



Welcome

Welcome to the Children's Ministry Team! Mount Zion United Holy Church (MZUHC) could not exist without the many people who give of their time in service to God and He has placed each of you here in children's ministry with the potential to change lives! We are thrilled you are joining with us to help families grow closer to Jesus. The contribution you will make is crucial to the mission of our church. You can play an instrumental role in kids and parents finding their way to God. God is honored by your commitment and we're confident He's going to do an amazing work through you!

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines that MZUHC Church has established for its volunteers. Please read through it carefully.

The handbook should serve as a guide for you as you begin or continue your service at the church. However, it's obviously not possible to anticipate all situations that could arise in ministry or provide information that answers every possible question. As a result, the church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any policy or provision, with or without notice, as necessary or appropriate. However, at all times, the church will comply with all applicable laws.

Nothing in this handbook creates a contract of employment. Both traditionally and biblically, churches have long relied on unpaid workers to fulfill their calls to service—not because of reward or remuneration—but out of love and obedience in personal relationship to God. Of course, different ministry roles require different skills and personality types, and neither the church nor the servant can always predict whether things will be a good fit. Therefore, while we hope that your service is both long-term and rewarding, either you or the church can terminate this relationship at any time.

Finally, it's important that you read and understand the contents of this handbook. If you have any questions or need additional information, please talk with your designated ministry leader. If your leader doesn't know the answers, he or she will find the answers and get back to you in a timely manner.



Mission & Vision

MZUHC Children's Ministry is a place where children can get excited about Jesus Christ – a place where children have so much fun learning how awesome God is, that they don't want to miss a single week! Our mission is to *bring children closer to Jesus*.

Core Values

MZUHC holds these values not as a set of rules, but a standard to which we have been called. Our Children's Ministry is a part of MZUHC and adheres to these Core Values.

Above all else, honor God in *all* we do.

1. **Communion** – We believe that every person should have an intentional interactive relationship with God: (spiritual disciplines – Bible study, prayer...)
 - a. Love God with all your heart.
 - b. Worship God privately and corporately.
 - c. Prayer is essential as individuals and as a team.
 - d. Set aside time for God.
 - e. Ask yourself: "What is in my life that is getting in the way of putting God first?" Deuteronomy 6:5
2. **Unity** – We believe that every person and ministry should share the single, common mission of the church. (Attitude matters; supportive)
 - a. We are all on the same team. It's not 'us against them.
 - b. We look for ways to serve one another.
 - c. We're all in it together – one heart, one purpose, one mind.
 - d. Our attitude matters. It reflects the condition of our heart. It can affect others positively or negatively.
 - e. Ask yourself: "Am I supportive of the whole church and not just the areas about which I am passionate? Would others know that I am a Christ follower by my attitude? John 17:11; 1 Corinthians 1:10
3. **Community** – We believe every person should be involved in deep, authentic friendships with other Christ followers
 - a. Through these relationships, we give each other grace, forgiveness, and truth; and hold each other accountable.
 - b. We commit to know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated.
 - c. We take hurts, frustrations, and offenses directly to each other instead of gossiping.



- d. We love one another, think the best of one another, encourage one another, and tell the truth.
4. **Convergence** – We believe our faith should impact our world. (It's not about me)
 - a. We are to be God-centered, others-centered, not us-centered; we are to strive to be selfless.
 - b. Our focus is on God and what He wants to do through us.
 - c. Jesus calls us to converge our faith on our world through the way we live, missions, and evangelism.
 - d. We are committed to creating a non-threatening environment for everyone to 'come as they are' and have a safe place to explore their questions of faith.
 - e. Ask yourself: "Where is my focus...on me or on what God wants to do through me?" Matthew 28:18-20; 1 John 4:19-21
 5. **Serving** – We believe that serving is a response to God.
 - a. Service is an act of worship.
 - b. Service is an act of obedience.
 - c. Serving flows from a grateful heart. d. Serving cannot earn more grace.
 - e. Ask yourself: "Do I serve because I am grateful for what God has done for me?" Mark 10:45
 6. **Excellence** – We believe that God calls us to do whatever we do with excellence. (Give your best, not perfection.)
 - a. Excellence honors God and inspires others.
 - b. Excellence removes distractions so that others can more easily focus on God.
 - c. We show our commitment to excellences by showing up on time and being prepared.
 - d. Excellence means we give God our best (not our leftovers) and serve where we are gifted.
 - e. Ask yourself: "Is there any part of my life where I am not giving God my best?" Matthew 25:14-30 Romans 12:11
 7. **Relevance** – We believe that faith in, and commitment to follow Christ is relevant to every person in the world today because it has the power to change hearts and lives.
 - a. The Bible is relevant and is our authority on matters of faith and the practice of faith.
 - b. We are committed to helping people see the relevance of our faith and



how it can change their lives for the better.

- c. We strive to make all that we do relevant for people today.
- d. Ask yourself: What is in the way of our active, intentional study of God's word?" Matthew 4:4

Children's Ministry Values

The Children's Ministry also has its own set of values.

CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT – We know that children matter to God. All leaders and servers working in children's ministry know that God loves each and every child; therefore, each child matters to them.

SAFE – We believe that spiritual growth happens best in an atmosphere of emotional and physical safety. We are committed to exceptional standards in these areas

TRUTH-BASED – We believe that God's word is foundational and it is our heart to train every child to use it as their guide and authority in everything.

CHILD-CENTERED – Adults working with children should strive to gain a child's perspective. Whether adults are working with four year olds or fifth graders, their perspective needs to be age specific. By understanding the world in which children live, adults are able to relate to whom they are ministering. Thus MZUHC strives to make sure that each classroom area is designed and decorated to appeal to its respective age level. In addition, all children are to be accepted, not alienated.

RELATIONAL – We believe that life change happens best in the context of relationship. Passionate adults who exhibit Christ to children, their families, and each other will show kids how to do the same and impact generations to come. In addition, we will respect the privacy of the children and their families (or other servers) by holding in confidence any information obtained in the course of serving.

ADVENTUROUS – We believe that children should have fun! This means that as adults, we must be creative, innovative, and adventurous in reaching them and holding their attention. We believe that children are more receptive to the lessons when they are presented in a creative way. And we know that when children are having fun, they are actively engaged in the lesson; when they are actively engaged in the lesson, they are learning; and when they are learning, they are growing.

Open Door Policy



MZUHC encourages all volunteers to provide input and suggestions concerning the ministry area in which they serve, as well as the overall operation and programs of the church.

Your input and suggestions will likely receive the timeliest attention and action if you initially bring your comments to the individual your ministry leader.

This open door policy is important to increasing the quality of the church's ministries, as well as for correcting problems that may exist in processes or relationships within areas of ministry.

General Guidelines

As a volunteer serving MZUHC and reaching out to those beyond the church, you agree to seek a careful, exemplary Christian lifestyle to encourage other believers and strengthen the church.

Section 2: Orientation

Invitation & Placement

MZUHC Church generally follows these guidelines when it comes to inviting volunteers to service in the ministries and programs of the church.

1. Potential volunteers will attend the church for six months and complete our in house training before they can serve as a leader *with children*. In some cases, as determined by ministry or program leaders, potential volunteers may serve *with an* already approved volunteer leader.
2. All potential volunteers will complete a "get to know you" form providing personal information and references. All references will be checked.
3. Potential volunteers will be interviewed informally and a ministry position that matches the volunteer will be found. The church desires to place volunteers according to their skills, talents, experience, and spiritual gifts so that volunteers find meaningful ministry opportunities that enrich their lives.
4. First Serve Opportunity – Every volunteer is given a "first serve" opportunity to try an area to determine if that area is a good fit for the volunteer. After this first encounter, a coordinator or team leader will contact the volunteer to discuss the experience.



5. Potential volunteers who desire to work with children will be required to undergo a background check. **All information related to background checks will be held in strictest confidence.**

Potential volunteers should strive attend all training opportunities offered by the church.

Volunteer Files

MZUHC does keep files on volunteers. Your file is considered to be confidential information and only the pastor of the church or his designee will have access to your file.

Even that access is limited—only on a need-to-know basis. Of course, you may request to view your own file at any time.

Volunteer files typically contain the following types of personal information:

- Application for volunteer service. (“get to know you” form)
- Spiritual gifts testing and inventories.
- Copies of completion-of-training certificates.
- Letters and other records of affirmation/appreciation.
- Documentation required by local, state, federal, and/or private regulatory agencies, including items such as background checks (such as for volunteers who work with children or teenagers).

Change of Personal Information

It’s important that the church has up-to-date, complete, and accurate information about each of the people who serve in our ministry. Please notify your team leader and the church office immediately if there is a change involving your name, address, phone number, etc.

Keeping your personal information updated serves several purposes. In a most practical sense, it allows the church and/or your team leader to contact you to notify or remind you of meetings and to let you know about changes in schedules. It also allows other servers to contact you if they are ill or injured and need to find a substitute to temporarily fill their ministry position.



Background Checks

Volunteers at MZUHC who work with children and youth (and other vulnerable groups) must submit to various screening procedures. The primary type of background check includes a U.S. Criminal Record Indicator database search and a Social Security number search.

This check searches electronic criminal files and record databases of government agencies, including sexual offenders' registries. Manual records of some records may also be needed in states or counties that don't keep electronic records.

A Social Security number search verifies an individual's name, state, and previous addresses; this prevents people from providing false identification.

Other screening procedures by the church might include a motor vehicle report or a local police record check. Any screening may be repeated as frequently as annually at our discretion.

The results of all screening procedures are kept in strictest confidence.

Individuals who have been arrested for, charged with, are on probation for, or have been convicted of sexually oriented or sex related crimes cannot serve in any area of children's ministry. MZUHC will screen and rely upon the truthful answers of its reference checks and volunteers (based on the background check form) for this information.

Equal Opportunity

MZUHC is strongly committed to recruit and equip volunteers for all levels of ministry positions according to their skills, abilities, talents, experiences, and spiritual gifts. Our church follows the guidelines established by federal Equal Employment Opportunity laws. We treat all volunteers equally without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, veteran status, or mental or physical disability.

This is important even if you have no concerns about your own opportunities, because as a volunteer you need to remain alert to avoid words or actions that could be seen as racially, sexually, ethnically, or disability based. **All are entitled to be treated with respect, and the church won't tolerate disrespect for personal dignity.**

Of course, this policy isn't simply motivated by legal or policy guidelines. The Bible



clearly says that every Christian can do ministry in some way! Each person has important work to do in the church, regardless of age, gender, education, or any other perceived “difference.” Consider these verses:

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

—Ephesians 2:10

“And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.”

—1 Corinthians 12:28-31

“If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

—Romans 12:7-8

Clearly, all Christians have God-given abilities, skills, passions, and gifts that God desires us to use to build up the body of Christ and to glorify God. Whether you serve in front of crowds or complete your duties with no one else around, God has a place where he wants you to serve. And he has built the church so that others also have places to serve as well. Every position and every person carrying out a ministry deserves your respect.



Section 3: Behavior

Smoking

For the health of all who attend or visit MZUHC, the facility is considered a smoke-free environment. No smoking is allowed inside the building or on its grounds.

Drugs and Alcohol

It would seem to be common sense that a church environment is not the place for any kind of consumption of alcohol or controlled substances. So why do we need a policy?

The goal of MZUHC's guidelines regarding drugs and alcohol is to protect and help two individuals: (1) the volunteer, and (2) the individuals the volunteer serves. Of course, this general guideline can't cover every possible circumstance.

All cases involving alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or related problems will be handled discretely and confidentially.

1. All volunteers are unequivocally prohibited from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, or using controlled substances. Any volunteer violating this guideline is subject to discipline, including termination. Additionally MZUHC will report any illegal activities to authorities as appropriate.
2. Alcohol abuse is equally serious in nature because of the danger it can pose to both the drinker and to others. Thus, any volunteer who is convicted of driving while intoxicated/driving under the influence (DWI/DUI) or of violating a criminal drug statute must inform the church within five days. The church may take various actions after such a conviction, depending on the nature of the volunteer's ministry, and the individual's desire to battle and overcome the drug problem.
3. Out of a spirit of Christ-centered love for all people, including those who volunteer at the church, the church will work to help those who have a desire to combat their struggles with drug or alcohol abuse problems. This may include information provided during volunteer training regarding the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, the church may offer (or refer a volunteer to seek) rehabilitative assistance.



Sexual Harassment

MZUHC is committed to providing an environment free of sexual harassment, as well as harassment based on factors such as race, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, and sex. We disapprove of any such harassment and will not tolerate it on the part of staff, volunteers, children, or youth in ministry programs.

Definition

Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct that creates an offensive or hostile environment. Such conduct constitutes harassment when:

1. Submission to the conduct is a stated or implied condition for continued employment or ministry involvement.
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment or volunteer position.
3. The harassment interferes with work or volunteer performance or creates an offensive, intimidating work environment.
4. Threatening reprisals result after a negative response to sexual advances.

Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments.
2. Visual conduct such as derogatory and or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures.
3. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, bra snapping.
4. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests.
5. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Process

If at any time you feel harassed at church or at a church-sponsored event, report the incident in writing immediately to the Board member you feel most comfortable reporting to. If the accusation concerns this person, report it to another Board member. Every reported complaint will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and in a confidential manner.

Discipline

If the investigation establishes harassment, the violator of this policy will be disciplined. Discipline can range from verbal or written warnings, a meeting with the pastor and a governing board member, or termination, depending upon the circumstances.



Violent Behavior

MZUHC has an absolutely zero tolerance for violence. This includes even talking or joking about violence.

If a volunteer threatens or displays violence, he or she will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including verbal or written warnings, a meeting with the pastor, or termination, depending upon the circumstances. In addition, the volunteer may be subject to criminal proceedings, as appropriate.

What is violence? Like many other areas, there's no way to anticipate every possible situation concerning violence. However, it generally includes physically or verbally harming another, including things like pushing, shoving, coercion, or intimidation. The church reserves the right to broaden this definition based on actual incidents or additional information.

In addition, Weapons are discouraged from being on church property.

Thankfully, while instances of violent behavior are rare, volunteers can help prevent violence by reporting any incidents to your ministry leader. Report it even if you suspect that a fellow volunteer (or someone your church serves) is in trouble. The church will investigate all such reports.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy when it comes to the history, records, and conversations about the people MZUHC serves.

The best advice regarding the release of information about the people you serve is *don't!* This is true whether you're simply talking to a friend or family member or to a member of the news media. If anyone requests information from you, your wisest answer is, "Church policy doesn't allow me to give out that information." If someone continues to question you for information, suggest that he or she talk to the Pastor. The only exceptions to this policy are described below; generally, these exceptions relate to legal information and fulfillment of the church's ministry and mission. Again, these exceptions are provided more for your information. Rather than determining if a valid reason exists for releasing information, you should refer the request to your ministry leader and/or the Pastor who will seek additional advice about whether the request is legitimate.

No information requested by an individual outside the church will be provided over the telephone or via email. Again, volunteers should reply, "Church policy doesn't permit me to provide that information." Refer the request to your ministry leader.



Release-of-information forms should be explained and completed in the presence of the person whose information may be released—before it is released.

Any release of information or inspection of records must be specifically authorized by the Pastor. Even in these cases, there should be no taking of notes, photocopying, or removal of records from the church property.

Volunteers agree not to discuss any individual's circumstances or records with unauthorized individuals, whether you're in the process of serving or not.

Section 4: Safety & Security

General Standards

MZUHC strives to ensure an environment where members and visitors of all ages feel safe and secure. Just as the employees in a place of business are on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of customers, the volunteers of the church serve on the frontlines of ensuring the safety of those we minister to.

General Guidelines

In general, as a volunteer, you should strive to:

- Serve using good and common-sense safety practices.
- Refrain from unsafe acts that might endanger yourself, the people you serve, or those who minister with you.
- Use any safety devices provided for your protection; for example, use safety belts in church vehicles etc.
- Report any unsafe situations or acts immediately to your ministry leader.

In addition, please note the safety procedures in the following specific areas.

Safety and Security of Children

Our desire at MZUHC is to draw people to Jesus. This includes even the youngest children who attend our church. We take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can come to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

It's important for volunteers who work with children to see themselves as partners with



parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in the ministries and programs of our church. Our guidelines are designed to protect and promote faith formation for each child (and each adult volunteer) involved in children's ministry.

Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children must agree to follow these guidelines. They represent minimum requirements; leaders of individual programs may develop additional guidelines as appropriate to the ministry setting.

Safety and Security Guidelines

Sunday morning and Wednesday Evenings are MZUHC's primary time to serve the children. Servers must adhere to the following safety expectations:

Bathroom policy

An adult must accompany a child to the restroom. While the child waits outside the restroom, the adult must check the restroom prior to the child using the facility. While the child is using the facility, the adult must wait outside for the child. OR a teacher can take a group (3 or more) to the bathroom at the same time. Again, the teacher must check the restroom prior to the children using the facilities. If children are using a public bathroom that other adults may also be using, the teacher should stand at the door and prop the door open with a hand or foot to be able to listen in case assistance is needed by the child.

Volunteers should help a child use the restroom only if the child is three years or younger and the door can be propped open and/or another unrelated adult is present.

Please note: Never be alone with a child in the stall of a restroom with the door closed.

Transfer of children (from one ministry area to another)

Children should be taken to another program or classroom in an orderly fashion with two adults (or one adult if passing through a public area with other adults present). Children should be counted prior to leaving one area as well as upon arrival at the new area.

Two teachers in each room

At least two adults (or one adult and one youth) should remain in a classroom at all times. If a volunteer needs to leave the classroom, the ministry leader or a hall monitor, must be notified to maintain the policy.



Appropriate touch

Appropriate touch is a part of a healthy ministry. The following are the guidelines for when, where, and how to use appropriate touch.

- i. An arm around a shoulder.
- ii. Walking hand in hand
- iii. Carrying small children (or having them sit on a lap)
- iv. Short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- v. Brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- vi. Handshake and high-fives

Inappropriate touch

Never do the following:

- vii. Touch a child in anger or disgust
- viii. Touch a child in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- ix. Touch a child between the bellybutton and the shin
- x. Touch a child's private parts .

Taboo Topics

Certain topics of discussion are best left to parents and their children. The following are best discussed as part of the official curriculum of MZUHC or taught by the Pastor (or left for the parents to discuss with their children). If you have a questions about the propriety of discussing one of these topics, speak with the leader in charge of your area in which you serve:

- xi. The rapture
- xii. The tribulation
- xiii. Satan – if the purpose is to incite fear or confusion
- xiv. Hell– if the purpose is to incite fear or confusion
- xv. Denominations
- xvi. Speaking in tongues
- xvii. Human sexuality or reproduction



BACKGROUND CHECK
NOTICE/AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FOR
THE PROCUREMENT OF AN INVESTIGATIVE
REPORT

This application is to be completed by all applicants for positions involving the supervising or custody of children. It will assist the church in providing a safe and secure environment for all preschoolers, children and youth. The term “child” or “children” includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

I, _____ (please print), hereby authorize MZUHC Church to have the following background check screening reports processed through the agency contacted by the church and/or its agent or representative for employment or volunteer purposes: Application Verification, National Criminal Report, Sexual Abuse Registry and County Court Report.

I am aware that this background check is only a screening tool and I may be asked to provide additional information or my fingerprints to resolve issues discovered during the screening.

I am aware that the background check screening report I consent to have prepared may include information obtained from a variety of sources, including but not limited to government agencies, and others. I am aware that if I choose, I may obtain a complete disclosure of the nature and scope of any report prepared about me if I make a written request to Triumph Church within a reasonable time after I execute this authorization.

I understand that a photocopy or facsimile of this signed document shall be considered as valid as an original.



BACKGROUND CHECK

NOTICE/AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FOR
THE PROCUREMENT OF AN INVESTIGATIVE
REPORT

FULL NAME:

OTHER NAMES USED/MAIDEN NAMES:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

MOBILE PHONE:

ALTERNATE
PHONE:

DRIVERS LICENSE # AND STATE:

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:

AGE:

DATE OF BIRTH:

SIGNATURE: