

SPECIAL NEEDS

WHAT IS A CULTURE GUIDE?

At Victory Church, we know that culture either happens by design or by default. Rather than allowing our feelings, upbringings, past experiences, or standards of society to take the lead, our goal is to intentionally create a culture that glorifies God.

Culture Guides are intended to do 2 primary things:

1. Give members the information needed to *finalize* their serving team decision.
2. Serve *as the onboarding*, providing all the information and guidance for how the team operates.

C.H.E.C.K. VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COURAGEOUS:

We follow Jesus into the unknown, walking by faith and not by sight, no matter what it costs us.

- We Get Out of the Boat
- We Lead Ourselves

HUMBLE:

We are not led by title. We lead with open hands, always seeking to serve others.

- We Use Our Titles as Towels
- We Fail Forward

EMPOWERING:

We make disciples who make disciples: Equip, empower, and send!

- We Are Gold Miners
- We Hand Over the Keys

CONNECTED:

We stroll through the crowd; we seek to know people and walk alongside them through life.

- We Smell Like the Sheep
- We Pull on the Same Rope

KIND:

People know we are disciples of Jesus by the way we love others.

- We Are Tigger, Not Eeyore
- We Live by the Golden Rule

TEAM POSITIONS

- **Ministry Lead:** provides oversight for an entire ministry for a campus or for Victory Church
- **Coordinator:** leads/supports a group of coaches and/or oversees a specific component of ministry
- **Coach:** leads/supports a group of leaders
- **Team Leader:** leads/supports a group of team members or a small group
- **Team Member:** (replaces the term “volunteer”); usually an individual contributor to a ministry team

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE & GROW

Within the **Victory Special Needs (VSN) ministry**, there are different teams and leadership opportunities! Each team serves a unique function but carries the same heart of preparing for, looking for, and caring for the one. Below is a list of our Special Needs teams, a brief explanation of their function, which campuses they serve, and other information you may need to know as you decide which you would like to try.

Sensory Classroom Teams – Care for the children in a sensory inclusive environment and minister to them with worship, biblical lessons, creative crafts, and interactive activities.

- *Campuses: Norcross (serves 2-year-olds to 22-year-olds) and Hamilton Mill (serves 3-year-olds to 12-year-olds)*
- *Ages: 18+ (ages 9-17 when serving with a parent/guardian)*

Sensory Support Teams – Welcome families as they enter our lobbies and guide them to their child’s ministry space as well as assist with supplies and activity preparation.

- *Campuses: Norcross*
- *Ages: 18+ (ages 13-17 when serving with a parent/guardian)*

Inclusion (Buddy) Teams – Support a child as a “buddy” to assist them in their age-appropriate classroom as they worship and do biblical lessons, creative crafts, and interactive activities.

- *Campuses: Hamilton Mill, Midtown, and Norcross*
- *Ages: 18+*

OUR MINISTRY GOAL

It is our mission to remove barriers that hinder families with children and adults who have special needs in fully engaging in the body of Christ. It is our desire to help children and adults with special needs encounter Jesus in their own unique way by providing a safe, caring, and Spirit-led environment that honors each of their specific ages and stages. While they learn about Jesus, their parents and caretakers have the opportunity to fully engage in the main service and worship experience.

As the Victory Special Needs ministry, we want to ensure that every individual who steps foot in our ministry feels seen, loved, valued, and heard. We will identify each student's unique learning style, and we will accommodate their needs through:

Communication: Learning how our students communicate

Care: Caring for the one

Community: Building community with one another

GUIDELINES & COMMITMENTS

Time Commitments:

Weekends: VSN ministry team members serve at our weekend services **every other week**. Exact arrival times and length of serving times are unique to each team, but all teams will have a meeting or connection point during their scheduled time, and all teams' schedules are designed so everyone can attend a service.

Trainings: During the year, trainings/refreshers may be scheduled for your team, or even for larger gatherings of all of your campus's VSN teams. We ask that, as these are announced, you make every effort to attend.

Other Opportunities: The two items above are the only required time commitments. Your leader may send out additional opportunities (for example: additional needs for Easter and Christmas services). They are important but optional. Help as you can when you can.

Scheduling: We use an online tool called Planning Center Online (PCO) for all of our ministry's scheduling. It will communicate to your email inbox, and even your text number if you like, but

it will require you to use either its phone app or website to confirm your schedule request or to communicate your upcoming schedule conflicts. Using Planning Center is expected for all Victory Special Needs ministry team members. But have no fear! It's not complicated, and we will help you until you're comfortable using it on your own.

Communication is a must from all involved. Exchange numbers, confirm email addresses, and ask any questions you can think of about scheduling and Planning Center. You will be expected to use the assigned tools to confirm scheduling requests, to let us know something unexpected has come up (like sickness), to block out upcoming dates you're unavailable, and to communicate any other necessary information – from personal prayer requests to serving related questions. "Communication" starts with "co"... It takes both of us!

Flexibility is a gift from your VSN ministry leaders to you and from you to your VSN leaders. Sometimes a process needs to change. Sometimes something additional/different needs to be done on a weekend. Sometimes mistakes are made. Let's maintain relationship and trust as we navigate the unexpected things of life together.

Real Relationships: It's our hope that friendships grow as you link arms with others to serve! To encourage real relationships, we foster community where life can be shared and supported – both celebrations and struggles. We also have Small Groups built into our teams and encourage you to join one, especially if you are not in a Small Group already.

Physical Contact: As a part of the Victory Special Needs (VSN) ministry, you could serve several students at a time! Please be mindful of appropriate contact with these children. A good guideline to follow is: high fives, fist bumps, and, when appropriate, a pat on the back or a side hug. If the opportunity presents itself to pray for someone, a hand on a shoulder or holding hands could be appropriate. Any other physical affection or playful physical contact should be avoided while you serve.

Background Checks are conducted for all team members (ages 18+) in all ministries at Victory. But if you have any concerns, do not let that stop you! Please have a conversation with us. We love to walk relationally with people and find a way to say "Yes!"

Onboarding and Next Steps: We've got you! Your campus's VSN ministry leaders can help you discern which team might be a good fit and will help you understand your next steps for that particular team. You can expect to be welcomed, to be well-trained, to be introduced to teammates, and to be provided with necessary details like time expectations, what to wear (and not wear), where to meet, and where to park.

FAQs

How often would I be scheduled?

Every other week. The additional details of “what time” and “how long” will be answered by the leader of the team you’re interested in.

Could I serve at the same (or different) time as my family?

Yes! Our scheduling tool, Planning Center, has functionality to help households serve the same or different weeks, even if people are on different ministry teams! We will work with you.

I have kids. Can I still serve?

Yes! This is a great opportunity to model serving for your children. We’ll work with you and will help you know when you can step away to get your kids checked in to their ministry.

What happens if I miss a week I am scheduled?

Communicate, communicate, communicate. If you know in advance, please help your leader by blocking out those dates in Planning Center. If there’s a conflict on the day of your serving (like waking up sick or with a sick kid), communicate with your Team Leader as soon as possible. Any heads up is better than no heads up! And if you forgot and missed the scheduled time, please communicate anyway. Communication builds relationship and trust.

I am concerned about having a Background Check.

Please come talk with us! Whether it’s concern about what may show up on it, fear of not having necessary documents, or something else, please trust us to walk with you. We can provide guidance, and we can also promise that your personal information will be handled with confidentiality and love by a very small number of necessary staff members.

What’s next?

First, if you are unsure of which one of our Victory Special Needs ministry teams is the right fit for you, our team will help you sort that out! One of our leaders will reach out to you about next steps (i.e. shadowing a member of the team you’re interested in during an upcoming weekend service). If a team you try doesn’t feel like the right fit, we will help you find the right one, even if it means serving in an entirely different ministry. We’re here to help!

I still have questions...

Not a problem! Our Victory Special Needs ministry leaders can help guide you or find the answer you need.