





HEY THERE!

We're so excited that you want to volunteer in youth ministry! It's fun and crazy, but it will change these youth's lives. It's an opportunity help youth take ownership of their faith and walk with them on their spiritual formation journey.

Most importantly, we get to reflect God's love to them, pray for them, and speak His truths to them. These youth need people in their lives who will show up to hang out with them, love them (and like them too), and show them what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Whatever your role is in our ministry this year, this Volunteer Handbook will show you some of the ways you can begin making a lasting impact in the lives and faith of kids.

Thanks for being willing to serve. Thanks for caring about youth and families. And thanks for letting God use you.

We are honored to partner with you in ministry to impact the lives of youth and parents.



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Fun and engaging worship for a Middle Schooler

High School | Wednesday 7:30 P.M. | Sunday 10:30 A.M.

Fun, contemplative, and engaging worship

OUR ENVIRONMENTS

There are three kinds of environments for youth in our ministry. Each one is designed to strategically invite youth and families on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, our adult volunteers, and Jesus, and each one is designed with every youth in mind — from the youth who grew up in church to first-time visitors.

EVENTS: Throughout the year, we'll host several big events designed to help youth connect with each other, with their families, and with their small group leaders. Special events will often be the place where youth walk into our ministry for the very first time.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS: Our programs happen every single week. They're designed to help youth grow spiritually in three key areas (we'll get to those in a minute).

SMALL GROUPS: Small groups are the most important part of what we do. They happen every week in our programs and are designed to connect every youth with consistent trustworthy adults and community of their peers.



OUR BIG WIN

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in youth ministries, you know? Like, is anything we're teaching actually sinking in? Are youth really growing in their faith? That's why we decided to go ahead and define the big win for our ministry. It's the one thing that we, as a ministry team, want to achieve. It's the goal we want to always keep in mind. And it's what motivates and guides everything we do. It goes like this...

WE WIN WHEN A YOUTH TAKES A STEP TOWARD OWNING THEIR FAITH.

TAKING A STEP

Now, we say "takes a step" for a reason. It's because there's no finish line or certificate of completion when it comes to spiritual growth. Instead, spiritual growth is a journey (a life-long journey) and no two journeys are identical. That's why our big win doesn't have anything to do with a specific skill or achievement. Instead, we win anytime we see a youth take a single step closer to owning their faith.

OWNING THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for youth to own their faith? Well, we believe there are five things that both lead to, and are a result of, spiritual growth. We call these five things our spiritual habits.



1. **ASKING QUESTIONS:** This is the foundation for all the other steps. If a youth isn't curious, they aren't going to pursue their faith. No matter how hard the question is we want to inspire youth to pursue their spiritual curiosity.
2. **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** This is an obvious one, right? Sometimes it's the only spiritual habit we can name. After all, isn't "growing spiritually" synonymous with "spending time with God"? Well, not exactly, but it's still important. After all, if youth are ever going to make their faith their own, they've got to start spending time with God on their own. It means opening the Bible on their own, having conversations with God on their own, and discovering how they best connect with God through worship on their own.
3. **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** Engaging in healthy community can, and should, be a spiritual habit we help our kids develop. But "healthy community" doesn't just mean hanging out with Christians. This spiritual habit is about growing in Christlike relationships with everyone.
4. **USE THEIR GIFTS:** Youth need to know that God made them unique, and special, and with specific gifts, talents, passions, and resources. Then they need to use those gifts to love God, love others, and influence the world around them. When youth begin to discover who God made them to be, and then use their unique identity to love both God and others, they grow.
5. **SHARE THEIR STORY:** Youth need to learn how to talk about God. Sharing your story is the spiritual habit of making faith a regular, every day, go-to topic of conversation in our lives. When we talk about God and His place in our story (or, more accurately, our place in His story), it helps us believe, helps us understand, and helps us take ownership of our own faith.

We count it as a win whenever a youth takes a step toward owning their faith by practicing one, or maybe even all five of these spiritual habits.



THEOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Every young person is asking three questions:

WHY DO I MATTER? | WHERE DO I BELONG? | WHO AM I?

We want to help youth pursue these questions while pointing them to Jesus. We do this by helping them discover how Jesus can help them in their day-to-day stress, struggles, and value systems (which usually root down to one of these core questions).

PURPOSE: The question of “why do I matter” is really a question of autonomy and influence in the world. We want to help them discover their purpose as connected to Jesus. A great spiritual practice for beginning this process is prayer. As we teach youth that the God of the universe is listening to them and acting on behalf of them, we meet this question of purpose in its origins.

BELONGING: Every youth desires to belong. As they progress through high school their core influencers shift from their parents to their peers. We want to come alongside youth and help them see how they can be known and loved by Jesus and our church community. Small groups are a great way to meet this need.

IDENTITY: While we are always pursuing our identity this question seeks great prominence in the later high school years. Our win is to come alongside youth and help them see themselves as sons and daughters of the King. An important spiritual practice that helps youth discover their identity is worship. As we learn who we are as “second” to Jesus our process of identity formation gets a whole lot easier.



DISCIPLING YOUTH

Do you know the last thing that Jesus said to His followers while he was on earth? Some people call it The Great Commission: “Go and make disciples.” Duplicate yourselves. Go and make more of you. Take your faith and pass it on to someone else. When we talk about helping kids begin to own their faith, we’re really just talking about discipleship. So, what is discipleship? Here are three thoughts . . .

DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT LEARNING

Rather than only asking, “What can we teach youth about God?” we ask, “How can we help a kid live out their faith?” It’s not just about teaching them about Jesus — it’s about modeling what faith in Jesus looks like. That’s why relationships are such a key part of our ministry. Because discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom — it’s modeled in everyday life.

DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the Gospels, you don’t really see Jesus doing one-on-one discipleship. That’s because discipleship happens best in a community of people. That’s why we focus so much energy on getting kids plugged into consistent small groups, why we emphasize the role of parents and families, and why we surround kids with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

Discipleship is never complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. And because we know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of kids who are in it for the long-haul. We ask our small group leaders to plan to be committed for a year or more - discipleship is a process.



ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

As a volunteer, you are making a huge impact in the lives of the youth in our ministry. But do you know who's making an even bigger impact in the lives of those kids? Their parents.

Before we explain any more about what our ministry is all about, we want to make sure one thing is super clear. (We even drew a picture to help you remember it). In every teenager's life, we believe that the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.



Jim Burns, author of *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry*, says it this way— “Long after youth stop attending youth groups, they are still connected to their families.”

No matter what, a youth's family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives. So, doesn't it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in a youth's life in order to influence their faith?

That's why our ministry is committed to serving, supporting, partnering with, and engaging the parents of the kids in our ministry.

As a volunteer, caring for youth isn't your only responsibility. Engaging with parents is part of your job, too.



SMALL GROUP LEADERS

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry – seeing youth take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished.

Small group leaders, though, have a very crucial part to play in seeing that goal accomplished. Here's what we think the win looks like for small group leaders...

**SMALL GROUP LEADERS WIN WHEN
THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH
AND HELP THEM BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH
EACH OTHER.**

RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUTH

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a youth's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for small group leaders to build strong relationships with the youth they lead. You can't make a youth own their faith, but you can build a relationship with that teenager that allows you to love them and influence their faith.

So, a small group leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the youth God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their relationship to lead kids, rather than relying on their position. They win when a youth sees their small group leader not as just an authority figure they must obey, but someone they trust.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

As important as a youth's relationship with a small group leader is, it's not the only relationship that matters. Small group leaders win when they help youth build relationships with each other because (remember) discipleship happens best in community. A small group leader isn't the only person a youth needs to influence their faith. They need each other, too!

THE EXPECTATIONS

QUALIFICATIONS

- Love Jesus
- Love youth
- Stick to our Code of Conduct
- Commit to lead the same small group for at least one year

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up to our regular program every week
- Wear your nametag
- Look over your curriculum ahead of time (It won't be hard, we promise!)
- Engage with parents during drop-off and pick-up times
- Participate in the entire youth ministry service
- Build relationships with the youth in your group
- Attend the adult worship services on a regular basis
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for volunteers
- Attend the pre-service huddle for volunteers every week you're scheduled to serve
- Read, follow, and enforce all policies and procedures



THE GREETING TEAM

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry – seeing youth take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here’s what we think the win looks like for our greeters . . .

GREETERS WIN WHEN THEY MAKE A YOUTH OR FAMILY FEEL WELCOME AND SAFE.

Our greeters are the first people families meet when they arrive and the last people they see before they leave, so they’ve got a big responsibility.

Our greeters have the ability to set the tone for the kind of day youth are going to have when they walk through our doors. It’s not just about signing youth in. It’s about making them feel seen, cared for, and safe. An awesome greeter can begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, youth are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders, and to connect with God.



THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love people
- Love smiling

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up when you're scheduled to serve
- Wear name tag
- Make sure every family is greeted with a smile
- Make sure every youth is checked-in
- Identify, register, and orient first-time guests
- Introduce first time guests to a leader
- Attend the pre-service huddle for volunteers every week you're scheduled to serve
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for volunteers
- Follow our Code of Conduct
- Adhere to our safety policies, and operating procedures.



WORSHIP & TEACHING

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry – seeing youth take a step toward owning their faith. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here’s what we think the win looks like for our worship and teaching team members . . .

THE WORSHIP & TEACHING TEAM WINS WHEN THEY ENGAGE YOUTH IN OUR WEEKLY SERVICES.

Worship leaders, teachers, and everyone involved in making our weekly program happen create an atmosphere that gives youth an opportunity to learn about and connect with Jesus. That’s why it’s so important to keep youth engaged – because what’s happening during our program really matters!



THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love youth
- Love Jesus
- Stick to our Code of Conduct
- Commit to helping lead youth in a large group teaching or worship environment

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up when you are scheduled to serve
- Let us know in advance if you cannot serve
- Look over the curriculum or songs (and motions) ahead of time and become familiar with them before the service
- Arrive in time for a weekly run-through
- Lead with lots of energy, engagement, and control
- Read, follow, and enforce all policies and procedures
- Attend the adult worship services on a regular basis
- Attend the pre-service huddle for volunteers every week you're scheduled to serve
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for volunteers
- Follow our Code of Conduct
- Adhere to our safety policies, and operating procedures.



OTHER VOLUNTEERS

There are so many ways to serve in the Youth ministry and every role is so important. Here are a few more ways to serve.

STUDET LEADERS

Our teenage volunteers serve as assistants to our adult leaders, engage with kids or preschoolers, help teach lessons and lead activities, and act as role models for the kids they lead.

PREP TEAM

Our prep team helps us make our Sunday morning program happen by serving during the week, helping our team prepare all the materials needed for our services, and keeping our supply room stocked and organized.

TECH TEAM

Our tech team learns to master our computer and production equipment and prepares for our services in advance to create smooth and distraction-free experiences.

EVENT TEAM & SUBSTITUTES

Many of our volunteers serve on a temporary or as-needed basis during the holidays, special events, or when another volunteer is out sick or on vacation.



THE FINE PRINT

SAFETY GUIDELINES

As a member of our ministry team, it is absolutely essential that you always practice healthy boundaries with youth, for their safety and yours. These guidelines exist to protect youth from harm and to protect you from false allegations. And remember, we consider someone a youth until after the summer camp of their senior year in high school (this means sometimes an 18 year old will still be considered a youth and we must treat them like we do other minors).

NEVER BE ALONE WITH A CHILD

No volunteer should ever be alone with any number of youth at any time. There should be a minimum of two mandated reporters (who have been approved) in a room at all times. Every volunteer is required to be fingerprinted (background checked) and complete the youth safety training.

DOCUMENT ALL INCIDENTS

If a youth in your care is injured or falls ill, or an incident occurs, notify a staff member to be to complete incident report and communicate with the youth's parents.



PRACTICE APPROPRIATE TOUCH

Showing affection is a natural part of ministry and working with youth. Here are some guidelines for showing appropriate affection to youth while maintaining integrity.

HUGS: Hugs should be brief and should be side hugs. Youth should always initiate any hugs – not adults.

HANDS: High fives, handshakes, and fist bumps are appropriate. Hand holding is acceptable only for kids in 2nd grade or younger.

HOLDING: A child over the age of 2 should not be held unless the child is being transported. If a child wants to sit on your lap on the floor, gently move the child to a sitting position beside you.

AVOID AND REPORT ALL INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

The following forms of affection are inappropriate in our youth ministry in any circumstance:

- Lengthy or full-body hugs
- Kisses
- Holding children over the age of two
- Kids sitting in your lap
- Touching genitals or helping a child in the bathroom
- Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Any form of unwanted affection



REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Our church policy is to report any signs or suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Contact a staff member immediately if you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect. Do not attempt to gather information from the youth or speak with the parents about your concerns. Do not talk with other team members about your concerns.

DEFINING ABUSE

Sexual abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor. It could be contact behavior (touching) or non-contact behavior (pictures, spying, exposure, or conversation).

Physical abuse is any contact intended to cause physical pain or injury to a child. The law does permit parents to use corporal punishment, but the discipline must be reasonable.

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or supervision. Neglect can also include exposure to harmful substances or situations.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Contact a staff member immediately if you see signs of abuse, such as Depression, sudden changes in behavior, paranoia, fear of their caregivers or others, aggressive behavior, anxiety, bed-wetting, or accidents in their underwear, imitating or talking about sexual behaviors, wounds or pain, unexplained bruises, or untreated illnesses.



BE AWARE OF ALLERGIES

Due to the risk of allergies, always check with the youth about allergies before offering any kind of food.

Parents should let the youth's leader or a host team member know if their child has a medical need or allergy when they check-in, and that information is relayed on their check-in tag. We cannot administer any medications.

KNOW WHEN TO TEXT PARENTS

If you need to get ahold of parents at any point during the service, let a staff member know, and they will contact the parent.

Parents should be texted if youth exhibit symptoms of illness, are in a significant state of duress, or if a youth behaves in a violent manner.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

We have emergency procedures posted in every classroom and regular trainings for weather emergencies, medical emergencies, evacuations, and predator situations.

If an emergency occurs, youth will not be released to parents until the area is cleared.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

We expect everyone in our program to abide by the following values. These rules are designed to create a respectful and nurturing environment that encourages personal responsibility and positive social interactions. If a participant decides to violate these, please refer to our “discipline policy” where we help them become successful.

RESPECT

- Respect all individuals—peers, staff, and volunteers—with kindness and consideration.
- Respect the space

RESIST

- Resist participating in or encouraging unsafe behaviors.
- Resist crossing boundaries and make sure to respect everyone’s personal space.

REPORT

- Report anything that makes you or others feel unsafe or uncomfortable.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline should always be done in a positive, patient and grace-filled way that focuses on helping the youth instead of enforcing punishments. When discipline is necessary to keep a safe and effective environment for everyone, here are three steps to take:

REDIRECT

- Get on the youth's level and look them in the eye.
- Give a verbal warning, explaining why the behavior is not acceptable.
- Give a suggestion for the right way to act or behave and help them do it.

REMOVE

- If the youth does not follow directions when you give them a redirection, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin the service.

REFER

- If the youth is still not obeying, refer the youth to your ministry leader for assistance.

Never attempt to physically discipline, belittle, or administer corporal punishment.



To limit the amount of discipline needed, here are some tips:

1. PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Become familiar with the curriculum and gather supplies before youth enter the room. When they arrive, be prepared to greet and engage them.

2. ESTABLISH RULES AND EXPECTATIONS EARLY

Communicate the rules and expectations consistently at the beginning of every service. Remind the youth often.

3. BE PROACTIVE

Follow proper ratios and make sure there are enough adults to maintain order in the room. Look for youth who may talk too much around each other and split them up. Encourage youth who have trouble listening to be leaders and look for ways to include them in the service.

4. TALK TO PARENTS

If you must take disciplinary action with a youth, let your Youth ministry leader know. If you have to talk to parents, always do so in an encouraging, gentle and positive way. Ask the parents how you can help their child.

If a youth exhibits violence to the teacher or other kids, parents will be contacted immediately, and the youth's ministry leader will talk with the parents.



CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES

Youth and children are under the care and supervision of their parents until they are checked in to our programming. We require all kids 5th grade and under to be checked in by a parent or guardian and escorted to their class by the parent or guardian, and that the following steps are taken. Older youth may check themselves in and out.

5th Grade and Under

- Kids must be checked in for services by parents, using our check-in system. Parents will get a claim sticker that matches their child's.
- They must show their sticker with a matching code to the volunteer to pick up their child.
- If a child has a special need or medical issue or allergy, parents should alert the host team and the child's teacher.

6th Grade and Above

- Youth may check themselves in and out but must be checked into every event for liability and safety purposes.
- Parents must be present or have a prior arrangement with the staff to drop off for an overnight trip.



CODE OF CONDUCT

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by. Here they are!

ALL VOLUNTEERS

WORK HARD: You are so important to our ministry and we need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

"Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ." (Colossians 3:23)

BE KIND: Ministry is all about people, so to be effective in ministry, you'll need to reflect God's heart for people. With youth, parents, other volunteers, and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love.

"Get along amongst yourselves... And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out." (1 Thessalonians 5:13-15)

BE LIKE JESUS: More than any other volunteer role, small group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of kids. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every small group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God with their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day - especially in key areas like their treatment of others on our team, social media presence, drug or alcohol use, and sexual behavior.

"Watch what God does, and then do it." (Ephesians 5:1)

BE CURIOUS: If you see something unique, say something!



DRESS CODE:

- Generally, please wear clothing that is appropriate for the event we're at and allows you to move freely and engage in all activities we're doing.
- For swimsuits, we ask youth to wear swimsuits that are appropriate for activities (ex: is the bathing suit for tanning or beach volleyball?). For leaders, we ask that women wear something appropriate for the event and that allows you to move, swim, play volleyball, help set up or tear down, and so on without concern. For the guys, as soon as you're not actively swimming, we ask that you put a shirt back on and that they wear appropriate board shorts.
- At camps, we'll follow all camp dress code rules before our own.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Be aware of what posts and photos you like and comment on. We ask that you only support posts that are emotionally and morally appropriate while using your best judgment. If our staff sees something you posted that is inconsistent with biblical morality we will address it with you, and may even ask you take a post down.
- Do not add youth or follow them on any social platform. No youth and adults should be communicating this way. Our hope is to be above reproach in all areas, and that's very difficult to do if there's no record of what has happened.



TEXTS AND CALLS:

- Texting and calling youth is a normal part of being a leader in the 21st century. To respect boundaries and be above reproach, we ask that you not initiate a conversation with youth after 10:00p.m. or before 8:00a.m. If a youth texts you with something that cannot wait until the morning, please text a staff member to let them know you're communicating with a youth at night.

RIDES:

- Our policy is to avoid being alone with a youth. If giving rides to youth, there must be two mandated reporters in the vehicle.

1 On 1's:

- The safety and well-being of our youth participants and mentors are of paramount importance to us. To ensure a secure and transparent environment during one-on-one interactions between a mentor and a youth, it is mandated that all such meetings take place in a public area, within the line of sight of another mandated reporter. Following the conclusion of each interaction, the mentor is required to complete the "Minor Mentor Meeting" form, accurately documenting the attendees, time, and topics discussed. This protocol is necessary when the total attendance, including leaders, comprises four individuals or fewer. These measures are implemented to safeguard both the youth and the adult, fostering an atmosphere of accountability and protection within our mentoring program.



Volunteers Under the Age of 18

St. Andrew's Family Ministries loves having high school and middle school volunteers, and we recognize how valuable they are to our ministries. Our highest priority is a child's health and wellbeing— below are our policies for volunteers under the age of 18, and those who turn 18 while volunteering.

VOLUNTEERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 WILL:

- Agree to follow all rules and guidelines laid out in the volunteer handbook for the ministry they volunteer with.
- Prioritize children's health and wellbeing, practicing the safety procedures we've laid out.
- Recognize that failure to follow the guidelines may mean they're asked to step down from their volunteer role.

VOLUNTEERS TURNING 18 WILL:

We recognize that some volunteers will turn 18 while serving with us during their senior year of high school and therefore become legal adults. We want to protect and preserve their relationships as well as the kids and youth we're serving. As such, our policy will be to fingerprint and require mandated reporter training of 18-year-old once they have graduated from high school and intend to continue serving with us. This includes anyone serving at events like VBS or in a prolonged capacity.



COMMITMENT

My name is _____
and I'm ready to serve!

I promise to follow through on my responsibilities. If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to keep our staff informed and to give them as much notice as I possibly can, knowing they'll need to find a replacement for me and that takes time.

I promise I've read this Volunteer Handbook. I understand the mission and strategy of our ministry and will support the vision and leadership of the staff.

I promise I've read the Safety Guidelines and will abide by them, for my safety and for the safety of our kids.

I promise I've read the Code of Conduct and will abide by it. If I mess up, I promise to be honest with our staff about my actions and will accept whatever consequences they think are reasonable and necessary, knowing that, while they must always act in the best interest of kids, they are committed to treating me with respect, love, and grace.

I promise I understand the expectations of my role and will work hard to fulfill them. If I'm having trouble fulfilling any of my expectations, I promise to communicate with the staff and ask for help, knowing they're here to support me. And finally...

I promise to do my part in making a huge difference in the lives and faith of the kids who walk through our doors. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____