

Grace Student Ministries DNA



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About this document

This document exists to help church members understand the mindset and lifeblood of our student ministry. Hopefully by reading this document, parents, volunteers, and teenagers alike can get excited about what God is doing in our student ministry.

A quick heads up: One big word is “mentorship.” It’s basically just a more up-to-date way of saying “discipleship.”

Our goal is simple: **To present students as mature in Christ.** This means our goal is not post-middle school or high school. Our goal is that on the day they die, they will be presented to God as mature in Christ.

Theology of Grace Student Ministries

Our student ministry must have at least a few verses that we can turn back to and examine if our ministry is living the way that verse describes what a ministry or a Christian should look like. This puts the forefront of our philosophy of ministry right where it should be, at the heart of God, his written word of truth:

Colossians 1:28= We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

This is truly who we are as a ministry. We proclaim Jesus. We do that by warning and teaching with wisdom. Everything we do must be with this goal in mind: To present students mature in Christ. Youth ministry is only happening when that is what we are working toward.

Philippians 2:3= Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more significant than yourselves.

Humility: "It's not about me"— Our ministry is not about any individual but Jesus. With this in mind, we come not to be served, but to serve others. Absolutely everything should be done with the mindset that others are more important than ourselves.

Matthew 25:40= “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Hospitality: “It’s about them”= Our ministry will be one that always keeps strangers in mind. Much like the parable of the good Samaritan, our goal is to treat strangers so hospitably that eventually they become neighbors.

Romans 13:8= Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Love: “It’s about us (our community)”= As a community of believers, we are called to share one another’s burdens. We owe each other love. This is how we prove we are his disciples and it is how we fulfill the law in Christ.

Luke 9:23= Then he said to them all, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Devotion: “It’s about Him.” Following Christ requires total, daily devotion. It is a life dedicated to denying our old, corrupt, sinful passions, and putting those to death so we can follow Jesus instead. This is displayed through disciplining ourselves to pursue Him in all we do.

Ministry Core Values

Our four core values are: Humility, Hospitality, Love, and Devotion

Humility like Christ

Because we value humility, our student ministry is devoted to teaching students to daily examine their hearts to see where they tend to think about themselves before anyone else. Students will be regularly challenged to deny themselves for the sake of Christ and others.

Hospitality for Christ

Hospitality means “seeing the unseen students.” It means we will not tolerate cliques, divisions, or insider language. We will always keep students who are new in mind with the goal of showing them Christ’s love.

Love in Christ

Love in Christ means that we will teach students to think with a “we” mentality and not an “I” mentality. We will value teaching students to think of themselves as being part of a community rather than simply being an individual.

Devotion to Christ

Devotion means we will consistently challenge our students to live out a life that pursues Christ actively. That means being disciplined to read scripture, pray, meditate on, and memorize scripture.

Vision and Mission

Our **Mission** is:

To present students as mature in Christ



Our **Vision** for how we will implement that is:

Godly adults, coming alongside students to help them think and live biblically.

Discipleship Strategy

There are four stages of growth we use in regards to student discipleship. To help you understand better what we mean by “discipleship” we will instead use the word “mentorship.”

Not every student grows up in the church, and not every student who grows up in the church is at the same spiritual stage. Here are the four stages we will classify students at in their walk, which will determine how we go about mentoring (discipling) them: Seekers, Believers, Doers, Mentors.

These stages are NOT statements on salvation. They are merely a way of recognizing that each stage is unique in how each student should be treated, mentored, and involved in the life of our youth ministry. Listed below are some more details on each stage:

Seekers: The “Come as you are” students.

- *Characteristics:*
 - Still searching (Yes, this includes even some students who have grown up in the church and know all the right Sunday School answers)
 - Unsure of what they believe, but open to new ideas.
 - More questions than answers
- *Major Needs:*
 - Be loved
 - Hear the truth about who they are
 - Hear the truth about who God is
- *What to remember about these students:*
 - Patience: They don’t know any better, even if they know all the answers in their head. It might not have impacted their heart yet.
 - Love them no matter how hard it might be at times
 - Communicate *with*, not *to*
 - Meet them where they are

Believers: Believers who are learning what it means to be a Christian

- *Characteristics:*
 - Faith in Christ.
 - A desire to learn more about what God expects of them
- *Major Needs:*
 - Get a solid grasp on scripture and the basics of the Christian life
 - Mentoring becomes less about just building a friendship, and more about intentionally looking at what God's word says about them.
 - Truth in love
- *What to remember about these students:*
 - They're still just trying to figure it out. They're not always going to have the character we want them to. Love them anyway
 - When they don't show that character, speak the truth to them, but do it in love.

Doers: Believers who are now being shaped to live out what they know to be true. They're "doers of the word, not merely hearers."

- *Characteristics:*
 - Solid biblical worldview: looking at life through the lens of what the bible says
 - Discovering and establishing their spiritual gifts
 - Interested in going deeper
 - Submissive in letting God shape their character
- *Major Needs:*
 - "I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I help. You do, I watch."
 - Opportunities to succeed and opportunities to fail.
 - Mentoring is not just about looking at what the bible says, it's doing things together in an active way of doing God's work.
 - Showing the "why" behind everything we do in life.
- *What to remember about these students:*
 - Show them the "why" behind things
 - They're committed to ministry, we need to be committed to them.

Mentors: Students who make more disciples. They're the seed that multiplies.

- *Characteristics:*
 - Go out of their way to show Jesus to others
 - Fully equipped to teach others about Jesus
- *Major Needs:*
 - Mentoring becomes less about helping with how to do and more about iron sharpening iron.
 - Other students that they can mentor
 - Challenges to become more holy
- *What to remember about these students:*
 - Help them get involved in decisions in the youth ministry
 - Give them leadership opportunities
 - Point them to other students that they can mentor.

Mentorship

Mentoring is what will help our student ministry tick. Without it, everything else we do will be much less beneficial. Students are divided into four spiritual stages: 1. Seekers 2. Believers 3. Doers 4. Mentors. The goal is to mentor students so they can become mentors themselves. Mentoring is really just a more up to date word for discipleship. We want Godly people mentoring teenagers to live out their faith. Here's a simpler look at how the mentoring works in each stage:

1. **Seekers:** Mentoring is about hanging out and finding teachable moments when you can (sometimes the seeker student is interested, sometimes they're not. Sometimes they call themselves a Christian already, sometimes they don't).
2. **Believers:** Mentoring becomes about discovering what the bible says together.
3. **Doers:** Mentoring becomes more practical. Showing students how to live out the faith they've learned and change is taking place in the heart and outward actions. Mentoring involves more challenges/accountability.
4. **Mentors:** Students now start mentoring other students while still being invested in themselves.

Mentors will be Godly men and women who have proven character and a willingness to sacrifice their time and energy to investing in the lives of students. Mentors will be invested in by the student minister as well so they feel fully equipped in their role.

Each mentor will be encouraged to meet with the student(s) they are committed to at least twice a month and what they do together will be based on what stage the student is in.

Each month, all the mentors will meet together with the student minister to discuss how the mentoring is going.

Other Programs

To help make mentoring easier, we will also be providing programming throughout the school year to provide students more opportunities to be around each other as well as mentors and also provide opportunities to reach new students. Here are our usual programs:

Tuesday Night Youth Group: Every Tuesday night, we will have youth group which is a large group gathering where we can worship together, hear a timely lesson, and spend time hanging out. This provides students a chance to spend time together, provides mentors the chance to build more relationships with students, and gives the opportunity for teaching and worship.

D-Group: D-Group is designed for older HS student.. This is an environment for students who are believers desiring to mature into doers and for doers who desire to mature into mentors. This is an invite-only group for students who have demonstrated a desire to be mentors and faithfulness toward our ministry. If a student is interested, they must be invited or ask permission/demonstrate teachability.

Sunday School: Sunday School is designed to equip students with all the info they need to keep on the path with Jesus. We will typically go through entire books of the bible passage by passage to ensure God's word is the center of our discussions.

Retreats: Retreats are designed as a launching pad to take what the students have been learning throughout the school year and really give them the time to work through it by getting away from distractions and hearing the word of God, then discussing what's on their heart and creating measurable goals for life. The priority is to help them grow in love with God and one another.

Mission Events: This includes mission trips as well as service opportunities in our neighborhood and are available throughout the year among various age groups.

Parent/Leader Resources: Parents and leaders will receive weekly emails updating them on what is going on in the youth ministry, along with an article, a sermon, a devotional, etc. geared toward parenting or leadership. This demonstrates our priority of ensuring parents and leaders are communicated with well and have the support they need as they are the true youth ministers. Leaders are expected to attend monthly leader meetings. This will be a determining factor in assessing what leaders will return each school year as we have many people who desire to lead.

Roles for Adults

Parents: Parents have the potential to play the most important role in our youth ministry. Godly parents who are intentional about discipling their children at home will make everything else in our youth ministry so much more effective. It's without a doubt, the most efficient way to move students toward maturity in Christ.

Mentors: See the *Mentorship* section above for more details. Mentors are proven Godly adults who are committed to meeting with a specific student(s) at least twice a month and are committed to helping shape them based on the spiritual stage they are in. This can also include parents of youth. There is a separate document for mentors to look at that lists the qualifications and responsibilities of a mentor.

Volunteers: We need volunteers for all sorts of things: Picking up/dropping off students, hosting events, organizing games, etc. These are typically "as needed" roles, but we love hearing from people that they're willing so we know who to talk to when it comes up!