



# WELLSPRING STUDENTS

*Ministry Handbook*

# A MESSAGE FROM *our pastors*



**Hello Wellspring Students Team!**

**Thank you for being a part of such an integral serve team here at Wellspring. Every Sunday, or Event, you have a great opportunity to serve God by serving others with your passions, kindness, talents and testimony.**

**When you come prepared to notice teenagers, build a relationship with them and mentor them toward a genuine relationship with God- you are leading the way and helping students to encounter God and build a firm foundation on His Word.**

**Leading others in this way is not only an honor but a great responsibility. Thank you for giving it your all and for realizing that every Sunday is **SOMEONE'S SUNDAY** where they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.**

**As you help to create purposeful environments and interactions here at Wellspring, you are greatly impacting the Kingdom within the Next Generation.**

**Thank you and God bless you,**

*Pastor Joey + April Adkins*

# 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 stage in their lives when 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 Team Wellspring 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.





# WHY WE EXIST

To encourage and lead students to become fully engaged followers of Jesus.

# OUR PURPOSE

To create an environment that challenges students to grow spiritually through discipleship and community.

# GET TO KNOW

## *Our Ministry*

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## WEEKLY PROGRAMS

### MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM AND 11:15AM

Our middle school ministry (grades 6-8) meets every Sunday for games, worship, teaching, and small groups.

### HIGH SCHOOL | WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30PM

Our high school ministry (grades 9-12) meets every Wednesday for fun, worship, teaching, and small groups.

## OUR ENVIRONMENTS

The environment for teenagers in our ministry is intentional. It is designed to strategically invite teenagers on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders, and Jesus. Our environment is designed with every teenager in mind - the kid who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too. Our environments include:

- Events
- Weekly Programs
- Small Groups



# WE HELP STUDENTS OWN THEIR 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.*

## 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. 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, helps us understand, and helps us take ownership of our own faith.

# WE DISCIPLE STUDENTS

*Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." 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 our small groups spend time together outside of church. Because discipleship isn't taught in a classroom - it's modeled in everyday life.

## 3. 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 small 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 small group 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 part of our team, you are making a huge impact in the lives of the teenagers in our ministry. But do you know who's making an even bigger impact in the lives of those teenagers? Their parents.

We believe that, in every teenager's life, this is true: the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.

Jim Burns, author of *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry*, says it this way: "Long after students stop attending youth groups, they are still connected to their families."

No matter what, a teenager's family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives. So doesn't it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in a teenager's life in order to influence their faith?

That's why our ministry is committed to serving, supporting, partnering with, and engaging the parents of the teenagers in our ministry.

***As a volunteer, caring for teenagers isn't your only responsibility. Engaging with parents is part of your job, too.***





# SERVING POSITIONS

- Student night volunteer
- High school small group leader
- Middle school small group leader

# BACKGROUND CHECK

A background check will be performed for every position. This is for the safety of you and the teenagers.

# SMALL GROUP LEADER

## Guidelines

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### RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEENAGERS

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a teenager's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for small group leaders to build strong relationships with the teenagers they lead.

You can't make a teenager own their faith, but you can build a relationship with that student that allows you to love them and influence their faith.

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

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

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

### THE EXPECTATIONS

- Love Jesus
- Love teenagers
- Complete Wellspring Culture
- Attend our weekly programs
- Connect with teens outside of church
- Engage the parents of your teens
- Plan one service project for your small group each year
- Attend all special events for teens
- Attend all events, meetings, and gatherings for Team Wellspring volunteers

# THE GREETER TEAM

## Guidelines

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### SET THE TONE

Our greeters are the first people teenagers meet when they arrive and the last people they see before they leave, so they've got a pretty big responsibility!

Our greeters have the ability to set the tone for the kind of day teenagers are going to have when they walk through our doors. It's not just about signing them in, it's about making them feel seen, cared for, and liked.

### MAKE THEM FEEL WELCOME

Greeters win when they make a teenager feel welcome and liked. An awesome greeter has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, teenagers are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders, and to connect with God.

## THE EXPECTATIONS

- Love Jesus
- Love teenagers
- Love smiling
- Show up to your assigned service
- Make sure every teenager is greeted with a smile.
- Make sure every teenager signs in
- Identify first-time guests and introduce them to a small group leader
- Attend all events, meetings, and gathering for Team Wellspring volunteers



# SAFETY GUIDELINES

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

## ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

- Do not set up one-on-one meeting with teenagers without the knowledge and consent of their parents.
- Never transport a teenager anywhere alone. If a teenager needs a ride, arrange to have another adult or teenager ride with you. If that's not possible, say no.
- If you do plan to meet, meet them in a public place (i.e., Starbucks), and it must be a student of the same gender.
- If a student comes to your home, at least two leaders should always be present.
- Please communicate with the staff about any organized activities or events you host that represent Wellspring Students.

## MAINTAIN PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

- Always maintain healthy and safe physical boundaries with teenagers.
- Leaders should never have a personal relationship with a student of the opposite sex or share personal information.
- Student leaders should never be pursuing a romantic relationship with another student.
- If you have any questions about what is or is not appropriate, talk to a member of our staff.



# SAFETY GUIDELINES

## (CONTINUED)

### LOG ELECTRONIC CONVERSATIONS

- If you find yourself in the midst of a sensitive conversation with a teenager, keep in mind that words and intentions can be misconstrued - intentionally or unintentionally.
- Any time you are engaged in a serious conversation with a teenager, log your conversations (take screen shots, save text messages and emails).
- Texting should be done in a group and not one-on-one.

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

### GRADUATED SENIORS

*Once a student has graduated high school, we invite them to join our Young Adult ministry at Wellspring. For six months after graduation, they will be encouraged to serve in middle school or Wellspring kids.*



# CODE OF CONDUCT

## ALL VOLUNTEERS

- **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. **(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 teenagers, parents, other volunteers, and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love. **(1 Thessalonians 5:13-15)**

## SMALL GROUP LEADERS

- **Be like Jesus:** More than any other volunteer role, small group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of teenagers. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every small group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, 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.

## SAFETY

- **Fire Alarm:** Remain calm, gather all students, and exit the building proceeding to the outside area by the pond. Parents will meet the team at the outside location for pick-up.
- **Power Outage:** Remain calm, gather all students, and exit the building proceeding to the outside area by the pond. Parents will meet the team at the outside location for pick-up.



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