



# **Student Ministry Handbook**

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# THE WORSHIP PLACE STUDENT MINISTRY JR. HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL ***POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL***

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# Philosophy of the Youth Ministry

## Purpose & Objective

The Worship Place Student Ministry exists to reach our young people with the truth of the Gospel of our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ, to help them grow in their knowledge of Christ, and to nurture a burning desire to reach out to others in love with that knowledge.

## Core Values & Expectations

**Parents will take the primary responsibility for discipleship of children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:1-4)**

- The primary minister in a young person's life is his/her parents. While it is true that youth ministry is important, its role is not to assume the responsibility God has entrusted to the parents. Therefore, the staff of the Youth Ministry will seek to partner with parents to support them in accomplishing the task God has given them. We will not usurp the parents' role, but come along side to support, encourage and love them in this process.

**The word of God will be the foundation of all that we do (2 Tim 4:1-2; James 1:22-24; Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12)**

- The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to transform lives. Without the centrality of scripture, ministry loses its focus and, as a result, opportunities for lasting spiritual impact are diminished or lost. Therefore, from start to finish, Scripture will remain foundational and permeate all that we do.

**The gospel of Christ will be the primary message. (John 14:1-6; Acts 4:12)**

- Games, events, and craziness of all kinds is great, but only when they work to accomplish the ultimate goal- *saving faith in Christ Jesus*. For this reason, all that we do will be designed with salvation and Christ-likeness in mind. Our goal is not to entertain our young people or have the coolest, most cutting edge ministry in town, but to remain true to the gospel, trusting that God can and will change lives. We will do this by never assuming that our young people already have a sufficient understanding of the gospel and never exhorting the students to obey God's word apart from the gospel.

**The church is the body of Christ and the youth ministry will learn and submit to the overall purposes of the church. (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 3:15; Titus 2:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1-5)**

## Student Protection Policy

The purpose for establishing a Student Protection Policy is to demonstrate our clear commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our youth. The Worship Place also recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy to (1) prevent the occurrence and/or appearance of abuse of our students, (2) protect our adults from false accusations and/or suspicions, (3) protect the reputation and financial and emotional well-being of the entire church.

- The student ministry is not a separate church. Student ministry exists under the umbrella of Christ as the head of the Church, and those who shepherd The Worship Place. Accordingly, we will teach our youth what the Bible says about their responsibility to the church as a whole and encourage them to be involved in the life of the church.

**Every young person will be encouraged to pursue accountability relationships where they can learn and grow alongside other believers (Luke 6:12-13; Matthew 18:15-20; Phil 3:17; Hebrews 3:13)**

- There shouldn't be any "lone ranger" Christians. The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation. God has given believers the Body of Christ as a support system. For this reason we seek to connect our young people to mature believers for the purpose of discipleship and accountability. (Being a good example for others)

**We will speak the truth in love while being patient with all believers in the process of spiritual growth (1 Corinthians 3:5-8; Ephesians 5:17-24; Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 6:4; 2 Ti 4:2).**

- There are differences between justification, sanctification and glorification. In justification God declares sinners righteous by crediting them with the perfect righteousness of Christ. This free gift is received by faith alone. Sanctification is the process by which the holy spirit of God works godliness into the hearts and lives of believers. Glorification comes when we see Jesus face to face and are transformed into His very image. Whereas justification and glorification are instantaneous, sanctification is an on-going process that will never be fully completed or fully realized in this life. As with all of us, no young person will ever be without sin on this earth. Therefore, we will seek to be patient with all young people in the process of spiritual growth, believing that "He who began a good work in them will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6 – paraphrased)

**There will be no semblance of favoritism within the ministry because all young people matter to God (Psalm 139:13-16; Luke 15; Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:15-17; James 2:1-5; 2 Peter 3:9)**

- Each young person is fearfully and wonderfully made and unique in God's eyes. Regardless of dress, lifestyle, or personal background, God loves each young person equally. Therefore, we will seek to demonstrate that same love through fairness and impartiality. We will encourage each young person to interact freely and openly with others, while discouraging "cliques" of any kind. We will remain equally accessible to everyone.

## II. Student Protection Policies

### Application

This policy is applicable to all individuals having direct contact with the youth of The Worship Place, including but not limited to, pastors, staff, teachers, volunteers, chaperones, and drivers.

### Definitions

#### Inappropriate Displays of Affection

- Any form of sexual contact or contact perceived as stimulating
- Intimate kissing
- Initiating full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Massages
- Lying down or sleeping beside youth
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Showing affection in isolated/inappropriate areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted or private rooms.
- Comments that relate to physique or body development
- Patting on the thigh, knee or leg
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Piggyback rides

#### Appropriate Displays of Affection

- Use of appropriate physical contact in a public setting to show support, encouragement and healthy affection toward youth who are receptive to this form of emotional expression is acceptable. However, adults must exercise good judgment and never force any physical contact on any youth. Examples of appropriate displays of affection may include:
  - Holding hands during prayers or when a person is upset
  - Side-hugs
  - Holding hands while walking with small children
  - Hand-shakes
  - High-fives, hand slaps and fist bumps
  - Verbal praise
  - Arms around shoulders
  - Pats on the shoulder/back

#### Appropriate discipline

Adults will employ only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages, builds self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. Examples of positive discipline include:

- Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior

- Reminding youth of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements
  - Redirecting behavior using positive statements
  - Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the youth's age and development.
- Harsh, cruel or unusual treatment under the guise of discipline is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

## Guidelines

### General

Adults involved in The Worship Place Student activities must assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all youth ministry relationships.

- **Two Adult Rule** – Two or more adults are to be present during any The Worship Place sponsored youth activity. If one-on-one interactions between adults and youth are unavoidable or absolutely necessary, the interaction should occur in an area that is visible to others and with the knowledge of another adult. No youth assistants will have sole responsibility for, or be alone with, any student or child. Where application of this rule is not possible or practical (e.g. emergencies) a “roaming adult” should be utilized. Youth activities that cannot meet requirements of the two- adult rule will be cancelled.
- **Proportional Adult Coverage/Supervision** It is recommended that there be a minimum of 1 adult per 10 youth for high school level activities, 1 Adult per 7 youth for middle school age activities. Per the two-adult rule, no activity will have less than two adults, preferably one male and one female if mixed gender youth are participating.
- **Off-site Activities** It is preferable that one or more of the accompanying adults be parents/guardians of participants.

### Transport

All students must ride in vehicles driven by authorized adults who must:

- Be at least 25 years old
- Have a valid Texas driver's license, qualified for the vehicle being operated.
- Have no record of convictions for the past five years for DUI, driving with a suspended or revoked drivers license or reckless endangerment.
- Have proof of insurance
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a youth other than his/her own child. Therefore, no fewer than three persons, one of them an adult, should occupy a vehicle traveling to/from an activity.
- Ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured and that occupants behave respectfully at all times.
- Maintain sign-in sheets to identify individuals riding in their vehicle.
- Must understand emergency contact procedures provided for each event and maintain contact with the person in charge (e.g. cell phone)

## **Overnight Events**

- Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is a clean, safe environment provided for sleeping, showering, bathing, dressing and all other aspects of being away for a period of time. Adults must always respect the privacy of youth and each other. Likewise youth must respect the privacy of adults and each other.
- When the youth group includes both males and females, and stays overnight, both male and female adults must be present. (This also applies to overnight stays at The Worship Place at Rocky Hollow)
- Only The Worship Place and associated congregational group, youth and adults participating in the trip are allowed to stay in the same accommodations.
- Sleeping areas and access to bathroom facilities should be segregated between males and females. Every sleeping unit (hotel room, dorm room, cabin, tent, etc) should have either two adults of the same gender as the youth, or no adults assigned to it. In the rarest of cases when only one adult is available, the sleeping unit must have at least two youth of the same gender as the adult. Adults are not allowed to share a bed with a youth unless it is their own child. If absolutely necessary, beds may be shared by youth of the same gender. If separate bathroom facilities are not available, times for male and female and youth/adults use should be scheduled and posted prominently.
- When one room is used for sleeping, youth and adults of the opposite gender will sleep an appropriate distance apart as determined by the adult in charge.
- Both youth and adults shall wear appropriate sleeping apparel.
- In booking hotel rooms, reservations should be made, if possible, with all rooms on the same floor or location in the hotel. Adjacent rooms allow for enhanced supervision and safety.
- No youth(s) should be allowed to leave the premises without authorized and appropriate adult supervision.
- Curfews must be established and adhered to by all participants.

## **Exceptional Situations**

- Only under the rarest and most unusual circumstances should an adult be alone in a car, room, or other accommodation with a youth. This might include a case where a youth is ill or in a bona fide medical emergency. In this case, the adult should make every effort to enlist the help of another youth or adult to be present and assist. Note however, the welfare of the youth takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.
- If there is a unique need for an adult to talk with a youth in private, the adult should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Examples of this may include open areas around the church (courtyards or hotel lobbies if on a trip), short walks down a sidewalk, a restaurant or other location where people are present in the area.

- Adults need to acknowledge that there is potential for sexual abuse and/or harassment by outside parties and must take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth.

## **Screening**

- Each volunteer is required to complete an application process which includes a personal interview and a criminal background check.
- Each volunteer must be a member of The Worship Place (having completed the membership requirements) and be at least 21 years of age. Interns must be at least 18 yrs of age and undergo the same screening process.
- Each volunteer must acknowledge and agree with The Worship Place's Statement of Faith (What We Believe), Vision and Mission Statement.

## **Training/Continuing Education**

- Volunteers will attend two (2) mandatory training sessions per year.
- Each volunteer will be expected to complete a Red Cross approved CPR course and maintain certification while serving.

## **Reporting**

- Any person, adult or youth, must be ready to safeguard and protect the trust and safety of children and youth. Anyone who has "reason to believe" or evidence that a child/youth is a victim of abuse or neglect has a duty to report. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at Capstone Church or under our supervision. A failure to report can be considered a criminal offense and potentially subject to civil liability.
- The Worship Place understands that appropriate government agencies must respond and investigate reports of abuse/neglect of a child/youth to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The Worship Place will at all times fully cooperate with such governmental agencies, and in no way attempt to interfere in or obstruct such agencies or their investigations. Response and reporting to the DFPS is summarized on their form 7261.
- If anyone is unsure whether an incident or condition should be reported, they should feel free to discuss the circumstances with the Pastor or the Associate Pastor. Additionally, The Worship Place asks that if an incident or condition is reported to the DFPS, that the Pastor and the Associate Pastor be notified of the situation.

## **Counseling**

Bear in mind, Student Ministry volunteers are not professional counselors.

Consequently this occasionally poses a significant boundary issue when working with young people. As they begin to trust the Student Ministry Staff, they will begin to confide in them. Problems arise when a young person confides in a volunteer, expecting them to maintain confidentiality. Unfortunately, not all counseling issues can remain confidential.

Student Ministry volunteers are required to report immediately to the Youth Pastor if:

- A young person is being abused sexually
- A young person is threatening to hurt him/herself (suicide, cutting, etc)
- A young person is threatening to hurt someone else (homicide, revenge, etc)
- A young person reveals a personal crisis/endangerment (pregnancy, drug abuse addictions, criminal activity, etc).

If any of these situations arise, the Pastor will take the appropriate course of action, including the consulting of authorities and/or parents or pursuing professional counseling options. The Pastor is available to give counsel and guidance on any issues or concerns that arise.

Because we are dealing with minors, we will use the utmost discretion as to who to involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with our young people, but not to the extent of keeping parents excluded from their child's life.

### **Care of Documents**

- All information will be treated in a confidential manner, except as required by legal reporting requirements or legal process. Documents will be kept in secure storage available only to those charged in this policy with the responsibilities requiring direct access to information within their purview. This secure storage will house all Screening Forms, Applications, Volunteer Acknowledgement Forms and any other sensitive information related to youth protection.

### **Dress Code**

- Modesty is importance and all youth participants should consider their outfits prior to attending any event.
- Clothes with inappropriate messages or images are not permitted. (For example bad language, advertising for alcohol, etc.)
- When in doubt, don't wear it. Short shirts or skirts, low tops, etc., are best left at home.

### **Injury & First Aid**

- If a student participant is injured while under our supervision, the volunteer in charge will immediately notify the Pastor. The Pastor or Student Ministry Leader will be responsible for notifying the youth's parents. All injuries must be reported no matter how insignificant or minor they may seem. The volunteer in charge will complete an Ouch Report as soon as possible, but no later than the day of the incident.
- Incidents that require more than a band-aid or ice pack need to be reported immediately to the Children's Ministry Coordinator, or call 911.
- We can administer ONLY band-aids and ice packs

## **Health / Hygiene**

### **Hand Washing**

One of the best ways to prevent the passage of germs is by correctly washing hands. It's important to teach our children and model for them frequent hand washing. Hands should be washed with soap and water or sanitizing gel.

\* According to the Center for Disease Control, the proper method to wash hands is to wet them, rub soap into lather and rub hands together for 15 seconds. Rinse. The faucet should be turned off with a paper towel after drying hands.

### **Health Policies**

1. For the protection of all children and adults at church, parents are requested not to bring a child who appears to be ill.

*The committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a child should not be taken from home when any of the following exists:*

- Fever – currently or within the previous 24 hours (without medication)
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Any symptom of a childhood disease such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
  - Common cold – from the onset through one week
  - Sore throat
  - Croup
  - Any unexplained rash
  - Any skin infection – boils, ringworm, impetigo
  - Pink eye or other eye infection
2. A parent will be notified if a student develops illness during youth services.
  3. No oral medication will be given to a student except by a parent or guardian. (All medication should remain in the parent's possession.)
  4. If a student contracts a childhood disease following a session in the student ministry department, parents should notify the Children's Ministry Coordinator so that other parents and teachers may be informed.
  5. Parents should report any allergies and special needs to the department director.

### **Infectious Disease**

Believing we have a Biblical mandate to minister to all people, the occasion may arise when we are called to respond to the health care needs of children with serious disease including, but not limited to, Hepatitis-B, HIV, and Tuberculosis.

Parents or guardians of children with these types of health concerns are expected to inform The Worship Place Children's Ministry Coordinator. (All information and records, whether publicly or privately maintained, that identify a person with AIDS virus infection shall be strictly confidential.) At the discretion of the Children's Ministry Coordinator, a committee may be formed to review individual cases of infectious disease for the protection of all those involved. If the parent or guardian does not agree to disclosure as necessary, the Children's Ministry Coordinator may work with the family to see that home ministry is provided as resources allow.

After review and consultation with professional medical personnel (and legal, if deemed necessary), teachers and caregivers will be instructed in the universal precautions and procedures for hygiene (appropriate for the particular disease) and will be expected to follow them.

### **Forms/Releases**

- Medical Forms, Insurance Forms, Parental Consent/Permission Slips, Waivers & Releases, Power of Attorney Forms, etc., will be filed, maintained and secured in the church office.

# Classroom Incident Report

Non Injury

## General Information

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Adult(s)

1

2

## Information on Incident

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's notified by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Location where incident occurred:

Classroom  Bathroom  Playground  Hall  Doorway  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Description of Incident:

## Action Taken to Resolve

## Corretive action taken to prevent reoccurrence

Signature of person making report \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ouch Report

**General Information**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Adult(s)

1

2

**Information on Incident**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's notified by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Location where incident occurred:**

Classroom  Bathroom  Playground  Hall  Doorway  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment / product involved**

Chair  Rocker  Swing  Slide  Door  Hand toy  Climbing equipment  Ride-on Toy  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Cause of Injury**

- Fall from surface     Height of fall \_\_\_\_\_ Type of impact surface \_\_\_\_\_
- Bitten by child     Fall from running or tripping     Insect / Bee sting     Animal Bite
- Hit or pushed     Motor vehicle     Eating or Choking
- Injured by an object (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part of Body Injured**

- Eye  Ear  Nose  Throat  Tooth  Neck  Trunk  Arm/wrist/hand  Leg/ankle/foot
- Other part of head or face (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Injury**

- Cut  Bruise / swelling  Puncture  Scrape  Sprain  Burn  Broken bone/dislocation
- Crushing injury  Loss of consciousness  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

First Aid administered \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person that administered first aid: \_\_\_\_\_

Corrective action taken to prevent reoccurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person making report \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of staff member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### III. VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

#### Volunteer Acknowledgement

The Student Ministry Handbook/Policy & Procedures Manual contains important information about The Worship Place. I understand that I should consult the Pastor if I have any questions that are not answered in this handbook.

I also acknowledge that revisions to this handbook may occur at any time.

My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read this entire handbook/manual. My signature also indicates that I agree to serve faithfully and to comply with and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook/manual.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor or Associate Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_ Date