Volunteer Training

WELCOME TO MASTERPIECE MINISTRIES

Whatever your role with Masterpiece Ministries, you are vital to its success. This program is such a blessing in the lives of many children with special needs and their families. You are serving for the glory of our great God.

Thank you for volunteering. You are a blessing!

Danelle Mills
Masterpiece Ministries Director
MATERIAL MINISTRIES PROGRAMS

- Quarterly Respite Nights
- Weekly Sunday Mornings
- Most of this training is applicable to both, with a few specific points for each program.
- In each, Jesus is our role model for responding to the needs of all the people around us.

After completing this Volunteer Training please take the quiz provided (6 multiple choice questions) to demonstrate that you understand your role and responsibilities.

This isn’t a test. Well, okay, it is sort of a test.

We just want to make sure you are comfortable with and informed about all the aspects of serving in Masterpiece Ministries!
**OVERVIEW**

- Respite Nights are held four times per year. Each night has a different theme.
- These events provide time for parents of children with special needs to enjoy an evening together, run errands, or accomplish tasks at home that often go undone.
- Siblings relax and have fun, too!
- Respite Night is a place where all children feel secure, accepted, surrounded by love, and come to have fun!
BEFORE EACH RESPITE NIGHT

- Since these programs are quarterly, please come back to this portal during the week prior to each event for a refresher and helpful tips.
- You will receive an email the Wednesday prior to Respite Night with important details, including your job assignment and schedule for the evening.
- If you do not receive an email, please contact Danelle Mills, Respite Night Director, (402) 483-7635.
- Please be on time!
- If you need to cancel, please contact Danelle as soon as possible.

SCHEDULE

- 5:30 pm: Volunteers arrive
- 6:00 pm: Families arrive, introductions, dinner
- 6:30-9:00 pm: Activities time
- 9:00 pm: Parents return to pick up children
**VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

Positions working with children:
- Buddy
- Sibling Group Leader
- Room Host
- Nursery Worker
- Medical Team

Positions not working with children:
- Bathroom Monitors
- Photographer
- Greeters
- Security
- Set up/Clean up
- Registration
- Food Server

Whatever your interest in serving with Masterpiece Ministries, we encourage you to read through the Buddy training. This info is helpful in learning how to work as a volunteer in any role with children with special needs. Besides, you might decide you’d rather be a Buddy more than anything else!
WHAT BUDDIES DO

- Every child with a special need is paired with a Buddy who accompanies that child all evening.
- Siblings are grouped by age and accompanied by Sibling Group Leaders.
- Activities include but are not limited to: games, crafts, and movies.
- There are rooms set up with sensory activities, such as water play, a rice table, and a quiet room.
- The variety of activities ensures every child can find something they enjoy.

WHAT BUDDIES DO

- Accompany your child at all times. You can take a bathroom break, just have another volunteer stay with your child during that time.
- Refer to the Plan of Care* for specific details about your assigned child.
  *The Plan of Care is a document filled out by parents with information about diagnosis, medications, and useful tips to help their child thrive in our care.
- Assist with mobility, as needed.
- Assist with participation in activities, as needed.
**WHAT BUDDIES DO**

- Do not let a child go anywhere unattended.
- There should **always be TWO adults present** in every room, especially restrooms.
- If you lose track of your child, find a Coordinator immediately! We have Security Staff to help.
- Do not take photos of any child with a **green** dot on their identification tag. (Children in foster care, particularly cannot have their photo taken.)

**WHAT BUDDIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO DO**

Children with a wide range of abilities and medical needs attend our Respite Nights. We have medical professionals on hand to assist you.

- **You are not required to change diapers.** (Check your child’s Plan of Care for toileting instructions. Some children may wear diapers and are less able to communicate about their toileting needs. If your child needs a diaper change, contact a Coordinator and they will handle the diapering.)
- **You do not administer medication.** (All medications will be given to Medical Personnel at check-in and ONLY Medical Personnel will administer medications.)
- **Do not change or adjust a child’s equipment without permission.** If you are unsure or have questions about using the equipment, just ask.
HEALTH & SAFETY REMINDERS

- If you encounter anything at all that you don’t feel comfortable doing, ask for help. Contact a Coordinator or the Director.
- Seizures can be a common problem in children with medical conditions. If you suspect a child is having a seizure, contact a Coordinator immediately. Note the start and end time and symptoms observed (i.e. blinking, staring, or shaking) for the Medical Team.
- Minor “emergencies” are to be expected with all kids, right? Find a Medical Team volunteer or Coordinator to handle any emergency or injury.
- Don’t panic! Our staff is trained and able to deal with these situations.

IMPORTANT: If you, or anyone in your household, has a contagious illness, please notify Danelle Mills, Respite Night Director, (402) 483-7835 to find a replacement for you. Volunteers must be fever-free for 24 hours.

BUDDY TIPS: PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- What is People First Language? It is not being “politically correct.” It is using **good manners and showing respect and dignity**. People with disabilities are - first and foremost - PEOPLE who have individual abilities, interests, and needs.
- When you meet your child and the parents, remember “words” matter. Always refer to the person first, and not the disability.
- Say “the girl with autism.” **Not** “the autistic girl.”
- Say “the boy who uses a wheelchair.” **NOT** the “wheelchair kid.”
- For siblings, say “typical child” or “child without a disability.” **NOT** “normal or healthy.”
BUDDY TIPS: LET’S GET PRACTICAL

- Wear clothes and shoes appropriate for an active evening.
- Avoid dangling earrings or necklaces.
- Use as little fragrance as possible, some children have sensitivities.
- Keep your child in your line-of-sight at all times.
- Use extra patience!

BUDDY TIPS: COMPETENCE & AGE

- When dealing with a child with a disability, you should presume competence. This means that you assume they are capable of doing something until you learn otherwise.
- Treat your child in a manner that corresponds to their chronological age, not their perceived ability.
- Allow them extra processing time. Wait for a response before you give more instructions. (Counting to 10 in your head is a good way to know how long to wait for a response.)
**BUDDY TIPS: COMMUNICATION**

- Many kids who struggle with speaking are able to understand language at a much higher level. Go ahead and talk to them. Keep in mind: the less talking you do, the more talking they will do.
- **Nonverbal praise is more effective**…give a smile, or a thumbs up!
- Be mindful of your tone, not sing-song or baby talk. Just talk.
- **Keep language simple**. Avoid giving too many options.
- Do not talk about the child to others as if he/she wasn’t there.
- Tell the child what to expect instead of asking. SAY “We are going to pick up the toys.” NOT “Will you pick up the toys please?”
- Use first/then sentences. “First we will…then we will…”
- When responding to use of inappropriate words SAY “Use kind words,” “We aren’t talking about that now,” “We don’t talk about that here.”
- Be empathetic. Get **down on their level** and talk in a calm voice.

**BUDDY TIPS: TRANSITIONS**

- Prepare by giving a heads up about the next activity. SAY “In five minutes, we will…”
- At transition time, SAY “It is time for us to …”
- Provide information about where you are going, what you will do, and what to expect there.
- Use a timer, if needed. Children can’t argue with a timer and it provides a concrete boundary. “The timer says all done!”
BUDDY TIPS: BEHAVIOR

Your assigned child might experience frustration at some point during the evening because of communication difficulties, reactions to the fun yet busy environment, etc. It will be easier for them to maintain appropriate behavior when they are reminded of what they are doing well.

- Try to provide four positive phrases for every one redirection or correction.
- Allow the child to leave a situation that appears to be causing distress. Let the child take a break and try something else. Utilize the Quiet Room if needed.
- Avoid overreacting and remain calm.
- Refer to the Behavior Management Section of the Plan of Care for your child’s specific needs and ask clarifying questions to parents at drop off.

SIBLING GROUP LEADERS

siblings of children with special needs do not have a “normal” life. They need just as much of a break as the parents do. This night gives them the opportunity to feel loved, special, and appreciated. You will play an active role in making them feel special by just showing them you care for and appreciate them.
**SIBLING GROUP LEADER**

Siblings are split into groups by age. Groups typically have 10-12 children and 2-3 leaders.

- Your role is to supervise your Sibling Group, making sure that everyone is being safe, and helping the children to have fun.
- It is your responsibility to check on your group frequently throughout the night to assure safe movement of these children to the various activities throughout the building.
- If you find that you are missing a child, let a Coordinator know right away.

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**END OF EVENING PROCEDURES**

- During pick-up time at the end of Respite Night, please make sure that the parent's *security tag matches* the number on the child’s name tag to ensure children get with the right parents.
- When parents are picking up their child(ren), **be positive**! Even better, share a positive experience you had with their child or why you enjoyed caring for their child. **Do not share any negative experiences with them.**
- The success of this program greatly depends on feedback from you, the volunteer. You are our quality assurance. If you have suggestions for improvement, or if you have concerns about anything that occurred during Respite Night, please report it to the Director.
- After Respite Night, we can use all the help we can get to clean up and put away materials, equipment, and decorations. If you can stay and help with this, that would be greatly appreciated.
- Room Hosts, it is your responsibility to clean up the activity in your room.
BUDDIES ARE NEEDED ON SUNDAY MORNINGS!

- Duties are similar to Respite Night volunteers.
- You will provide support to your assigned child during Sunday School, helping them succeed in the classroom and with their peers.
- Support for your child's medical and emotional needs will be made available to you. (Parents of these children are usually in the building on Sunday mornings.)
YOU’RE ALMOST DONE!

To complete your training and to demonstrate that you understand your role and responsibilities as a volunteer for Masterpiece Ministries, please follow the “Take Quiz” link below this module.

*We just can’t thank you enough for your service in this ministry!*

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

_Ephesians 2:10_