

YouthMinistry **HANDBOOK**

for families 2024-25



GROWING
BETTER
TOGETHER



HEY THERE!

So you're the parent of a teenager, huh? Congratulations! You have one of the most important (and sometimes one of the most difficult) jobs on the planet.

We know your job isn't always easy, but here's what we want you to know: we're here to help, in any way we can. Sure, we're a "youth" ministry, but teenagers aren't the only people we care about. **We care about you too.**

No matter how connected (or not connected) you are with our church, this Handbook for Families will show you some of the ways we're trying to care for your kid *and* serve you at the same time.

Thanks for letting us be another voice in the life of your teenager. Your trust and partnership means a lot to us.

We can't wait to see what the future has in store!



Anna



peep the pic with one of my favorite leaders, Heather Thompson Day!
Photo cred: Haylee

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THE BASICS

OUR STAFF

ANNA BLAKE

Youth Pastor

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Anna's goal is to see young people involved, engaged and connected with the local church in worship, discipleship, and fun to lead them toward their next steps in becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Anna's passion is

to teach and equip Christ-centered leaders for the now and for the future.



MADDIE "GRAN" PAINTER

2023-24 Youth Ministry Intern

Volunteer LEADERS:



PAUL BLAKE



ERICA BODKER



RYAN SMITH



HAYLEE SHAMBLIN



JACOB TUCKER



CHERYL ROSS



HOLLY NORMAN



JAYDEN JOHNSON



WILL FORD



JACOB MCCOMAS



HANNAH DIETZ



HEATHER CARICO



BRAYDEN SCOTT



ANTHONY ROSS



VAL ADKINS



JACOB HUGHEY



WALKER PARSONS



SAVANNAH FORD



CARLY DARNELL



ALEIGHA TUCKER



MICKAYLAH SAUNDERS

So that's us! Let us know if there's anything you ever need. We're here to help!

OUR MINISTRY

OUR ENVIRONMENTS

There are three environments for teenagers in our ministry. Each one is designed to strategically invite teenagers on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders, and Jesus. Each environment is designed with every teenager in mind - the kid who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too.

EVENTS: Throughout the year, we'll host several big events designed to help teenagers connect with their peers, their leaders, and Jesus.

Events are often the environment where teenagers will walk into our ministry for the very first time.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS: Our weekly programs happen every single week. They're designed to help teenagers grow in four key areas. (We'll get to those in a minute.)

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS: Discipleship groups are the most important part of what we do. Discipleship happens every week in our programs, but the relationships built in groups extend outside the walls of our church. They're designed to connect every teenager with a consistent trustworthy adult and community of their peers.

OUR REGULAR PROGRAMMING

SUNDAY MORNING YOUTH SERVICE

Our middle school and high school (grades 6-12) meets every Sunday for games, worship, teaching, and discussion at Southridge Church at 9am and 11 am.

YTH NIGHTS in the Cafe at Southridge Church (FALL 2024)

HIGH SCHOOL (grades 9-12) **Sundays** from 6:30pm-8:00pm

MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 6-8) **Wednesdays** from 6:30pm-8:00pm

YTH NIGHTS are a time for students to grow better together!

(YTH NIGHTS run seasonally in the fall and spring semesters with SRC GROUPS)

YTH NIGHTS will be held MONTHLY in SPRING 2025! Stay updated at src.life/youth

OUR GOAL

It's hard sometimes to know when you're progressing in youth ministry, you know? Like, is anything we're teaching actually sinking in? Are teenagers really growing in their faith? That's why we decided to go ahead and define a primary goal for our ministry. It's the one thing that we, as a ministry team, want to achieve. It's 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 WANT TO HELP TEENAGERS TAKE STEPS TOWARD JESUS ON THEIR FAITH JOURNEY.

TAKING A STEP

Now, we say "take a step" or "next steps" 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. Any time a teenager takes a single step closer to *living out their faith in Jesus* on their faith journey (no matter where they are in their relationship with Him), we get to celebrate!



LIVE OUT THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for a teenager to live out their faith? We want to help them build the confidence to identify and talk about what they believe about God and make choices informed by their beliefs. We believe there are four things that both lead to, and are a result of, spiritual growth. We call these four things our *four spiritual habits*.

**1**

SPEND TIME WITH GOD

This is an obvious one, right? Sometimes it's the only spiritual habit we can name. After all, isn't "growing spiritually" synonymous with "spending time with God"? Well, not exactly, but it's still pretty important. After all, if teenagers are ever going to make their faith their own, they've got to start spending time with God on their own. It means opening the Bible on their own, having conversations with God on their own, and discovering how they best connect with God through worship *on their own*.

**2**

SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS

Engaging in healthy community can, and should, be a spiritual habit we help our students develop. But "healthy community" doesn't just mean hanging out with Christians. This spiritual habit is about growing in Christlike relationships with everyone.

**3**

USE THEIR GIFTS

Teenagers need to know that God made them unique, and special, and with really specific gifts, talents, passions, and resources. Then they need to use those gifts to love God, love others, and influence the world around them. Because when teenagers begin to discover who God made them to be, and then use their unique identity to love both God and others, they grow.

**4**

SHARE THEIR STORY

Teenagers need to learn how to talk about God. Sharing your story is the spiritual habit of making faith a regular, everyday, go-to topic of conversation in our lives. Because when we talk about God and His place in our story (or, more accurately, our place in His story), it helps us believe, understand, and to take ownership of our own faith.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward owning their faith by practicing one, or maybe even all four, of these spiritual habits on their faith journey.

DISCIPLING TEENAGERS

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 teenagers begin to own their faith, we’re really just talking about discipleship.** So what is discipleship? Here are three thoughts . . .

1. DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT LEARNING

Rather than asking, “What can we teach a teenager about God?” we ask, “*How can we help a teenager 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 spend time together outside of church in groups, events, and life-moments. Because **discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom - it’s modeled in everyday life.**

2. DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the Gospels, you don’t really see Jesus doing one-on-one discipleship. That’s because **discipleship happens best in a community of people.** That’s why we focus so much energy on getting teenagers plugged into consistent groups, why we emphasize the role of parents and families, and why we surround teenagers with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

3. DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

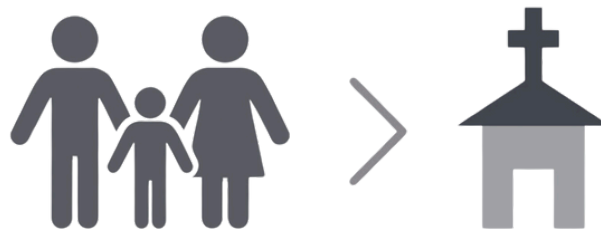
Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. And because we know discipleship takes time, **we want to put people in the lives of teenagers who are in it for the long-haul.** That’s why our ministry leaders don’t bail on their teenagers after a few months, but stick with them for several years - because it’s a process.



ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

As a parent, you are making a huge impact in your teenager's life. The impact you're making is far more significant than any impact we, their church, could ever hope to make. **You are the most important voice in your kid's life, both now and for a lifetime.**

But in all of our time caring for teenagers, we've learned something really important. (We even drew a picture to help you remember it.) We believe that, in every teenager's life, this is true: **your best chance at influencing your teenager's faith and future is to recruit other adults to influence them with you.**



Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark, authors of *Sticky Faith*, encourage parents to “develop a sticky web of relationships” for their kids. We love that idea!

Especially during the teenage years, when your kid is beginning to pull away from you in their search for independence, we want to come alongside you by creating a pool of trustworthy adults who can help you influence your teenager.

That's why our ministry is committed to discipleship groups. **Discipleship groups exist to connect your kid with an adult you can trust so you can better influence their faith and future.**

So, this year, engage with your kid's discipleship group leader. They can be a powerful ally for you and your family.

THE FINE PRINT

SAFETY GUIDELINES

The safety of your teenager is a priority for our ministry, so we wanted to get you in the loop on how we plan to care for and protect them.

WE SCREEN VOLUNTEERS

Before any volunteer is permitted to serve with us, they undergo a rigorous application and interview process, including a criminal background check.

WE SET BOUNDARIES

We have a set number of guidelines for our youth ministry staff and volunteers. As a parent, you can help us make sure your child is well-cared for by helping us maintain these boundaries.

- No staff member or volunteer should initiate a one-on-one meeting with a teenager without the knowledge and awareness of you, their parents or guardians.
- No staff member or volunteer should transport a teenager in a vehicle alone. If a teenager needs a ride, we must arrange to have another adult or teenager accompany them or plans must be made in advance with you, the student's parent or guardian.
- All staff members and volunteers must maintain appropriate physical boundaries with teenagers at all times.

WE REQUIRE PERMISSION FORMS

We will ask for your consent in order for your teenager to attend any event, retreat, or gathering outside of our regular programs.

WE REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Every staff member and volunteer is a mandated reporter, which means we are legally required to report any dangerous or potentially dangerous situations 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.

WE ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE

If you ever have a concern about your teenager's care or safety, please reach out to us. We're just a phone call or email away!



CONTACT US

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

This year, we'd love to stay in conversation with you. Here are a few ways we're hoping we can keep the lines of communication open...

EMAIL - Our SRC Youth Minsitry emails are packed with information on our ministry and on how you can be a more awesome parent of a teenager. Subscribe on our youth families webpage.

SOCIAL MEDIA - We post photos, videos, and updates from our ministry regularly. Find us at @srcwvyouth and join the families Facebook group (linked in families webpage).

DISCUSSION GROUPS - Throughout the year, we'll host a Discussion Group or two for parents. If you'd like an invitation, let us know!



SRC YOUTH FAMILIES
SRC.LIFE/YTHFAMILIES

BONUS:

Here's one of our favorite resources for Families!!!

SR
Youth



TEEN PARENTING RESOURCES
AXIS.ORG



Handbook for Families