

To Church Coordinators, Coaches, Parents and Participants

Re: New Sign Language Requirements HOALTC starting in 2020

Hello! I am Crystal DeWindt, Sign Language Coordinator for Heart of America Leadership Training for Christ. The board has asked me to share my ideas behind the changes being made to this event. This will also be a way to clarify those opportunities and give you a direct way to contact me with questions, etc. in the coming months.

For many years, as a coach, judge and a parent of a participant, I had been concerned that first-year signers were being discouraged by how much was expected of them in this event. Just last year, I was asked to coach 2 young ladies who were seniors in high school, but they had never participated in Sign Language before. Despite not knowing anything about this foreign language, they would be expected to learn 3 songs AND 3 scriptures for their age category! Many other people, in years past, have bemoaned this fact as well. Some have, like those 2 senior girls, decided to drop out. In remembering always that LTC is “a ministry of encouragement,” I felt it important to draw beginners of all ages *to* our event, not chase them away.

The first new thing to be aware of is labeling your participant’s level of signing. I suggested they master a level before they move up. If they have received a gold 1-2 years, they should try the next level up. Some students may not be comfortable moving up quickly and that is ok. Seniors who have never signed can absolutely start at Level 1 this year!! There are 5 levels listed and 3 age categories. The age categories had to stay in place, for the benefit of other events happening. I will be contacting the church coordinators after registration has closed, to determine the level decided upon for each participant. Secondly, to cut down on confusion and pressure on coaches with multiple students, I have limited it to two songs and two scripture choices. Lastly, when it comes to Level 5 or above, I will need to approve of the project personally before the participant will sign it at convention. We want to be respectful of the convention we are a part of and support male spiritual leadership, so we will not allow recordings of women preachers.

I know there will be questions and concerns as we try out these new options. Please review the Signing Levels in our manual and you will see, most of it is virtually the same as before. Now we are following a model most like other LTC conventions around the nation. Please contact me at: teawithtemnyson@gmail.com or 785-577-2129 if you need to clarify anything. No matter how thorough we attempt to be, there will always be a glitch, mistake or eventuality we have not foreseen.

Thanks, and Blessings to all of you,

Crystal DEWINDT