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# Volunteer Ministry Policy

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To serve this present age

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A Ministry of the Board of Stewards

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**VICTORY TEMPLE**  
CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER  
**Volunteer Policy**

Effective January 1, 2008

## **Introduction**

### **Overview of Volunteer Application Process**

#### **Application**

To protect vulnerable people and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any work with children, youth, or other vulnerable people. Therefore, every prospective ministry leader, including established or long-time members of this church, must complete the volunteer application form.

The volunteer application form is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved. A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers. By having prospective volunteers fill out a volunteer application form, the church greatly reduces the potential for abuse and the resultant liability.

The pastor of a congregation, stewards or other designated leaders will monitor the application process and keep forms and information in a secure file.

#### **Interview**

Each prospective volunteer is then interviewed by two authorized people. The interviewers can ask follow-up questions and questions of clarification. The information given in the interview will be available only to the interviewers and the pastor or other designated leader. The interview also gives the prospective volunteer the opportunity to ask questions about children's ministries and the reasons behind child-protection procedures.

#### **Reference Check**

Volunteers are asked to provide three references from the following list:

- Former or present pastor
- Long-time friend (minimum of 5 years)
- One parent (for minors)
- Teacher (for minors)
- Congregational member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character)
- Employer or colleague

At least two of these references will be contacted. The person making the contacts, the date contacted, and a summary of the reference's comments will become part of the individual's file.

#### **Background Records Check**

The church reserves the right to ask for a police and/or background records check for all volunteers. (All staff must submit to a police records check for their own protection and for the protection of the church.)

A police records check will be required in those instances where someone is a new resident or unknown to the church community or where an applicant's references cannot be fully verified. Minors (under 16 years of age) are exempt from a police records check.

The church will pay for the cost of a background records check.

The background records check report is to be brought to the pastor or designated leader. If there is no criminal record, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church. If there is a criminal record or information that raises concern, the pastor and/or ministry leader will meet with the volunteer to discuss and resolve the matter.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the pastor and ministry leader agree.

The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

- The number and type of convictions
- The age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offense
- The length of time between past criminal activity and the present
- The conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offense
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offense

If any offense is related to the abuse of children or is of a sexual nature, the prospective volunteer will not be approved for ministry with children, youth or vulnerable people in the church.

The information contained in the police records check report is considered strictly confidential. Only the pastor and steward on duty or the director of a church ministry can be privy to the information.

### **Approval**

The pastor or designated steward will review all volunteer application materials, which will be kept in a confidential, secure file for a minimum of seven years.

Will religious conversion make a difference for someone who has been guilty of past abuse?

No. Occasionally, a person may freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatever. The safest course is to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children, youth, or other vulnerable people. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve in the church.

A church that permits such an individual to work with children, youth or other vulnerable people, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should another incident of abuse occur. The defense—that the abuser claimed to have been converted—would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known abuser in a position involving access to children, youth, or other vulnerable people is taking an enormous risk.

## **Policy for Providing a Safe Sanctuary Environment for Children and Youth**

We want to provide a safe environment for the children and youth who attend activities at our church or who attend events sponsored by the church. We also want to safeguard all paid employees, staff, clergy, and volunteers. A Safe Sanctuary Policy has been adopted effective January 1, 2008. In addition to our Safe Sanctuary Policy, the church is implementing the following policies:

### **Responsible Screening of Employees**

1. All paid church employees, including clergy, will undergo a thorough screening process as a part of the job application procedure.

2. A documented background reference check, prior to employment, will be done on all paid employees working with children or youth.
3. A pre-employment criminal history investigation will be made for all persons being considered for full-time or permanent part-time paid employment. A pastor and/or the Board of Stewards will review and evaluate any information obtained from the inquiry into the applicant's criminal history. All information obtained in such an investigation, including any review/evaluation notes, will become a part of the applicant's permanent personnel file.

### **Responsible Screening of Volunteers**

4. All volunteer workers for any and all positions involving work with children or youth will be screened.
5. All adult volunteers working with preschoolers, children, or youth are required to be members of our church for a minimum of six months.
6. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual or physical abuse may NOT do volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program involving children or youth.
7. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need the love and acceptance of this church family. Individuals who have such a history should discuss their desire to work with preschoolers, children, or youth with one of the pastoral staff prior to engaging in any volunteer service.

### **Providing a Safe Environment**

8. All volunteers must observe the "two adult" rule. This rule requires that adults are never alone with children or youth without another adult partner present.
9. All church staff and regular volunteers who work with children or youth will complete the safe sanctuary training that is recommended and offered in regard to the nature of child abuse; and, in regard to carrying out our policies to prevent sexual abuse.
10. Pertinent state law information concerning child abuse reporting obligations will be reviewed annually.
11. Reporting procedures and response strategy regarding any suspected incident of child and/or sexual abuse are to be developed and periodically updated jointly by the steward board.
12. The Board of Trustees will do an annual needs/risk management assessment and update as to adequate liability insurance coverage.

### **Providing A Proper Response**

13. All volunteers must immediately report any behaviors that seem abusive or inappropriate to their supervisor.
14. Response to any and all media inquiries, if an incident occurs, shall be the responsibility of the senior pastor or the appointed representative only.
15. Our church takes our policies to prevent molestation and/or sexual abuse seriously and intends to see that the policies are enforced.

# Volunteer Ministry Covenant

Rejoicing in my salvation and celebrating God's grace and gifts in my life, I resolve to minister within the community of this church as a servant of Jesus Christ as follows:

I. I will support the witness of this church:

- by regular attendance at worship
- by living a godly life
- by giving regularly

II. I will serve the ministry of this church:

- by seeking to discover and nurturing my gifts and talents
- by fulfilling the duties of my ministry to the best of my ability
- by participating in training as I am given opportunity
- by serving in partnership with others
- by supporting and affirming the gifts and ministries of others.

III. I will share in the growth of this church:

- by praying for our congregation/ministry/office and for our community
- by inviting those without a church home into our ministry
- by warmly welcoming those who visit.

IV. I will build-up the community of this church:

- by acting in love toward others
- by holding others in high regard
- by working cooperatively with others

I have read and become familiar with the Safe Sanctuary Policy to Protect Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People in the church.

I understand that this local church is responsible for the well being of all children, youth, and other vulnerable people entrusted to our care.

I will endeavor to minister to the best of my ability and to cooperate fully with this local church and its leaders in the exercise of my ministry.

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Statement of Faith

*Victory Temple Christian Life Center is committed to offering teaching to all ages that is firmly grounded in Scripture and compatible with our Statement of Faith. As a result of this important commitment, it is our practice to ask all ministers, officers and volunteers to complete this form summarizing their commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and agreement with our doctrinal position.*

## Statement of Faith

A. The 66 canonical books of the Bible as originally written were inspired of God, hence free from error. They constitute the only infallible guide in faith and practice.

B. There is one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, infinite in being and perfection. He exists eternally in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are of one substance and equal in power and glory.

C. God created Adam and Eve in his own image. By disobedience, they fell from their sinless state through the temptation by Satan. This fall plunged humanity into a state of sin and spiritual death, and brought upon the entire race the sentence of eternal death. From this condition we can be saved only by the grace of God, through faith, on the basis of the work of Christ, and by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

D. The eternally pre-existent Son became incarnate without human father, by being born of the Virgin Mary. Thus, in the Lord Jesus Christ, divine and human natures were united in one Person, both natures being whole, perfect, and distinct. To effect salvation, he lived a sinless life and died on the cross as the sinner's substitute, shedding his blood for the remission of sins. On the third day he rose from the dead in the body, which had been laid in the tomb. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he performs the ministry of intercession. He shall come again, personally and visibly, to complete his saving work and to consummate the eternal plan of God.

E. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Triune God. He applies to man the work of Christ. By justification and adoption we are given a right standing before God; by regeneration, sanctification, and glorification our nature is renewed.

F. When we have turned to God in penitent faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are accountable to God for living a life separated from sin and characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. It is our responsibility to contribute by word and deed to the universal spread of the Gospel.

G. At the end of the age, the bodies of the dead shall be raised. The righteous shall enter into full possession of eternal bliss in the presence of God, and the wicked shall be condemned to eternal death.

***I have read the Statement of Faith, agree with, and am willing to abide by it.***

Yes     No    If no, explain why/where you are not in agreement. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Authorization for Release of Information

~~Confidential~~

## Applicant Information (Please print legibly.)

Volunteer  Staff

## Biographical Data

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First Middle Initial*

Date of Birth: (Mo/Day/Year) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Street City State Zip*

Telephone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Issuing State: \_\_\_\_\_

List previous addresses within the past five years (attach a separate sheet if necessary).

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street City State Zip*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street City State Zip*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street City State Zip*

**Release to do Reference Checks and Criminal Records Check**

***I authorize my references, present and past employers, and churches listed in this application, to give this church any information, including opinions, they may have regarding my character and fitness for child care and youth work, or other volunteer ministry or employment.***

*This release and authorization acknowledges that this church may now, or at any time while I am employed or work as a volunteer, obtain and use a "consumer report" about me, which may include verification of my education, previous employment/work history, driving record, and criminal record that may be in the files of the federal, state, or local criminal justice agency in any state. A photocopy or fax of this Authorization and Consent for Release of Information shall be valid as the original. The results of this verification process will be used to determine employment or volunteer eligibility. All results will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. The information obtained will not be provided to any parties other than to designated church personnel.*

*I authorize a criminal background check organization, and any of their agents or designated company personnel, or a police department to release to this church any information that pertains to any record of convictions in its file or in any criminal file maintained on me, whether local, state, or national, and to disclose orally and in writing the results of this verification process to authorized representatives.*

*I do hereby agree to forever release and discharge this church and their associates, and all such individuals, employers, churches, and organizations, to the full extent permitted by law, from any claims, damages, losses, liabilities, costs and expenses, or any other charge or complaint arising from the retrieving and reporting of information.*

*In the event that information from the consumer report is utilized in whole or in part in making an adverse decision with regard to my application, before making the adverse decision, the church will provide me with a copy of the report and a description in writing of my rights under the law.*

*I hereby authorize*

\_\_\_\_\_  
VICTORY TEMPLE CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER to obtain a consumer report on me.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name Typed or Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Last reviewed by legal counsel on \_\_\_\_\_