



# Volunteer Handbook

## Cloud and Fire Ministries Volunteer Handbook

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This handbook has been developed in order to help us  
together work to build the Kingdom of God.

May He richly bless you as you serve Him and grow in  
His ways.

*The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters  
will himself be watered. Proverbs 11:25*

## Welcome

Welcome to Cloud and Fire Ministries! We are excited to have you join our team, and are grateful for your time, talents, and dedication. We know you will be a blessing to us, and we hope that your experience here will also be a blessing to you. Thank you for what you are doing to build God's Kingdom!

## Our History

**Cloud and Fire Ministries (CFM)** was founded in 1999 by Melody Rossi. Previously, Melody was a professional opera singer, but after a serious illness interrupted her career, she began substitute teaching in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She was repeatedly sent to a middle school in North Hills, and was eventually offered a permanent contract there. At that time, the school was performing in the bottom 2% of the nation. Melody fell in love with her students and wanted to do something to help.

Melody and her friend (and teaching assistant from the middle school) Carole Walker began Cloud and Fire as a way to provide extra help to their students. They started an after school "club" on Fridays, and invited their middle school students to come. They met at Centro Cristiano, a church very near the school. The first week, a handful of kids showed up, but the next week, they brought friends with them. Melody and Carole decided to introduce Bible verses and lessons, and see what happened. The students loved it, and kept coming back for more. The "club" grew to include crafts, field trips, camping, and cultural events. Before long, "club" became a staple in the lives of young people in the community. They were having fun while learning about God's love. Today, the "club" is still the main feature of CFM, and many of our original participants are still with us as leaders!

## How We Got Our Name

One of the most thrilling stories in the Bible is the account of how God used Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land with Moses as their leader. They dreamed that things could be better and trusted God to help them, but they certainly didn't know how to get to where they wanted to go. Fortunately, God provided miraculous guidance through a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The **Cloud and Fire** were visible signs of God's presence, and moved when God wanted the people to move. By following the **Cloud and Fire** day by day, the people were able to go where God wanted them to go.

As we work with urban youth and address the very serious problems they face, we desperately need God's presence and leading to help us. Without His help, we really don't know which way to turn. We look to Him for daily guidance. We strive to follow His path, and move when He says "move!" Just like the Hebrews, we are crossing uncharted territory, but we believe He will show us the way.

*And the Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.  
Exodus 13: 21*

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to provide transformational ministry that equips low-income urban youth to become thriving, productive members of the community.

We believe the only lasting transformation comes from within, as a result of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Although we provide a wide array of academic, social, cultural, and spiritual services for youth, our goal is to provide an environment in which youth can come to experience and fully know God's love. In short, we are:

*Equipping others for life's journey  
Providing a future and a hope*

### **Statement of Faith**

**Cloud and Fire** is a Faith-Based Organization. Therefore, we seek volunteers with similar beliefs, who can uphold our philosophy and code of conduct. Please carefully review this information, and be sure that you are in agreement with it.

### **What We Believe**

1. We believe in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God, inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

2. We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility become sinners in thought, word, and deed.
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension to Heaven, in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate.
7. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and, thereby, become children of God.
8. We believe that the New Birth by faith and obedience to Christ places each believer in the Body of Christ of which the local congregation is an expression.
9. We believe that it is necessary for the Christian to be in the world but not of the world, to resist Satan, and to live a godly lifestyle.
10. We believe in the great commission which our Lord has given to His Church to evangelize the world, and that this evangelization is the great mission of the Church.
11. We believe in the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*As a manner of operation policy, we believe the ministry of the Holy Spirit, in the life of a believer, is to glorify Jesus Christ in and through that life. Since our organization is inter-denominational and volunteers come from various denominational backgrounds, denominational and doctrinal differences should not be stressed in relationships with our fellow workers and in our teaching. There s to be no proselytizing for disputable or controversial doctrinal issues. Anything that would tend to create division should positively be avoided. We are not asking staff t o change their personal beliefs but simply to adhere to this policy, which has been established for the order, harmony, and good of all. We ask our volunteers to be mindful of the personal beliefs of others and help create an environment of order and harmony.*

## **Volunteer Protocols and Procedures**

We work with youth. Most of our young people considered “at-risk” or “high-risk.” Most of them have never been around Christians before becoming involved with Cloud and Fire. Many of them have dealt with adults who are not safe. We hope that every adult in our organization—whether staff or volunteers--will be a model of Christ’s love to these youth. Therefore, we maintain very high standards of integrity and conduct in our organization. This helps ensure that our youth are safe, our staff and volunteers are safe, and that our behavior is congruent with the Biblical values we teach. Thank you for being mindful of this while you are volunteering with us!

### **Background Checks**

All volunteers are required to have background checks. We utilize a service that examines California and National crime databases and informs us of criminal activity that would prohibit a volunteer from working with youth. Prohibitive offenses include child endangerment or sexual offenses. In order to run the background check, we will need to ask you for personal information such as driver’s license number, Social Security number, and date of birth. Background checks must be done before you may volunteer with us on a regular basis.

**The fee for background checks is \$10.**

## Cloud and Fire Code of Conduct

We expect our volunteers to uphold Christian values and model integrity and moral character both while on and off duty from serving with us. Our volunteers come from a wide array of denominations and doctrinal backgrounds, and we know there are a number of interpretations of what constitutes “Christian values.” To help clarify, we have listed some key expectations here. If you have any questions, please be sure to contact the volunteer coordinator.

### **Personal Conduct**

CFM volunteers are expected to be exemplary in speech and conduct. Profanity of any kind is not to be used on CFM premises or during CFM activities. Off-color, racial, or inappropriate jokes or comments are not to be used. Harsh language or derogatory tone is not to be used with youth participants.

Cloud and Fire is a smoke-free environment. Volunteers may not smoke while on our premises or while on any CFM activity.

Cloud and Fire is a drug and alcohol free environment. Volunteers are not permitted to possess or be under the influence of any illegal substance while volunteering for CFM whether on or off-site. Volunteers who partake of alcohol are not permitted to do so on CFM premises, while on CFM activities, or when CFM youth are present. The use of alcohol by volunteers is not to be discussed directly, indirectly or in the presence of participants.

Violence or threats of violence are not allowed.

Dangerous or unauthorized material or firearms are not allowed on CFM premises or outings.

Unless authorized by a CFM manager, on-site computers are not to be used for personal purposes. Access to adult or otherwise inappropriate websites on CFM computers is strictly prohibited.

CFM believes in and teaches a position of complete sexual abstinence except within the confines of legal marriage between one man and one woman. We ask our volunteers to support and adhere to this position in word and deed.

Volunteers are expected at all times to present a professional, modest image to our youth. Radical departures from conventional dress are not permitted. CFM expects all volunteers to maintain a neat, clean appearance with respect to personal grooming and hygiene standards, and to dress in a manner that sets a high standard for our youth participants. Anyone whose attire is not considered acceptable and in accordance with CFM standards will be asked to return home to change before resuming normal duties. Dress code guidelines include:

**Ladies:**

No spaghetti straps  
No tube tops or bare shoulders  
No halter tops  
No bare midriffs  
Tops must meet bottoms  
No excessively tight clothing  
Skirts must be tasteful and modest  
Sheer clothing is allowed when in good taste  
Undergarments should not be seen  
Clothing should not have inappropriate or offensive sayings or pictures  
Necklines should be modest, tasteful, and unrevealing  
Must wear proper undergarments (bra)  
Shoes are required

**Gentlemen:**

Clothing should not have inappropriate or offensive sayings or pictures  
No excessively baggy trousers  
No excessively tight clothing  
Shirts must be worn at all times  
Tops must meet bottoms  
No gang attire  
Undergarments should not be seen  
Shoes are required  
Hats/caps should be removed indoors

**Ear and Facial Jewelry**

Ear “expanders” are not allowed  
Facial jewelry is not allowed at work

**PLEASE ALTER AS NEEDED!**

## **Conduct with Participants**

For the protection of youth and volunteers, volunteers are never to be alone with a participant. This includes in a room, car, parking lot or other setting

Volunteers may not transport a youth without authorization from a CFM manager. When transporting youth, at least two authorized volunteers must be present. In special circumstances, two cars in caravan may suffice.

Confidentiality of participants is to be guarded. Volunteers may not contact participants outside of CFM activities.

Volunteers may not fraternize with (i.e., date) youth participants.

Although common sense and problem solving are needed to discern the best way to handle a particular situation, volunteers are discouraged from disciplining youth participants. Contact the supervisor or volunteer coordinator and describe the problem.

CFM utilizes positive reinforcement rather than scolding, yelling, or shaming youth. Volunteers are asked to do likewise.

Do not offer participants drugs of any kind, including legal prescription or over-the-counter drugs. This includes Advil, Tylenol, Motrin, Aspirin, cold remedies, etc.

Do not offer food or beverages (other than water) to youth without prior approval.

Please do not discuss or endorse movies, games, or other activities that would not be honoring to God or set a positive example.

Please be sensitive to the demographics of our youth population. Refrain from any conversations that might be considered negative or derogatory.

## **Sexual Harrassment**

Sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment of anyone based on race, religion, ancestry, physical/mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age or any other impermissible basis is strictly prohibited both by company policy and by law.

Any volunteer who believes that he/she has been subjected to harassment should immediately report that harassment to their supervisor, volunteer coordinator, or the Executive Director. Examples include but are not limited to:

Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.

Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement, interfering with work in a taunting or threatening manner;

Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or persistent or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;

Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.

*It is important you understand that these actions, even when intended as humorous, may be offensive to others. While we certainly don't intend to create a sterile, humorless environment, we do intend that you treat coworkers with respect, and that our workplace is always reflective of our core ministry values. Please be alert to the reactions of others, and moderate your behavior as needed. If someone asks that you to refrain from a particular practice, indicates they are offended, or rejects an invitation, you must respect their wishes **without retaliation of any kind.***

### **Mandated Reporting of Child Endangerment or Abuse**

CFM is considered Mandated Reporters in compliance with California State Law. If you have reason to suspect that any youth with whom you have come in contact has suffered physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or has been the victim of neglect, it is your legal responsibility to report this information to the proper authorities. If you become aware of such a situation or have reason to suspect that a child (anyone under the age of 18) is being abused, neglected, or endangered, or is in danger of harming him/herself or contemplating suicide, let the supervisor, Volunteer Coordinator, or Executive Director know immediately. If for some reason it is not possible to contact the supervisor, Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director, please refer to The California Department of Social Services Office of Child Abuse Prevention., or call the Department of Children and Family Services Hotline: 1-800-540-4000.

## Volunteer Orientation and Handbook Agreement

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Telephone Number(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ (home)

\_\_\_\_\_ (cell)

Date of orientation \_\_\_\_\_

I have attended The Cloud and Fire Ministries Orientation for volunteers and have received and reviewed the Cloud and Fire Ministries Volunteer Handbook. I agree to abide by the procedures and protocols outlined in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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