

STUDENT MINISTRY **Leader** **HANDBOOK**

'25 - '26



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“That we may present everyone mature in Christ...”
- Col. 1:28

Our Mission Statement

The Student Ministry at Woodland exists to help middle school and high school students know, love, and follow Jesus together through worship, discipleship, and missions.

||

KNOW | LOVE | FOLLOW



Weekly Schedule

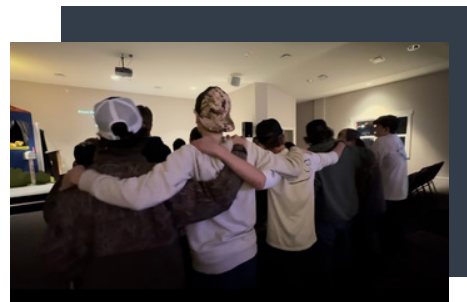
YOUTH GROUP:

We believe that the next generation matters, so we have created a place just for them. Our hope is that every teenager that walks through our doors will be empowered to develop an authentic and personal relationship with Jesus. We want each teenager to discover their place and start to understand the plan God has for their life.



Sundays: Community Group

We provide a Middle & High school Bible study at 11:15am right after service. This is a great time for students to dive into God's Word together as we hold discussion based teaching.



Wednesdays: Midweek

On Wednesdays, we run our Midweek services from 6-7:30pm. This includes time for games, teaching, and small groups. Small Groups are divided by gender and are a great way for students to engage in conversation and create long lasting relationships. Small Groups focus in on the lesson, accountability, and prayer. This is a crucial time where students get to develop relationships with each other as they grow closer to Jesus.



YOU WILL NEVER BE A LEADER UNTIL YOU SIMPLY START LEADING

Sometimes leading can be intimidating, but if you never start you will never grow into the leader God has called you to be.



STUDENTS LEADING STUDENTS

Lead by example and lead by pouring out leadership opportunities to students. Help them discover their gifts and show them how to use their gifts for the church. (Romans 12)

LEADERSHIP IS SIMPLY INFLUENCE

As you lead students, remember, you are influencing them. Your goal is to inspire them to make their faith their own and have a passion for the Word of God.

Leader Qualifications

Here are the Leader Qualifications required for someone to serve in Student Ministry at Woodland.

1. Must be 18 years or older.
2. Must have a growing relationship with Jesus.
3. Must be committed to Woodland Baptist Church and its beliefs.
4. Must be part of an active adult community group.
5. Must have a desire to serve in Student Ministry.
6. Must be background checked.
7. Must attend child protection class.



LEADER EXPECTATIONS



BE ON-TIME:

Show up to all events on time (or early)! If you come late, you will lose out on welcoming new students to your group, parent partnership opportunities, and time to build relational leverage with your students and other leaders. **All adult volunteers should arrive no later than 6pm for Midweek.**

COMMUNICATE:

Sometimes the kids get sick, you get held up at work, you get stuck in never-ending traffic, we get it...life happens! When a situation arises that will cause you to be late or miss Midweek altogether, we ask that you communicate with the Minister of Students and your co-leaders **via text as soon as you can**. This allows us to make the necessary adjustments so that your students and co-leaders continue to operate well.

COME PREPARED:

You will receive two emails every Monday that will communicate important information about youth group. One email contains information sent to everyone including updates, upcoming events, and other information. The second email is sent to *only* leaders containing the weeks lesson, a small group discussion guide, and other important information relevant to leaders. Please make a routine of reading the email on Mondays or Tuesdays. Come into Midweek *having read the passage* and small group discussion guide. Your success as a leader and our success as a team requires everyone to be prepared and on the same page!

BE CONSISTENT:

Consistency is **KEY** to building **relationships** and trust with students. The more they trust you, the deeper conversations will get, and the easier they will follow your direction and counsel. So be as consistent as you can! To help you succeed in this area, we ask all Small Group Leaders to **miss no more than 1 Wednesday a month**. In other words, we hope for Small Group Leaders to be present for 3 out of 4 Wednesdays a month. We understand life is busy, so **this is not a hard and fast rule**. However, we encourage all of our leaders to achieve this goal! Lastly, leaders who succeed the most are consistent in attending all retreats & events such as FUGE, the Caswell Fall Retreat, and seasonal gatherings. They also hang out with their small groups outside church and partner with parents.

NO GOSSIP:

Gossip is poison to a ministry as it creates disunity and distrust. In efforts to protect this ministry, we have a no gossip policy. If you hear someone slipping into gossip, hold them accountable by calling it out. But if gossip becomes a routine behavior, we will ask you to step away from the ministry in efforts to protect the unity and trust that allows our team of volunteers to succeed in ministering to the next generation.

“If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, his religion is useless and he deceives himself.” James 1:26 “No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need.” Ephesians 4:29

LEADER ROLES

SUNDAY MORNING LEADER:

Sunday Mornings 11:15am-12:15pm

- Cultivate a welcoming space where students feel safe to share and grow in their relationship with Jesus and with each other
- Facilitate discussion towards a lifestyle of faith: ask questions and create opportunities to enrich dialogue
- Build relationships with your students inside the church building

PRAYER TEAM:

Wednesday Nights + External Time Commitments

- Give encouragement and pray over volunteers under your care throughout the week
- Pray for the students under your care throughout the week
- Pray for adults and students during midweek and other student events

PLANNING TEAM:

External time commitments

- Be available to serve in monthly student events and/or special overnight events
- Be available to host student events
- Be available to contribute to student events, such as food, planning, and/or logistics

SMALL GROUP LEADERS (SGL):

Wednesday Nights 6pm-7:30pm

- Cultivate a welcoming space where students feel safe to share and grow in their relationship with Jesus and with each other.
- Facilitate discussion towards a lifestyle of faith: ask questions and create opportunities to enrich dialogue.
- Get to know your students and their parents relationally inside and outside of the church building.
- Follow the provided Small Group materials to aid in your preparation of weekly lessons.
- Commit to praying with your group and over them.
- Follow-up with students & parents with both attendance and milestones

WORSHIP TEAM:

Wednesday Nights 5:50pm-6:40pm

- Cultivate a welcoming environment while serving as a greeter for students & parents
- Lead students in worship during Midweek
- Train students to participate and lead in worship
- Facilitate meaningful conversations and build relationships with students



COMMUNICATION

We believe that clear communication is key to the success of our team! That is why it's so important for you to understand our communication process and commit to staying up-to-date on the forms of communication. We communicate with you in 4 different ways throughout the year:

1. A Weekly Email

Throughout the ministry year, you will receive an email every Monday. This email will outline that specific week's message, important notes on youth group expectations and flow, upcoming events, small group discussion guide, and more. This is our primary communication with you, so please be sure to read it and respond to any RSVP's/ surveys before Midweek.

2. Messages in the GroupMe App

For any immediate communication needs or informal communication (like birthday wishes, encouragement, etc.) that needs to go to our **Youth Leaders** group chat through the GroupMe app. If you do not have the app already, please download it to your phone and turn on the notification settings!

3. Leader Meetings

A few times throughout the school year we will have leader meetings where we will gather together to celebrate wins, discuss areas of need, and to encourage each other in our mission. You will also be further equipped with practical help and tools to encourage you in leading our students.

4. Individual Texts/Phone Calls

On the occasion that we need to individually follow-up with you about something, staff will call or text (depending on the situation).

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH US

If you are unable to attend YG



Text your co-leader & the Minister of Students.

If you are going to be late



Text your co-leaders & the Minister of Students.

If you are dealing with struggles with your students. Talk to the Minister of Students to come up with a solution.

If you are navigating difficult circumstances with students or co-leaders that may need to include parents, outside authorities, counseling, or anything that your coaches deem necessary



Talk directly to the Minister of Students (in-person, via phone call, or via email if necessary).

TIPS FOR LEADING A SMALL GROUP

- Be with Jesus first. Fill up before you show up. Pray for your students, the staff, and for yourself before you arrive.
- The goal is to engage students in a dialogue about what God is teaching them and what they are going to do about it. The questions are a launching pad into a conversation around the night's message. Help them process and discern!
- Don't teach — facilitate. Apply the 70/30 principle: Students do 70% of the talking; you do 30% or less. Listen well to what they say and ask open ended follow up questions.
- Go around the group and ask each student to say their name and what stood out the most from the message. Tell them that saying, "What they said" is off limits. Say it in their own words.
- Have multiple students answer the same question.
- When students answer questions, ask follow up questions such as: "Tell me more, why do you think that, how should that change the way you live tomorrow?"
- Be comfortable with silence. Some people "talk to think," while others "think to talk." Let silence linger for at least fifteen-seconds before rephrasing and asking again.
- Don't be afraid to call on students to answer specific questions.
- Be passionate. Wear your love for Jesus on your sleeve.
- Be real. People would rather follow a leader who is always real than a leader who is always right. Wisely share your story. Give practical examples of how you follow Jesus in your life and share stories of times you failed in the past. This encourages students to open up.
- Be honest. They will see right through the facade. Don't act more spiritual than you are. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them you're not sure but you will find out. Be sure to follow up with them later. Continue the convo.
- Don't give them the easy answer. When they ask you a tough question, ask them what they think before giving a response.
- Look for opportunities for laughter. Make fun of yourself. Laugh when students say things that are funny. Don't make students the target of a joke. Be careful to not laugh at inappropriate times.
- Some nights students just aren't feeling it. Every night isn't going to be a "come to Jesus" kind of moment. Don't be afraid to improvise. Break up the rhythm, keep them guessing, do something fun!
- Have students pray. Have one student pray to start Small Group and another student pray to end Small Group.
- Look for ways to get them back in the Bible that night or the following morning. Challenge them to re-read the passage discussed.
- Ask students to not be on their phones during group. You do the same!
- Always challenge them to action at the end. What are they doing? Who are they inviting?



YOUR FIRST MEETING

Begin by introducing people to one another. Don't delay. Start with your icebreaker and then transition into your study. Be sure to end promptly. In the first meeting, **focus on building relationships**. That's not to say you should minimize the Bible, but if the people in the group don't know each other, it's important that they learn more about each other. Continue to build community over time. This may take several weeks to get the entire group willing to share.

AFTER THE FIRST MEETING

- Catch up with the group members appropriately and ask them how things are going. Ask them specifics about the things they shared in the group.
- Serve them. If someone in the group expressed a need, try to meet it — a meal on a hectic day, follow up on a prayer request, etc.
- Do something fun. Meet people for lunch, sit with them at church, or greet them with their favorite drink or snack.
- Evaluate how it went and make any necessary changes before the next week with your co-leaders

TWO DAYS BEFORE MIDWEEK

- Review the given content and be ready to make the messages personal to your group. **Pro tip: take notes during the message and come up with questions during the teaching time.**
- Prepare to lead or guide the lesson. It is one thing to study the lesson yourself; it is another thing to lead it. Check out our Tips for Leading a Small Group Page
- **Pray for those coming.** Ask God for wisdom about how He wants to work in their lives.
- Plan the specifics for your meeting. You have a limited amount of time to build relationships, cover content and pray. What portion of the time do you want to spend on each aspect?
- Different levels of spiritual maturity among members will dictate different amounts of time for each part, and the balance of time will likely be different as the group grows and its members get to know one another.
- Learn your group and ask specific questions through a group message so that you can have better conversation during small group time.

DURING

- Be there early or on time.
- Pray for your time and your group members, and ask the Lord to give you the ability to lead well.
- Turn your phone to vibrate to reduce the distractions
- Make sure each student is connected to at least one other student
- Look for the new students and care for them well!

EVALUATE EACH SMALL GROUP MEETING WITH YOUR CO-LEADERS

- How did you see God at work during the meeting? Take time to thank Him for all He did. Did everyone show up?
 - Did people who had expressed interest but didn't show up contact you before or after the meeting to tell you why?
 - Is there anything you can do to help more people come in the future?
- Were you prepared? Did you feel confident and at ease?
- Did you have an attitude of expectancy?
- Were you prepared for everyone who came?
- Did you create a warm atmosphere? Did people seem comfortable? (Some people may feel awkward regardless of how welcoming you are, but if most people seemed relaxed and open, that's a good indication you created a good environment).
- What other adjustments do you need to make?

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DETERMINE YOUR GROUP'S NEEDS

Use the following questions to help you determine what you will cover during your small group meetings:

- What strengths do they have? Where do they need growth? What do they not understand?
- What principles or topics would benefit them most at this stage in their Christian walks? (If you are not sure, ask the other leaders and Minister of Students for some suggestions.)
- What are their most important needs? Do they comprehend the foundations of their faith (e.g., salvation, forgiveness, the Spirit-filled life and how to study God's Word)? Are they sharing their faith?
- How many times should we meet outside of Wednesday nights?
- How will we prayerfully divide up the group among each adult leader for deeper discipleship?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS & GUIDE

STEP ONE: ENGAGE STUDENTS IN CONVERSATION

1. What stood out to you from tonight's message? 2. What in the message was hard to understand or difficult to hear? 3. What practical step do you need to take in response to tonight's message?

STEP TWO: BUILD COMMUNITY THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY (USING THE 3 R's)

1. RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Question: How is your relationship with God?

2. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

Question: How is your relationship with your friends, family, coaches, significant others, etc?

3. REAL LIFE

Questions: How is life actually going?

STEP THREE: DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Take time to pray over specific prayer requests or over specific things that were brought up during the "3 R's".

TEEN CULTURE & MINISTRY

Students are in the midst of a **self-seeking, sexually-confused, and technology-obsessed** age. With that being said, we have listed some of the issues and topics we believe would be beneficial to educate and inform yourselves on. It is important to remember that there are several other issues and topics that may arise as you seek to counsel and guide students.

STAY EDUCATED

On topics like:

- Drugs (Vapes) & Alcohol
- Bullying
- LGBTQIA+ Culture
- Modern Phone Capabilities
- Abuse and Self Abuse
- Sexting
- Pornography
- Dating
- Eating Disorders
- Masturbation
- Social media apps

ACTION STEPS

1. Listen

"The one who gives an answer before he listens - this is foolishness and disgrace for him." Proverbs 18:13

When a student opens up or asks for guidance, seek to listen extensively before trying to give them your take on it.

2. Ask Questions

This is a delicate and pivotal phase, so do not see it as an opportunity to bombard them and learn every minute detail. Formulate thought and ask careful questions to understand what is going on. Remember, you are seeking to guide and counsel, not accuse and interrogate.

3. Discover Underlying Issues

Are these issues pertaining to the teenagers beliefs about identity, acceptance, guilt, anger, or love?

4. Challenge False Beliefs

As you provide guidance and direction, you may need to challenge false beliefs that students are clinging to as truth.

"I understand it may seem like no one cares, but that just isn't true."

Is the student's issue directly connected with an incorrect assumption or a false belief? You have been enlisted to speak into a teenager's life. Don't be afraid to be direct and speak the truth of God's Word in love.

5. Confidentiality

Building trust with students is extremely difficult; gaining it back after losing it is borderline impossible. If and when a student confides in you to confess sin, seek help, or is seeking advice, their expectation is that the details shared stay between the two of you. It is **NEVER** acceptable to gossip about a conversation with a student, with other leaders or students. **HOWEVER:** There will be times in which the priority of a teenager's well being outweighs that of confidentiality. Remember the **3H Rule** and inform staff.

SOMEONE **HURTING** THEM | **HURTING** THEMSELVES | **HURTING** OTHERS

STAY STUDENT-FOCUSED

While there are definitely moments in the night to grow relationally with other leaders, our key focus should be the students! Here's what it looks like to be student-focused:

During Messages:

Sit with your students, have a physical Bible, and take notes. If you use your phone during messages, even if it's just for the Bible app, it models for our students that they can also be on their phones during messages. So avoid the temptation, keep your phones out of sight and keep your mind student-focused!

During Worship:

Worship with your Small Group. Don't give into the temptation to worship in the back of the room! Model what engaging worship looks like for your students by engaging in worship yourself.

During Games:

Play! There are certain games that will be exclusively for the students, but if we don't ask you to help lead a game, assume that it's your time to shine and have some fun playing alongside your students.

During Small Groups:

Give your students 110% of your attention while leading and engaging with them in Small Group time.

Hang out with your students. Resist the urge to believe that the students don't want you around — most of the time, they really do want you to hang out with them and play games. By doing so, you'll win a ton of relational leverage with them. However, the game time and hangout time can be an excellent place to get on the same page with your co-leaders, bring up concerns with student staff, or engage in conversations with other leaders. Just remember to use your time wisely!

KEEPING YOURSELF & STUDENTS SAFE

General rules to follow to keep yourself and students in safe environments:

- No 1-1: Leaders should not be alone with a student
- No driving 1-1: Leaders should not drive alone with a student.
- “Groups of 3 are the way to be!” Aka - always make sure there are two adults present. If you need to have a private conversation with a student of the opposite sex, bring in another leader of the student’s gender.
- No 1-1 communication with a student of the opposite gender
- If you’re unsure about any situation, always pull/ask the Minister of Students.

“Stay away from every kind of evil.”

1 Thessalonians 5:22

In general, remember to operate with wisdom as you work with minors. There are too many stories of church leaders who abuse their power and relational leverage to manipulate teens. However, we trust all of our adult volunteers to be in our ministry for the right reasons.

Remember, we are mandated reporters! Mandated reporters are required to report anything that may lead you to believe a child is in harms way including:

- **Sexual assault/harassment**
- **Suicide threats/statements**
- **Any kind of abuse**

If you hear of past or present assault, harassment or abuse, bring it to the Minister of Students immediately so that we can help you navigate the situation.

BEHAVIOR & DISRUPTIVE ISSUES

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Kids are imperfect. They are going to **distract, disrupt, and disrespect**.
2. We can choose how we come off to kids who do the **above things**.
3. How we choose to treat kids says a lot about what we believe about the Gospel.
4. We should never embarrass a student, no matter what they do.
5. In the context of our relationship with a student, we should plainly lay out the expectations of how to behave during our events. When those expectations are violated, we should be prepared with **simple discipline measures**.
6. We should **make parents aware of any problems that persist**, and ask for their help in dealing with it.
7. We should be patient. There are a lot of on-fire Christian adults who were the biggest troublemakers in their youth groups.

SIMPLE DISCIPLINE MEASURES

- One Warning (strike 1)
- Two reminders (strike 2 & 3)
- After the third strike, parent conversation on the phone with the Minister of Students
- If it happens after parent phone call: Parent and Minister of Students meeting

A teenager will never care what you have to say until they know you care about them.

LEADER INSTRUCTION

1. Record name of teenager
2. Send name to Minister of Students with a report of what happened
3. Warnings reset each semester (2 semesters a year)

RULES & REGULATIONS

We follow R&R, we will go far

1. RESPECT & HONOR

- People
- The building
- The things in the building

2. LIMIT DISTRACTIONS

- Phone use
- Talking during the service
- Bathroom use during service
- Public display of affection
- Dress appropriately

3. FOLLOW THE LAW

- No Vapes
- No Drugs
- No Alcohol

WHEN YOU BREAK THE R&R

- You slow down our mission and purpose
- You are given a chance to do better
- You continue to break R&R you will have a parent meeting with the Minister of Students

I AFFIRM:



- I agree to submit to a background check
- I have received Jesus as my Lord and Savior and am currently walking in relationship with Him. (Col. 2:6)
- I am consistently attending a worship service at Woodland Baptist Church, and I will commit to be active in a Small Group with other adults. (Heb. 10:25)
- I agree to champion unity in the church and will not teach or practice anything that violates Woodland Baptist Church's Statement of Belief found on the website. (Eph. 4:1-3)
- I desire to demonstrate respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity. (Eph. 4:1-3)
- I will treat students of all races, religions, and cultures with respect and consideration. (Luke 6:31)
- I will not possess or use illegal drugs. I will not possess or use alcohol or tobacco in the context of any ministry related activities. (1 Peter 5:8)
- I agree to seek the counsel of my ministry leader if I experience struggles which may have an impact on the ministry. (James 5:16)
- I aim to join God in his work of transforming lives. I commit to model Christ-likeness in all my behavior, especially as I serve in Student Ministry, and I am aware that children, students, and adults are watching me and my lifestyle. (1 Cor. 10:31)
- I understand that my social media accounts are an extension of who I am and commit to having them reflect a lifestyle that joins God in his work of transforming lives.
- I commit to serving within Woodland Students for at least one school year while being committed to meet the expectations.
- I testify that I have read the leader handbook in its entirety and that I fulfill all qualifications to serve

Date _____

Signature _____

Desired Role(s) of Service _____



Leadership

Minister of Students: Chris Snyder *chris@woodlandwakeforest.com* 919-902-1668

Leadership Team: Lauren Brown *laurenteasleybrown@gmail.com* 601-941-8005

Leslie Bristow *leslie@bristowlandscaping.com* 919-780-9334

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20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

