



**FAMILIES INSTRUCTING STUDENTS at HOME  
F.I.S.H.**

A Ministry of Bell Shoals Baptist Church (BSBC)

**BY-LAWS**

Effective September 2013

NOTE: THESE BY-LAWS SUPERSEDE ALL PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY-LAWS  
AND AMENDMENTS

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of the group will be Families Instructing Students at Home – a Homeschool Ministry of BSBC, abbreviated as F.I.S.H.

**ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Families Instructing Students at Home (F.I.S.H.), a ministry of Bell Shoals Baptist Church (BSBC), is a Christian homeschool encouragement group for Christian families seeking support in the home education of their children. We strive to provide an environment centered on Christ and to glorify God through encouraging one another to teach our children in the way God has directed us.

**ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

Section 1: F.I.S.H. Statement of Faith is a broad declaration that we consider vital for the furthering of this ministry. It is required that all persons seeking membership be able to agree with this broad minimum statement. This is not an attempt to overrule denominational distinctions. Rather, it is a means for those of varying denominational persuasions to unite in the simple truths and precepts of God's Holy Word. All membership approval is at the discretion of the Leadership Board.

Section 2: We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are the inerrant, infallible, and totally trustworthy Word of God and our supreme authority on all matters of truth. We affirm

that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the great theme of all Scripture and that the Bible is sufficient to reveal all we need to know concerning God's purpose to save sinners.

Section 3: There is one God, eternally existent in three Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Section 4: Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man in one Person. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, and vicariously atoned for sin through His shed blood and death. He was bodily resurrected from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of God the Father, and He will personally return in power and glory.

Section 5: Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of lost and sinful man.

Section 6: Eternal life is received by faith--that is, trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Section 7: The Holy Spirit indwells all true believers and enables them to live a godly life.

Section 8: Both the saved and the lost will be resurrected from the dead, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Section 9: There is spiritual unity of all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 10: The local church is the primary God-established institution for furthering His work including, among other things, worship, edification, and evangelism.

Section 11: The family is the primary God-established institution for the training of children in righteousness and in preparation for their life purpose.

#### **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

Section 1: The membership year runs from annual membership meeting to annual membership meeting. Membership may be enjoyed by any family who subscribes to the purposes and policies of F.I.S.H. and subject only to compliance with the provisions of the By-Laws.

Section 2: Membership in F.I.S.H. shall be available without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Section 3: Anyone wanting to join or renew a membership to F.I.S.H. is encouraged to register at the annual meeting. Anyone wanting to join must submit proper paperwork and payment as defined in our membership procedures.

Section 4: Membership dues shall be established by the Leadership Board of F.I.S.H. The Leadership Board has the option to set additional enrollment periods.

Section 5: Only members in good standing of F.I.S.H. shall be eligible to participate/serve in any of its leadership positions, meetings, activities, classes, or events.

Section 6: For any group-sponsored activity where fees are due, these fees must be paid in advance. If fees are not paid in full, as required, then any portion of the amount paid will be forfeited and your place in the activity forfeited.

Section 7: Failure to adhere to any provision of the Statement of Faith may be grounds for termination of membership in F.I.S.H.

## **ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP BOARD**

Section 1: The Leadership Board of F.I.S.H. will be comprised of the following Officer Positions: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and will also include the Athletic Director, Web Administrator, and others as determined by the current Leadership Board. As far as is practical, both the husband and wife will serve together on the Leadership Board. There will be a maximum of ten (10) couples and a minimum of seven (7) couples on the Leadership Board. If the Leadership Board falls below the minimum required, as long as Officers are in position, the Leadership Board can continue to function while striving to replace vacant positions.

Section 2: All Leadership Board members must be members of F.I.S.H. in good standing. The majority of the Leadership Board members must be members in good standing at BSBC. Officers who do not attend BSBC must be members in good standing of a local church in the Tampa Bay area. Church membership and standing may be verified by a letter from the officer's Pastor. Leadership Board members must sign, with a clear conscience, and without edit, the Statement of Faith.

Section 3: It is recommended that any member will have homeschooled school age children for at least two years before serving on the leadership board.

Section 4: All Leadership Board members shall be selected by the existing members of the leadership board and shall serve until the Leadership Board selects new members to succeed them.

Section 5: BSBC members who are current Leadership Board members are required to inform the Leadership Board when their church membership/attendance changes.

Section 6: In the event a Leadership Board member, who is an active member of BSBC decides to change affiliation, thus bringing the Leadership Board out of compliance (see

Section 2), that Leadership Board member would be required to resign unless another non-BSBC member volunteers to resign. That Leadership Board member's position must be replaced with a member of F.I.S.H. who is an active member in good standing at BSBC.

Section 7: All Leadership Board members are expected to serve a one-year minimum term, with terms expiring at the end of annual meeting. New Leadership Board member's term begins at the annual meeting.

Section 8: The Chairman position must be a current BSBC member, currently serving on the FISH Board, and can only serve a maximum of three consecutive years.

## **ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF LEADERSHIP BOARD**

Section 1: The Chairman (Chair couple) shall be a member of BSBC, preside at F.I.S.H. Leadership Board meetings and F.I.S.H. membership meetings, act as liaison with the BSBC staff, keep and establish the calendar and may delegate jobs and form committees as needed.

Section 2: The Vice-Chair shall be a member of BSBC, assist the Chairman as needed, including presiding over Leadership Board meetings in the absence of the Chairman. If the position of Chairman becomes vacant, the Vice Chair will serve as Chairman until the Leadership Board elects a new Chairman.

Section 3: The Secretary shall keep minutes at all Leadership Board and membership meetings and distribute to the Leadership Board within 14 days of the meeting.

Section 4: The Treasurer shall be a member of BSBC, coordinate all monetary transactions with BSBC financial staff and prepare all financial reports.

Section 5: The Web Administrator shall be a member of BSBC, responsible for maintaining a website that is informative and comprehensive. Provides continuous support with the set-up, design, and implementation. Responsible for the day-to-day maintenance, provides updates when necessary, reviews content, trains F.I.S.H. members on how to use the site, ensures the membership roster is up to date, develops registration forms to coincide with the activities, sends mass emails to membership, keeps calendar information up to date, and posts activities in a timely manner.

Section 6: The Athletic Director shall be a member of BSBC and represents the equities of the athletic program to the Leadership Board. Details of this position can be found in the F.I.S.H. Athletic Program Bylaws.

Section 7: Other members of the Leadership Board shall: attend board meetings, provide assistance in organizing and facilitating activities necessary for the smooth and orderly functioning of F.I.S.H.

Section 8: Voting. All Leadership Board members will vote as individuals. In the event of a tie, discussions will continue until resolved. All Leadership Board members present at meetings must cast a vote.

Section 9: All Leadership Board members shall perform the duties outlined in these By-Laws and those assigned from time to time. They will deliver to their successor all official material no later than 10 days following the appointment of their successors.

Section 10: The Leadership Board shall meet at least quarterly or by times to be fixed by the Leadership Board. A quorum must be present in order to conduct a Leadership Board meeting. The majority of the Leadership Board shall constitute a quorum. Leadership Board meetings may be open to all members of F.I.S.H., however the Board reserves the right to close meetings to discuss matters of a sensitive nature. During all Board meetings, the floor shall not be open for any discussion by non-Board members unless specifically requested by a Board member.

Section 11: Regularly scheduled Leadership Board meetings will be announced to the group. Anyone with business to present to the Leadership Board must contact the Chairperson to request a specific time to appear before the Board.

Section 12: F.I.S.H. was founded on Christian principles and all activities are expected to be consistent with and not contradict Scripture. The Leadership Board, which is the governing body of F.I.S.H., reserves the right to approve or disapprove any activities that may be in question.

## **ARTICLE VII: POLICIES**

Section 1: F.I.S.H. shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan though founded in Biblical principles and will be governed by such principles.

Section 2: The name of F.I.S.H. or the names of any members in their official capacities shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern or with any partisan interest or for any purpose not appropriately related to promotion of the objectives of F.I.S.H.

Section 3: F.I.S.H. may cooperate with other organizations and agencies, but persons representing F.I.S.H. in such matters shall make no commitments that bind F.I.S.H.

Section 4: Facility Usage-Any member deciding to schedule an event for F.I.S.H. must submit a request to the Chairman of the Leadership Board with specific information. For nonrecurring events the Chairman may approve the event without Leadership Board approval. The Chairman or their designated BSBC Leadership Board members are the ONLY persons to have contact with the church staff. This is solely to minimize impact on the church staff. Individuals going directly to the church staff to schedule an event or use of facility could result in the Leadership Board denying the request. For any regularly scheduled events the Leadership Board will be presented with the request and

considered for approval. Requests are approved by a majority vote of the Leadership Board. The Leadership Board reserves the right to deny any request.

Section 5: Any F.I.S.H. group-sponsored activity where fees are collected or expensed will require a budget to be submitted and preapproved by the Leadership Board.

Section 6: As a ministry of BSBC, F.I.S.H. and its members must comply with all BSBC policies, rules, and procedures.

Section 7: Any member of F.I.S.H. may have their membership revoked for cause as determined by a two-thirds majority vote of the Leadership Board. A member of the Leadership Board can also be removed from the Leadership Board for cause as determined by a two-thirds majority vote by the other Board members.

Section 8: F.I.S.H. is an encouragement group and is not intended to take the place of core curriculum, which the parents are responsible for.

### **ARTICLE VIII: CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Section 1: In the event that a conflict arises between two (2) or more F.I.S.H. members, or between a member or members with a F.I.S.H. sponsored group, activity and/or event, concerning any matter that pertains to a F.I.S.H. member, sponsored group, activity and/or event, the parties involved in the conflict shall, if they are unable to resolve the conflict amongst themselves, first bring the matter to the attention of the Leadership Board for resolution. A matter may be brought to the attention of the Leadership Board by notifying any Leadership Board member in writing.

All conflicts so brought to the F.I.S.H. Leadership Board for resolution shall be addressed as follows:

1. Unless earlier action is warranted, the conflict shall be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Leadership Board meeting.
2. At the meeting, each party shall be given an opportunity to be heard, after which the Leadership Board shall meet privately to discuss an appropriate resolution.
3. Upon reaching a conclusion, the Leadership Board will notify the parties and the BSBC liaison of its suggested resolution in writing, which the parties may either accept or reject in writing to the Leadership Board. Should the parties choose to accept the Leadership Board's suggested resolution, the matter shall be so resolved. If any parties choose to reject the Leadership Board's suggested resolution, the Leadership Board shall refer the conflict to the BSBC liaison.
4. Any F.I.S.H. member who agrees to accept a resolution suggested by the Leadership Board, but then continues to pursue a different resolution, or

otherwise perpetuates the conflict, may have their F.I.S.H. membership terminated by the Leadership Board.

5. No F.I.S.H. member shall discuss any pending or resolved conflict with other F.I.S.H. members, BSBC members, or other individuals outside of the F.I.S.H. homeschool community .The membership of any F.I.S.H. member who *violates* this provision may be terminated by the Leadership Board.

## **ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENT**

The by-laws may be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of Leadership Board members present at any Leadership Board meeting. Proposed amendments must be presented to the Leadership Board in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Date, time and place of the meeting must be announced in the same communication.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Annual Membership Meeting** – This meeting is the start of the F.I.S.H. year. New and previous members are encouraged to attend in order to complete membership documentation and pay applicable dues.

**Bell Shoals Baptist Church (BSBC)** – This Church supports F.I.S.H. as one of its ministries. It is located at 2102 Bell Shoals Road, Brandon, FL 33511. Phone number 813-689-4229.

**By-Laws** – A by-law is a regulation passed by a non-sovereign body, which derives its authority from another governing body. The by-laws specify what things may be regulated by the Leadership Board.

**Dues** – Fees required for Membership in F.I.S.H.

**F.I.S.H.** – Families Instructing Students at Home. A Home School Ministry of Bell Shoals Baptist Church (BSBC), Brandon, FL.

**Good Standing** – A member whose membership dues and activity fees are paid; all forms are current, complete, and submitted; membership has been approved by the Board; and they are not under any disciplinary action from the Leadership Board.

**Leadership Board** – The governing body for F.I.S.H. This volunteer Leadership Board meets regularly to discuss issues relating to F.I.S.H. It holds the right to approve or disapprove any activities that may be in question.

**Majority Vote** – A vote by the Leadership Board in which more than half of the members vote in one manner on an issue. A vote may only be held if there is a Quorum.

Non-commercial – A non-commercial enterprise is one that values other considerations above and beyond that of making a profit.

Nonsectarian – An organization not affiliated with or restricted to a particular religious denomination.

Nonpartisan – An organization that does not have a formal alignment with a political party.

Quorum – A Quorum is the minimum number of members of the board necessary to conduct the business and vote on issues brought before the group. The minimum number of members necessary is a majority of all current Board Members.

Statement of Faith – A document that unites varying denominational persuasions in the simple truths and precepts of God's Holy Word.

### **ADDENDUMS: PROCEDURES**

#### F.I.S.H. STANDARD RULES OF CONDUCT

- BEHAVIORIAL CONDUCT
- MEDIA GUIDELINES
- ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES (CAN BE FOUND ON THE F.I.S.H. WEBSITE)

ATHLETIC PROGRAM BYLAWS

PATH/COOP BYLAWS (2008 VERSION)

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – REVISED 11/18/2012

GROUP LEADER/COORDINATOR GUIDELINES

- ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES/JOB DESCRIPTIONS