy and Procedure Manual. I agree, as a condition of my employment or volunteering with Lord of Life, to comply with these policies and procedures as well as any new or revised policies or procedures.*

Signature Date

Printed name