

May 2011

BENEFITS OF GRACE MEMBERSHIP

Deciding to homeschool is a tough enough task for many of us. Once that choice has been made, though, so many other things need to be researched and new decisions made.

For many families, finding a homeschool support group is on that necessary list. Even veteran homeschoolers find themselves considering annually whether or not to participate in a support group.

I think it's a good question to ask yourself. Personally, I've always found the answer easy: GRACE is where my family started with homeschooling. I think about all the support I received my first year with GRACE, and I know I couldn't have made it through the rough spots without the wisdom from the women I met. My children have formed friendships through field trips and park days with GRACE. Each year when activities pick up in September, we are all excited!

If you are a new family, you may wonder how to fit in and get connected. You'll need to consider what your (and your children's) relationship personality is. What type event would you be most comfortable with in the beginning: A field trip, which is structured with minimal time for small talk and includes everyone in the family? A park day, which is just the opposite, with small talk and playtime as the priorities? A Ladies Night Out, which is sometimes structured, sometimes not and includes just the adults? Whichever type of event makes you feel most comfortable is probably the best way to get your feet wet. You can add in other events anytime, as faces become familiar, and you are ready.

If you decide that GRACE has a place in your homeschool, we are thrilled to have you as an active member, and we look forward to seeing you at many events throughout the year!

(and responsibilities as a member)

There are many different kinds of support groups these days. GRACE is what can be defined as a relational, friendship-based group. Because of this, GRACE **restricts the majority of its activities to be for members-only**. In this smaller, predictable environment, friendships can be cultivated as you see the same faces over and over at different events.

As members, you are needed to help provide the resources to make these activities happen. Planners and event workers are essential. When you commit to a job, you take responsibility for remembering to fulfill that commitment. If you don't, someone else has to step in, someone who doesn't necessarily have that extra time! Along with that, if you are planning an event that needs to be advertised to our members, it is your responsibility to get the information to the Newsletter Editor by the deadline. The editor cannot provide our membership with complete timely information otherwise!

As members, you are given many opportunities for activities. Some of these activities require an RSVP. RSVP's serve to make sure we meet minimum requirements of various facilities. They also serve to let us know when we have reached our limit of attendees. Quite often, a waiting list is developed of members who want to go to an event. When you RSVP you are committing to attending that event. If a cancellation is necessary, you need to inform the planner prior to the event.

Because of the definition of who GRACE is, **our events should never be advertised by our members or our member's friends to the various eloops around town**. We do not have anything against these eloops, they are a very useful form of homeschool support for those families who utilize them. However, they have hundreds of members. When those non-GRACE members then inquire about an event they sometimes overwhelm our planners due to their sheer numbers. Please help us keep GRACE as the smooth-running, relationship-based group we all like it to be.

So, with everyone working to support each other, we can all look forward to a wonderful year of park days, presentations, youth activities, parties, Ladies Nights Out, field trips and best of all: each other. We are a wonderful network of personalities, experiences and wisdom. Tap into it, come join us!

Shannon Kiser, GRACE Director

gracedirector@homeschoolingwithgrace.org

GRACE Conduct Policy

This version of the Conduct Policy is in effect as of February 7, 2002 and replaces any previous copy which has been distributed.

Read the following, then sign your agreement on page two of the Registration Form.

By signing you are fulfilling a requirement for membership in GRACE. You are giving us a guarantee that your family will adhere to this policy during all group activities.

Why a Conduct Policy?

GRACE is a homeschool organization. GRACE is also a Christian organization. Both of these descriptions require that our conduct be exemplary, above reproach. Every time our families step out into the world we are witnessing to everyone we encounter, both as homeschoolers and as Christians. Whether the people are in a retail environment, at a park, on a field trip, or in a business office, they will form an opinion of homeschoolers and of Christians based on your family. The rights and freedoms we have are fragile, and unfortunately, they are easy to take for granted. Our country's founders fought tirelessly to win our religious freedoms. The early homeschoolers also fought a difficult battle. We must not forget the efforts of either group, and we must not, through our apathy, threaten the loss of those freedoms.

We also have a responsibility to each other. When we get together, we expect that every family in attendance holds to the same basic set of values and beliefs, even though we have diverse methods and personalities. We trust each other and each other's children in a way we may not trust others. The mothers are content to spend necessary time being refreshed and seeking the advice of others, knowing that their children will be treated fairly by all, and that all will be watching out for each other's welfare. The children are content to develop friendships with each other, knowing that in this environment they will not experience the bullying and peer pressure common to so many childhood gatherings.

The Policy

- All children must be supervised by a responsible adult at all activities.
- If the parent is not present, the parent must have spoken with another attending adult and given disciplinary responsibility to that adult.
- The supervising adult must be aware of his/her child(ren)'s activities and behavior.
- Inappropriate behavior requires immediate consequences.
- Appropriate language is expected. *This excludes cursing, teasing, using the Lord's name in vain, etc.*
- Physical contact such as general roughhousing, hitting or pushing is not acceptable.
- Children need to understand when they are required to be still and quiet (i.e. while we are being spoken to on a field trip).
- Any parent within our homeschool group who witnesses inappropriate behavior has the authority to verbally correct the child(ren). Children must understand that they are expected to respect any adult in our gathering. *Note: Be sure children are aware that if any adult would make a suggestion which makes them uncomfortable, they should immediately check with their own parent.*
- It is unacceptable for any person, child or adult, to bring any weapon, concealed or revealed, to any GRACE activity. A weapon is a knife, a gun, or any other object whose purpose would be to cause injury to another person. *ANY failure to comply with this policy item will result in that family being permanently removed from membership in GRACE.*

Families who have difficulty meeting these requirements will be counseled by a member of the Board, and repeated conduct problems will result in that family being restricted from attending some or all group activities.

G.R.A.C.E. Homeschool Group

Group Resources and Christian Encouragement

2011-2012 Registration

Please **complete** both pages
of this form and return with
appropriate payment
(to G.R.A.C.E.) to:

GRACE Directory
6617 Mounting Rock Rd
Charlotte, NC 28217

Questions? Call (704) 210-8732

Dues Schedule:

- ___ Returning Members **prior to or on** June 10, 2011: \$10.00
___ Returning Members **after** June 10, 2011: **\$20.00**
___ New Members: \$10.00

Membership Requirements:

1. Payment of dues
2. Performance of an assigned job
3. Agreement to Conduct Policy
4. Agreement to Waiver of Liability

Please Print:

Parents' Names: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ e-mail address: _____

Year began homeschooling: _____

Children's Names	Birth date	Disability we should be aware of (<i>confidential</i>)
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

This agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by law.

To the fullest extent allowed by law, I agree to WAIVE, DISCHARGE CLAIMS, AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY the GRACE Homeschool Group, its director and members, and any home or facility used by the group from any and all liability on account of, or in any way resulting from Injuries and Damages to myself, any member of my family, and any guest I may bring to an activity, even if caused by negligence of the GRACE Homeschool Group, its director, members, or any home or facility used by the group. I further agree to HOLD HARMLESS the GRACE Homeschool Group, its director and members, and any home or facility used by the group from any claims, damages, injuries or losses caused by the negligence of myself, any member of my family, or any guest I may bring to an activity. I understand and intend that this assumption of risk and release is binding upon my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and includes any minors accompanying me. I further understand that this statement also includes any personal property present at a GRACE activity.

I have read the Waiver of Liability statement. I freely and voluntarily assume all risks of such Injuries and Damages noted in this document for myself, all members of my family and any guests who may accompany me, as well as any personal property which may be present at a GRACE activity.

Name of Parent

Signature of Parent

Date

JOBS LIST

Please mark **three (3)** jobs you could do, ranking them from 1 to 3, 1 being your first choice.

ALL jobs are important, even assisting at a one-time event. Members who do not fulfill their job commitments cause undue stress and extra work for others (no matter how small the job might seem)!

If, after agreeing to a particular job, you find yourself unable to complete the obligation, it is YOUR responsibility to find a replacement.

GENERAL GROUP MANAGEMENT

NEWSLETTER (*monthly August-May*)

_____ **Editor:** Type newsletter each month.

PRESENTATION PLATFORM

_____ **Hostess:** Serve as coordinator monthly.

_____ **Back-up Hostess**

_____ **WEBSITE MANAGER:** Keep website up-to-date

_____ **PAPER GOODS MANAGER:** Responsible for keeping paper goods, bringing them to activities when required, and for purchasing (reimbursable) replacements.

TESTING

IOWA Test of Basic Skills (*normally occurs in April*)

All families who test with GRACE are expected to assist all three days of testing, in addition to their assigned job. You will be contacted once you have registered for the test regarding your job for testing days.

_____ **ADMINISTRATOR** Member with college degree who oversees testing. This member handles the registration, paperwork, and organizes the staffing for the event.

_____ **FACILITIES COORDINATOR.** This member reserves an appropriate facility, and is responsible each day before, during and after testing, for the set-up and availability of necessary resources.

_____ **POST-TESTING CELEBRATION EVENT** Plan a fun, inexpensive outing for the afternoon of the last day of testing. (This planner should be expecting to test with GRACE.)

ANNUAL EVENTS

CHRISTMAS and VALENTINE PARTY (This is a combined position – coordinate with the assistant to plan each party)

_____ Event Coordinator

CHRISTMAS PARTY

_____ Event Assistant

VALENTINE PARTY

_____ Event Assistant

_____ **END-OF-YEAR PICNIC:** Plan this event

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

OUTINGS

_____ **OUTING PLANNER (FIELD TRIP, ACTIVITIES, OR COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS)**

_____ **INREACH COORDINATOR (COORDINATES TAKING MEALS TO MEMBERS IN NEED – each person in the group should be available to assist with a meal in the event a need should arise)**

LADIES NIGHT OUT (LNO)

_____ **COORDINATOR**

_____ **PLANNER**

YOUR AGREEMENT TO THE GRACE CONDUCT POLICY

I have read and understand this policy. I agree to its terms. I have explained these rules of conduct to each of my children. My children have agreed to its terms.

Signature: _____ Date: _____