



**Ultimately, Berean's desire is to create a positive experience for:**

- The special child, by modeling Christ's love to them and by ensuring they are not pushed past their level of development.
- Others in the class, as they see the value of all that God has created.
- Parents, as they are allowed to attend worship, knowing that their child is being loved and cared for.
- The teacher, who is allowed to concentrate on the truth of the lesson to be taught as well as the uniqueness of each student in the room.

## **GOD'S SPECIAL FLOCK CARE GIVERS**

### **Volunteers:**

Berean's *God's Special Flock* ministry can help you serve children with developmental or physical needs, if you have a desire to:

- Model Christ's love to a GSF child.
- Help each child to feel safe and secure while at Sunday School.
- Utilize input from the child's parents and other caregivers as needed to understand how every child can be loved as they worship in their own special way.
- Encourage a GSF child to participate in the story and worship times as appropriate for his or her special needs.
- Work with other teachers to help make Sunday School the best experience possible for a GSF child.
- Ensure the safety of the child and others by using methods of learned intervention if required (training provided as needed).
- Spend time with a special child apart from the group or room as needed to allow the child some alone or wandering time when appropriate.
- Serve once a week or rotate with another GSF caregiver.

If you would like further information regarding Special Needs care or would like to consider serving in this important ministry, **please contact Melissa Herzog at 952.223.1818.**



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# **God's Special Flock**



**BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH**

## PURPOSE

One-on-one special care for children with special needs is provided on **Sunday mornings** to mainstream children who need a little help coping with a preschool or elementary classroom setting.

Whenever possible, we build pairings to benefit families, children, classmates, and teachers. We believe that all are created special and unique in God's eyes. We assign special companions where desired by the family or the teacher.

A special needs companion is paired with a child to model Christ's love and to ensure that the child feels safe and secure (using input from the child's parents as needed). The companion monitors the child's ability to cope with the activity level of the large group or small group setting and encourages the child to participate in stories and class activities as appropriate for his or her needs.

When necessary, the companion escorts the child to an area that better matches a need to move, be noisy, or avoid distractions. Spaces available to the companions and children include:

- *Special Flock Rest & Refocus Room*
- *Corridors*
- *Children's Library*
- *Playground (weather permitting)*

Berean cannot guarantee to find a companion for each special student, so in some cases the parents may need to be the companions.



## MINISTRY AT VARIOUS AGE LEVELS

### Nursery & Preschool:

When identified, a servant will be assigned to a child as needed within the classroom setting. Generally the child will be served inside the classroom.

### Elementary:

A companion will be assigned for one of the service hours and we will try to mainstream the child in the Sunday morning programs of that hour as appropriate for the child's abilities. The most common hour of assignment has been 10:30 a.m.

We will try to accommodate the child into Wednesday Clubs when possible, but we **do not generally have the staff to provide companions**. Parents are free to provide PCA's or act as the companions as it works for them.

### Junior & Senior High:

We recognize the fact that every special needs student is at a different level in his or her ability to connect with peers and ask for parental assistance in arranging for companions. At some point during the Junior or Senior High years, parents and staff will have to carefully assess their child's actual ability to remain mainstreamed with peers. We realize that the separation between other students and those with special needs widen considerably during these years.

As a GSF student moves up from Children's Ministries to Student Ministries, we will do our best to integrate them into the appropriate activities of Student Ministries while at the same time recognizing that some activities will not lend themselves to full integration. A couple of the specific areas are:

### Small Group Time:

- As the age increases, so does the separation between special needs students and their peers. This becomes more apparent in small group settings.
- If a student with special needs is to participate in small group time, a **'same gender' care giver is essential** for the active participation of the others in the group.

### Event, Retreats, and Mission Trips

- Participation by a student with special needs in these activities is based on variables including the event's nature, purpose, and locale. We as a staff are committed to doing what we can; however, due to the intensity of youth events, every event may not be available to all students.
- Decisions are made on a case-by-case scenario by the staff team.

*We believe that all are created special and unique in God's eyes.*