



## FAQ 2016 for Volunteer Teams

### Bus Driver Qualifications

Heaventrain does not transport passengers. Drivers need at least a CDL Class B license with air brakes certification. Class A drivers are more than qualified.

Before driving Heaventrain, we need a copy of the driver's license on file.

Ideally, volunteering churches that go out with Heaventrain on a regular basis will provide their own driver. Pastor Julie will work with volunteering churches and help find a driver if needed. 😊

### Volunteer Training Times

Training times/help with promoting the volunteer opportunity to your church family are both available. Pastor Julie is happy to set up a time for one of our veteran Heaventrain team members to come to your church and train volunteers and/or share the story of Heaventrain with potential volunteers. Contact Julie at [Julie@centralchurchonline.com](mailto:Julie@centralchurchonline.com) to set up a time... 😊

We also have resources for you to utilize to recruit volunteers....medias, etc.

### Age Guidelines for Volunteers

One of the beauties of Heaventrain is that this can be a family mission experience. I've had volunteers go with me to Cleveland as young as 5 years old. Granted, their parent knew that they were "connected at the hip." I had one of these little guys even lead prayer on Heaventrain several times! It is an experience that Preston has never forgotten and still talks about 6 years later...

Young elementary students are allowed to come as volunteers WITH A PARENT OR GUARDIAN. Parents and guardians need to understand that although we all will do our best to look out for one another, they need to be "connected at the hip" and serve together with their child.

If a preteen child/teenager wants to serve on Heaventrain and their parent is not present, it is up to the discretion of the church leader in charge. If the child attends, they will need to have written permission and the church leader needs to have their emergency contact info with them at all times.

We need to have smart child/adult ratios in place to make sure it is a good (and safe) experience for all... A 5:1 ratio is advised.

It is also important to note that senior adults are more than welcome to come and serve. They add so much and have so much to offer. One senior adult in a wheel chair approached me at a church and wondered if there was a place for her even though she could not get on and off the bus... An enthusiastic "YES!" was my answer...

### **Background Checks for Volunteers 18 years-Older**

All volunteers who are 18 years and older need to submit a copy of a cleared background check that has been run within the past 2 years. Many of our volunteering churches already have background checks in place... Please plan on turning in a copy of the check before going out on Heaventrain.

Cleared volunteers are never alone with Heaventrain children. We will take an accountability stance that will be above reproach.

### **Will Heaventrain go out if it rains?**

We are shooting for a consistent presence in our neighborhoods. Plan on us going out rain or shine. If weather is to the point of a safety issue for neighborhood kids/families, volunteers and/or is not safe for our bus to safely go out, we will regroup and delay/cancel. As a general rule, though, Heaventrain goes out rain or shine.

### **General Schedule of Saturday Heaventrain Days**

- 8:30am: Team meets at Shepherd Church of the Nazarene for prayer, organization and final safety review.
- 9:45am: Arrive at first location. The bus train whistle and music will announce our arrival in the communities.
- Lunch will be fast food between sites. We will have a better feel about how much time at each site once we get started.
- A typical day will be from 8:30am-5:30pm.
- Teams will do the same program at each location. Depending on the number of kids, there may be multiple programs at each site.

### **What happens outside the bus...**

A ton of relationship building is the priority of outside the bus. Things like face painting, bubbles, hula hoops, street chalk, jump ropes, playing catch with a football (no tackling, though 😊)...

## Schedule of Bible Stories/Curriculum Plan

We have a schedule of stories out for our 2016 Heaventrain season. This will help us have continuity even though we have a wide variety of volunteers. Churches who sign up for a particular week will creatively make the story come to life. They can also review what was talked about the prior week!

### Heaventrain Programming Guidelines

- *Presentations on the bus should be between 15-20 minutes long.*
- Think high energy and engaging
- Start with something fun to get them started (example: Boom chicka boom)
- Do a few high energy songs with only a brief set-up and verbal intro
- Bring the Bible to life by telling the story... Be creative! 😊 Consider interactive storytelling, puppets, art.....the options are endless 😊
- Pray and invite them back next week
- Technology: There is a sound system on the bus. We have installed 2 wireless mics and have access to a handheld. We have a CD player and you are able to plug in an ipod. We have a flat screen for the bus... If this is something you want to utilize, please bring a jump drive or your own computer to hook up. If you need to bring any adaptors, please bring those, as well.

#### **IMPORTANT PROGRAMMING NOTE FOR OUR FIRST SITE**

Our first site is near a Nepali apartment complex. Please keep the story simple. Our first year there, we had student translators for the first half of the season... then realized they were no longer needed. This site is a site in progress as we strengthen our and build relationships. It is being very well received, though by kids and parents alike. 😊

### How many are needed to do Heaventrain?

Minimum of 8... Maximum of 40 or so. We want it to be positive for all. If there is a large group, we need to be prepared with things to do outside the bus so volunteers stay engaged. Groups will also want to consider rotating volunteers in/out of the bus at different sites (not between presentations at a site) so volunteers get to experience it all.

## **T-Shirt Plan for Volunteers**

We have designed bright, distinctive and vibrant t-shirts for all volunteers to wear each week. (This is the same design as our first 3 seasons...) This helps build continuity and is a factor in safety. ***We will be asking volunteers/groups to donate \$10 towards the cost of their shirts to offset this expense in the Heaventrain budget.*** We understand that some volunteers will not be able to afford this expense and do not want it to be a hindrance to their involvement. In other words, they will get a shirt and be a part of the group just like everyone else...

We will not be giving out these shirts randomly at sites... The shirt will help identify those who have been background checked (if they are 18 years and older). This way the community knows who is with us and who is not.

T-shirt Sizes Available: Youth Medium, Youth Large, Adult Small, Adult Medium, Adult Large, Adult XLarge, Adult XXLarge, Adult XXXLarge.

*Please try to get sizes needed for your group to Julie before the day of your volunteer experience.*

Sweatshirts are also available while supplies last... They come in Adult Small, Adult Medium, Adult Large, Adult XLarge, Adult XXLarge and Adult XXXLarge. They are a \$25 donation to cover cost.

**If you are writing checks for T-shirts/Sweatshirts, please make the checks payable to Heaventrain Columbus.**

**Please ask volunteers to make sure they eat breakfast before coming to Heaventrain... We eat lunch later in the day. You may even want to bring along a few snacks to tide them over...**

**Please plan utilizing a church van or at least consolidating cars as we go out on Heaventrain. We provide directions from site to site, but like to keep volunteers together. A long train of cars is hard to accommodate... Please note that no one is allowed to ride on Heaventrain... It is not registered as a passenger vehicle.**

## **Ministry Resources for Volunteers/Churches to Bring**

The Heaventrain budget will get a few basic supplies needed for what happens outside the bus, but any help with what your group uses on a particular Saturday would be appreciated. Especially if you are coming multiple times, you might want to consider getting a basic stash of stuff to utilize with kids and families.

***Teams need to bring their own cooler and bottles of water for their volunteers. Especially in the heat of the summer, it is important to keep teams hydrated.***

### **Food Vehicle...**

God provided a food trailer!! Our Heaventrain families receive a simple, hot meal each week!! We will guide your volunteers in assisting with this ministry endeavor... 😊

**My prayer is that this is a positive experience for all involved... Here is my contact info if you have questions, concerns and/or if there is anyway I can be helpful to your church family as they dive into ministry on Heaventrain Columbus...**

**~Pastor Julie Stevens**

**Email: [Julie@centralchurchonline.com](mailto:Julie@centralchurchonline.com)**

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