

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

**ALETHEIA JR. VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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**Dear Aletheia Jr. Volunteer,**

Thank you so much for your heart and willingness to serve in Aletheia Jr. We want you to know how much our Leadership and parents value and appreciate your dedication to the children and families in our church. Your investment to this ministry will impact the Kingdom for eternity!!

Sincerely,

Callie White, AJR Director

**Our Promise to You**

• We will pray for you.

• We will seek to put you in your gifted area.

• We will honor you in our speech and actions.

• We will offer training for your growth.

**Becoming a Volunteer in Aletheia Jr**

We value our students and know that the impact we make in their lives today will directly affect the church for decades to come. In order to ensure that volunteers are encouraged in their ministry opportunity, trained and well prepared for their involvement with children we have instituted the following steps to become an Aletheia Jr Volunteer:

**1. Fill out the Volunteer Information Sheet and Background Check**

**2. Attend scheduled meeting with Aletheia Church Staff or Aletheia Jr. Helpers**

This mandatory training for all volunteers includes some getting to know you time, explaining our core values, and explaining our safety and security procedures. This must be attended prior to serving in a classroom.

**3. Assignment & Implementation** – Volunteers work with their assigned Team Shepherd to learn the specifics of their classroom assignment. Review the Handbook and get any questions answered. Turn in the accountability sheet before serving.

**4. Start Serving!**

**Aletheia JR- Core Values**

**(In no particular order)**

1. **Partnering with families**

* The church partners with families, because God intends kids to learn in the context of family relationships
* Two combined influences make a greater impact than two separate influences.

How we accomplish this:

* We connect with parents intentionally in hallway/at the door of classrooms
* We provide take home sheets (verse, what they’re learning etc.)
* We provide resources for parents
* Our servers intentionally reaching out beyond Sunday mornings to maintain and grow relationships with families

1. **Targeting the heart**

* God’s word teaches that behavior is rooted in the heart. Therefore, we want children to have a heart to follow God, not just go through outward motions.
* Teaching focuses on cultivating a heart that loves God and trusts His promises above all else. We care more about just seeking to change behavior.

How we accomplish this:

* Our curriculum focuses on individual hearts! Can’t be a curriculum that focuses primarily on what kids should “do.”
* We provide parents with resources that reinforce this.
* When we talk with children, even in moments of discipline, we are targeting their heart, not just the behavior.

1. **God-centered, Grace-centered teaching**

* Teaching is centered on God’s word
* Teaching focuses on the gospel of God’s grace as the primary motivation for obeying Christ—A RESPONSE to the love that He has already shown us.
* Teaching is application-oriented, rather than centered on imparting knowledge.

How we accomplish this:

* We choose curriculum that meets this criteria and ensure our conversations with kids reflect this.

1. **Relationships with others**

* Relationships with others in the church are an essential component of spiritual growth
* Learning and relationships are always in a safe, caring and comfortable environment for children.

How we accomplish this:

* We recruit volunteers that love to invest in the personal lives of children…who understand discipleship (or who can be taught about discipleship! ☺ )
* We provide opportunities for kids to develop relationships with other kids in their class through being in small groups, playing games together, etc.

1. **Serving**

* We teach children that everything we have is given to us from God and should be used to bring Him glory.
* We provide opportunities for children to express their faith through serving, giving, and reaching out to others both inside and outside the church

How we accomplish this:

* Operation Christmas Child boxes for each class, food drives, etc.
* We allow kids to help with teardown after the service…
* Interactive curriculum provides crafts that require service action points (homeless care packages, gospel story sharing at school etc.)

**6. Kid- Relevant teaching**

* Teaching is always appropriate to a child’s physical, social, cognitive, and spiritual development.
* Different children have different learning styles, so we teach in a variety of creative ways.
* We seek to understand a child’s cultural influences and relate to that culture, while never compromising biblical truth.

How we accomplish this:

* FUN CURRICULUM!!
* Large group/small group format
  + Large group- fun, upbeat music and worship made just for kids
  + Small group- interactive curriculum where kids are a part of the learning process

**Aletheia Jr “Job Descriptions”**

**Servant Leaders (Title for anyone serving in an Aletheia Jr. capacity)**

Volunteers are the heartbeat of Aletheia Jr. They are the hands, and feet of Jesus to children each week.

**Team Shepherd** –Touches base regularly with the AJ Director for visioning and to be equipped to lead the classroom through shepherding, training and encouragement. Also responsible for scheduling the volunteers.

**Classroom Greeter** – Welcomes kids into classrooms, greet parents, and serve as the front line of safety and security as kids are checked in and dismissed. In charge of classroom roster being filled out

**Classroom Teacher-** Is responsible for the overall flow of the class on a Sunday morning: Prepares and leads the lesson and is a point person for other volunteers in the class.

**Classroom Helper-** Builds intentional relationships with the kids and assists the classroom teacher in any way needed.

**2nd & 3rd–**

**Small Group Volunteers-** Invest in the lives of kids by building relationships, praying with kids, helping them to apply the Bible lesson, and either leading or helping to lead the lesson.

**Large Group Volunteers-** Facilitate a fun, upbeat, Christ-centered time of worship for all of the Elementary students.

**Aletheia Jr Greeting Team**

Operate check in kiosks.

Welcoming new families and escorting them to classrooms.

Send follow up notes/emails to new families.

**Aletheia Jr Security-** Keeps the Aletheia Jr hallway safe and secure. Contacts the appropriate personnel when parents are needed from the service.

**Commitment Terms**

* We ask that our volunteers serve one Sunday/month. There may be occasional months where you may be asked to serve twice.
* If you need a break from serving in AJR:
  + Give a month’s notice to your team shepherd
  + We encourage you to recruit someone to volunteer for you and take your place whether indefinitely or for a certain amount of time
  + PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:
    - We want to prevent our volunteers from feeling burnt out and provide freedom for anyone to take a break from serving; we want everyone to be energized by serving our kiddos
    - Helps maintain the current number of volunteers in AJR so fellow volunteers aren’t asked to serve more than once a month

**Ministry Expectations of Our Servant Volunteers**

**Attend Church Regularly** – We believe that service comes out of the overflow of the spiritual nourishment we get from God and other believers. Therefore, it is important for each volunteer to attend the worship service each week.

**Be on Time to Serve** – Being on time is necessary for us to have a time of team building through prayer and to be ready when students arrive. We encourage to you be a part of the prayer and worship time that happens with all of Aletheia Church’s Sunday volunteers at 9:45 in the auditorium. This will allow for you to arrive in your classroom 30 minutes prior to the start of the worship service. **Arrive no later than 10:00**!

**Prayer** - Prayer is foundational to our ministry. We ask that volunteers regularly pray together in teams, and also that you support the ministry and children by praying throughout the week.

**Support Aletheia** – In this volunteer role you are expected to be supportive and honoring of Aletheia and its leadership in speech and action. If you have concerns that need to be raised, please bring it to the attention of your Team Shepherd who will help you follow the appropriate forms of conflict resolution.

**Be Open for Growth** – In order to grow in the position where God has placed you, plan to attend training events that will include time to grow with your team both in community and skills.

**Wear your Name Badge** – To help parents know that you are an approved leader of children, please wear your name badge while serving.

**Attendance** –We expect regular attendance for volunteers as they are scheduled. When you need to be away, please follow the following procedure to find a sub:

1. You will be given a contact list of the other volunteers in your classroom. Please contact one of them as soon as possible to find someone to switch with you.

2. Contact your team shepherd to let them know of your trade.

**Be Honoring to One Another** – We recognize that even in the best of environments, people will sometimes disagree with one another. In Aletheia Jr, we advise that disagreements be kept private between the parties directly involved and not displayed in public ways. If you have a disagreement with another person, go to that person privately and discuss it together. (See Matthew 18:15). If this does not resolve the issue, contact your staff director for help resolving the situation. Our goal is to eliminate gossip and resolve the issue while honoring all parties involved.

**Confidentiality** – As you shepherd children, you will be serving in a unique capacity that demands carefully handling the information they may share regarding their family lives, things they are feeling, and their behaviors. If you feel it is important that another person have this information, please talk to the Team Shepherd or an Aletheia staff member.

**Discipline** – Discipline helps to maintain a positive learning environment and it is everybody’s responsibility to respond to and redirect misbehavior. See Classroom Discipline Ideas on Page 9.

**Turn off cell phones during class –** Your role as a volunteer will require your full attention. Please do not use your cell phone during class. Also, do not take any pictures of the children! The AJR director is the only one approved to take pictures.

**Health and Safety**

Health and Safety is the number one priority in Aletheia Jr. We always seek to maintain a clean, safe, and welcoming atmosphere for our kiddos. If any situation should arise where a volunteer or parent doesn’t follow one of the following criteria, contact Callie Coleman (717-816-6229) or security. If there’s a medical emergency, call 911.

Help us keep the environment healthy for all children. Please do not check in children who:

• Have had diarrhea, fever or vomiting within past 24 hours

• Have a persistent cough

• Have excessive runny nose

• Have discolored discharge from nose or eyes

• Have had a communicable disease within past 24 hours

If any of these circumstances arise, either page parent to come get their child, or ask that the parent look out for the safety of their child and keep them in the service. Any further issues contact the Aletheia Jr. Director.

**Follow Universal Precautions** by wearing vinyl gloves, available in the first aid kit in each classroom for handling any body fluid i.e., bloody nose, bleeding cut, vomit, urine, or feces.

“**Two-Adult Rule**.” No volunteer should ever be with a child outside the visual presence of another volunteer. This is for the safety of the child and the volunteer. Please keep the bathroom doors in the Aletheia Jr. hallway open. (The men’s bathroom door may be closed if the child is able to use the bathroom with complete independence.)

**Ratios** In addition to the two-adult policy, we have set ratios for each classroom to ensure the safety of volunteers and children. The ideal ratios for each classroom are as follows:

Infants- 1 to 3

Toddlers- 1 to 4

2s & 3s- 1 to 5

4s & 5s- 1 to 7

K & 1st- 1 to 8

2nd & 3rd- 1 to 10

**Bathrooms/Diapers**

* No men can change diapers or help with bathroom assistance.
* Diaper changes must be done with two adults present and open doors.
* Kiddos who need help may be accompanied by two adults to the bathroom. (One adult may be a security guard)
* The adult who assists personally in the bathroom must be a woman.
* The woman who assists personally must keep stall door open while assisting to keep clear line of site with other adult. (The other adult may be the security guard)
* For children who do not need assistance, one adult will accompany to the bathroom door. The child will wait outside while the adult (preferably the security guard) checks VISUALLY to make sure the bathroom is empty. The child proceeds into the bathroom while the adult waits outside the door and stops anyone else from entering.

**Food/Snacks in the Classroom**

We maintain a nut-free environment in the Nursery and Early Childhood Area. Snacks include pretzels or animal crackers for 2’s and older, and Cheerios for 2’s and younger. We do not offer snacks that contain peanuts/tree nuts or that have been processed on machinery that also processed peanuts/tree nuts. Parents may provide snacks for kids with special dietary issues.

**Water Fountain**

Classroom teachers and Security Guards will keep the area under the fountain dry. For trips to the water fountain the Two-Adult Rule still applies.

**Affirming Touch Only**

* DO: High-fives, pat on the back or shoulder, side hugs/brief hugs.
* DO NOT: ask for/expect hugs, wrestle, tickle, hug tightly, spank, kiss, etc.

**Evacuation Procedure:**

Volunteer Staff should take their roster with them and continually do a headcount. Make sure you have all your children during any type of evacuation.

**Fire or fire alarm** - In the event of a fire or fire alarm activation getting the children out quickly and in an organized fashion is of utmost importance.  Remain calm and give firm, clear directions.

* If the fire alarm sounds evacuate the building unless there is a good reason to shelter in place (i.e. active shooter situation, heavy smoke in the hallway, security advises you to shelter in place, etc...)
* If you are sheltering in place keep the door shut and attempt to signal the Fire Department from the windows. Be aware that fire alarms will be very loud and will be accompanied by flashing lights.
* The primary route is to go down the hall toward the elevator, take the stairs down (do not use the elevator), make a 180 degree turn and exit the building through the double doors then proceed to the soccer field.
* The secondary route is to continue straight at the bottom of the stairs and go out the double doors to the parking lot that fronts Parkwood Ave.
* The tertiary route is down the steps by the main entrance and out the glass door at the bottom by the restrooms.  If one exit is not accessible due to smoke or fire conditions, attempt the next exit.
* Parents should meet you on the soccer fields.
* There should always be a member of the security team present on the floor and they will be available to assist with determining the best route.
* Adults from classes with older kids should assist the younger classes with carrying and directing children as possible/needed.  Adults from younger classes should request help from other adults if needed.

**Active shooter or other physical threat** - If at all possible, notify a member of the security team if they are not already aware, the team has protocols in place to assist, however, they must know there is a problem before they can be implemented.

* Remain calm in an effort to keep the children calm.
* Shelter in place - Move the children to a far corner and provide shielding with furniture.  Close the door, lock it and secure it with a wedge. Stack as much as you can in front of the door; chairs, desks, filing cabinets, bookshelves, etc.
* Turn off lights, silence cell phones, maintain silence to the extent possible.
* Call 911 and give the dispatcher as much information as you can, remain calm and realize that they are going to be receiving multiple calls and they will ask you a lot of information that does not seem relevant, trust them and their training to get you the help that you need.
* If the threat enters the room, fight back with whatever is available; hands, feet, broomsticks, chairs, books, etc… Attack as a group as violently as possible.

**General Security** - The person working security for the day should introduce themselves to you, if they don’t, make an effort to find out who is serving that day. Maintain situational awareness, know where your exits, fire extinguishers, and students are. If someone seems suspicious or makes you feel uneasy, let security know.

**First Aid Kits** are located in the classroom supply tubs. Please let your team shepherd know when supplies are used from these kits so a replacement can be done.

**Check in/ Check Out Procedures for children**

All Children attending Aletheia classes will be checked in by their parents at one of the computers at the Aletheia Jr Check In Table. This process will produce an adhesive nametag for the child with their name, class, and a security ID number. Parents will receive a badge with matching security ID numbers which must be presented and matched to the numbers on the child’s nametag at dismissal.

Parents will walk their child to the classroom where they will be greeted by the classroom staff and join the learning activities available. There must be at least 2 adults present to welcome children into the classroom.

At dismissal, parents will present their security ID badge as they give the first and last name of the child they are picking up. The security numbers on the badge must be matched with the ID number on the child’s nametag.

**A child may NOT be released to anyone who does not display the matching security badge**. In the case of a lost badge, please call for a staff member to release the child. The staff member will require and record the details of sufficient adult identification to safely release the child.

Please always remove the child’s nametag as they are released to their parents.

There must be 2 adults present until the last child is released from the room.

**Paging a Parent** – in cases of emergency or illness the security ID number for a child can be displayed on the screens in the worship service. To activate this option, notify the Aletheia Jr Security volunteer. He will contact the people who will display that information on the screen.

**Classroom Discipline**

Our goal in shepherding children is to lead their hearts to know and love Jesus. Discipline provides a wonderful platform to explain the gospel, which is the central focus of our classrooms.

**I. Be Sure God and the Gospel are the Center of Your Classroom**

• Pray and rely on Holy Scriptures. God desires success for each child. He wants adults to turn all things over to Him. We must let the Word influence us with love and joy for children.

• Pray over each class session. Ask for wisdom with special needs children.

• Allow your co-workers to pray with you and to pray for you. The scriptures are full of illustrations of individuals who were used by the Lord to bring about changes in people or nations. *“Commit to the LORD whatever you do,* *and your plans will succeed.” Proverbs 16:3*

*●* Remember that behavior is not the main issue. Themain issue is always the heart. We

want to ask the Holy Spirit to expose the sin in the hearts of our children that lead to the negative behavior, help them understand their need for a Savior, and share with them the awesome news that Jesus has died for them!

**II. Principles for Positive Discipline**

• Plan for every child to succeed. All children are unique and need to experience success at their own levels of interest and development.

• Home environment and past discipline habits influence self-discipline in the classroom.

• Expectations should be realistic for age characteristics.

• Avoid setting standards or conditions that will cause a child to fail. Read 1 Cor. 13:11.

• Motivate the child by arousing curiosity. Boredom will discourage participation.

• Reinforce positive behavior. Notice each child’s accomplishments and encourage repeated positive behavior.

• Above all, remember God’s love does not depend on our good behavior. Love each child as he is and resolve to be a wise teacher who makes learning a joy.

**III. Basic Discipline Policy**

• Separate a child in a loving, calm, matter-of-fact manner from the activity or incident causing the problem. Use a firm but soft voice.

• All disciplinary guidance must take place immediately.

• Acknowledge the child’s feelings without censure. Then tell the child how much he is loved and liked, but that he must cooperate with acceptable behavior.

• If the child is old enough, be sure the child understands clearly what behavior was improper and have the child repeat verbally what behavior was incorrect.

• At no time is spanking, pulling, yelling, grabbing, or any other form of physical and/or mental abuse permitted.

• Discuss any special problems with the Team Shepherd or the Director.

**IV. How to Prevent Problems**

• Love and accept each child, even when the behavior is not acceptable.

• Provide meaningful activities and choices. Is an activity too difficult, too easy, boring, or inappropriate for the age? Discipline is minimized when children work at tasks, which have meaning and purpose.

• Be prepared. Have all lesson plans and materials ready and at hand.

• Lost eye contact results in losing the children’s attention.

• Monitor group behavior constantly, and redirect potential negative situations. The emphasis is on redirect, not repress.

• Identify limits, which are appropriate and necessary. Once limits have been established, they should be clearly defined and consistently maintained. Only give children choices where you can accept their decision. Know your own limitations.

• Teach children to finish what they start - even the very young.

• Understand clearly the age characteristics of the children in your care.

Never expect young children to sit still for very long.

• Focus attention on the child’s positive behavior and give honest praise where warranted. Children desire attention and a feeling of importance.

• Model the behavior expected from the children. If children are not to sit on shelves or tables, adults should not sit on shelves or tables.

Check your own level of anxiety and tenseness.

• Be a good listener and observer. Talk less; listen more.

• Identify what is important and emphasize it. Forget the rest.

• Maintain a sense of humor. Most behaviors will be temporary.

**V. Specific Redirections:**

• Help children to recognize and accept logical consequences of their behavior. Avoid building classroom discipline around bribes or rewards.

• Redirect children into positive behavior by using positive action words. Example: rather than saying, “don’t hit”, try saying, “use your words to say how you feel, not your hands.”

• It cannot be overstressed how important interesting and stimulating activities are to the management of a classroom. Children who are not bored, frustrated, or under-supervised will rarely be mischievous. Children who are able to play at activities that satisfy their own performance levels will continue with that activity and return to it time and again.

• If children tend to run in the room, rearrange centers to discourage that behavior.

• Isolate the block area to prevent children who are not playing with the blocks from coming into the activity area and kicking another child’s block creation.

• Introduce new activities with instructions for use and how to put it away.

• Arrange seating of children so that incompatible children are never seated together. It is often wise not to let children choose where they will be seated.

• In the case of biting: Firmly isolate the biter immediately and give attention to the child who has been bitten. The Team Shepherd should talk with the parents of the biter and the parents of the child who was bitten. It is very important not to disclose names of the children and save lengthy discussions for later in the week, not Sunday morning.

• Disarm poor behavior caused by low blood sugar levels with light snacks.

• Check room conditions - is it too hot? Over-crowded? Is a child overly tired?

**Follow Up**

If a student has had a bad day and been redirected several times, please inform your Team Shepherd or Aletheia Jr Director. We will be happy to call the parents to see if there is some reason or some need that we can assist with. Often, it has to do with things outside of the classroom that sometimes is affecting a student’s behavior and this is an opportunity for us to minister to the family in some way.

**Curriculum and Supplies**

**Curriculum**

Aletheia Jr uses age appropriate curriculum that seeks to meet the needs of the learners in each age group. We choose curriculum that is God-Centered and Grace-Centered, kid relevant and FUN! Your Team Shepherd will give you the curriculum to be used in your ministry with children.

**Supply Closets/Supplies**

Your Team Shepherd will show you where all supplies are kept for your class. If you need special supplies, let your Team Shepherd or the AJR Director know ahead of the time they’re needed, and the items will be purchased for you.

**Reproduction of Materials**

Notify your Team Shepherd if you need any materials copied. We do not copy materials that are copyrighted.

**Contact Information**

**Team Shepherds**

Infants-

Hayley Holsinger

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**Aletheia Jr. Director-**

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717-816-6229

**Accountability**

**The policies above are taken directly from the Aletheia Jr. Handbook.**

**I have read, affirm, and will abide by the ministry expectations, health/safety and discipline policies while in Aletheia Jr.:**

**Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Sign Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please read your handbook thoroughly, sign and date this page, and return only this sheet to Callie. Keep your handbook for future reference.**