

**Together Growing in Faith
Homeschool Co-Operative**

(Adopted May 22, 2008)

Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative
Bylaws

ARTICLE I NAME.....2

ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.....2

ARTICLE III CHRISTIAN IDENTITY.....2

ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH.....2

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP.....3

Requirements.....3

Benefits.....3

Responsibilities.....3

Revocation of Membership.....4

Legal Notices and Liability.....5

ARTICLE VI TEACHERS AND CO-TEACHERS.....5

ARTICLE VII CONFLICT RESOLUTION.....5

ARTICLE VIII LEADERSHIP.....6

General Board Duties.....6

Board Composition.....6

Compensation.....7

Terms.....7

Vacancies and Approval Process.....7

Removal of Board Members.....7

ARTICLE IX AMENDING THE BYLAWS.....8

ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION.....8

Article I Name

The name of this homeschool group shall be Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative (TGIF). This group is primarily located in Eldersburg, Maryland but encompasses the surrounding communities.

Article II Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this group is:

- To offer a Christ-centered environment for fellowship and learning
- To provide unique, activity-based learning opportunities for students which require group interaction
- To foster positive Godly relationships among members and provide a support network for parents
- To provide a convenient, efficient forum for sharing parent/student skills, expertise, and resources

Article III Christian Identity

TGIF is a Christian group. As such, we believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. Expressions of the Christian faith are to be expected and encouraged in Specials Day classes, support group meetings, and other TGIF events and activities. Contradiction of Christian beliefs in word or action is grounds for expulsion from the group according to Article V, Revocation of Membership.

Article IV Statement of Faith

The purpose of the Statement of Faith is to state the beliefs and worldview by which TGIF will operate. Formal acceptance of the Statement of Faith is not required for membership in TGIF. However, prior to being accepted, all members shall acknowledge, in writing, that they understand that the TGIF Statement of Faith constitutes the beliefs of this organization and that they agree not to contradict these beliefs. All members of the board shall be required to affirm, in writing, their personal agreement with, belief in, and acceptance of the TGIF Statement of Faith. The TGIF Statement of Faith is as follows:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.*

*The word "catholic" refers not to the Roman Catholic Church, but to the universal church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Article V Membership

TGIF membership runs from June 1 through May 31.

Requirements

1) TGIF Family Application: All families complete a family application yearly. Re-enrollment for current members is generally held each spring. New member applications will be accepted while spaces still remain in the group. The board will determine the maximum number of families.

2) Additional Paperwork: Because many of our activities are held in St. Joseph Catholic Community facilities, the Church requires that all members and teachers complete (including social security number) the Archdiocese of Baltimore Volunteer Criminal History Screening Form. This is for the protection of our children. Likewise, TGIF also requires Medical Emergency Forms to be completed for each child yearly.

3) TGIF Membership Fee: The membership fee to join TGIF will be determined by the board each year.

4) Service to the group: All members are required to serve the group in at least one of the positions listed in the TGIF Information Packet. This will be done when signing up for annual membership. Additional service is required for those families who participate in Specials Day classes on Fridays.

Benefits

1. Members will receive access to group e-mails.
2. Members will have access to the Membership Directory.
3. Members will be offered the opportunity to attend TGIF-sponsored classes, field trips, and activities.
4. Members will be offered opportunities to receive support, encouragement, and fellowship.

Responsibilities

Members are responsible for the following:

1. Holding information included in the membership directory in confidence. No part of the directory is to be distributed to any non-member or non-member organization or to be used for personal businesses.
2. Complying with the Maryland homeschool law and overseeing the behavior and work of their students.
3. Making payments on time.
4. Staying informed by checking e-mail and the website and attending general meetings of the group at large.

5. Completing volunteer duties as outlined in Article V Requirements, No. 4.
6. Showing respect for doctrinal differences in biblical belief, backgrounds, and methods of homeschooling.
7. Attending to their own family's safety and well being during TGIF activities. Members acknowledge the risks of attending, traveling to and from, and participating in social, athletic, service, educational, and all other activities and hereby assume all risks.
8. Reading and understanding the TGIF Information Packet.
9. Representing TGIF with the highest standards of integrity and Christian character. Therefore, at all TGIF-related functions, the following standards are to be observed by parents and students:
 - a. No profanity
 - b. No smoking
 - c. No drugs or alcohol
 - d. No fighting
 - e. No weapons
 - f. No slander
 - g. No physical or verbal insults
 - h. No immodest or inappropriate dress

If a board member is made aware that any of these offenses have occurred, steps will be taken according to Article VII Conflict Resolution. Depending on the severity of the offense, the board, in its sole and absolute discretion, will either provide a verbal warning followed by a written warning or consider immediate suspension of membership. If the offending party has received a warning and the offense is repeated, revocation of membership will be considered.

Revocation of Membership

1. The board, in its sole and absolute discretion, has the right to revoke the membership of any member if the member has violated the terms of these Bylaws. A member may voluntarily resign their membership any time for any reason. In the event of a member's resignation or revocation of membership, said member shall not have any claim for refund of any monies paid.
2. If a member violates any of the terms of these Bylaws, the board, in its sole and absolute discretion, reserves the right to suspend the family's membership in all TGIF classes, events, and activities. An investigation will begin within two weeks of the suspension.
3. For revocation, a specific, closed board meeting is required with the member invited to attend. All members of the board must be present at the meeting. Prior to revocation, attempts for member reconciliation shall have occurred according to Article VII Conflict Resolution. A consensus consisting of two-thirds of the entire board is required to revoke a membership.
4. The final decision on revocation will be made within three weeks of the closed board meeting.

Legal Notices and Liability

1. As a condition of membership in TGIF, all member families shall hold harmless all parties connected with the operation of TGIF from any claim of injury or loss which might result from participation, by any or all of the members and in any of the meetings, activities, or events.
2. TGIF shall not as a group lend its name to endorse or finance any outside operations (e.g. political groups or candidates, businesses, etc.)
3. The name Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative shall only be used with the approval of the board.

Article VI Teachers and Co-Teachers

Teachers and Co-Teachers may be members of TGIF who have participated for at least one semester. Non-member teachers with expertise in a specific field may also be recruited or recommended by current members. All teachers and co-teachers are expected to read and abide by the TGIF Bylaws, TGIF Teacher Guidelines, and TGIF Information Packet. Selection of teachers will be determined by the Specials Day Coordinator.

Article VII Conflict Resolution

Matthew 18:15-17 is the guideline to be used when dealing with conflicts affecting TGIF members. The two parties in conflict will work to resolve the problem. If after a time of prayerful consideration this is deemed impossible, the following steps will be taken:

1. The parties in conflict shall select one board member for mediation. If they cannot decide on one board member, the board chairman shall, in his/her sole and absolute discretion, assign a board member for mediation.
2. If no resolution is reached, the board member will bring the conflict to the remainder of the board.
3. All parties will be required to submit written statements outlining their viewpoints no less than three days prior to the next scheduled board meeting.
4. The board will review the statements and, if deemed necessary, will hold a meeting with all parties present.
5. The board, in its sole and absolute discretion, will be the deciding party. A consensus consisting of two-thirds of the board is required to decide the issue.
6. The board will make every effort to reach a decision and inform the parties of that decision no later than 30 days after the scheduled board meeting.
7. All parties in conflict agree to abide by the decision of the board.

Article VIII Leadership

The governing body of TGIF is the Board of Representatives, with each representative heading up a committee staffed by group members.

General Board Duties

- a. Board Meetings – the board will set the time, date and locations for the board meetings for the year. Open board meetings shall be advertised to all members at least one week before the meeting. It is the responsibility of each board member to attend these regularly scheduled meetings. Two-thirds of the board members must be present to conduct a meeting. In the event two-thirds is not present, the board will reconvene as soon as possible for two-thirds of the board to meet. However, such time is not to exceed 30 days. If two-thirds of the board cannot convene in 30 days or less, than a meeting may be convened with less than two-thirds and all decisions at that meeting shall be made by a simple majority.
 - b. The New Business portion of the regularly scheduled meetings is open to all members of TGIF to attend. If members would like to address an issue with the board, they must contact the board at least three days prior to the scheduled meeting.
 - c. At times, it may be necessary to hold a closed board meeting at the discretion of the board.
2. The board holds the following responsibilities in the area of communications:
 - a. Fields concerns from TGIF members and the community.
 - b. Ensures that clear, consistent communications exist within the group through e-mail and website.
 - c. Maintains records of all board meetings and policies.
 - d. Provides notification of scheduled board meetings.
 3. A board quorum shall be established when two-thirds of the board members are present. Each board member is entitled to one vote. The chairman only votes in the event of a tie. A simple majority is required for passage of motions regarding general business and policies.

Board Composition

Representatives shall be approved by the TGIF board. Board positions may consist of, but are not limited to, a Chairman, Specials Day Representative, Specials Day Clerical Support Representative, Field Trips and Special Events Representative, High School/Teen Support Representative, Group Finances Representative, Member Jobs and Duties Representative, and Communications Representative. To allow for diverse representation of membership and to reduce the workload of each board member, TGIF shall strive for a minimum of five board members and shall not exceed a maximum of nine.

Compensation

There is no compensation for serving on the board. However, as funds allow, board members may receive discounts on Specials Day class fees. Discounts may range from 0 to 100 percent, depending on availability of funds. Discounts will be determined by the Treasurer each semester.

Terms

Board Members agree to serve no less than a two-year term. Ideally, there shall be no more than 50 percent turnover per year.

Vacancies and Approval Process

1. When an opening becomes available, the board will inform the membership through e-mail that a board position is open and provide a date (not less than 15 nor more than 30 days from the date of the e-mail) by which applications must be received. All interested parties will submit their name and a brief statement as to why they would like to serve on the board. To be considered for a board position, the interested party:
 - a. Must have affirmed, in writing, their personal agreement with, belief in, and acceptance of the TGIF Statement of Faith.
 - b. Must be an active, participating member of TGIF for at least two semesters and must have completed his or her member duties and Specials Day duties.
 - c. Must be able to perform the general duties of the board and is expected to attend all board meetings and not to miss more than three in a year.
 - d. Must not serve together with spouses on the board.
2. Candidates may be asked to meet in person with the board for an interview.
3. The Approval Process will take place at a closed board meeting not more than 30 days after the deadline for applications with at least two-thirds of the current board in attendance. In the event that at least two-thirds of the current board is not in attendance at the scheduled meeting, the meeting will be scheduled as quickly as is possible for two-thirds of the board to meet.

Removal of Board Members

1. A board member may be removed from office, if, in the opinion of the remainder of the board, that person fails to carry out his/her required duties and/or his/her attitude or conduct damages the reputation and testimony of TGIF and/or said board member displays a gross violation of biblical principles.
2. Prior to removal of a board member, attempts for reconciliation shall have occurred according to Article VII Conflict Resolution.

3. If no resolution is reached, a closed board meeting will be called with all members of the board in attendance. The offending board member is invited to attend but may not vote on his/her removal. A simple majority of votes cast determines removal. The chairman only votes in the event of a tie.

Article IX Amending the Bylaws

Recommendations for changes in the Bylaws can be made at any time but will only be considered for the following membership year if they are submitted by April 1 to allow ample time for approval or rejection before the new membership year begins on June 1.

1. Any TGIF member (including board Members) can propose bylaw changes in writing to the board. All members of the board must be present to review the proposed changes and either approve or reject the proposed changes by a two-third majority vote.
2. Notification of the changes to the bylaws shall be made to the group members. The amended bylaws will be implemented June 1.

Article X Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of TGIF, all liabilities and obligations shall be paid, satisfied, and discharged or adequate provision made therefore. After all payment of bills and claims are distributed, all cash shall be disbursed evenly among its remaining members.