

STUDENT MINISTRY

TEAM MEMBER HANDBOOK

HEY THERE!

So you want to volunteer with teenagers, huh? Some people might think you're crazy... but we know better. Middle schoolers and high schoolers are awesome. They're hilarious (sometimes on purpose). They're dramatic. They're complicated. And they're a ton of fun.

But most importantly, middle schoolers and high schoolers are at a time in their lives where they desperately need someone like you 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 teenagers.

Thanks for being willing to serve. Thanks for caring about teenagers. And thanks for letting God use you.

We can't wait to see what this year has in store.

-Traders Point Student Ministry Team

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS HANDBOOK

THE BASICS

Our Staff	1
Our Ministry.....	2
Our Big Win	3
Discipling Students	6
Partnering with Parents	7

ALL TEAM MEMBERS

The Win	8
The Expectations	9

ENVIRONMENTS TEAM

The Win	10
The Expectations	11

GROUP LEADERS

The Win	12
The Expectations	13

OUTREACH TEAM

The Win	14
The Expectations	15

THE FINE PRINT

Safety Guidelines	16
Code of Conduct	18
Commitment	19

THE BASICS

OUR STAFF

NATHAN BRANAM

STUDENT MINISTER

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Nathan has served in student ministry for nearly 15 years, and leads our student ministry team and strategy across all of our campuses.

ERIC PENDLEY

STUDENT OUTREACH MINISTER

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Eric oversees all student outreach efforts, including large events, school partnerships, and any initiatives that help connect students to Catalyst for the very first time.

MAKAYLA SEIBOLD

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTS MINISTER

MSEIBOLD@TPCC.ORG

Makayla ensures that every campus environment is a place where students feel valued. From food, signage, atmosphere, activities, themes, Makayla helps our teams set up a warm and inviting space in Catalyst.

ANNE WILSON

STUDENT GROUPS MINISTER

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Anne oversees all of our student group leaders, curriculum, and strategy across all of our campuses. She helps ensure that all leaders are set up to minister to their students and create a space where all students can be known and loved so they can grow.

OUR MINISTRY

WORSHIP | SUNDAY AT 11 A.M. (WEST) AND 5:30 P.M. (NORTHWEST, NORTH, AND DOWNTOWN)

Our students worship together and hear biblical teaching during our main services. They gather and sit in the front right section of the auditorium with their leaders and each other!

CONNECT AND GROUPS | SUNDAY 6:30 TO 8 P.M.

Connection and group time are all about helping students grow in their relationships with each other and with God. After service, students have an opportunity to connect in a casual, laid-back environment and then go to groups where they study the content from the Sunday message.

OUR ENVIRONMENTS

Our funnel for student ministry looks like this:

OUTREACH > SERVICE > GROUPS

Each environment is designed to strategically invite students on a journey into deeper relationships with their friends, leaders, and Jesus.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Throughout the year, we'll host several big events designed to help students connect with their peers and group leaders. Special events are often the place where students will walk into our ministry for the very first time.

WEEKLY WORSHIP, CONNECTION, AND GROUP: Our weekly program happens every week, with a few breaks throughout the year. They're designed to help students connect with God, connect with others, and learn to better live out their faith. Groups are designed to connect every student with a consistent adult and community where they can be disciplined and known.

OUR BIG WIN

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in student ministry, you know? Is anything we're saying actually sinking in? Are students 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 we hope students walk away from our ministry with, and the goal we want to keep in mind at all times. And it's what motivates and guides everything we do. It goes like this:

**WE WIN WHEN A STUDENT
TAKES A STEP TOWARD
OWNING *THEIR FAITH* AND
JOINING GOD ON HIS MISSION.**

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 student take a single step closer to owning their faith and joining God on His mission.

OWNING THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for a student to own their faith? We believe there are four things that are the natural result of living a life of faith in Jesus.

When a student begins to own their faith in Jesus, **they will begin to exhibit these four outcomes:**

- 1. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD:** As followers of Jesus, the first outcome of our faith should be our desire to accept him as our Lord and Savior and grow our friendship with God through prayer and reading, studying, meditating on, and wrestling with, the Bible. To help students grow in their friendship with God, we provide activities for students to do individually or with their group and create ways for students to connect with God at church.
- 2. CHRISTLIKE RELATIONSHIPS:** The second outcome of faith in Jesus has to do with our relationships with others. To help students develop more Christlike relationships, we provide activities for students to do individually or with their small group, give students opportunities to practice community with their small groups and small group leaders, and create ways for students to make and build friendships at church.
- 3. KNOWING AND USING THEIR GIFTS:** The third outcome is our ability to identify and then use our gifts and talents to give back to love God and others. To help students identify and use their gifts, we want to provide opportunities to use their gifts at church, and create ways for students serve others.
- 4. SHARING THEIR STORY:** The fourth outcome of faith is our eagerness to share the story of what God has done in our lives with others. To help students begin to figure out their grace story and then share it, we provide activities for students to do individually or with their small group and give students opportunities to share their stories at church and outside of church.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward owning their faith through friendship with God, Christlike relationships, knowing and using their gifts, or sharing their stories.

JOINING GOD ON HIS MISSION

The second part of our big win is seeing students begin to join God on his mission to reach every man, woman, and child with the good news of Jesus.

When it comes to thinking and behaving missionally, **there are three things we believe are our responsibility as believers.** While we don't expect every student to be living out these behaviors just yet, we can still talk about them, encourage them, and create opportunities for students to put them into practice.

- 1. PRESENCE:** It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to be present in the world. Rather than isolating ourselves from unbelievers, we must be engaged in the world around us and present in our communities. While our students aren't always at a place in life where they can do this on their own, the adults in their lives can model what this looks like and create opportunities for them to be engaged in the world together.
- 2. PROCLAMATION:** It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to use our actions and our words to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's not enough to simply be present in the world—we must also proclaim the Gospel with our words and actions.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward joining God on his mission in the world.

DISCIPLING STUDENTS

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 students begin to own their faith and join God on mission, we’re really just talking about discipleship. So what is discipleship? Here are three thoughts...

DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT LEARNING

Rather than asking, “What can I teach a student about God?” try asking, “How can I help a student better 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 we would encourage groups to spend time together outside of church sometime during the year. Because **discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom—it’s modeled in everyday life.**

DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the gospels, you see Jesus prioritizing community in discipleship, and that’s because **discipleship happens best in a community of people.** That’s why we focus so much energy on getting students plugged into consistent groups, why we emphasize that parents are the primary disciplers of their own kids, and why we surround students with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

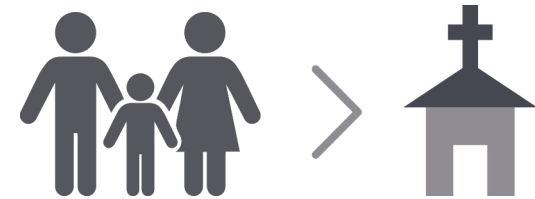
DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

Discipleship is never really 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 students who are in it for the long-haul. That’s why we encourage group leaders to not bail on their students after a few months, but to stick with them from 7th grade to 12th grade—because it’s a process.

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

Getting involved in a church is a really important part of the discipleship process. But you know what? (Now, don’t freak out.) **Church isn’t the most important part of discipleship.**

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.) We believe that, in every student’s life, this is true: in a student’s life, **the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.** In fact, the church has an average of 40 hours a year to influence a life, whereas the parent has an average of 3,000 hours per year to influence a child or student’s life.



Here’s another way to phrase it, from the smart people at *Orange*, who help churches everywhere better partner with parents:

“WHAT HAPPENS AT HOME IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT HAPPENS AT CHURCH.” - REGGIE JOINER

No matter what, a student’s family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives (for good or for bad). So doesn’t it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in our students’ lives in order to influence their faith?

We use the term “partner” for a reason, because parents and the church need each other. **We need to team up with parents** because they’re ultimately the biggest influence on their own kids’ spirituality. **And parents need to team up with the local church** because their kids need to see faith in Jesus and missional living modeled from a whole community of believers! We need each other!

ALL TEAM MEMBERS

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry—seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on his mission. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished.

No matter what your role is on our team—whether you help prepare food, help set up our environments, coach group leaders, or lead a group of 7th grade squirrely boys, team members win when they seek to be humble, hungry, and healthy.

ALL TEAM MEMBERS WIN WHEN THEY SEEK TO BE HUMBLE, HUNGRY, AND HEALTHY.

HUMBLE

Being humble is a key part to serving in any ministry area, but specifically student ministry. Being coachable, willing to receive feedback, and always open to be flexible when needed are key components of remaining humble.

HUNGRY

Remaining hungry before God is pivotal when serving others—we cannot give to anyone what we don't have. Being focused on the role we have to play, motivating others to join in, and looking for ways to connect with students are all parts of seeking to grow in servant leadership.

HEALTHY

Perhaps most important for any of our team members, coaches, and staff are that we're in a healthy place spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically.. Our own personal development and spiritual formation are essential to helping students grow. In other words, make sure you show up filled up. Weekly church attendance and being involved in a group who can pour into you are two ways you can safe-guard yourself in staying spiritually healthy.

THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love Jesus.
- Love students.
- Stick to the Code of Conduct (see pages 18-19).

STUDENT MINISTRY VALUES

In addition to being humble, hungry, healthy, as a student ministry team, we want to focus on three things for our ministry specifically as we minister to teenagers:

1. **We are consistently present.** We consistently show up, and when we're present, we're not distracted but we're ready to engage.
2. **We persistently connect.** We look for ways to connect with students and have our eyes open to kids on the fringe.
3. **We continuously encourage.** We want to be a safe place and a haven for students, recognizing that many spaces in their lives are discouraging.

ENVIRONMENTS TEAM

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry—seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on His mission. 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 environments team:

ENVIRONMENT TEAMS WIN WHEN STUDENTS FEEL *VALUED* AND LIKE THEY *BELONG*.

Our environments team make up a lot of roles that help Catalyst happen on a weekly basis, and can be the first people students see when they arrive and some of the last people they see before they leave, so they’ve got a pretty big responsibility!

Our environments teams have the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have when they walk through our doors. **It’s not just about signing new students in, holding signs in the auditorium, setting up 9-square, or preparing food. It’s about making students feel seen, cared for, and valued.**

Also, food is a pretty powerful thing. Seriously, think about the memories, the conversations, and the friendships that you’ve built around food! A meal, a cup of coffee, or a fun treat can bring people together and make them smile. For our food team, whether you’re handing a seventh grade boy a bag of Doritos, mixing custom Italian sodas for a group of tenth grade girls, it’s never just about the food or the environment. **It’s about the experience of kindness, generosity, and service** you’re creating for students and each and every week through prep or service.

An awesome environments team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down barriers so that, for the rest of our night, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their group leaders, and to connect with God.

THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love students.
- Love working behind-the-scenes.

THE SPECIFICS

- Positions: First Impressions, food, set up/tear down, follow up
- Show up with energy and ready to serve, reading the environments plan and any special notes ahead of time.
- Wear your Catalyst t-shirt when possible.
- Make sure every student is greeted.
- For first-time check in teams, make sure every new student signs in (for first-time check in).
- For first-time check in teams, identify first-time guests and introduce him/her to a group leader for his/her grade (for first-time check in).
- Attend all events, leader huddles, and gatherings for team members.
- Each area will be given more specifics about their roles and the expectations involved.
- There are opportunities to serve before, during, and after Catalyst as well as during the week, depending on the position you choose.

GROUP LEADERS

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry—seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on his mission. Group leaders have a very crucial part to play in seeing our ministry goal accomplished, and depending on the age and gender of the group you're leading, you might feel like you're walking into a battlefield every week. Here's what we think the win looks like for group leaders:

GROUP LEADERS WIN WHEN THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS AND HELP STUDENTS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a student's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for group leaders to build strong relationships with the students they lead. You can't make a student own their faith. You can't make a student join God on his mission. **But you can build a relationship with that student that allows you to love them and influence their faith.**

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

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

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

THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love Jesus.
- Love students.
- Stick to our Code of Conduct (see pages 18-19).
- Commit to lead the same group for a year, with the goal of being with them from 7th through 12th grade.

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up to our weekly program every week.
- Connect with students outside of church.
- Partner with the parents of your students by introducing yourself when possible.
- Plan one service project for your group each year (you have \$100 to spend from Traders Point!)
- Attend special events (concerts, sporting events, etc.)

OUTREACH TEAM

THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry - seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on His mission. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here's what that looks like for our Outreach team:

THE OUTREACH TEAM WINS WHEN STUDENTS INVITE THEIR FRIENDS TO AN EVENT AND FIRST-TIME STUDENTS CONNECT TO STUDENT MINISTRY.

Our Outreach team oversees our three big events each year (one during the fall, winter, and spring), works on strategies for attracting students to the ministry, and reaching out to the community and equip students to reach out to their friends.

THE EXPECTATIONS

THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love students.
- Enjoy planning events.
- Love speaking.
- Have a passion for the lost.
- Willing to take risks.

THE SPECIFICS

- Show up.
- Join the events team to help plan and coordinate.
- Delegate when you can.
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for team members.

THE FINE PRINT

SAFETY GUIDELINES

As a member of our ministry team, it is absolutely essential that you practice healthy boundaries with students at all times, for their safety and yours. These guidelines exist to protect students from harm and to protect you from false allegations.

Keep in mind, while these guidelines apply to your interactions with all students, they are especially important with working and ministering to students who are of the opposite gender.

BE MINDFUL WHEN YOU ARE ALONE WITH A STUDENT

If you need to have a private conversation with a student, have the conversation in a public place—not behind closed doors or in a room alone. Here are some tips to help you navigate through this particular guideline:

- In an effort to partner with parents, when setting up meetings one-on-one with students, make sure parents know you and are aware you're meeting.
- If a student needs a ride, try to arrange to have another adult or student ride with you. Always make sure the parent is aware.

MAINTAIN PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Be wise. Maintain healthy and safe physical boundaries with students at all times. This means setting boundaries for yourself, but it may also mean setting and enforcing boundaries with students who push physical limits. If you have any questions about what is or isn't appropriate, talk with our staff and always err on the side of caution.

For example:

1. **Never** physically harm or discipline a student.
2. **High fives, handshakes, side hugs, and fist bumps** are great ways to exhibit physical touch. Hugs are okay, but be mindful of appropriate boundaries with students and their level of comfort.

LOG ELECTRONIC CONVERSATIONS

When you find yourself in the midst of a sensitive conversation with a student, keep in mind that words and intentions can be misconstrued—intentionally or unintentionally. Any time you are engaged in a serious conversation with a student, log your conversations (take screen shots, save text messages and emails). This may seem excessive, but if you're ever falsely accused of misconduct from a student or parent, you'll be glad you did it.

REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

As a member of our ministry team, you are a mandated reporter. That means you are legally required to report any dangerous or potentially dangerous situations to our staff immediately. Including...

- If a student is being harmed, neglected, or abused.
- If a student is harming or abusing someone else.
- If a student is harming or at risk of harming themselves.
-

CODE OF CONDUCT

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

ALL TEAM MEMBERS

WORK HARD: You are so important to our ministry! 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 students, parents, other team members, 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)

GROUP LEADERS

BE LIKE JESUS: More than any other serving role, group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of students. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, remain above reproach, 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)

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

COMMITMENT

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

I promise to follow through on what I've committed to. If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to let the staff know 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 students.

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 students, 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 students who walk through our doors. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____