

**A Community Service Ministry of
Reasoning Tree Church**

ROOTS HOMESCHOOL CO-OP

Handbook

Reasoning Tree Church
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We at Reasoning Tree Church:

- Affirm the Five Solas of the Reformation.
- Recite the historic creeds/catechisms.
- Have Christ exalting music program.
 - Read and preach God's Word.
- Maintain time-honored Christian beliefs.
- Defend traditional values with a comprehensive approach to Scripture.
 - Provide Biblical instruction that is culturally engaging.

Roots General Information

Purpose of Roots:

- To offer a Christ-centered homeschool program to Shenandoah County and surrounding areas.
- To have a group focused on growing in their wisdom of the Lord and growing in relationship with believers.
- To offer a place for meaningful and healthy friendships for parents and children.
- To come alongside parents to encourage them and help them in raising their children.

Name:

- Roots CO-OP
 - He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit. (Jer. 17:8)

Who Can Attend:

- We are aimed towards Christian families but not limited to Christian families.
 - Anyone interested in attending our group that are not Christians need to understand that we will not waiver on our stance of the truth of Scripture or our commitment to Biblical living and teaching.

How Many Families Can Attend:

- **Limit to 20 non-RTC families per year** (no limit on RTC families)
 - To keep the group more intimate.
 - Not allow the group to become too large and impersonal.
 - Each family must sign up at the end of each school year to be on the list for the next fall's family limit.
 - All current families will be given priority, we will then announce if we have other openings.
 - If a family must leave for a year but wants to hold their spot for the following school year, they will need to fill out a **Leave of Absence** form.
 - If a family has decided not to continue attending Roots a **Letter of Resignation** form needs to be filled out so an opening is made available to the families on the Waitlist.

Age Range:

- **Infants – 8th Grade**
 - Class divisions that are offered:
 - Nursery
 - Pre-K: Potty trained and 4 years old
 - K-2
 - 3-5
 - 6-8
- **Cadet Program: 9th-12th grade**
 - The Roots Cadet Program allows high school students to qualify for volunteer hours that can go towards their transcripts &/or resumes.
 - Only open to students with younger siblings in Roots.
 - They may also use the staff of Roots as professional references if the staff feel that the student has shown a Christlike attitude in their role as well as having a good work ethic.
 - At the end of each school year the student volunteer will be given a letter stating their volunteer position & hours served.
 - These positions allow them to grow as adults in skills such as leadership, public speaking, childcare, event planning, and organization.
 - If any parent wants to work in one of these areas, they should feel free as they are not limited to just teens.

- Students who are interested should sign up to be in the Cadet Program & then proceed to sign up to volunteer in the role they desire. (Must be done yearly.)
- Cadets can serve in the following ways:
 - ✓ Enrichment Leaders or Enrichment assistants
 - To be an Enrichment Leader the student must have been in Roots for 3 months or a member of Reasoning Tree Church and be in 11th grade or higher
 - To be an Assistant the student must be in 9th grade or higher
 - Always will be an adult present as a leader or assistant
 - Student Enrichment Leaders will have oversight from Roots leadership.
 - ✓ Welcome Table
 - 9th grade or higher
 - Friendly & helpful
 - ✓ Set up & tear down helpers
 - 9th grade or higher
 - ✓ Snack time set-up
 - 9th grade or higher
 - ✓ Photobook/Yearbook assistants (if we offer it, year by year case)
 - 11th grade or higher
 - ✓ Plan out “Rainy Day” Activities
 - 11th grade or higher
 - ✓ Open the meetings
 - Lead the Pledge, Calendar, Catechism, Bible Verse, etc.
 - 9th grade or higher
 - ✓ Help with any of our volunteer related activities (End of Year Picnic, Christmas Blessing, etc.).
 - 9th grade or higher depending on the activity.

Cost:

- As a ministry of Reasoning Tree Church this CO-OP is free for each family.
- Field Trip/Special activity costs are paid for by the families.
 - We cannot guarantee refunds for these activities due to the policies of each site.
- If a family cannot go on a Field Trip due to financial needs, please let the Director know as we may be able to help you with that cost.
 - The Director needs to know this information at the time of planning and/or booking the field trip.

Meetings:

- September – May
- 1st or 2nd Mondays of each month
- 9am-12pm
- Follow SCPS and RTC for weather related cancellation and delay schedules.



Jeremiah 17: 7-8

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.
 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream,
 and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green,
 and is not anxious in the year of drought,
 for it does not cease to bear fruit."



Roots Policies

Absences & Maintaining Membership:

- **Regular, punctual attendance is crucial for the smooth functioning of the co-op. (All time frames are exact and should be followed.)**
- Since we only meet three hours one time monthly for nine months and we limit our group we will require that families only have **two planned absences** during the year.
 - Please try to make appointments, etc. on other days besides Roots days.
 - Families should give notice to the Director at least a week in advance for a planned absence.
 - If there is a third planned absence the leadership of Roots will work to decide if the family can continue in the program or if the family should be removed for that existing year. They may sign-up again for the following year but their spot for the existing year may be given to a waitlist family.
 - This does not include extended illnesses, births, deaths, or other extenuating circumstances. Please make sure to always communicate with leadership.
- Absences for sickness or other medical reasons will be **allowed up to four times**.
 - After four absences the leadership of Roots will work to decide if the family can continue in the program or if the family should be removed for that existing year. They may sign-up again for the following year but their spot for the existing year may be given to a waitlist family.

Bathrooms:

- Preschoolers must be potty trained. Teachers will not assist with toileting. If assistance is needed, the parent will be called to assist.
- Toddlers who are potty-training in the nursery will be assisted. Potty training accidents may require calling the parent to assist.
- When adults are assisting children, who are not their own, in the bathroom, doors should remain open.
- Bathrooms are located at the back of the Sanctuary.

Bible:

- We have no preference on Bible translations but we will be using the English Standard Version (ESV) for most memory verses.

Cleaning Up:

- Each family should be prepared to pitch in at 12:00pm for cleanup and tear down.
 - Families who have small children that need to get home for lunch and nap do not need to stay.
- Find list of required clean-up areas in our Daily & Yearly Operations document.

Church Rules & Information:

- Please be respectful of the equipment and church property.
- All toys and supplies will be cleaned up at the end of the morning.
 - Craft supplies should be placed in specific Roots containers.
- No children should be on the platform in the Sanctuary.
- No children should be wandering around the church without adults.
- The Nursery is located downstairs
- Parents should remind their children to walk when possible.
- Children should only be playing around the back of the church property, never in the parking lot or front of the church property.
- No food or drink in the Sanctuary except water.
- There is a coat rack and alcove in the back of the Sanctuary where family belongings can go during our time together.

Communication:

- Communication with the leadership is extremely important. This applies not only to attendance issues but also to all email communication.
 - Members are expected to regularly check their email and respond to requests for information, etc.
 - Our sources of communication are the Roots Facebook group and email.
 - ✓ All information regarding classes, notifications, and cancellations will come through these sources.
 - ✓ Failure to check emails regularly jeopardizes the success of the co-op for all members.
- If a family has a concern, they should fill out a **Care and Concerns** form & place it in the box on the Welcome table for review by leadership.

Conflict Resolution:

- Disagreements will inevitably happen but as Christians we should handle disputes in a Biblical way.
 - We ask that you pray about any disputes that may have occurred that have caused hurt before making any decisions.
 - If after prayer, you feel the conflict needs to be addressed, it should be handled in a kind way between the two parties involved.
 - If either party is unsatisfied that these discussions are not creating a resolution, they may seek the help of the Director.
 - As a last resort, the conflict will be taken to the other members of the group or Reasoning Tree Church leaders.
 - If one of the parties in the disagreement is the leadership of Roots than it will need to go directly to the leadership of Reasoning Tree Church.

Creeds and Catechisms:

- We affirm the historic creeds which would include the Apostles & Nicene Creeds.
 - We will be focusing on the Apostle's Creed at Roots.
- We glean from various reformed catechisms, the reason being to stay theologically connected to the historic church.
 - At Roots we will be using Truth and Grace edited by Tom Ascol.

Discipline:

- Every student is expected to act in a way that brings God glory.
- Each child will be given a verbal warning for misbehavior.
- If a child does not respond to verbal redirection, that child will be removed from the class and escorted to the parent for supervision.
 - If a parent fails to control the child's disruptive behavior, or the child's behavior involves physical violence or the threat of physical violence the family will be asked to leave that day.
 - The leadership of Roots may choose to remove the family from the co-op permanently especially if this is an ongoing issue.
- Policies and procedures are in place for everyone's safety and protection. Failure to abide by the policies of our co-op may be cause for removal from Roots.
- Lewdness, inappropriate handling or touching, or complete defiance will not be allowed and will result in immediate removal from Roots.

Dress Code:

- All dress code policies are to be adhered to at the Roots meetings and at all field trips.
 - No spaghetti straps, low cut tops, bare midriffs (even while bending or stretching), no bra straps
 - No sheer materials
 - No tight shirts

- No short shorts/dresses (Shorts and skirts should not go higher than mid-thigh.)
- No tight shorts or pants like leggings unless under a dress or skirt.
- No shorts, sweats, or pants with words on the back
- No clothing with inappropriate wording or pictures
- No wheeled shoes.
- No bikinis at possible pool meet up days.
- If a student violates the dress code the leadership will address this violation with the family and if the article of clothing cannot be addressed immediately that family may be asked to leave for that day. They are welcome to return that day or the next time we meet.
- Proper hygiene will be expected as well.

Fellowship Time:

- We ask that each family strive to arrive on time each month for the Play/Fellowship time in respect of the other families and to promote community and relationship-building within the co-op.

Field Trip Etiquette:

- Children will always remain with staff and parents.
- Everyone will act in a way that honors the Lord and honors the group.
- Kindness and politeness, by all, will be expected.
- Attention will be given to tour guides and staff.
- Rules of the site will be followed and respected.
- The group will stay together, when possible, to encourage friendship and fellowship.

First Aid:

- First Aid boxes can be found throughout the church.
- Fire extinguishers can be found throughout the church.
- Emergency exits can be found all over the church.
- The basement will be the area we go to in the event of dangerous weather.
- The only door that will be always be unlocked is the side door located in the foyer. After everyone has arrived & checked in at the Welcome table all other doors will be locked.

Illnesses:

- Participants should not attend co-op if they are sick or are experiencing any of the following symptoms:
 - Colored mucus
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea (within last 24 hours)
 - Eye drainage
 - Virus or infection (known to be contagious)
 - Rashes (contagious)
 - Contagious anything including but not limited to, lice, ringworm, etc.
 - Fever (within last 24 hours - unmedicated)
- Please keep in mind that this policy is essential for the health and protection of all our children and families.
- If you or one of your children becomes ill during Roots, you must leave for the day.

Lost & Found:

- Roots will have a designated box for lost and found materials that can be found under the welcome table as needed.
- Anything left at the end of the year will be donated.

New Families:

- To join the group each family should contact the Director of Roots to read through all materials.
- After reading the information, if the perspective family has decided to join-
 - They will sign a form stating they read and understand the Roots Handbook & Operations documents.

- They will also fill out a form listing their names, home address, phone numbers, emails, birthdays, allergies, and children's grade levels.
- If there is no available space in the co-op at that time the family will then be placed on a waiting list and will be contacted as openings occur.
- Only Christian parents/students who are members of RTC or have been in Roots for 3 months are allowed to lead/teach.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Parents are required to stay and are encouraged to help where they can and/or are led.
 - Only in extenuating circumstances may the parent leave their child, older than 6, in the care of a friend should they not be able to stay. Must be communicated with the Director beforehand.
 - If a child will be going home with another family, that information needs to be given to the Director.
 - Make sure you know how your child will behave in these circumstances.
- Each parent is responsible for their own child's behavior but if you see other children making poor or unsafe decisions you should feel welcome to gently correct that child and/or direct them to their parents.
- Children should not be outside by themselves.
- Parents with infants and/or children under 2 have the option to teach or help with the toddler area.
- Parents should be setting an example in behavior during opening meeting procedures and during class times.
 - Parents, with no children in the nursery and who are not helping with the class time as leaders or assistants should plan to fellowship outside of the sanctuary or nursery.

Personal Items:

- Students are not allowed to have phones, electronic games/ equipment, or personal items like headphones/earbuds during co-op.
- Weapons without a permit are prohibited
- No tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
- Parents are encouraged to maintain possession of any medication a child may require, except for those that must remain with the child for their safety.
- Parents' cell phones should be set on vibrate during co-op hours.

Playground & Picnic Shelter:

- No children should climb on the top of the playset.
- No mulch should be thrown.
- Picnic tables are for sitting and eating, not climbing on.
- All toys and supplies should be cleaned up and placed in appropriate boxes before leaving.
- Children should not be taking or using any outdoor church materials for playtime.

Pledge of Allegiance:

- We will be saying the Pledge of Allegiance only to have the children introduced to it & have them be familiar with something that they will undoubtedly encounter at some point in their lives.
- Utilizing the pledge is not to be like public schools or to conflate America and the church.

School Topics:

- We will look through a Biblical worldview in all that we learn.
- History
 - In our studies, we will encounter a wide view of world history. We will not stray from teaching hard history as we should learn from the bad so it can never be repeated and learn from the good so we can continue in that path.
- Science & Geography
 - We believe God created the world and all that is in it.

Student Responsibility:

- No flirtatious or romantically driven behavior.
- No profane language, crude humor, or morbid topics
- No negative or insulting words aimed at others.
- No bullying.
- Must obey all teachers and adults during co-op hours.
- Must alert teachers to where they are going.
- Must treat each other with respect.
- Required to be in their assigned group during class time.
- Not permitted to bring toys or other personal playthings from home, unless it is Show-N-Tell Day. (Limit one Show-N-Tell item per child)
- Be on time.
- Honor parents and teachers by addressing them as Mr./Ms. For example: Ms. Sarah & Mr. Paul
- Be respectful of the church property, as well as other people and their property.

Visitors:

- For the safety of our families, no one can come to meetings, including extra family members, without contacting the leadership of the group first & meeting with approval.

Waitlist:

- The waitlist will not be followed alphabetically but will be followed by first name on the list.
- If a family chooses not to join Roots after being contacted from the list, it will pass to the next name.
- Each perspective family will be informed at how many families they are away from the top so they can decide if they want to be placed on the waitlist.

Weather Policy:

- If the weather is 40° or above at starting time, we will be outside so always dress warmly.
- Snack times are not dependent on the mornings but are dependent on the temperatures. (Outside time is always the best thing to do for kids so we will always have that as our focus in decision making.)
- Rainy, snowy, high windy winter days will always mean we are inside.
- We will monitor Reasoning Tree Church & SCPS for cancellations. SCPS can be a little aggressive at canceling when there is nothing on the ground so we will make decisions slowly & cautiously before contacting everyone. SCPS will be our guide but the church will be our final decider.