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Welcome, Parents!

So, you're the parent of a pre-teen or teenager, huh? Congratulations! You have one of the most important, and sometimes one of the most challenging, jobs on the planet.

We know parenting isn't always easy, but here is what we want you to know: we are here to help in any way we can. Sure, we are a youth ministry, but teenagers aren't the only people we care about. We care about you, too.

Whether you have been connected to Indy Vineyard for years or you are just getting started, this Parent Handbook will give you a glimpse into how we are striving to care for your student while supporting and serving your family along the way.

Thank you for allowing us to be another voice speaking encouragement, truth, and hope into the life of your student. Your trust and partnership mean a lot to us.

We can't wait to see what God does in your student's life!

-Nick Kane

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THE BASICS

MEET NICK

NICK KANE

YOUTH PASTOR

youth@indyvineyard.org

(317)250-5300

Jesus, Rock Climbing and my Golden Retriever Cove. In that order! I have been working with the youth at Indy Vineyard since August of 2022 and love it! I was born into a Messianic Jewish family. I started learning my Aleph, Bet, Vet at the age of six and was Bar Mitzvahed at the age of thirteen. I also attended Church providing a strong foundation in scripture/biblical stories. This foundation was expanded through my thirteen years of schooling at Heritage Christian School where I took yearly bible courses and attended the Christian Summer Camp Springhill in the summers. However, in my high school years I started to question this religion I was raised in and began to rebel and no longer place value in my Christian and Jewish upbringing. This all changed the summer before college when I tearfully experienced the relational love of God in a life changing way on the concrete entry-way of Grace Community Church.

From that point forward I had a lasting intimate and personal relationship with God. Out of this stemmed unwavering loyalty to Him on the spiritually dark campus of IU. I got to shine brightly and consistently during my four years as a student. While earning a double major in Entrepreneurship and Operations Process Management from the #1 rated business school rated by recruiters in the nation at the time, I was most excited to lead bible studies and disciple. This and a cool testimony including me hearing God's voice say, "lead my people" led

me to pursue full-time ministry post-graduation first on IU's campus with Cru.

At IU one of my disciples was Pastor Randy Gooder's son Jonny who showed a hungry believer that Holy Spirit was just as active today as in the scriptures that I loved! This started my relationship with the Vineyard and a dream of one day getting to do ministry surrounded by people who could teach more about the Holy Spirit! Involvement with the Vineyard, paired with being a graduate from the two year Revive School of Transformation (an Indianapolis off-shoot of the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry), and five mission trips to Brazil with my Seminary Global Awakening has led to the Holy Spirit now being my #1 helper in my ministry. I am about 25% done with a master's degree in practical pastoral ministry and am entering my 5th year of leading the Indy Vineyard Youth Group.



OUR MINISTRY

OUR WEEKLY PROGRAMS

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAYS 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Our youth group is for all students 6th-12th grade and we meet every Sunday night (unless stated otherwise via our 94000-texting software) for games, worship, teaching, and small groups.

OUR ENVIRONMENTS

There are three environments for teenagers in our ministry. Each one is created to strategically invite pre-teens/teenagers on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders, and Jesus. Each environment is designed with *every pre-teen/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 and small group leaders. Events will often be the environments where teenagers 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 spiritually in four key areas. (We'll get to those in a minute.)

SMALL GROUP: Small groups are an important part of what we do. They happen most weeks in our programs, but the relationships built in small 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. Often, we find this statement to be true **"Transformation happens in circles, not in rows:"**

OUR BIG WIN

Let's be honest...sometimes it's hard to know if you are "winning" with pre-teens and teenagers. You wonder if what they're learning is really sticking, if the conversations matter, or if their faith is becoming their own. That's why we've chosen to define what success looks like for our ministry. We call it our "big win." It's the heartbeat behind everything we do, the goal that guides our leadership, teaching, events, and relationships with students. Simply put:

**WE WIN WHEN A TEENAGER
TAKES A STEP TOWARD
OWNING THEIR FAITH.**

TAKING A STEP

Now, we say "takes a step" 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. That's why our big win doesn't have anything to do with a specific skill or achievement. Instead, we win anytime we see a teenager **take a single step closer** to owning their faith.

OWNING THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for a teenager to own their faith? Well, we believe **there are four things that both lead to, and are a result of, spiritual growth.** These are 4 values that we believe we have truly "won" as a ministry if students embody them by the time that they graduate. Everything that we do as a ministry should point back to these values, as these are who we are! **You as parents can ask some of these questions at home!**

HERE ARE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK AT HOME TO HELP YOUR STUDENT OWN THEIR FAITH BY LIVING OUT OUR 4 VALUES

1. ENCOUNTER GOD

- *How have you been encountering God recently?*
- *What are you currently learning about God?*
- *What does your time with the Lord look like lately?*
- *What has been difficult about encountering God?*
- *How can we support you in this?*

2. DISCOVER SCRIPTURE

- *How has reading the Bible been recently?*
- *Is there anything that you have been discovering in Scripture lately?*
- *What has been challenging about reading the Bible recently?*
- *How can we support you in this?*

3. LIVE COMMUNITY

- *How are your friendships?*
- *Do you feel loved, seen, and known by your community?*
- *How are you experiencing connection in youth group? How about outside of youth group?*
- *What has been going well in your small group? What has been challenging about it?*
- *How can we support you in this?*

4. GO SHARE

- *Who are you sharing the Gospel with?*
- *Who in your life doesn't know Jesus? Could you do anything to show them the love of Christ?*
- *What is challenging for you personally about sharing your faith?*
- *How can we support you in this?*

WHY WE EXIST

Many ministries know what they do, some even know how they do it, but few know why they do what they do. People buy into a purpose or a Why, and we believe at Indy Vineyard Youth that everything we do should be an extension of our Why. If it doesn't start with this in mind, then we do not want to do it.

WE EXIST TO EQUIP HEALTHY SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO ENCOUNTER THE LOVE AND POWER OF GOD AND GIVE IT AWAY TO THE WORLD

WE EXIST TO EQUIP

Ephesians 4:12 talks about how God gave certain gifts for the equipping of the saints. The word equip simply means to supply with the necessary items for a particular purpose. We don't just teach, we equip! We empower the students with the purpose of sending them out into the world as fully devoted, holistic, disciples of Jesus.

HEALTHY

We all know someone who would claim to be a follower of Jesus, but their life might not resemble it. We can know all the facts about the bible and not truly be transformed by Christ and what He has done. The word healthy is important because we desire students to not only be spiritually mature, but also to be physically and emotionally healthy as well. Holistic means more than knowledge but moves into all areas of our life. This is one reason we speak on mental health each year. We get to teach students interpersonal skills, how to healthily process emotions, and how to look more like Jesus through the context of community and discipleship.

WHY WE EXIST**SONS & DAUGHTERS**

Romans 8:14 says "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God." Identity is so important in our walk with the Lord. We need to know who we are, and whose we are. Your identity does not change based on how you feel but is simply a truth that we get the opportunity to grow deeper in our understanding. We desire the students to know who they are in Christ, whether they just started a relationship with God or have been walking with Him for many years.

ENCOUNTER THE LOVE & POWER OF GOD

This is Indy Vineyard Church's mission statement. We want the youth ministry to live this out as we are a part of the church, and not a separate entity. We get to encounter God's love as well as His power. This plays a large part into our value of Encountering God.

GIVE IT AWAY TO THE WORLD

We have been sent on a mission from Jesus. It is to go out in the world and proclaim the Kingdom of God has come near! We are called to share our faith with those around us. And thus as we encounter the Lord's love and power we get the opportunity to give it away to the world. We desire to have students with a missional mindset, and to have ones that value sharing their faith. That is why we empower students to share and equip them on different ways to do so.

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 just talking about discipleship. So, what is discipleship? Here are three thoughts...

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.**

DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

One thing that's very important around here is living in community. A large part of that is life on life discipleship (We go into that later). Life on life doesn't always mean one on one. That's because **discipleship often 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!

DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

Discipleship is never 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 SMALL GROUP LEADERS

As a parent, you are making a huge impact in your teenager's life. The impact you are 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 our time caring for teenagers, we've learned something really important. (We 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.**

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 so committed to small groups. Small groups are about more than just good discussions. **Small 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 small group leader. They can be a powerful ally for you and your family!

OUR VALUES

ENCOUNTER. DISCOVER. LIVE. GO

Disciples of Jesus do not just play fun games and eat snacks. There are practical elements to discipleship, and there are 4 values that we focus on throughout the year. We desire for each student that participates in our ministry to experience, understand, and live these out by the time they graduate. Each event, teaching series, retreat, or anything that we do in our ministry has these values in mind.

ENCOUNTER God

One moment can change everything. One encounter with God can alter our future, and even impact our past. We want students to have opportunities to encounter God, specifically in their everyday lives. A saying we say in our ministry is there is no Jr. Holy Spirit. We want to empower students to hear from the Lord for themselves and others, experience the Holy Spirit, learn the importance of worship, and let these encounters impact their daily lives.

DISCOVER Scripture

The world is saying one thing, while the Bible is often saying something different. We want to grow and raise students in an environment where they view the world through the lens of scripture. What does scripture say about their present circumstance, how do you read scripture, and how is the Bible still relevant in their lives today? Discovering scripture helps lead us to deeper intimacy with Christ as we learn to understand Him in a new way. We're constantly learning and that is a gift!

OUR VALUES

ENCOUNTER. DISCOVER. LIVE. GO

LIVE Community

We don't just live in community, we also live it out. Community is a word we hear a lot, but we rarely understand what it means to be in Christ centered community. Community helps refine us to look more like Christ. We teach the importance of feedback and we believe that discipleship can happen by speaking the truth in love based on Ephesians 4:15. Part of living in community is life on life discipleship. That looks like students sharing their lives with one another. It also looks like youth leaders sharing their lives and in return the students sharing their lives with the leaders. Jesus' demonstrated a powerful model of discipleship by doing life alongside the disciples. It is our job as leaders to partner with students and be in their lives to point each of them towards Jesus.

GO Share

We believe that the commission of Jesus is clear. We are all called to go and make disciples. That means sharing about our faith and the impact that Jesus has had on our lives. By the time student's graduate, we want them to be comfortable sharing their faith with friends, family, coworkers, etc. This can look different depending on the student. There is not a set "method" for this, but by empowering students to have Gospel conversations we are enabling them to continue in their faith journey far beyond just the time that they are in our youth ministry.

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 set 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 another adult knowing the meeting is occurring.
- No staff member or volunteer should transport a teenager of the opposite gender in a vehicle alone. If a teenager needs a ride, we must arrange to have another adult or teenager accompany them.
- All staff members and volunteers must always maintain appropriate physical boundaries with teenagers.

WE REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Every staff member and volunteer in our ministry 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.

Every staff member and volunteer in our ministry are trained on how to have this conversation with a student and ask the appropriate questions to determine if a situation is dangerous. If your student falls into any three of these areas, you will be contacted.

WE ARE AVAILABLE

If you have a concern about your teenager's care or safety, please reach out to us. We are just a phone call or email away! My personal cell phone number is (317) 250-5300.

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

We send an email just for parents several times throughout the year. It is packed with information on our ministry and on how to be a more awesome parent of a teenager. Subscribe to our email by going to our youth page on our church website. Also you can email me at youth@indyvineyard.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

We post photos, videos, event updates, devotionals, and tons of things from our ministry. Follow along at ...

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/indyvineyardyouth

INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/indyvineyardyouth

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Throughout the year, we'll host a Discussion Group or two for parents. This is a place to learn from other parents, and partner with one another in how to raise a teenager. We don't have to disciple alone, and we want to provide the space for partnership even with other parents! You will hear about these as they come up in the year. The parent email will be the best way to learn about these.

YOU ARE AWESOME!

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!

Working with students isn't an easy task. We need one another, and we don't always have to have the answers. If you ever have any question, if you ever need any resources, books, pod casts, or just need to talk, please reach out and ask. Whether it is to Nick, or to someone else on the team. Good things come to those who ask. What an honor it is to have you serving in this ministry. We get to make an impact on the Kingdom together!

To close out this handbook, we want to end with some encouragement:

YOU ARE LOVED!

