

Circle of Friends: Support for Home Educators

Group Information Packet

August 2018 - July 2019

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your interest in our group. Our group was started in July of 1998. The group meets together to support each other and to plan social and educational events. We try to focus on including everyone, and we encourage members to join more than one group if that is best for their family.

Open Activities *when offered*
(For both members and non-members)

Field Trips

Field trips are open to all and will not have a limited number of spaces for participants; however, non-members will be required to sign a disclaimer before participating. Reservations will be required to join the field trip so that we can tell the hosts of our trip how many to expect. Reservations will not be taken after the reservation date. Additionally, some field trips may require a pre-payment or deposit which may not be refundable if cancellation is made after the final reservation date.

Parents' Night Out

This is a special time just for parents to get together and chat, share experiences, and gain support. These are planned sporadically through the year.

Member Exclusive Activities
(Not all activities offered every year)

There are several activities that are exclusively for CoF members. If you would like to become a member of Circle of Friends, you will be required to sign off on the basic policies of our group on our membership form. A copy of those policies is included with this letter. There is an annual membership fee of \$20 due on August 15th (new members are accepted all year, though). Membership is not accepted without payment and the form. In addition to the activities listed above, members also gain the following benefits:

Egroup

This group has greatly assisted our circle in growing closer and gaining support from each other. The group was designed to discuss homeschool related issues and receive information via email. The groups are moderated, and all subscribers must be approved to join. New members need to send an introduction to the group to be approved.

Honors Celebration

Every year we celebrate our ongoing journey of home education with our children, family, and friends. The afternoon or evening is used to present our children with certificates or awards of achievement and encouragement. Some children prepare projects for display or presentations to share and some prepare and present certificates or drawings to someone who has been a special help to them. We encourage the invitation of family members and special loved ones so they may enjoy the evening as well. The presentations and displays help our guests understand and appreciate our call to home educate our children.

Facebook Group

We use our Facebook page to post documents, pictures, information updates, and other things pertaining to our group.

Classes

Classes are offered for CoF members on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month. An additional charge is required for each class (minimum charge is \$5).

Talent Show

This is a great time for our students to 'strut their stuff!'

Market Day

Market Day is a special event held once or twice a year. This event allows our students to showcase and sell their handmade products (jewelry, art, fabric crafts, food items, etc.). It is possible that a Market Day for Moms will be offered during this year, as well.

The membership form, basic policies, and membership fee are valid until July, 2019.

Circle of Friends: Support for Home Educators

2018--2019 Basic Policies

Please read these policies carefully. They will be enforced. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns about our policies, please contact one of the group leaders.

Statement of Purpose - Circle of Friends: Support for Home Educators is a group of families that meet together for the express purpose of supporting each other and planning social and educational events (this includes, but is not limited to, field trips and play days) for any home educated families (regardless of religion or philosophy) in the area.

1. Membership--To be a member of Circle of Friends, a family must pay the yearly \$10 fee and complete the membership enrollment form (including the signature on the membership agreement). The form and payment are due each year by August 15th (membership runs from September 1st through August 31st). Membership will not be accepted without both the payment and the signed membership form.

****** A charge of \$35 will be required in cash (in addition to the membership fee and class fees--to be paid in cash) for any check returned due to insufficient funds. If a member has 2 checks returned due to insufficient funds, checks will no longer be accepted by that member/family.

Membership dues are divided between the following areas – information packets and printing, drama, slush fund, and facility.

Neither group dues nor class fees will be refunded for any reason.

All members must be paid in full (or to have made arrangements with the treasurer for payment) to be considered members in good standing. Members must be in good standing to be eligible to register for classes for to rejoin the group.

2. Group Leadership--Leaders of major activities (Class Coordinator, Field Trips) or events should be an active member of Circle of Friends for at least 1 full year before accepting a leadership position. Leadership positions are to be held for one full year--from August 1 until July 31. When fulfilling leadership responsibilities, group event dates, times, plans etc. need to be communicated to the group leader for approval. Senior Group Members will be used to diffuse bad situations, handle group problems, or remove leaders when necessary.

A group leader may be relieved of his/her duties if the leader is not fulfilling the responsibilities of the position held, if the leader fails to abide by group policies, or if the leader is being deliberately destructive to group members or the group as a whole. This action will occur only if a majority of Senior Group Members approve it.

Senior Group Members will be identified by September 30th of each year (after membership renewals).

Each year, the group leader will be 'elected.' This process will go as follows: Discussion period, nomination period, vote (MEMBERS ONLY are allowed to vote on leaders). Elections will happen at each annual meeting.

If a leader steps down in the middle of the CoF year (August – July), a vote for a temporary leader will be held during a special, called meeting. This temporary leader will hold the leadership position until the next vote during a regularly scheduled annual meeting.

3. Behavior-- All participants in group events are expected to exemplify the best behavior in all activities, events, field trips, and classes. If someone behaves in a way that is disrespectful to the group, other groups, other people, a speaker, tour guide, event leader, or piece of property, that person will be asked to stop the behavior (or a parent asked to calm the child). If the person is a disturbance twice during the same event, that person will be asked to remove themselves or their child from the event. This includes but is not limited to running in the church building, climbing on the furniture, or using any equipment unless given permission by a senior group member. Parents are expected to accompany their children to all events, activities, and field trips. Children should not be "dropped off" without a parent at any event unless private arrangements have been made for another adult to be responsible for those children at that event. Profanity from children ***WILL NOT*** be tolerated. We encourage adults to refrain from using profanity, as well. Hitting, kicking, biting, or any other aggressive physical or verbal act toward another person ***WILL NOT*** be tolerated. Bullying will NOT be tolerated under any circumstances.

4. Field Trips--Our field trips are open to all and will not have a limited number of spaces for participants. Often, reservations will be required to join the field trip; and when there is a charge for the field trip, prepayment will be required. The reservation date will be announced on the egroup, on the web site and Facebook page. Reservations and repayments will not be taken after the reservation date. If your payment is not received by the final reservation date, you will be removed from the field trip list. Payments for field trips may be non-refundable if cancellation was made after the final reservation date. All non-members must sign a disclaimer before participating in CoF field trips. Field trips for our group--using the Circle of Friends name--will only be organized by our field trip leaders. No other group member should organize a group trip. Contact a field trip leader if you have a suggestion for a group trip.

5. Egroup Participation--The Circle of Friends' egroup has become a very vital resource for our group, and anyone with internet access is encouraged to join. This group provides information, support, and, often, a laugh or two.

A) The egroups are for use by members of Circle of Friends. All new members or potential members must post an introduction to the group within two weeks of joining the group. If an introduction is not posted, you may be removed from the egroup.

B) No abusive or inflammatory language will ever be tolerated on the egroup. If you have a serious disagreement with someone, please take it to private email. Those who choose to engage in inappropriate posting or inflammatory language may be banned from the group at the moderator's discretion.

8. Classes--Classes offered by CoF are open exclusively to CoF members. Classes will have a minimum fee of \$5 per child per class (facilities' fee). Some clubs may have a fee to facilitate supplies or outside leaders. All behavior policies will be enforced at all classes. Classes will be offered on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month between 10:00 AM and 12 PM.

Some important rules for our classes—

**** All teachers are *expected* to be at the meeting location no later than 15 minutes before the beginning of the class they are scheduled to teach.**

**** Class groups are defined by age--Puppies (4--8), Eagles (9--12) and Dragons (13+). You must be of age by Sept.30 for the first session and Jan.31st for the second session.**

**** Some classes may have a specific attendance policy. This policy will be defined by the teacher at or before the first class.**

**** Class members are expected to be on time for all classes to avoid disrupting the teacher and other children.**

**** Class members should bring all supplies needed to each class.**

**** Any adult who chooses to stay in the children's classes should be prepared to *observe* only. Adults should not reprimand kids during the classes or `chat' with other adults. They should not interject opinions, facts, extra information, or discipline while the class is in session. These interruptions are a distraction to the students and teachers and will not be tolerated. Adults who interrupt the class will be asked to leave. Adults are always welcome to `hang out' in the lobby area of Classy Friday, but should not ever leave the premises of the classes and should be available should a leader need to consult with them or should an emergency arise.**

**** All classes must be paid before children can attend. Children will not be allowed to attend a class for which they have not paid. No one is officially signed up for a class without payment.**

**** We do not have a `try before you buy' policy for our classes. All classes must be paid in full before a child will be allowed to join the class in any way.**

**** Refunds for classes are not offered for any reason.**

9. Responsible Adults - All members choosing to be responsible for an additional child/children during group events should have a note which allows them to secure medical treatment on behalf of the parent for the child/children. This provides for emergency medical situations.

The membership fee and membership form are valid until July, 2019.

Thank you for participating in Circle of Friends. We know that these policies will help our circle grow and help our group to be better as a whole.

_____ New _____ Renewal
2018-2019 Circle of Friends Membership Enrollment Form

Please return this form and cash or check (made payable to Barbara Mayeske) at registration.

Family Name-- _____ Parent(s) - _____

Address-- _____

Phone Number-- _____

Child(ren) - names and ages

Email Address-- _____

Egroup/Directory Opt-In

_____ Put me on the egroup.

Membership* (\$10)
Total payment included-- \$ _____

* Membership dues must be accompanied by this form. Membership is not activated until both are received.

My family has read the basic policies of Circle of Friends: Support for Home Educators, and we agree to follow these policies. This includes discussing the behavior policy with all children. We understand that Circle of Friends, its leaders, and/or group members will not be responsible for any injury, damage, or loss sustained by a person or object while involved in any group function or event. My family will not attempt to hold Circle of Friends, its leaders, or group members responsible for any loss, damage, or injury occurring at a group function or event. We understand that all monies collected by the group for a membership fee goes toward the area outlined in the policies. (This does not include money collected for supplies for other activities or money collected for classes, clubs, field trips or special events.) We understand that members to Circle of Friends enjoy the benefits of an email egroup, group classes (additional fee), and participation in Honors Night (when available).

Emergency Contact _____

Emergency Contact Phone _____

Printed Name of Family Representative _____

Signature of Family Representative _____ Date _____