



**REAL LIFE**  
YOUNG ADULTS

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES**



# WHO WE ARE

**Vision:** We will reach the world for Jesus Christ one student at a time.

**Mission:** We will make biblical disciples in relational environments.

**Process:** We will make disciples who make disciples through our S.C.M.D. Process

- **Share:** We will SHARE Jesus with a dying world, making disciples of all nations.
  - We will share the Gospel, our time, our resources, our gifts, etc.
- **Connect:** We will CONNECT disciples into a leader-directed small group.
  - We will connect young adults to God and to a community of other believers in small groups, Young Adults, church, etc.
- **Minister:** In small groups we will train disciples to MINISTER in the church, and world.
  - We will minister to young adults to equip them to follow Jesus and take their next step in their relationship with God.
- **Disciple:** We will release those who have been developed to make DISCIPLES of others.
  - We will continue to walk alongside young adults in every stage as we encourage them to go out to share, connect, minister, and disciple others (family, friends, classmates, etc.)

# BEING A LEADER

## WHY BE A LEADER?

Jesus used 12 people to turn this entire world upside down. We believe He is still in the business of changing lives. Join us in this mission of changing the lives of a generation by showing young adults the love of God and empowering them to reach their families, schools, work places, and communities for Jesus one person at a time.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A LEADER

- **Be a disciple of Jesus.** Someone who is committed to following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, on missions with Jesus, and walking this out wherever you live, work, and play. (Matthew 4:19)
- **Be a member** at Real Life Ministries
- **Pass a background check**
- **Attend weekly services at Real Life Ministries**
- **Belong to a small group/life group**
- **Live a life that is above reproach** in all areas of life including home, work, all relationships (including romantic relationships), social media etc. Be a model to those that you lead both at the church and outside of the church.

*2 Corinthians 6:3 "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited."*

## YOUR ROLE

### **Prepare**

Spend a little time each week familiarizing yourself with the material you're studying with your group (Sermon series, YA teaching, or other approved curriculum).

### **Lead**

Build relationships with your group and help them know and apply the Word of God. Ask questions, facilitate conversation, and help lead out the guidelines.

### **Connect**

Connect with each of the people in your group on a weekly basis, checking in, and making sure that no one is left behind. You are the shepherd of your group.

### **Mobilize**

Utilize the Real Life App to see where your people are and help them take steps toward maturity i.e. church attendance, baptism, membership, serving, etc.

# LEADER EXPECTATIONS

## TIME COMMITMENT

We ask that our leaders commit to a small group year that runs from September to June (9 Months).  
*\*We still have Young Adult Ministry through the summer but we adjust what that looks like to be able to give leaders a break for the summer if they would like.*

### Weekly Commitment: ~ 4 Hours



#### **Prepare** - 30 Minutes:

Spend a little time each week preparing.

- **Pray** for your group and your time with them each week.
- **Familiarize yourself with the curriculum** for the week and make a plan for your group time.

#### **Leader Meeting** - 30 minutes:

Attend weekly meetings.

- Thursdays 6:30PM-7PM

#### **Young Adults Night** - 2.5 Hours:

Attend the night of your ministry. Connect with your group, be a part of large group, and lead in small group. Connect with your group and other young adults during dinner and during the after party, if you are able to stay.

- **Dinner** 7:00PM-7:20PM
- **Large Group** 7:20PM-8:15PM
- **Small Group** 8:15PM-9:30PM
- **After Party (Optional)** 9:30PM-10PM

#### **Follow Up** - 30 minutes:

Connect with each of your small group participants on a weekly basis, checking in, and making sure that young adults are taking steps in their faith. If someone missed small group, follow up with them to let them know they were missed.

#### **Additional times-**

- Monthly leader meetings (~1.5 hours)
- Go through the 301 Aligning the Team class once a year. (~3 hours)
- Your ministry lead or ministry coach will meet with you for a 1-on-1 meeting two-three times over the small group season.
- Spend time with your group outside of the ministry night as you are able to build relationship.

# LEADER EXPECTATIONS

## EXPECTATIONS OF SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- Be there consistently to build relationships with young adults
- Attend weekly leader huddles on program night and monthly leader meetings on Sundays
- Contact your staff or coach if you are unable to make it to program nights
- Keep conversations free of gossip
- Participate in large group
- Invest in the lives of the participants in your small group - follow up with them when they are missing from Young Adults or church, invite them back, and be interested in their lives

## SOCIAL MEDIA/TEXTING

Within our team, we use many methods to engage and connect young adults to our ministry. Social Media/texting is one of those methods. For that reason, we need to be mindful of how we portray ourselves on these platforms and make sure we are appropriate. Here are steps to follow when using social media/texting:

1. Dress code--be aware that young adults are seeing what you post
2. Be above reproach with the use of alcohol on social media
3. Conflicts are resolved in person, not on social media
4. Personal agendas, no matter how right they might be, can divide people. We ask that you keep your agendas to yourself for the purpose of keeping the church unified
5. You must allow the Real Life Ministries Accounts to follow each of your social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, spams, TikTok, etc.)
6. Leaders cannot Snapchat young adults due to the nature of the app and the lack of safety it can bring
7. The vanish feature on apps cannot be used between leaders and young adults. With that, messages between leaders and young adults should never be deleted by the leader
8. Social media/texting should only be used between leaders and young adults in their small groups, and not with the opposite gender

# LEADING SMALL GROUP

## WINNING IN SMALL GROUP

If you are trying to go deeper, helping young adults understand and apply the bible, praying with and for your group, and contacting them regularly outside of group, then you are leading a successful Small Group!

## TIPS FOR LEADING

Leading a small group can be challenging with all of the dynamics of people in the group. To help with this we have a few best practices and guidelines that will help small group time go smoother.

## 7 BEST PRACTICES OF LEADING A SMALL GROUP

1. **Circles Over Rows.** Life Change Happens in Circles not Rows.
2. **Take Attendance.** We want to know where our people are and encourage them to attend both small and large group..
3. **Go Over Guidelines.** They set expectations and create a safe place. These are NOT rules. They GUIDE safe conversations.
4. **Prepare For Group.** Prepare your heart by praying for your group and going over any curriculum you have prior to group.
5. **Ask Questions Before Giving Answers.** By asking questions we are helping them process. When we give answers, we are actually stunting their growth.
6. **Fight For Relationship.** Relationships are hard and don't always come naturally. We have to fight for them. Look for opportunities to connect with young adults relationally inside and outside of group.
7. **Celebrate!** What's celebrated gets repeated. When someone takes a next step in their faith journey (even if it seems small), celebrate with them and with your team!

## TIPS FOR ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS

- **Keep them open ended**
  - "What was that like for you?" "Tell me more about that"
- **Ask questions about vague answers**
  - "What do you mean when you say that is tough for you?"
- **Utilize self-disclosure appropriately**
  - "Last year, I went through a really challenging season. Share about a time you went through a hard season"
- **Redirect to personal application**
  - When people struggle to use "I" statements, ask them how it impacted them personally.
- **Follow the flow of conversation**
  - Try not to derail the conversation simply to stick with the list of questions. Pick your spots to go down rabbit trails as is helpful

# **SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES**

At the beginning of every small group, leaders will incorporate these into small group time. Our goal is to reach the world for Jesus, one young adult at a time--we do this through relational environments. These guidelines help us achieve this.

## **THIS IS A SAFE GROUP**

Confidentiality is key, what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment: words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

## **NO CROSSTALK**

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, checking phone, responding to text or email, no scrolling on social media etc.

## **LISTEN**

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

## **NO RESCUING OR FIXING**

We are not here to fix each other, Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

## **USE "I" STATEMENTS**

It's easy to talk about the issues of others or respond with "we", "us", "the church". But for us to grow as disciples and build relationship we want to use "I" statements.

## **DON'T OVER-TALK**

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

## **FIGHT FOR RELATIONSHIP**

It's not 'if' conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but 'when'. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to that person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

# **MULTIPLYING DISCIPLESHIP**

## **HOW TO BRANCH YOUR SMALL GROUP**

Our ideal target size for our small groups is 6-12 participants with two co-leaders. This will keep the group conducive for great discussion and space to allow people to truly participate. As groups near the max for a group size, it is the leader's responsibility to bring that to the attention of their coach and/or staff. We will identify an organic delineation within the group, communicate the plan to the group, and in a set period of time, branch a new small group.

## **PLAN TO INTEGRATE 25-29 YEAR OLDS INTO LIFE GROUPS**

As a Young Adult ministry, our target isn't simply to have people come to Young Adults. We want to see young adults integrate fully into the church body. We have an intentional strategy to seek to accomplish this. For 18-24 year olds, our primary environment for discipleship as a church will be our Young Adult Ministry. When someone turns 25, we want to begin to assess their readiness to move into the Life Group system of our church. For our older groups, we will communicate our desire to see them eventually integrate and then connect you as a leader with our ADM (Adult Discipleship Ministries) liaison. We will make a concerted effort leading into each new groups season to assess readiness and start to push young adults towards life groups.

# 7 MINISTRY ESSENTIALS

The Seven Essentials are the guardrails that help us stay the course of being a disciple-making church and help us avoid making a wrong turn or go in a different direction. They are a dashboard to help us assess our ministries.



## 1. ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

JOHN 15:4-6

Every person in our church will have a personal relationship with God (father, son, and holy spirit) that transforms the way they live in the church, home, and world.



## 2. REACH THE LOST

LUKE 19:10 & MATTHEW 18:12-14

Every person in our church can and does share their faith with those who do not know Jesus, and we celebrate what God has done when people make decisions for Christ.



## 3. CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED

ACTS 2:24-47

Every person is connected to Jesus and connected to the congregation as a whole as they consistently worship together on the weekends. That they are connected in intentional relational environments for the purpose of becoming a disciple of Jesus.



## 4. CHASE THE STRAYS

EZEKIEL 34:4

Every person who has strayed from Christ will be valued, noticed and pursued. (Example: strayed from their relational environment, strayed from the weekend services, etc.)



## 5. SHEPHERD TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

COLOSSIANS 1:28

To help our leaders, and those who are in our groups, grow up through the stages of spiritual growth. We want to know where our leaders are spiritually and design trainings and intentional personal time with them on their journey towards spiritual parenthood and in some cases leadership.



## 6. IDENTIFY, EQUIP & RELEASE LEADERS

EPHESIANS 4:12

We will fulfill the command in Ephesians 4 to equip all God's people for service and release them to be all God has created them to be.



## 7. FUNCTION AS A TEAM

JOHN 17:21-23

We will be unified as it states in John 17, and that we will function and work as a team in submission to God's plan as a church.

# **FOLLOW UP RESPONSIBILITIES**

We believe that we, as a collective of individuals, make up Christ's church. As such, the whole body, as well as the individual, suffers when people stray and become disconnected. We want to be a ministry that encourages maturity in Christ and that Chases the Strays of those that begin to drift away. As a small group leader, you are the main vehicle of discipleship for many in our ministry. As such, it is your responsibility to be following up with those within your small group when they are missing from young adults. Additionally, we believe as a ministry that we are a part of the larger church, so we will chase and follow up with those within our ministry that have not been attending the weekend service. Consistent check-ins concerning church attendance, volunteer participation, and Young Adult participation are all part of the role of a Young Adult Small Group Leader.

If you are unable to connect with every person who is missing from Young Adults or weekend services, please contact staff members, who are committed to assisting with the follow up process, with the hope that none of our young adults 'fall through the cracks'.

## **WHEN SOMEONE MISSES YOUNG ADULTS ONCE**

Text them that night or the following day to check in with them. This helps them know they were seen and helps bring them back if they are straying

## **WHEN SOMEONE MISSES YOUNG ADULTS THREE TIMES IN A ROW**

When you notice a pattern, you can try to sit down with them. This helps continue to make movement toward them. Include your coach or a staff member in the process to help try to figure out if everything is okay and let them know they are missed.

## **WHEN SOMEONE ISN'T ATTENDING CHURCH - (Indicated on the Real Life App)**

Have a conversation with them relationally. Explain the importance of church engagement and encourage them to log attendance if they aren't. This reinforces the benefit of church and shows them it matters. If they simply aren't registering attendance, you can remind them of the value of that.

## APPENDIX:

### Transgender Scenarios

We recognize that we will have transgender young adults in our ministry. They are welcomed and loved but not affirmed in their belief that they were created/are the opposite gender. We will speak truth in love when it comes to this. When we do this relationally and kindly, we see young adults

- **Small Group:** They attend the small group of their biological sex
- **Gender Divided Activities:** They participate with their biological sex
- **Bathrooms:** They will use the bathroom of their biological gender or the family bathroom
- **Pronouns:** We choose not to call young adults by a pronoun that does not align with their biological gender. This is because it could look like (to them or other young adults) that we are condoning their actions and that we support them in their decision to be transgender
- **Nicknames/Changing Names:** We will call young adults by their legal name.
- **Dress Code:** Dress code must match biological sex.

### Gender Identity, Sexuality, and LGBT Movement in Small Group

When these topics come up in small group and the curriculum is not specifically directed to this, you will need to follow these steps below. In this, our heart is to affirm young adults that we are glad they are with us and to share with them the truth we believe. We treat this the same as we do any other sin.

1. **Represent a Biblical worldview** that God created two genders that are identified from birth and are designed to be in a heterosexual relationship with one man and one woman
2. Let the student know that **small group time is not for diving into these topics** but that they can be talked about further 1-on-1 with a staff member and you as the leader
3. **Follow up with a coach or staff member** after small group time and let them know about the conversation that took place
  - For a helpful resource read Understanding Homosexuality and Irreversible damage