

Youth Ministry Handbook for Keltys First Baptist Church

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I. The Ministry's Purpose and Function

A. Our Purpose

Common Ground Youth Ministry is an existing ministry within the confines of Keltys First Baptist Church. Our department seeks to minister solely to youth within the confines of the local church. (We define youth as anyone between 6th and 12th grade.) Our purpose statement seeks to clarify why this department exists.

Our Purpose Statement: *Common Ground Youth Ministry of Keltys First Baptist Church exists to cultivate students to (1) Know God by loving Him with all of their heart, (2) Grow in Christ Jesus through discipleship and fellowship, and (3) Reach lost students with the gospel of Jesus Christ by going into our world.*

This purpose statement can be broken down into three key words for easy recognition. These three terms are most often cited and seen. They simply reflect the previous detailed statement.

TO KNOW (To Know Christ Through Worship)

TO GROW (To Grow in Christ Through Discipleship and Fellowship)

TO GO (To Go with Christ Through Ministry and Missions)

We exist to teach students to fulfill the great commandment and the great commission. That alone is our purpose. Every event that we entertain, every class that we teach, and every plan that we make will have one of these purposes in mind.

B. Our Name

The name Common Ground was chosen from Acts 4:32 to identify our youth ministry as a place where everyone is accepted and loved regardless of age, race, school, family status, or any other factor. We desire to make Common Ground a place where students WANT to be so we can more effectively carry out the above-mentioned purpose.

C. The Role of the Youth Pastor

The Youth Minister is the hired leader and director of the Youth Ministry. Keltys First Baptist Church has entrusted one person to be the responsible party for the entire youth ministry. He is the final authority within the department. He reports to the Pastor and the entire church body. ***His main role is to assist teenagers in becoming more like Christ.*** The church did not hire him to do the work of the saints, but rather to teach and equip the saints for ministry.

II. Policy on Adult “Dream Team”

Common Ground Youth Ministry believes that no one man can fully minister to a growing group of teenagers. Therefore, it is necessary for the success and fulfillment of our mission that the ministry has an adult team to assist the youth minister. This adult team desires to be comprised mainly of youth parents, college students, or willing adults who can assist in the ministry. It should be noted that this team has not been created for the purpose of becoming the leadership or taking over control of the ministry. Rather, these individuals should see their roles as servants. This is simply a way for them to participate in ministry. The adult team assists the Youth Minister to help the church and ministry fulfill the command of Jesus. This is a great opportunity for church members to use their gifts and talents to serve the Lord and have the privilege to see teenagers become followers of Christ. Below are the requirements and purposes of the adult “Dream Team”:

Criteria for the adult “Dream Team”: ***Who are we looking for?***

1. A member of our church in good standing
2. A baptized believer of Jesus Christ
3. An active member of a Sunday School class
4. The desire to grow in the Lord and encourage teenagers to do the same

Purpose of the adult “Dream Team”: ***Why do we need them?***

1. Encourage young people to follow Christ by modeling your Christian walk. (I want to be able to point to you and say to a teenager, “Follow them as they follow Christ”.)
2. Be a visible and active supporter of the youth minister and ministry.
3. Assist in the work and preparation of the ministry.
4. Be a spiritual mentor and guide for the youth at Keltys First Baptist Church.

Expectations of the adult “Dream Team”: ***What are we wanting from them?***

1. Attend and be involved in as many Wednesday night youth worship services or Sunday School meetings as possible.
2. Be ready to counsel young people after services or whenever necessary.
3. Assist and help plan and implement youth activities.
4. Be ready to lead, teach, or assist in prayer, small group, or discipleship ministries.
5. Be willing to commit to at least one-year services, with the possibility of renewal.
6. Attend regular meetings.

The adult “Dream Team” will be chosen on an annual basis by the Youth Pastor with the support of the Pastoral Staff.

III. Policy on Youth Leadership Team

The third key element of the Common Ground Youth Ministry's purpose statement asserts that youth are to eventually get to the point where they "go" with Christ. That is, they come to the place where they are active ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that the leadership team can aid in students taking a role in leadership. They are not an elected body to govern the group. Rather, they exist to head up different areas of ministry. They are the core group who is ready and willing to lead ministry themselves.

This group also acts as a link between the youth minister and the students. They exist to inform the youth pastor of needs and assist in ministering to the body. The following criteria and job descriptions have been given to clarify the role of students on this team.

Criteria of the youth leadership team: ***Who are we looking for?***

Senior High students who are:

1. active members in our youth ministry.
2. willing to live out their testimony in front of other teenagers.
3. saved, baptized, and are members of our church in good standing.
4. ready to begin ministry.

Purpose of the youth leadership team: ***Why do we need them?***

1. Be a link to the youth minister from the teenagers.
2. Encourage and pray for other teenagers in the group.
3. Be an example to other teenagers by living out the Christian life.

Expectations of the youth leadership team: ***What do we want from them?***

1. Give feedback and suggestions to the youth minister.
2. Communicate and promote youth functions to other teenagers.
3. Plan and help carry out youth activities when necessary.
4. Be in a discipleship group and eventually lead one themselves.
5. Come to regular meetings.
6. Commit to one year of service with possibility of renewal.

The Youth Leadership Team will be chosen on an annual basis by the Youth Pastor with the support of the Pastoral Staff.

IV. Policy on Youth Outings and Trips

We believe that fellowship is a key to growing a healthy youth ministry. Therefore, we attempt to create circumstances where youth can spend a quantity of time together. Quantity of time together produces a quality of love within our group. With this in mind, we will schedule many outings and annual trips.

Outings are defined as those ventures outside of our church that are within our city or surrounding area. These are one-day events and do not require an overnight stay. Any student may go on an outing. All are welcome, especially outsiders, to all outings.

Trips are defined as ventures that take more than one day and do require an overnight stay. Such trips are announced in ample time for all participants to prepare. Since trips will involve a larger amount of responsibility and money, students must reach certain criteria to qualify.

A. Criteria for Overnight Trips

On designated youth trips, all youth who are planning on going must meet three specific requirements. (Note: Students going on a trip are not required to be members of our church. In fact, there are times when students are encouraged to invite lost or unchurched friends. Still, no matter who the student is, they must prove themselves by these criteria:

1. They must attend Wednesday night worship service at least 50% of the time (2 out of 4 services) beginning 3 months prior to the event. For example, if we are going to a conference in July, the student must attend 50% of the Wednesday night worship services in April, May, and June.
2. The student must attend at least 50% of Sunday School services for the same above-mentioned 3 months.
3. The student must participate in all fundraisers.
4. The student must have a medical release/liability release from on file at least one week prior to the departure of the event.

These requirements are designed to better prepare the student spiritually for each event, to bolster fellowship within the group, and to hasten a sense of responsibility to the church.

Every trip, without exception, is underwritten to some degree financially by our church. This allows the cost of the student to be exceptionally lower than normal. Students, therefore, have a certain responsibility to be good stewards of the gracious financial support of Keltys First Baptist Church. Attendance and participation are visible signs to prove an awareness of the gifts given by the church.

Any student meeting these requirements is welcome to enjoy the benefits of Keltys First Baptist Church Youth Ministry trips. **No last minute additions can be added on overnight trips.** These last minute additions will lack the necessary spiritual mindset needed for our trip's purpose as well as a possible hindrance of fellowship. Once again, any youth is welcome on our trips, but they must follow these criteria in order to go with us.

NOTE: Some at this point may question our outreach. I assure you that outreach is foremost in our minds. But unplanned students desiring to "come along" at the last minute have, in my experience, only desired a good time. They often deter the spiritual mindset of those involved, and due to a lack of understanding, can hinder our group. Outreach is emphasized in our regularly planned "outings". Trips are considered major events and are planned with a unique purpose in mind.

B. New and Transfer Students

New students that may join the church are still welcome to join our trips. But, in saying this, the student must still prove themselves by the 3 criteria *as best as possible*. For example, Sam's family moves to Keltys three weeks before a July conference. Sam desires to become an active member of Common Ground and expresses the desire to go to the conference with us. He is welcome, provided there is room. But, he must complete as many of the 3 criteria possible within that three-week period. The percentages of attendance will be somewhat different, but still applicable.

C. Intern Clause

On certain occasions, youth in other youth groups (besides Common Ground) may desire to attend a trip with our group. This is allowed if these individuals are:

1. living in another city, town, or country.
2. Unable to come to a percentage of youth worship services due to distance or major hindrance.

Then, and only then, these individuals are welcome to attend our trips. They must file a medical release form with our church office at least one week in advance of our trip. Of course, these individuals must also seek permission from the youth minister to attend the trip. Based on these factors and completion of the above-mentioned criteria, they may then join us on our trip.

V. Policy on Medical and Liability Issues

All students are expected to have a current medical/liability release form on file with the church office upon entering the youth department. The standard procedure is for a letter to be sent to incoming sixth graders. They are responsible to return the form to the church office. The letter is good for a duration of 1 year. Each letter is to be notarized. If the letter is not notarized, it is not considered an official document. The church secretary will photocopy each letter and place it on file. The youth minister has a copy of each student's letter on all outings, trips, and functions of the youth ministry.

The purpose of the letter is twofold. First, it assures the church that the parents will not press legal charges against the church, its staff, or chaperones in the unlikely event of an accident during a youth function. Second, it assures the youth minister that should an accident occur, proper and precise medical attention could be administered to your child.

If a teenager or adult does not have a current medical/liability release form on file with the church office, they cannot go on any youth function. This applies to any function outside of church grounds that is identified as a youth venture.

VI. Policy on Adult Involvement in Youth Trips

Adults, especially youth parents, are always welcome on youth trips. Still, not all adults can go on each youth trip. Depending on the number of adults who desire to go on any given trip, adults will be chosen **by the youth minister** in the following manner (provided that there are more adults desiring to go than needed).

A. First Priority

1. Adult Dream Team members
2. Parents who can drive the bus or perform another service for the trip
3. Adult Youth Staff (Sunday School teachers and other youth workers)
4. Other youth parents
5. Other adults within the church

B. Application Process

Adults desiring to go on any given trip will be asked to fill out an application. The application will ask them to state why they feel God is leading them to go with us and how they may be beneficial to the spiritual well being of our trip. The youth minister will use the applications and the above-mentioned order to select the adults they will be chaperones for said trip.

C. Church Membership Policy

Under **all** circumstances, parents must be members of the church in order to chaperone a youth outing or trip.

VII. Policy on Dress Code and Music

A. Dress

The youth ministry adheres to a constant dress code. Everywhere we go, we are representing Christ. Therefore, we desire to honor Him in our dress. Lewd dress, improper logos, short shorts, mini skirts, tank tops, and 2-piece bathing suits will not be allowed on any youth function, trip, or outing.

Students who violate this code will be asked to change immediately and/or be sent home if necessary. As humans, we acknowledge that youth have a tendency to struggle with lust. It is not our desire to facilitate this struggle by allowing improper dress. This can be a major issue with teenagers. Proper attention should be noted to this dress code.

B. Music

It is our desire to have our teenagers focused on Christ during our trips. Therefore, we ask parents to please cooperate with us in not allowing your teenagers to bring **any** music on church trips.

VIII. Policy on Conduct and Disciplinary Actions

A. Expectations

On all youth functions, outings, and trips, students (and adults) are expected to behave in a Christ-like manner. Those who violate this and proceed otherwise will face consequences. Specifically we will not tolerate:

1. cursing, outbursts of anger, or lewd behavior.
2. personal displays of affection between male and female.
3. use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or weapons of any kind.

Students are also expected to participate in the functions they are attending. Not participating, leaving unannounced or without permission, etc., will also result in consequences.

For all youth outings and trips, students are expected to make use of the transportation the church provides. Personal transportation may not be used unless cleared by the youth minister and the parents of the student.

B. Consequences

For any violation of the given rules, the following consequences will be administered:

1. Contact parents
2. Dismissal from the event
3. Being sent home from trips at the parents' expense

(In the case of extreme or continual misbehavior, the student will lose his/her privilege to attend future outings and trips.)

VIII. Statement Regarding Education in Youth Ministry

Common Ground youth ministry firmly believes in the process of teaching and preaching the Word of God. In our purpose statement, we claim that one of our three purposes is to grow in Christ. We believe this is done most effectively through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Therefore, it is necessary that we lay a foundation for our teaching so that others may come and properly build upon it.

A. Teacher Requirements

Anyone desiring to be a Sunday School teacher must first get permission from the youth minister to teach the class, and then he/she must be voted on by the church body. Once this individual has received permission from both parties, he/she may teach the class. Sunday School material is then given to the teacher for he/she to use in teaching the class. The youth minister must first approve other materials or ideas.

B. Our Aim in Teaching

Our aim on teaching the Word is to grow out students through discipleship. We teach about the majesty and glory of God. We desire to ignite a passion for learning God's Word with the minds of teenagers. Also, we will not undermine, in any way, the education ministry of the church. It is our goal to work hand in hand with this ministry.

IX. Statement Regarding the Ministry of the Church

The youth ministry exists to strengthen the local church. We are not an organization outside the authority of Keltys First Baptist Church. The authority of our local church body upholds all of our rules and policies. We, therefore, exist to better minister to Keltys First Baptist Church. We are under the leadership of the Senior Pastor, and we adhere to his policies and concerns. This handbook has been written to assist in our needs at this time.