

**JOURNEY
STUDENTS**

**LEADERSHIP
MANUAL**

2023-2024

DEAR JOURNEY STUDENTS LEADER,

Thank you for investing your time, attention, and passion into the lives of students through Journey Students. We fully expect and believe that we will see the returns and rewards of the time we invest in serving God and engaging students in the process of knowing and loving Jesus Christ.

Since you are an investor, we expect you to have ownership of this ministry. Take ownership of your small group and every opportunity you have to serve in different capacities. Lead, teach, and worship with conviction and passion. Love your students, care about their lives, and teach them to walk wisely in every way that you can.

You are a disciple-maker, not a role filler or just another warm body. We believe that God has uniquely gifted you to lead and teach students in a way that only you can. We cannot effectively engage students in the process of knowing Jesus Christ personally and grow students into mature disciples without you. Honestly, we do not want to do this without you! Welcome to the team.

Building the Kingdom together,

The Journey Students Staff

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SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

The backbone of our ministry is Bible-focused community groups which we call “small groups.” Real life-change and application takes place through the building of relationships and conversations that take place in small groups. We want small groups at Journey Students to be gender and age-appropriate groups centered on Biblical teaching and community.

We expect students to respect the leaders and their peers. We also expect that leaders respect their students and that they maintain control of the small group and use small group time wisely to direct students to God's word so they can become devoted followers of Jesus and have deep a relationship with God and others.

Make the Most of Large Group Gatherings:

Pre-Service

- Rally students - Students like to have a familiar place to connect with familiar people when they arrive. Discover your students' routine and roll with it! (Aim to arrive by 6:40pm to have time to hang out with students outside & in the Atrium.)
- Greet your students **BY NAME** when they arrive to Journey Students services and events

During the Service

- Sit with students - Shared experience is a great way to build relationships. Students will feel a sense of value and connectedness when leaders sit with them instead of congregating with other adults. Being together in service for worship & the message is just as important as your time with your students in small group.
- Keep the peace and engage in the program - We rely on our leaders to regulate cell phone usage, discourage side conversations, prevent disruptive coming and going, and be on the look-out for couples that are getting a little too friendly with one another. The students follow your lead. You make the energetic times more energetic, the funny parts funnier, the worship more authentic, and the messages more meaningful. Be an example to your students by modeling good practices like bringing your Bible and note-taking during the service.

Post-Service (Small Group)

- We never want to quench the Holy Spirit and ignore His leading. When the Holy Spirit is moving your group in a different direction than the typical agenda, please follow the Spirit!

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

Small Group Time:

We recommend the following small group meeting agenda because it works. Even though it's tried and true, it's just a recommendation. Every group and leader is unique so this should just be a launching point.

- 15-20 minutes - Group Fellowship (Talk about what's been going on since you were last together & discuss highs/lows from the past week.)
- 5 minutes - Icebreaker Questions (Come up with your own icebreaker question or ask your group one of the questions provided in the weekly small group discussion guide.)
- 20 minutes - Teaching & Discussion - Open in prayer, give context to the Bible story/topic that is being discussed, ask small group questions that are provided in the Journey app or questions that you have come up with independently, discuss next steps for the group, answer any questions students have, close by praying for one another. Don't talk too much during this time. Your goal is to have a good discussion, not preach to your group the whole time. Ask open-ended questions. Allow time for silence, even if it feels awkward.
- Pray - Close in prayer by asking the students if there is anything going on in their lives that they want prayer for. Either a leader can pray for the group or encourage a student to pray for the group.

Choose Your Own Adventure:

You know your small group better than anyone else. You have more one on one time with your small group than anyone else. This means you probably know what they are hungry for and what they need to learn. Take ownership of your group and lead them as God leads you. Feel free to lead a Bible study if you see your group is hungry to find God through His word. Lead a more open discussion with the questions listed on page 6 if you see that your small group members are going through hard times and need encouragement and counsel. Choose your own adventure and lead your small group in whatever way God is leading you!

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

When the lesson written by Journey Students leadership does not seem to engage students and spur on the conversation, you can ask some of these questions:

1. How has your time with God been this week? What have you learned?
2. What has inspired or encouraged you this week? What was your "high" this week?
3. What has been weighing on you this week? What was your "low" this week?
4. How have you struggled with sin or temptation this week?
5. How have you shared Christ with and/or shown God's love to others this week?
6. How can we pray for you or serve you (encouragement, advice, support) this week?
7. What are your hopes or goals for next week?

Journey offers every volunteer and partner a free subscription to RightNow Media. This is like the Netflix of Bible studies. This is a great resource for your own personal study time and for your small group. Most studies on this platform have a 10-15 minute teaching video and a leader's guide to help you lead a group study. You can utilize this tool to lead your small group as well. (Email chacity@journeycommunity.net to get access to RightNow Media.)

We ask that you are consistent with whatever you choose to do with your group. Students learn best through repetition and consistency. If you start a study in RightNow Media, make sure to finish it! After the study is finished your group can decide to begin another study, do the JS discussion questions for a period of time, or try something else. If you choose to do something different than the JSM discussion questions, please notify JS leadership so the staff can have an idea of what each small group is learning about.

Bookmark journeystudents.net/leaders for access the weekly small group discussion guide! (And we'll also include a printed copy on your clipboard each week.)

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

5 Steps to Small Group Order and Discipline

While a certain amount of distractions are to be expected for this age group, it is important to not let things get out of hand. Follow these 5 steps and you will be well on your way to have a group that knows and stays within appropriate behavioral boundaries

Clarity

Be clear on the purpose of your group and the expectations for your time together. Be specific and give them clear cues. For example, when you're ready to transition from hanging out to discussing the lesson, have someone pray out loud. This marks the transition from social to serious.

Consistency

Once you are clear about your expectations for your group, you must be consistent. "First time, every time" is a good rule to follow. If you ask someone to stop doing something, you should expect them to respond the first time you ask and every time you ask. If they don't, you need to be ready to impose consequences with consistency. Be gentle and kind, but it is important to let them know who is in control. If you are inconsistent, they will walk all over you.

Request

If someone does something out of line, the first thing you should do is request they change the inappropriate behavior. Also, inform them of the consequence (ie - re-seating) that will follow if they misbehave again. If they continue after that, they will be removed from the room. You do not want to have to do this, but will have to for the sake of the group.

Re-Seat

If you have a repeat offense, do not make a second request. The whole group needs to know that you mean business. Your next step is to kindly re-seat them next to you. Be sure the group and the individual know that you don't enjoy enforcing rules but that you are doing so because you really believe the discussion is important and you don't want anything to ruin it. You can even apologize for having to do it but don't back down.

Remove

This is the worst. If a student continues to disrupt the group, you will need to ask them to go into another room. If you have two leaders, one may go with them to keep them company. If there is only one leader with the group, text or call a JS staff member to go with the student to keep them company. Be sure to have a follow-up conversation with them afterward to make sure they understand why they were sent out. Tell them that you aren't mad at them and that you care about them and you hope they'll come back with a better attitude next week.

Note: Small groups are a privilege. If behavioral issues continue, a student may be asked to not return to a small group for a period of time until there has been a demonstrated change in attitude or behavior. Conflict resolution and reconciliation may also be required in order to rebuild trust and unity.

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

4 Essentials for Working with Co-Leaders

1.Trust

Trust is an essential element to teamwork. In order for there to be trust between co-leaders there has to be a relationship. Especially at the beginning, it is important for co-leaders to spend some time getting to know each other more than surface level. Carve out some time to share your story with your co-leader. As much as possible, keep each other up to speed and involved in each other's personal lives. Honor one another, bring out the best in one another, and make each other look good!

2.Communication

In order to work well together, there must be regular and clear communication. Discuss preferred methods of communication and decide what essentials need to be covered each week

3.Expectations

Unnecessary conflict and frustration can be avoided if you take some time to discuss expectations with your co-leader. What is your vision for the small group? How do you expect the students to act? What do you expect the students to learn? How do you expect to handle disruptions in small group? How much time do you expect to spend with the students outside of small group?

4.Roles

Each person is different and will likely end up playing a specific role when it comes to leading the group. Which leader is more organized? Will you share duties or take turns when it comes to leading discussions or keeping boundaries during small group?

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

Leading a Student to Christ

God may use you this year to lead one of your students to Christ! We want to make sure you can lead a student through that decision in a way that is clear and effective. Here are some tips and steps to follow:

- **Keep it simple** - The Gospel involves these things:
 - God created us to have a relationship with Him
 - Sin got in the way and separated us from God (Rom. 3:10,23)
 - We can't fix our broken relationship with God (Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:21)
 - Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to make us right with God (Rom 5:8, 6:23; 1 Cor 15:16-17)
- **Admit, believe, confess** - you can accept Jesus as Savior if you:
 - Admit that your sin separates you from God and you can't fix it
 - Believe that Jesus died for your sins and offers you eternal life
 - Confess your need for God to forgive you and be Lord of your life
- **What to do next**
 - Celebrate with them! Then tell them this isn't the end but just the beginning.
 - Let a JS staff member know of the student's decision so that the church can follow up with the student and celebrate with them

Sharing Your Story

Journey Students leaders should lead their small groups from a place of authenticity. Your personal testimony, life experiences, and relationship with God are important components of your ministry to students. It should be our goal to present what Jesus has done in our lives in such a clear, simple, and attractive way that those who hear about our life will not only want to know God, but they will also know how to begin a real and personal relationship with Him.

When leading students, you should be careful when sharing your story that past sin is not the focus, but the work of Christ in your life. **Avoid details when describing past sin, especially sexual sin, drugs, and alcohol. Keep the age of your students in mind as you share.**

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

4 Ways to Respond to Hurting Students

It's not always easy to know how to respond when a student shares that they are hurting. Leaders should never counsel a student of the other gender. If you find yourself in this situation find an appropriate leader and turn the conversation over to them. If a subject of crisis comes up while counseling a student, **do not promise confidentiality**. If something is illegal or can harm the student or someone else physically, emotionally or spiritually it cannot be held confidential.

The Journey Students staff is always here to support you but these four steps will go a long way to help you take the LEAP into caring for your students.

Listen

Find a place and time where you can talk. Bring along a co-leader or one of the student's trusted friends. Ask a lot of questions. Get to know the situation and the feelings involved. Let them vent. Make sure they feel known and accepted. Call to check in with them. Make yourself available.

Empathize

Put yourself in their situation and imagine how you would feel. Share with them what you would be thinking and feeling. Show them that you're with them and that you understand. You might feel that what they are going through is small in the grand scheme of things, but to them it is big. Do not belittle their situation. Instead, show up in a big way by empathizing with them.

Advise

Counsel them towards God's love and nearness. Always lead them to the Bible and remind them of the gospel. What biblical characters share a story similar to theirs? What passages can provide guidance, comfort, and hope? Teach them how to look things up. Encourage them to memorize and meditate on God's word.

Pray

Always pray with them and for them! Lead them to the source of hope, truth, and power. Teach them how to pray for themselves.

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

If a Student Threatens Suicide

Assess: If you are concerned someone is suicidal, ask the following questions directly:

1. Are you having suicidal thoughts?
2. If they say "YES" then ask, "Do you have a plan to take your life?"
3. If they say "YES" then ask, "Do you have the ability to carry out that plan?"

If they say "YES" to all 3 questions, immediately call 911.

If they say "NO" to having a plan to take their life, but are having suicidal thoughts:

- Inquire about their faith in Christ and share the gospel with them. Jesus is our living hope. Encourage them with truth from God's word, pray with them, set up a time to meet with them to develop a plan of care for support, and notify Journey Students staff of the student's situation.
- Meanwhile, ask them to commit that they will not harm themselves between now and your meeting or their meeting with Journey Students staff. Make sure they have a list of a couple of people to call on in case they are struggling.
- Encourage the student to speak to their parents or guardian about their struggle with mental health and/or ask the student if you or a Journey Students staff member can notify their parent
- Next Steps: Develop a plan for the student to grow their **relationship** with Jesus, help the student find **community**, encourage the student to begin **servicing** so they can focus less on themselves, **consider the burdens** that the student might be bearing and help them carry this weight.

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

One-on-One Interactions with Students:

- Leaders should always make attempts to include another leader or students in meetings and communication with students.
- Leaders may occasionally minister to students on an individual basis. In this rare event, leaders should conduct one-to-one meetings with individual students at a location where others are present.
- Leaders should not visit a student in the student's home without a parent present.
- Leaders should not host students in their homes without parental consent and others present.
- Leaders should completely avoid one-to-one meetings or communications with students of the opposite sex.
- **Leaders, no matter their age, are not permitted to date or engage in personal, romantic relationships with students of any age.**

Transportation:

- Leaders should have verbal permission from a student's parent or guardian before providing transportation.
- Students should be transported directly to their destination. (Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided.)
- Leaders should avoid all physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while transporting students.
- Drivers should always obey traffic laws and be sure everyone riding in the car is wearing a seatbelt.

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

Mandatory Reporting

Leaders at Journey are required to report suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker to an immediate supervisor on staff with Journey Students.

Who Must Report? Georgia has a specific list of people who must report, including "child service organization personnel." That definition includes employees and volunteers with any organization that provides "care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children." Thus, organizations must train both their employees and any volunteers.

Child Care Centers: Employees and volunteers at these centers are mandated reporters.

Camps: Camps are included in the definition.

Mentoring Organizations: Most mentoring organizations will fit in the statutory definition.

Schools: The statute specifies that school administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers and psychologists are mandated reporters.

Church Programs: The statute does not specifically list church personnel, but the vast majority of church programs fit within the statute's definition. There is a specific exception for clergy who learn about abuse solely during "confession or other similar communication required to be kept confidential under church doctrine or practice."

What Must You Report? Georgia requires the reporting of "suspected child abuse," including physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and endangering a child.

- **Endangering a Child:** The statutory definition sets out several specific actions:
- **Cruelty to Children:** Depriving a child of sustenance and causing excessive physical or mental pain.
- **Domestic Violence:** Allowing a child to witness a felony, battery, or family violence battery.
- **Drug Manufacture:** Allowing children to be present during the manufacture of methamphetamine.
- **DUI:** Driving under the influence of alcohol or other substances with a child under 14 in the car.
- **Abandonment:** A parent or guardian is guilty of abandonment when he or she "willfully deserts a child or willfully surrenders physical possession of a child without making adequate arrangements" for continuing care.
- **Prenatal Abuse:** Personnel must report "exposure to chronic or severe use of alcohol or the unlawful use of any controlled substance" that leaves effects on a newborn.

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

Mandatory Reporting

- Neglect: The reporting statute does not define neglect, but the standard in custody proceedings is "failure to provide proper . . . control necessary for a child's physical, mental, or emotional health or morals."
- Mental/Emotional Abuse: Causing "excessive . . . mental pain." Custody statutes describe "emotional abuse" as causing "any mental injury to [a] child's intellectual or psychological capacity as evidenced by an observable and significant impairment in such child's ability to function with a child's normal range of performance and behavior," or that create a risk of such impairment as diagnosed by a physician or mental health professional. Severe cases of cyberbullying would fit into this category.
- Lack of Supervision: Neglect includes "failure to provide a child with adequate supervision necessary for such child's well-being." There are no specific statutes or regulations, but the state Department of Family and Children's Services has issued some guidelines: (1) children 8 years old and under should not be left unsupervised; (2) children between the ages of 9 and 12 can be left alone for less than two hours; and (3) children 13 years and older may be left alone and serve as a babysitter for up to 12 hours.
- Physical Abuse: You must report physical injury caused "by other than accidental means." There is an exception for corporal punishment that does not cause physical injury.
- Sexual Abuse: The statute requires the reporting of sexual abuse and includes a long and exhaustive list of specific acts.
- Teen Sexual Activity: The age of consent in Georgia is 16, but there is an exception for consensual acts between a minor who is at least 14 and someone not more than four years older than the minor.
- Sexual Exploitation: Personnel must report anyone who allows a child to participate in sexual conduct or "lewd exhibition of the genitals" in film or photographs.
- Sexting: The sexual exploitation law covers "sexting" pictures of a minor, regardless of the age of the person taking or sending the photograph. The law does not apply to a minor who "takes or possesses" a picture of himself or herself, but does apply to anyone who transmits it.

STUDENT SAFETY, CARE, AND COUNSEL

Mandatory Reporting

When Must You Report? Georgia requires a report no later than 24 hours “from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected abuse has occurred.” That standard is lower than the old “reasonable cause” standard. Now, any time you even suspect abuse, you must report it.

Where Must You Report? The statute requires a report to the Division of Family and Children Services. That agency has a statewide hotline at 1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-4453).

The statute also allows a mandated reporter to make a report to a supervisor. The supervisor cannot change anything in the report, but may add additional information.

Notify Student Pastor (Patrick Gallemore) immediately upon hearing of abuse. A Journey staff member will report to DFACS upon your behalf.

Why Must You Report? Knowingly and willfully failing to report suspected abuse is a misdemeanor.

Every Journey staff member is a mandated reporter and has completed courses with MinistrySafe to identify and understand signs of grooming and sexual abuse. Journey takes abuse and the protection of the children and students in our care very seriously.

All information and data provided above was published by The Taylor English Lawfirm on January 1, 2019.

MINISTRY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

What We Believe

God: God is the eternal creator of all things (Genesis 1:1). He is all-powerful (Job 37:1-5), all-knowing (Romans 11:33-34), and sovereign over everything He has created (Psalm 115:3, Daniel 4:34-35). He has always existed and will never cease to exist (Psalm 102:25-27). There is nothing created by Him that compares to His infinite glory (Psalm 19). He is holy and righteous by nature and cannot act outside of His character (1 John 1:5, Psalm 18:30, Psalm 30:4, Psalm 71:15).

Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Son of God, sent by the Father as a man, yet still fully God. Jesus was born of a virgin (Luke 1:26-35), lived a perfect life (1 John 3:5, 1 Peter 2:22) died a gruesome death (Mark 15), was raised from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), and is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3) making intercession for us (Hebrews 7:24-25). It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus that believers find life in Him (Romans 6:3-4). We believe that Jesus will one day come again just as He left at His ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the Counselor/Advocate/Helper (John 14:26) sent by God to live within believers once they believe in Christ as Savior (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Holy Spirit provides wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to believers (1 Corinthians 2:12-14) and is a key player in the process of life-change in the life of a believer (Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 3:18). He guides believers into all truth (John 16:13) and gives power to believers to be witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8).

Bible: The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. The Lord has exalted His Word above His name (Psalm 138:2), and because God cannot lie, we believe every word He has said to be true (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:17-18). The entire Bible is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We elevate the teachings of the Bible above our assumptions, ideas, and experiences, and we desire to faithfully teach and live by it.

Sin and Salvation: All of humanity is born into sin. Humanity's sin originated in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Genesis 3). Since then, all people have been eternally separated from God because of original and personal sin. We were dead in these sins, without the hope of being reconciled to God. But God, in His love and mercy, sent Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can be fully reconciled to God, but not through anything we have done. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and His grace is a gift. Nothing we have done could have earned us His saving grace (Ephesians 2:1-10). (continued on next page)

MINISTRY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

What We Believe

Sin and Salvation cont. Now, as believers in Jesus, we are to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1). We are to conform to the image of Jesus throughout the course of our lives (Romans 8:29). This process begins at salvation and does not end until we are with Him (Romans 6:22). We are not saved by works, but God expects and even commands believers to live in light of the gift of grace that we have received.

Hot Topics

Marriage: We believe marriage was instituted by God at the beginning of human history (Genesis 2:18-25). We hold to the biblical definition of marriage as shown in Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5, which both state, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Marriage is good and desirable in its proper context, and it is a picture of Christ and His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-30).

Sex: We believe that God created sex as consummation of the marriage relationship that promotes physical intimacy and togetherness. A man and wife become one through sex, and in a marital context sex is good and desirable (Song of Solomon, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5). Outside of the context of a marriage relationship is where sexual expression become sexual immorality. Fornication (sex before or outside of marriage), adultery, homosexuality, and lust all fall into this category of sexual immorality as recounted in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Matthew 5:27-28). As believers, we should abstain from these things (Ephesians 5:1-3). According to Paul, sexual sins are unlike others because sexual sins are committed against your own body, which is considered the temple of God for believers (1 Corinthians 6:17-20). In caring for someone who has dealt with sexual issues, approach them with love and grace, and help them to focus on the redemption that Christ provides for them. Their worth lies in being created by and belonging to God. While they cannot "go back," they do have the opportunity to begin again with Christ.

MINISTRY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

Hot Topics

Divorce: Divorce is very prevalent in our world today. We believe that divorce, in nearly every circumstance, is painful for all those who are involved. The Bible implies that God is adamantly against divorce (Malachi 2:13-16) and this is reinforced through Jesus' teaching on divorce (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:6-9). Sexual unfaithfulness on the part of a spouse, according to Jesus, is acceptable grounds for the allowance of divorce. There are other extenuating circumstances (abuse, domestic violence, etc.) that are not stated in Scripture but are generally accepted as grounds for separation at some level. In caring for those going through or affected by a divorce, one should respond with love and grace while acknowledging the biblical truth behind the pain.

Homosexuality: The practice of homosexuality is one of the most hotly debated topics in the world today. We believe that God's Word speaks against homosexual relationships and practices (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). While we do not hold to the Old Testament civic laws in dealing with this and several other issues, we do believe that unrepentant individuals who engage in homosexuality, along with all other unrepentant sinners, will face the "due penalty for their error" (Romans 1:26-32). Believers are not to engage in this practice. In caring for someone who struggles with homosexuality, approach them with grace and love, and **refrain from casting judgment** while still communicating the truth of God's Word to them graciously.

Pornography: Because of major technological increases, porn has become much more accessible to anyone with internet access. While the Bible does not speak specifically about pornography, lust and selfishness are both clearly addressed. Sex was created by God as an expression of love, togetherness, and intimacy between a husband and wife, but porn has taken sex and perverted it, turning it into a one-sided, selfish, self-destructive avenue for empty pleasure. Our bodies are temples of God, meant to be used to glorify Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Romans 12:1-2). Indulging in porn is first and foremost an act of lust (Matthew 5:27-28) rooted in selfish desire (James 1:13-15). In dealing with someone struggling with porn, you must recognize that some of the biggest deterrents for a student asking for help are shame, guilt, and feeling as if they are the only ones who struggle with this. Approach them with care, give them the truth, and place them in a setting where they can be accountable to someone. (Check out xxxchurch.com for more resources on dealing with pornography.)

MINISTRY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

Hot Topics

Cursing/Crude Joking: Throughout the Bible, there is major emphasis put on the words we say, mainly because what we say is an overflow of what is in our hearts (Matthew 15:18-20). James says that if a man can tame what he says, he can tame his whole body (James 3:2-12). Paul says, "Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving" (Ephesians 5:4). As believers, this kind of talk isn't supposed to come out of our mouths (Colossians 3:8). As we strive to become more like Jesus (Colossians 3:10), our minds are to be renewed (Romans 12:2) and our hearts are to be made clean (Psalm 51:10). As our minds and hearts are changed, cursing and crude joking must fall away. A guard must be set over our mouths and our hearts as we continue in our relationship with Christ (Psalm 141:3-4).

Bullying: Verbal bullying has increasingly become an issue today. As stated above, what we say is an overflow of what is in our hearts (Matthew 15:18-20). Because we are believers in Jesus, what we say to other people should reflect the love we have for God and for them (Matthew 22:36-40). We must realize that the words we say have power to build up or to tear down (Proverbs 18:21, James 3:8-9). As we follow Jesus, bullying and verbal abuse shouldn't be associated with us at all. We should exhort one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24), urge each other to stay away from sin (Hebrews 3:13), build each other up in grace and be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:29-32, 1 Thessalonians 5:11), and count others as more significant than ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4).

Alcohol: We believe that in and of itself, alcohol is not an evil thing. However, alcohol is easily misused and abused, leading to drunkenness, which we firmly stand against. Paul tells believers not to get drunk with wine but to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Drunkenness leads to unwise and foolish decisions along with a host of sins (Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-35). Also, for students (and anyone else under 21) it is illegal to drink. In his letters, Paul tells believers to submit to government authority and leadership (Romans 13:1, Titus 3:1), leading us to follow this mandate on alcohol consumption. Overall, our lives should be lived to glorify Christ, and we must ask ourselves whether or not our alcohol consumption will hinder us from doing so.

MINISTRY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

Hot Topics

Drugs: We believe that drug usage should not be found in the life of a believer. As with alcohol consumption, there are laws that make drug use illegal, and as believers we should follow these mandates (Romans 13:1, Titus 3:1). Aside from that, the Bible does not speak specifically about drugs, though there are several reasons we should not engage in drug use. The first is that Christ has set us free from our former way of life (Ephesians 2:2-5), and we are not intended to walk according to the ways of our flesh (Romans 8:5-8). Second, Paul says not to be mastered by anything, and drug use will eventually master you (1 Corinthians 6:11-12). Third, we are to honor God with our bodies because our bodies are His temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20). Lastly, we are to live wisely, having been transformed by the renewing of our minds, living out our faith with integrity (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 5:15-17, Psalm 25:21). In the end, we must ask whether or not our drug use will help others to see Jesus in us and whether it truly glorifies God.

JCC LEADERSHIP AGREEMENT

Thank you for your interest in serving as a leader at Journey Community Church. By showing interest in a leadership role in one of our ministries, you are assuming a position of authority and influence.

Leadership is influence, pure and simple. As a leader, the people of Journey will see you as an example and take what you say seriously. As a leader, your lifestyle inside and outside the church is part of the equation. How you present yourself at church should be consistent with how you live your life outside of church.

While many leaders would consider some of this to be common sense, we live in a culture that requires us to make some things extremely clear. John 1:14 tells us that Jesus was full of grace AND truth. As leaders, we hold tight to the truth while offering grace to those who struggle to understand it. 1 Timothy 3 tells us that anyone looking to lead needs to be above reproach. This means that most accusations brought against a leader could be dismissed quickly because we have set boundaries on ourselves for protection.

Please hear our hearts. If there is an issue with any of these areas, conversations that lead towards reconciliation are our goal. We desire for any leader (including staff) to walk towards repentance of sin instead of hiding sin like Adam and Eve did in Genesis 3. We want our accountability to be mutual. God calls us to Himself and continues to call us even in our sin.

Here are several areas we believe we need to be extremely clear about:

Spiritual Growth: As leaders, it will be easy to get caught up in "doing" the work of ministry and neglect your personal spiritual growth. We cannot take people where we are not going ourselves. We believe the Bible is the standard for everything we do. Spiritually speaking, we ask that these statements are true in your life:

- You have a real, personal relationship with Jesus.
- You are committed to consistently building your relationship with Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, worship, fasting, and giving.
- Your family remains a top priority as part of a balanced spiritual life.

*If you are struggling to maintain a balance or beginning to feel burnt out, please talk to the leadership in your ministry area.

JCC LEADERSHIP AGREEMENT

Sexual Behavior: Because our culture has made sex such a prominent aspect of our lives, it's important that we keep God's Word as the standard for this area. We believe the Bible teaches that sex was created by God as an expression of intimacy between a man and woman committed to each other within the context of marriage. Leaders who embrace lifestyles or behaviors that are different from this teaching will not be able to lead by example in this area. Here are several circumstances that will keep you from being able to lead at this time:

- If you are not married and involved in a sexual relationship.
- If you are not married and living with a member of the opposite sex.
- If you are married and involved in a relationship outside of your marriage.
- If you are involved in an LGBTQ lifestyle.
- If you are actively engaging in pornography.

**In all these instances, we ask that you seek godly counsel quickly.*

Substance Abuse: Our culture is continuing to find ways to cope with life situations and we want to make sure that our leaders do not allow themselves to be controlled by substances other than the Spirit of God. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to not get drunk but be filled with the Holy Spirit. While most think only about alcohol in this verse, it's clear that there are other substances that can have drastic consequences on our lives. Here are some circumstances that will keep you from being able to lead at this time:

- If you have recently been arrested or convicted of drug or alcohol offenses.
- If you have recently used illegal drugs or legal drugs beyond prescription.
- If you are regularly consuming alcohol to the point of intoxication.

**As leaders, we ask that you refrain from posting on social media about alcohol as there is no way for others to know if this is your first or tenth drink.*

Social Media: Because of the prominence of social media platforms, people will quickly look to your social media accounts as a reflection of your lifestyle and leadership. Many people in our groups use social media to stay connected and informed with each other. It is important that the words and images we use be honoring to God. Colossians 3 tells us that whatever we do, we should do as unto God and not men. Here are some circumstances that will keep you from being able to lead at this time:

- Posting images/videos/words that are profane in nature.
- Reposting from sources that are known for being profane in nature.
- Posting dishonoring comments about other people.

JCC LEADERSHIP AGREEMENT

Our hope in all of this is that you will be able to effectively lead the group of people God has called you to influence. We want your influence to be positive and pointing to Christ as the hope of the world. We are available for a conversation on any issue you believe needs to be discussed. Again, we want to be like Jesus who was full of grace and truth. We want to live by 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. We are new creations created to be ambassadors of reconciliation.

Do you agree to the expectations outlined above and agree to abide by them for the duration of your service at Journey Community Church?

**To complete this form and agree to these standards, visit the Leader's page on our app or at journeystudents.net/leaders to sign a digital copy of this document.*

JOURNEY STUDENTS LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Journey Students Leadership Manual. I have read this manual in its entirety and understand the importance of the matters set forth within its pages. I agree to follow and abide by the policies and guidelines during my service at Journey Community Church. Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended or revised. As changes are made public, I understand that it is my responsibility to review changes and adapt accordingly.

Furthermore, I understand the expectations set forth for Journey Students leaders and volunteers. I agree to follow and abide by the policies and guidelines for my personal relationship with Jesus, the leadership of students, my partnership with Journey Community Church, and my support for Journey Students leadership.

- I acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in my life and I have a personal relationship with Him
- I am committed to growing and maturing in my relationship with God
- I am committed to choices and a lifestyle that are both Godly and above reproach
- I will be "ALL IN" at Journey. This includes regular attendance on Sunday morning and/or a J-Group, support of the mission/vision of our church, and a faithful giver of time, resources, and money to Journey AND attend at least one Access Group or Journey Students Bible study per school year
- I will have an "Investor Mentality" as I serve ("This is my ministry and I will help make it better and better. I am bought in and I am investing my time, not spending my time.")
- I am making a commitment to Journey Students through the end of the 2023-2024 school year (August 2023-May 2024)
- I will attend all programs that I am involved in each week. If I have a conflict, I will let a Journey Students staff member know as early as possible. If I cannot fulfill my commitment and serve on a consistent basis (as least 3 out of 4 weeks a month) I understand that I must remove myself as a Journey Students leader.

**To complete this form and agree to these standards, visit the Leader's page on our app or at journeystudents.net/leaders to sign a digital copy of this document.*