

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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2024-2025

HOPEKIDS \* HOPETOTS

# Welcome!

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We want to thank you so much for making the decision to share the love of Jesus with the youngest here at Hope Lutheran Church. Hopekids staff are so grateful for you! You enable us to make ministry happen. You are important to us and to the families of the kids that you connect with each week. Make sure you read through this volunteer handbook. It'll have everything you need to know as you join our ministry, and it's a great place to reference if you forget something!

## HOSPITALITY VOLUNTEERS

- **Check In** make sure you are checking in at the main desk.
- **Welcoming Presence:** greet everyone as they pass by and direct families with questions to the main desk. Please arrive 30 minutes prior to the hour.
- **Know what's next:** make sure you are aware of upcoming events or announcements to share with families.
- **Guide:** families to the proper classrooms.
- **Alert us of technical issues:** if check-in isn't working, please alert youth staff in the building.
- **Make new connections:** make sure to introduce yourself to new families.

## SMALL GROUP GUIDES

- **Invest in your own spiritual growth:** spend time in God's Word, join a small group, attend worship, etc. just make sure you take the time to fill-up with God's Word, so you can share it with others.
- **Pray:** for the students in your small group, Hopekids and the church.
- **Engage with students:** participate in worship, ask students questions, and keep the focus on them. Make sure you know that you can redirect behaviors and please notify lead teacher if behaviors continue.
- **Show up predictably:** arrive 15 minutes early, so you can pray as a group and be a welcoming presence for your small group. Greet students and their families, share how their student did during the group. If you are going to be absent, please coordinate a sub (co-guide) and alert the lead teacher. Make sure your lead teacher knows of your absence.
- **Connect with your Lead Teacher:** let them know how they can support you and feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** To be a small group guide, you don't have to be a Bible scholar, pass a theological aptitude test or display a particular set of special spiritual gifts. You don't even need to be that cool! Here's all you need to do is love God, care about kids. be committed to consistently investing in and caring for your group.

- Complete and pass a background check.

- Watch volunteer training videos and read through manual

**Staff: Who Should I Contact?**

Nicole Weisz/nweisz@fargohope.org Director of Children's Ministry - WC	<b>Unfilled</b> Campus Coordinator: North Campus
Kim Bedore/kbedore@fargohope.org Associate Director of Children's Ministry - NC	<b>Missy Eastlund/</b> meastlund@fargohope.org Campus Coordinator: South Campus
Rebecca Lill/rlill@fargohope.org Associate Director of Children's Ministry - SC	<b>Dara Eschbach/deschbach@fargohope.org</b> Campus Coordinator: West Campus
<b>Lead Teacher Placements:</b>	
<b>North Campus Wednesday:</b>	
UNFILLED Hopetots	<b>Caitlyn Pithey</b> Preschool - cpithey@fargohope.org
<b>Molly Johnson</b> Kindergarten-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade - mjohnson@fargohope.org	<b>Kim Bedore – Until Filled</b> 2-3 Grade – kbedore@fargohope.org
<b>Jake Himle</b> 4-5 <sup>th</sup> Grade – jhimle@fargohope.org	
<b>North Campus Sunday:</b>	
UNFILLED Hopetots	<b>Alena Rinas</b> Preschool-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade - arinas@fargohope.org
<b>Kristi Steidl</b> 2-5 Grade - ksteidl@fargohope.org	
<b>South Campus Wednesday:</b>	
<b>Grace Surprenant</b> Hopetots - gsurprenant@fargohope.org Wed & Sunday	<b>Jo Baker</b> 3 years - jbaker@fargohope.org Wed & Sunday
<b>Sophie Weisz</b> 4-5 years - sweisz@fargohope.org	<b>Rebecca Lill – Until Filled</b> Kindergarten-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade – rlill@fargohope.org
<b>Cheryl Glasner</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade - cglasner@fargohope.org	<b>Ruth Bergstrom</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade - rbergstrom@fargohope.org
<b>Katy Johnson</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade - kjohnson@fargohope.org	<b>Peyton Klein</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade - pklein@fargohope.org
<b>South Campus Sunday:</b>	
<b>Jeremiah Fischer</b> 4-5 years – jfischer@fargohope.org	<b>Zach Johnson</b> Preschool – 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade - zjohnson@fargohope.org 9:30 k/1 & 10:45 Pre- 1st
<b>Missy Eastlund – Until Filled</b> 2-3 Grade 9:30 – meastlund@fargohope.org	<b>Susan Vitalis</b> SC 4-5 <sup>th</sup> Grade 9:30 – svitalis@fargohope.org
<b>Missy Eastlund – Until Filled</b> 2-5 Grade @ 10:45 – meastlund@fargohope.org	
<b>West Campus Wednesday:</b>	
<b>Melanie McGraw</b> Hopetots - mmcgraw@fargohope.org	<b>Dara Eschbach – Until Filled</b> Preschool-Kindergarten – deschbach@fargohope.org
<b>Autumn Gossett</b> 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade - agossett@fargohope.org	<b>Ashley Hogness</b> 4-5 <sup>th</sup> Grade - ahogness@fargohope.org
<b>West Campus Sunday:</b>	
<b>Alora Rude</b> Hopetots - arude@fargohope.org 9:30 & 10:45	<b>Dara Eschbach – Until Filled</b> WC Preschool-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade 9:30 - deschbach@fargohope.org
<b>Bailey Nieman</b> Preschool-1 <sup>st</sup> Grade – bnieman@fargohope.org 10:45	<b>Nicole Weisz – Until Filled</b> 2- 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade 9:30 & 10:45 – nweisz@fargohope.org

**Church Office: (701) 235-6629**

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## CHECK-IN & DISMISSAL - **CAMPUS SPECIFIC**

### CELLPHONES

We want your time volunteering to be focused on those present. Please refrain from any cellphone use unless taking attendance or emergencies. Please remind students this expectation applies to them as well.

### RESTROOMS

Never go into the bathroom alone with a child. If they need help, bring another adult with you. If they are old enough to go by themselves, wait outside for them.

### ALLERGIES

Due to the magnitude of different allergies, Hopekids policy requests no food to be served.

### DISCIPLINE

If you have a student who is not following the guidelines that have been put in place, try redirecting the child's behavior. If that doesn't work, have a plan in place to contact the coordinator or director so that they can handle the situation apart from small groups. Follow up with the coordinator or director to brainstorm other ways to help a student succeed in your group. We have a 3-Step Policy where the Lead Teacher will have a conversation with the student, if behavior continues the Lead Teacher, then visits with student's parent and/or guardian, with the third step being that an adult will be asked to stay with the student. This is usually a parent or guardian.

### SICKNESS POLICY

If you or the student has had a fever within the last 24 hours, please try to find a sub.

### CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Each state has its own child abuse mandated reporting policies. Be sure you are familiar with those policies. You can contact your state Department of Child and Family Services for specific guidelines. Please bring any concerns to the attention of the director.

### FIRE EVACUATION PLAN

Be aware of fire evacuation maps located in the building. Make a quick exit to the nearest safe exit with your group. Take attendance of the group when you approach a safe distance away. Notify church staff if any students are missing from your group.

### LOST CHILD PROCEDURE

Should a child get lost after they have been checked-in with your small group, be sure to notify church staff immediately. They will direct the next action steps.

## EVERY SMALL GROUP GUIDE SHOULD KNOW THESE FOUR THINGS:

### be present.

CONNECT THEIR FAITH TO A COMMUNITY

God created us for community. Jesus illustrated community. The Church practiced community. That's why you showed up—to connect the faith of your few to a community.

When you choose to be present, that means you. . .

#### 1. Show up predictably.

For most of you, that means weekly or every other week. You cannot lead a small group without trust. You cannot build a community without trust. And the first step to gaining the trust of your few is making sure they know you will show up—predictably.

#### 2. Show up mentally.

Check your phone at the door or leave it in your pocket. When you show up mentally, you commit to engaging your few in meaningful discussions and to listening—really listening—to what your students have to say. This means knowing the content ahead of time and being mentally prepared to shed some light and scriptural insight into their world. They are worth an hour of your attention.

#### 3. Show up randomly.

Never underestimate the power of showing up randomly. This may look like a text, a card, or showing up at an event they are excited about. These small connections may seem insignificant, but when you choose to be present in an unexpected way, outside of your weekly group time, you reinforce your students' connection to the community you are creating.

### create a safe place.

CLARIFY THEIR FAITH AS THEY GROW

There's inevitable tension when a group of different people with different personalities and backgrounds come together in one place. But what if tension is the platform that gives you an opportunity to demonstrate that this is a safe place? The safer your environment is, the more honestly your few will clarify their faith in the context of your circle.

When you choose to create a safe place, that means you. . .

#### 1. Lead the group.

Lead your group to value acceptance. Lead your group to value confidentiality. Lead your group to value honesty. When you do, your few will feel safe to be themselves, share doubts, ask questions and admit their struggles and clarify their faith in an authentic way.

#### 2. Respect the process.

Authentic faith is a continual process - it's the molding, crafting, shaping and changing of faith through time, life experience and reflection. The process isn't the same for everyone. Celebrate their steps and refuse to get impatient with the process. And let God do what only God can do.

#### 3. Guard the heart.

Faith is personal. We often process the most difficult times in our lives through the filter of faith, which is why, as an SGL, you should expect some tough and even shocking things to be revealed during small group time. Your job is to know when to respect confidentiality and when you need outside help.

# partner with parents.

NURTURE AN EVERYDAY FAITH

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No matter what you think about the parents of your few, two things are true. One, every parent wants to be a better parent. Two, they will always have more influence than you do. So if you want to nurture the kind of faith that lasts, you need to partner with your parents.

When you choose to partner with parents, that means you. . .

## 1. Cue the parent.

When you “cue” the parent, you give them just the right information at just the right time. Just let them know who you are and tell them what you learned today.

## 2. Honor the parent.

Some children struggle with authority. No, scratch that. All children struggle with authority. But remember this—if you’re not on the parent’s side, you’re not on the kid’s side. Model what it means to respect their parents.

## 3. Reinforce the family.

Although parents potentially have 3,000 hours a year of possible time with their child, it’s not always the same quality as the hours you have with your few.

# make it personal.

INSPIRE THEIR FAITH WITH YOUR EXAMPLE

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The most important person you need to lead is not your few—it’s you.

When you choose to make it personal, that means you. . .

## 1. Live in community.

Whether hosted by your church, formed organically or brought together through another local ministry, your own community provides the healthy and necessary outlet for you to process faith.

## 2. Set priorities.

One of the best things you can do for your few, and for yourself, is to make your priorities clear. They need to see what you value. And when they see the way you prioritize your own relationship with God, it might even inspire your few to think about their own priorities.

## 3. Be real.

Find ways to relate to your few without compromising who you really are. It’s more important for them to see a real person that is still growing, learning and trying to live out authentic faith than it is for them to have another friend.