

Calvary Bible Church

Student Ministry Handbook

Introduction:

Welcome to Calvary Bible Church's student ministry. If you are looking for information regarding what our ministry to young adults is all about, this is the booklet for you. In the next several pages we want to introduce you not only to *how* we approach student ministry but offer a biblical explanation for *why* as well.

Not all "youth" ministries are created equal. In fact, there are almost as many different kinds of student ministry as there are youth pastors to invent them. But most have some unfortunate characteristics in common. Namely, they tend to be man-centered, entertainment-driven, and insensitive to the God-ordained authority structures of the home.

At Calvary Bible Church, however, it is our goal to approach all our ministries from a perspective that is God-centered, Bible-driven, and decisively sensitive to the role of fathers as the spiritual leaders of their homes.

As we see it, there are two ways that a church can approach helping parents turn their children into disciples of Jesus Christ. The first is the moralistic approach.

The moralistic approach tries to come up with every conceivable moral question that a young person may face in his lifetime and offer a biblical answer for each. For example, "What should I do if someone offers me a drink?" "How should I respond if I am tempted to gossip?" "What should I say to a friend who offers me the answers to my biggest final exam?" Of course the hope is that when the student eventually comes face to face with these questions years down the road, he will remember the answer taught in church and then choose the course of action that is most moral.

The second approach isn't nearly as complicated and has a much firmer biblical foundation. We call it the "fear of God" approach. Instead of trying to come up with every conceivable question our students will ever face in life, simply teach them to fear the Lord, for that is the beginning (the ground and foundation) of knowledge and wisdom (Pro. 1:7; 9:10). When our young people learn who they are in the light of who God is; when they embrace what the Bible reveals about the punishment they deserve and the grace they have received instead; when they joyfully tremble before the twin pillars of God's justice and mercy, and realize how unspeakably blessed they are to have been made one with Christ, then they will be equipped to stand firm in the face of every moral question whether or not they have ever considered it before.

It is our firm conviction that God has called the church to play a significant role in helping parents raise their children in the fear of the Lord. And the best way to do that is not to entertain, amuse or pacify, but to use the word of God to point young people to the awesome glory of God set on display in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Ministry Goals:

Think of the fear of God as the sun around which the entire solar system of student ministry revolves. All other aspects of the ministry are held in place by and find their life in this massive and blazing ideal at the center. But what about all the other pieces that need to be set in place? How do we help parents move their students from where they are to where God wants them to be? It all starts with a clear set of goals.

A. Become Students of God's Word:

If our students are to learn to fear the Lord, they must learn to look to the Bible first to learn who God is, and then for answers to their questions about life and living. It is our conviction that we lead our students to submit to God's Word as their authority, because God and His word are inseparable. In his second epistle, the apostle Peter describes the origin of the Bible when he says,

"No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (1:21).

Just as my words cannot be separated from me, neither can God's from Him, therefore, the scriptures, as spoken from God through men, should be our authority in life just as God Himself is. Part of our ministry to the youth will be to point back to God's word as the foundation for everything we do, so that we portray God's word as being the very authority under which we live and breathe.

B. Become Models of Holiness:

Another goal that Calvary's student ministry strives for is a consistent pursuit of holiness for each of the students we minister to. Paul exhorts the church in Corinth,

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

This pursuit of holiness does not come naturally to any believer young or old. Therefore, Calvary's student ministry will stress and encourage the formation of godly, fruit-producing disciplines such as prayer, scripture intake, memorization and meditation, accountability, evangelism, journaling, and worship. The students in our ministry will understand that while we cannot satisfy God by our works (Christ has done that), we can please him through a life that is characterized by holiness.

C. Become Saturated With A Biblical Worldview:

The ability to look at our culture and discern between right and wrong, wise and unwise is another goal the student ministry at Calvary has deemed worthy of pursuing. Paul's prayer for the Philippian believers in 1:9-10 conveys our desire accurately:

"And this I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ."

Because our students are constantly bombarded by the attacks of Satan, their flesh, and the world around them, they must be trained to think and make decisions biblically so that they may prove to be good and faithful servants when they stand before Christ on the day of judgment.

D. Become Agents of Unity in the Church:

The unity of the church body is extremely important to the leadership of Calvary Bible Church because it is what ensures that we will function as we were meant to function- as "one man" (Eph 2:15). In order to produce and maintain this unity, strong Christ-centered relationships must be built. This is why we have named this as a goal for our students. The glory of God is at stake in whether or not we love each other and serve together without dispute. In Philippians 1 Paul conveys the manner in which God desires us to conduct ourselves when he says,

"Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (v. 27).

We cannot embrace Christ without his church, therefore, the student ministry at Calvary provides ample opportunity, in a God-saturated environment, for relationships to grow and thrive for the glory of our Lord.

E. Become Godly Leaders:

It is our hope that the Lord will use this ministry to develop men and women who will one day be leaders for Christ in a variety of different capacities. Whether foreign or domestic, vocationally or as laymen, we want to produce students who are so passionate about the Lord that they are driven to minister faithfully and to influence others to do the same. In 2 Timothy 2 Paul instructs Timothy, whom he had taken under his wing and developed as a leader, to do the same with other men as well:

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (v. 2)."

Our goal is to make “disciple-making” disciples out of our students, so that the gospel will go out to the ends of the earth producing new worshipers for our King. Therefore, this ministry endeavors to create an atmosphere of constant spiritual challenge and encouragement to help bring the students’ gifts and desires to fruition.

Clearly this is not an exhaustive list of biblical goals, but is representative of the overall direction we intend our student ministry to move for the glory of God and our student’s joy. But goals, even good ones, do not get met by default. How do we intend to help parents meet these goals through the ministry we provide?

II. Ministry Methods:

As we begin thinking about the nuts and bolts of student ministry, let’s remember that we are not thinking along the lines that many would imagine in this post-modern era of “youth ministry.” As stated before, the center of our ministry “solar system” is not entertainment, or fun, or foolishness, but the fear of the Lord in the knowledge of Christ. Our methods, therefore, strive to be consistent with that perspective.

A. Immersing the Students in God’s Word

We believe that the Bible is the agent by which God transforms the heart and the mind of His people, and therefore, must be used unsparingly in all our student ministry activities.

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1: 1-3).

B. Holding the Students Accountable to the Biblical Standard in their Actions, Words, Thoughts, and Attitudes

Sin is no light matter. Therefore, our leaders as well as our students will work together to provide an atmosphere of loving accountability so that we all do not go on offending our holy God.

“Take care, brethren that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12-13).

C. Providing Opportunities for Students to Experience Ministry and Service

While we see verbal instruction as a necessary aspect of our student ministry, the content of the instruction will not be fully realized without regular opportunities for the students to apply what they have been taught.

“You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him...” (Deuteronomy 10:20).

D. Facilitating an Environment of Well-Supervised Fun in which the Students can Fellowship and Build Godly Relationships

We want our students to have fun and build godly relationships with each other, but it cannot be without limitations. Therefore, adults will always be present to ensure that our students enjoy each other’s fellowship with respect and biblical appropriateness.

“...let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

E. Bathing All of our Activities with Prayer

Immersion in God’s word is only half the dialogue between God and His children. Prayer is our response to what God has spoken to us through His word; therefore, in order to truly know God and receive His blessing upon this ministry we must commune with Him through prayer.

“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

III. Parental Involvement:

The leadership of Calvary strongly desires that the parents of our students involve themselves in our youth activities as much as possible. We do not desire for the youth ministry to take the place of the parental instruction that the students are receiving, we simply want to come alongside parents to reinforce the biblical principles that they are already teaching at home.

Our hope is that this ministry will be an extension of the parents for the purpose of aiding in the spiritual growth of each student. One of the reasons this ministry exists is

to tighten family unity in the bonds of Christ. We will first point to the authority of God's word in our encouragement and instruction, but secondly, we will habitually point to the authority of the students' parents so as to reiterate the importance of the family in our church body.

IV. Ministry Values:

While our students are involved in this ministry they will be expected to behave according to the values set in God's word. If we are to create an environment that generates spiritual growth, we cannot allow sinful conduct to be tolerated. Therefore, we have detailed the behavior that we desire our students to attain to in the following categories:

A. Submissive & Humble Attitude:

God has placed certain people as leaders over this ministry and the students will be expected to submit to their authority while attending any one of the activities that we offer. It is our desire that each student do this not out of duty, but out of an attitude of humility and a love for God.

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this will be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

B. Holy Speech:

Words have the power to hurt, the power to corrupt, the power to lead astray, or they have the power to encourage and edify. We desire that our students use their words to build and lift their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and point them to our holy God.

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29).

C. Modest Dress:

It is hard enough for our students to engage both their hearts and minds with the truth of God's word without having to do battle with perverse thoughts. Therefore, we require that our students wear clothing that is both tasteful and modest so as not to tempt another student toward lust.

“I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and

discreetly” (1 Timothy 1:9).

D. Personal Purity:

Much like the last requirement, we do not want to give Satan or the flesh a foothold with our students. Physical contact between members of the opposite sex has the capability to do this, even if it is just something as simple as a hug. Our students are free to greet friends who are of the opposite sex with a wave or a handshake, but anything more than that will be considered unnecessary and inappropriate.

“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

E. Servant Heartedness:

This involves putting others before oneself. Help will often be needed in areas such as organization and clean up, and it is extremely accommodating when our students give of themselves so that the leaders and a hand full of students do not have to do all the work. We do not just want to minister to our students we want them to minister to the group as well, and a consistent attitude of courtesy is a great way to start.

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).

F. Repentant and Forgiving Spirit:

It is expected that when our students sin they will repent and ask forgiveness from those whom they have sinned against. Our students, just like any of the other members of our church, are not above or below church discipline. If a student, when confronted with his sin, first in private and then with one or two more witnesses, demonstrates no repentance, the church will be informed, and if that student still does not repent the church will break fellowship with him.

*“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:15-17).*

V. The Myth of Adolescence:

The leadership of Calvary Bible Church believes that the developmental stage popularly known as “adolescence” is a myth. While many churches operate on a philosophy of ministry that maintains there is an awkward stage of life between childhood and adulthood where students should not be held accountable to the same biblical standards as adult men and women, we do not. In fact, we have based everything that you have read in this handbook so far on the understanding that as soon as a child turns 12 he is an adult and therefore, expected to behave as one.

The Bible never makes a distinction between what some call “adolescence” on the one hand and adulthood on the other. Therefore, we do not believe a student’s sin should be winked at as something of little import in the eyes of God. Nor do we believe that effective ministry to this generation requires an atmosphere of amusement. To the contrary, we believe that young adults (like the Bible’s David, Daniel, Mary & Joseph, and a host of other faithful young men and women) are fully capable of wrestling with the deep truths of the Word and be used of the Spirit of God to make a profound and lasting impact on their world.

Bringing the truth of God to bear on the lives of our students is what they need more than anything else in life. And while we certainly will have a good time doing so, large dose of foolishness to hold their attention will not be required.

We only have these students for a short amount of time and we want to be the best stewards of that time that we can. Our ministry is about showing God to our students so that they can know Him, love Him, and fear Him more, thus fulfilling the reason they were created and saved. We hope that you will join us in this endeavor as we seek to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.