



Membership Policies and Procedures
2015-2016 Academic Year

Dear Agape Members:

Welcome! We are excited about your membership to the Agape Homeschool Group. It is our hearts desire that, in one format or another, you would find new friends and opportunities resembling Jesus in our group and that we might be a blessing during your homeschooling journey.

Once we have processed your application, we will add your email addresses to our directory and notify you of your application status. If you are on Facebook we will "friend" you by someone named Agape Ionia. This will allow us to then add you to our Agape Homeschool Group secret Facebook page. Once you have been accepted as a general member, you will receive email updates and opportunities so you can start benefiting from your membership immediately. The special events and field trips are opportunities, not obligations. Take advantage of any you think might benefit your family. Please don't let any of the details cause you stress. Just glean what you need or want, and relax in knowing you'll soon be able to connect some friendly faces to all of these names. Remember, if Friday School enrollment is full, there are a couple other opportunities for you. We also offer Friday afternoon classes (at an additional fee per class), as well as our EXTRA Fridays (Enriching eXtra Time Regroup- ing Altogether) you are still able to join the group as members to participate in field trips, parties, special events, and service projects.

Always feel free to call or email us to answer any questions. We hope that Agape helps you connect to other homeschool families, and becomes a second family to you as it has for many of us.

Grace and Peace,

The Agape Board

Nichole Thelen 616-841-1690 (Director)
Michelle Huisman 616-374-7723/ 269-838-3676 (Vice- Director)
Marci Teachworth 616-841-3037 (Secretary)
Amanda King 616-706-0360 (Treasurer)
Cherith Goodemoot 616-374-3103 (NTPK Coordinator)
Erin Stephens 517-213-3461 (General Member Services)

Statement of Faith

These truths are foundational to our group and mission.

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is One God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of the lost and sinful man, Jesus is the only way to eternal life. Salvation from sin is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit whose presence and power are necessary for believers to live a godly life and for the building of the Body of Christ.
6. We believe in the power of prayer, both individual and corporate.
7. We believe in the sanctity of human life and that each child is a gift from God, entrusted to his or her parents to be the primary educators, training them in accordance with God's will and Word.
8. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers through our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that individual doctrinal differences which may exist outside the aforementioned, should not hinder the unity of Christian home educators.
9. We believe that the marriage of one man and one woman is a sacred institution. Marriage and families are ordained and defined by God at creation.
10. We believe parents have the God given responsibility for the care and training of their children.

Mission Statement

Agape's mission is to be a Christ-centered community that connects and supports homeschool families.

Vision Statement

The vision of Agape Homeschool Group is to be an established and enduring Christ-centered organization which equips homeschool families for God's purposes by meeting a variety of educational (Prov. 22:6) and relational (2 Pet. 1:5-8) needs.

Group Purpose & Values

The Agape Homeschool Group was created to provide support and encouragement to homeschooling families in our community and surrounding areas. We provide resources for our members including Friday school, field trips, EXTRA Fridays, play dates, mom's nights out, along with many other opportunities to learn and connect with other local homeschool families. As a Christ centered group we believe that our number one goal is to serve God and seek Jesus Christ in all that we do.

Agape Activities & Services:

Agape offers many fun and educational activities throughout the year to group members. We offer various family workshops and EXTRA Fridays. We also offer Mentoring Mom events and group gatherings where families can participate in gym time or outside events. Students are given the opportunity to display and sharpen their skills in a fun and educational environment while helping them to build a community of other home schooled peers.

We are always looking for new ways to serve our community and our members. This is an area we are always expanding. In the past, we have contributed to a local Senior Retirement home, by making holiday decorations and visiting with residents as well worked at a local food pantry. Future events include such things as completing items to be donated to local hospitals and packing boxes for service members.

Membership Requirements & Fee Information:

Agape membership is open to any homeschooling family that has read the information in the membership packet and indicated their agreement with the stated purpose, expectations, and general policies by submitting a signed application form (online) as well as membership and insurance fees. Membership in Agape requires the participation of at least one legal parent. The children participating must also be home-schooled. Agape is a cooperative support group. Families must contribute and fulfill the needs of the group by committees, teaching and/or classroom help. Seek a Board Member for more information, direction, or guidance if necessary. Not fulfilling your participation may result in the loss of membership eligibility the following year.

Agape Friday School membership is open to any homeschool family that is an Agape member, as enrollment space is available. Attendees must have read the Friday School information (included in this packet) and have indicated their agreement with the stated expectations, purpose, and Statement of Faith of the organization by submitting a signed application form and class fees. Friday School families are also required to bring a pencil box or pouch with required materials for each child to each day of school. Required materials are listed, per age group, later in this packet. Be sure to also bring any extra materials listed in class descriptions if any specific needs are required.

Friday School participation will include an additional \$45.00 fee per family, per semester, as well as various class fees. See our current semester class list, including class descriptions and costs at www.agapehomeschoolgroup.org. The annual Agape membership fee is \$15.00 for a family membership. Membership fees are used to cover the costs of organizing and operating Agape functions, cleaning, church usage, and any other supplies needed for the better of our group. If Agape fees prove to be a burden in light of financial hardship, Scholarship opportunities are available. Please contact a board member to apply for a scholarship. This membership fee does not cover charges associated with Friday School.

Background Check Procedures and Policy:

Applicants must complete background information and consent form yearly. This applies to one Fall, Winter, and Spring Semester. The form is found in the membership application. Applicants must read the following acceptance policy prior to submitting their background check form. Failure to follow any of the protocol stated below, or meet acceptance standards, will result in the dismissal of application to be a Friday School Attendant.

The identity of accepted individuals having a questionable background will not be disclosed in the interest of privacy and to minimize liability.

If an applicant has convicted felonies in their past, please consider our guidelines for accepting criminal backgrounds. If your background does not adhere to the acceptable criteria please refrain from applying as we'll have to deny it.

AGAPE WILL NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, ACCEPT ANY CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR THE FOLLOWING CASES:

ANY abuse or neglect of children

ANY sexual criminal act of any kind

ANY felony where conviction or release from incarceration is fewer than five years prior to application

If an applicant has convicted felonies in their past, but meet the acceptable criteria below, they must submit a letter of consideration at the same time they submit their background check form. Agape Board is looking for full disclosure. Please advise the board, in the letter, of felony charges that will turn up. Explain how Christ has changed your life and why you are interested in being a volunteer with Agape Homeschool Group.

Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds must agree to the following terms of service. Individual will not be allowed to teach or volunteer with any children under the age of 11 Please be advised that at any time our Church facility, or any insurance provider, can override Agape policy without notice and Agape Board will comply with the policy they set forth. This may require the immediate dismissal of a volunteer.

If a questionable background is found, the board reserves the right to further investigate proof of character thru additional references, face-to-face interview, and more in-depth background checks (with the cost being the responsibility of the applicant).

The Agape board will be responsible for processing background checks and determining eligibility. The identity of the individual will be kept among the board, and will not be disclosed to general members to protect the individuals privacy and minimize liability.

General Policies

HONOR CHRIST: Agape is a Christ-centered organization. We aim to honor Jesus Christ at any Agape event in the form of actions and prayers both collectively and individually.

WAITING LIST: There is no limit to Agape's general membership. Outreach Christian Church has asked for a limit of 150 students to be enrolled in Friday school. We also have limits to individual classrooms and once that limit is reached the class is closed. If the class you have selected is full, you will be put on a waiting list based on first come first served.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATIVE SUPPORT: Membership in Agape requires the participation of at least one legal parent. One parent from each family is required to fill two spots in planning a field trip or special event, teaching a class, or helping clean the church after Agape functions. Participation will be documented and failure to meet participation may result in loss of membership eligibility the following year. All parents attending and participating in Friday School are required to fill out the form for, and clear, a background check.

CLASS POLICIES: Children may not be left at Agape Friday School, or any event, unattended. If you must leave for a short time, you must work out accordingly with another parent willing to be responsible for your child/children. They must be at least 18 years of age. Attendance must be taken in each class, every day Agape meets, and on field trips. Teachers are required to submit a substitute lesson plan to the board prior to the start of the semester should the teacher be unable to attend class for any reason.

REIMBURSEMENTS: Teacher reimbursement for class materials will only occur after receipts supporting the purchase, and a completed Reimbursement Form, are turned into Agape's Treasurer. Any donated classroom supplies must also be reported to the Treasurer for Agape's records. Reimbursements will be done once monthly unless special arrangements have been made.

NUSERY/TOTS: Any adult assigned to the nursery or tots are required to change diapers and/or escort children to the bathroom as necessary. Children assigned to the nursery or preschool that are still in diapers or potty training are required to have a diaper bag with the child and/or family name on it.

VISITOR POLICY: Visitors should notify a member of the board prior to the visit and are allowed to visit for one class day. Visiting students may follow a friend or other students around to their class and parents are encouraged to check out the classes to get a better feel for our group. Upon arriving, visitors need to check in with a board member at the announcement table. It is expected that all visitors adhere to Agape's expectations and general policies for all members.

PRAYER: We will pray at Friday School morning assembly, and before all Agape activities and meals. Teachers are also encouraged to pray before class.

General Policies Continued

LANGUAGE: No foul or coarse language or jokes will be tolerated from anyone. This includes taking the Lord's name in vain. We value and expect honesty and integrity in conversation and deed.

RESPECT OUTREACH CHRISTIAN CHURCH: As members of this group you are expected to show respect to the building. We are blessed to be able to use this facility and want to show gratitude by making it look better than we arrived!

MEDIA (MOVIES / VIDEOS / MUSIC / BOOKS / PHOTOS) SHOULD:

- 1) Not contain any reference to drugs / alcohol
- 2) Not contain any subtle or overt reference to carnality or sexual promiscuity
- 3) Not contain any profanity or swear words
- 4) Not CONDONE any unfaithfulness or other ungodly, disobedient lifestyle
- 5) Be in accord with our statement of faith

TEEN GROUP: Teen groups will be separated as follows (12-14 years) (15-18 years). Anyone younger or older than the given ages may not attend their event. The events will be separated in these groups. Not to be changed unless determined by a board member.

DRESS/MODESTY: As a Christian group we want to honor God in all that we do. This includes our actions as well as our clothing attire. We have many young and impressionable men and women in our group and we need to do our best to dress in an appropriate manner. Our goal is to teach our children to have respect for themselves and show consideration for others. The entire torso needs to be covered including midriff and cleavage. We do not want to see bra straps. Skirts and shorts must be at a reasonable length. We should not be able to see high thigh/buttock area. If we notice a student is not properly clothed a board member will be in contact with the parent and that student will be asked to change their clothing.

IMPROPER MATERIALS: No illegal substances, alcohol, or anything that may be considered a weapon is allowed at any Agape activity.

PROMPTNESS: Please be prompt to all Agape activities. Please arrive 15 minutes early as we will begin or leave on schedule. The impression we make on others is a part of our testimony.

ILLNESS: If you or one of your children have an illness or have had a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea in the 48 hours before Friday school or another Agape event please stay home. If you are staying home and you teach a Friday school class please let a board member know as soon as possible, so we can get a replacement in your spot. In a rare event that we get 50% of the adult Friday school participants call in sick prior to Friday school, we will cancel Friday school by posting to our Facebook page, sending out an email, and making phone calls to notify our members.

LICE: A child must be free from Lice for at least 48 hours prior to returning to Friday School. An assigned individual will need to do a check of the child once they return. If lice is discovered at Friday school, the child will be removed from class immediately and parents will be notified via e-mail for documentation purposes.

General Policies Continued

CANCELLATIONS: If the Lakewood Area Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, we will NOT meet. If they are delayed because of weather, we will still meet on time. There may be other times in which the Board may determine to cancel school. Attempts will be made to email in case of closing. If we have an outdoor event planned and you are concerned about the weather, please do what you feel is best for your family. If Outreach Church has a Funeral on Friday, Friday School will also be canceled.

PRIVACY: The information in our directory is for use by its member families only, with the possible exception of business information. We ask that you respect some members' desire to keep their personal information private. Please do not share any information from the directory with any outside individuals or organizations without permission.

FIELD TRIP AND SPECIAL EVENT ETIQUETTE: As homeschoolers we are looked at with critical eyes. People want to know what we are about and if we are different from the rest of the world. Homeschoolers are generally associated with devout Christianity. So we aren't just representing homeschoolers, we are representing Christ. We make a big impression when we show up late or not at all and when our children are disrespectful during a class or tour. Let's make sure we don't make that bad impression. We want to shine for Him!

Please read and follow these guidelines: Field Trips

Fee Payment: If there is a cost involved with a field trip or special event, the fee must be paid at the time of your registration, unless otherwise specified by the field trip coordinator. Please do not consider yourself registered for a field trip until you have paid the fees. Those first to pay will be first to be registered. Refunds because of your cancellation are dependent upon your giving proper notice of not being able to attend, the refund policy of the field trip destination, and/or if there is someone on the waiting list who is willing to step into your place.

Promptness: Please arrive 15 minutes before a field trip is to begin. This provides us the opportunity to give last minute instructions and to get organized before entering the facility quietly.

Courtesy: Please be attentive, courteous, polite and prepared with good questions for our tour guide. Remember to thank the tour guide at the end of the field trip. We encourage all families to follow-up with a thank you letter. What an added blessing to our host!

Attendance: It is a privilege to partake in a field trip. We understand that children will misbehave or just have a bad day occasionally; however, this should be corrected and inappropriate behavior addressed. Dangerous, belligerent, or blatantly disrespectful behavior may result in immediate expulsion from field trips for a set amount of time deemed appropriate by the Board. Your field trip coordinators will do their best to provide fun and educational field trips and provide information in a timely manner. If there are any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact them.

Duties of the Board of Directors

(additional information of board positions available upon request)

The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the oversight of all programs of Agape.

Some of their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Initiate new programs to promote homeschooling and to support the membership of Agape, as needed
2. Evaluate current programs of Agape
3. Eliminate any programs that do not meet the needs of the membership or community
4. Determine the eligibility of nominations for officers
5. Oversee any elections
6. Assist the other officers when needed to ensure that no single job interferes with the responsibilities of teaching their child(ren)
7. Publish the policies and procedures of Agape, including grievance procedures and disciplinary procedures
8. By committee, produce a weekly, bi-monthly, monthly newsletter, as seen fit by the committee.
9. By committee, keep accurate membership records
10. By committee, coordinate association events such as book fairs, picnics, field days, presentation nights, park days, enrichment programs, etc
11. By committee, develop, maintain a website and any social media that promotes homeschooling and Agape and their values
12. Develop an annual budget
13. Lead special teams when necessary, including, but not limited to, party coordinators, new member contacts, greeters, and other special volunteer positions

Disciplinary Policy

One of our goals is to reinforce Godly characteristics. In as much we expect everyone to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, treating other people as they would like to be treated.

1. Students are expected to follow instructions and to not be disruptive. No talking out of turn during class.
2. Proper respect for those in authority over us must be given at all times.
3. Please be kind, courteous and respectful of other people, their beliefs and their property. Serve one another in love.
4. Students should be either in the class they signed up for or assisting in the class they are a teacher's aide in.
5. Students may not wander in the kitchen, gym or the foyer during class.
6. There should be only quiet walking throughout the building.
7. Students are not permitted on the South side (offices and cafe) of Outreach Christian Church without a written consent from Pastor Fred.

If a student or child is being disruptive and/or not following instructions the following steps need to be taken. Preferably by either the parent (if they are in the class) or the teachers.

First, begin by simply correcting the child.

If the behavior continues or escalates that same day, take the child aside or out of the room and explain what is expected of them. Tell them what they need to be doing and explain the consequences of misbehavior.

If on the same day the negative behavior continues, one of the teachers will need to take the child to their parent and explain the behavior. We do not wish for the parent to become defensive with the adult who brings the child to them.

If the behavior continues and/or becomes a chronic behavioral problem, the parent(s) will be informed that the child is not able to continue taking that class for the rest of the term, and there will be no refund given.

The Board retains the right to expel any child or family from one or all Agape Homeschool Group classes if the student's behavior is intentionally or recklessly dangerous, belligerent, or blatantly disrespectful.

If an immediate removal of the student is appropriate. The student should be taken directly to a Board member. The Board will take up the issue with the parents and take appropriate measures. The Board retains the right to expel any child or family from one or all classes. It also retains the right to revoke Agape membership at any time without refund.

Required Materials for Friday School Participants

Each Student is required to bring the following materials to every class, every week of Friday school. Label ALL items so there is no confusion of things. Agape will have limited supplies available for students who may have forgotten their materials. However, these supplies are not guaranteed in their quantity or quality and failure to bring your own may result in your child's inability to participate in class projects/ activities. Be sure to also bring any materials specifically listed in a child's class description should extra materials be needed. (ie: calculators, tape, etc.) A backpack or pencil would be helpful for those children ages 6 and up that are switching classes.

NURSERY AND TOTS:

Please bring a diaper bag with all necessary items potentially required for your child during Friday school. These items may include, but are not limited to: Diapers –Wipes –Pacifiers – Feeding necessities

***Please be sure to have the bag labeled with a name to help nursery volunteers.

AGES 3-4

Preschool Supplies are combined to be used by the entire class. A pencil box is not needed. It is requested that each student bring the following items to be left in class throughout the semester. Any students returning for the winter semester will not need to bring additional supplies.

Age/Skill appropriate Child's safety scissors

1 Box of coloring crayons

1 Box of washable Markers

At least 2 glue sticks (more may be needed as semester progresses)

Small bottle of liquid School Glue

AGES 5-6

Age/Skill appropriate Child's safety scissors

2-3 sharpened Pencils

1 Box of coloring crayons

1 Box of washable Markers

At least 2 glue sticks (more may be needed as semester progresses)

Small bottle of liquid School Glue

AGES 7-18

Scissors

Pencil/Sharpener and/or Pen (Student Preference)

1 Box Coloring crayons, 1 box of markers or 1 box of colored pencils

Liquid School Glue or glue sticks

A spiral notebook or small binder with paper

Please check materials list for each class for additional materials needed

It is our desire that you will feel at "home" with Agape. Thank you for your joy and willingness to help us serve those around us. By following through with all of these things we can truly show the love of Christ. We are excited to have you as a part of our family!

