



STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP

— HANDBOOK —

*discipling students through
the family and the church*

WELCOME

Welcome to Student Discipleship! We are a ministry of Fellowship Baptist Church for students in 7th through 12th grade. Our church exists to *Worship Jesus, Follow Jesus, and Share Jesus . . . Together*.

As a church, we are committed to intentionally raising up the next generation to live out this mission. We want students to *worship Jesus* as they grow in their understanding of who He is, *follow Jesus* as they grow in their knowledge and application of His Word, and *share Jesus* as they learn to live on mission with Him. And we believe Scripture calls us to do this together—as families and as a church, united in our desire to see the next generation faithfully follow Christ.

About this Handbook

This handbook provides an overview of our Student Discipleship ministry and serves as a guide for students, parents, leaders, and volunteers. It explains our philosophy and strategy, describes our programs and curriculum, introduces our leadership, and outlines the expectations and procedures that guide our ministry.

OUR MINISTRY | Pages 1-2

Learn what Student Discipleship is, why we exist, what we believe, and how we make maturing disciples of Jesus Christ through the family and the church.

OUR PROGRAM | Pages 3-4

Discover what Student Discipleship looks like throughout the year, including our weekly schedule, special events, and our curriculum.

OUR LEADERSHIP | Pages 5-6

Understand how Student Discipleship is led, the role of the Elders, parents, leadership team, as well as opportunities for students to serve and lead.

OUR EXPECTATIONS | Pages 7-10

Review the standards and guidelines that help create a safe, respectful, Christ-centered environment during Student Discipleship programs and events.

OUR SAFETY | Page 11

Learn how Student Discipleship responds to emergencies and works to protect students during programs, events, and activities.

We are thankful for the opportunity to work together to raise up the next generation to *Worship Jesus, Follow Jesus, and Share Jesus . . . Together*—through the family and the church.

Who Are We?

Our mission is to raise up students to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ through the family and the church.



Through the Family • *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

We believe discipleship begins at home. Parents have the primary responsibility for discipling their students, so our role is to come alongside them to equip and encourage them in this work.

Through the Church • *Ephesians 4:11-16*

We believe discipleship also takes place through the church. The church comes alongside parents by teaching and discipling students while helping them meaningfully participate in the life of the church.

What Do We Believe?

Our ministry is built on five interrelated convictions that guide our decisions about programs, events, teaching, counseling, and relationships.



The Gospel • *Romans 1:16*

We believe the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message of salvation and eternal hope.

The Bible • *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible is God's Word and is the foundation for all we do and teach.

The Church • *2 Corinthians 12:12-27*

We believe all disciples of Jesus Christ—young and old—are full members of the local body of Christ.

The Mission • *Matthew 28:19-20*

We believe all disciples are called to make disciples in our community and around the world.

The Family • *Ephesians 6:4*

We believe parents are the primary spiritual leaders and teachers of their children.

What Do We Do?

Our strategy is simple and consists of four key activities designed to help students grow into maturing disciples of Christ.



Sharing • We share the gospel of Jesus Christ with students through our programs and through personal relationships.

Teaching • We teach students the whole counsel of God's Word through expositional instruction focused on developing knowledge and practical application.

Gathering • We gather students for fellowship while helping them integrate into the life of the church.

Sending • We send students into the community and around the world to share the gospel and make disciples.

What is a Mature Disciple?

We want to raise up students who are growing toward maturity as disciples of Jesus Christ. To help us pursue that goal, we have identified several areas that provide clear marks of growth toward maturity. While not exhaustive, these areas help us recognize and encourage that growth in the lives of our students.



Sharing • A mature disciple of Jesus Christ believes in the gospel, as evidenced by . . .

- Clearly articulating the gospel;
- Confessing belief in the gospel through baptism; and
- Demonstrating ongoing gospel growth.

Teaching • A mature disciple of Jesus Christ loves the Word of God, as evidenced by . . .

- Regularly reading the Bible;
- Applying God's Word to everyday life; and
- Participating in a Small Group Bible Study.

Gathering • A mature disciple of Jesus Christ participates in gospel community, as evidenced by . . .

- Faithfully participating in the church's weekly Worship Gatherings;
- Developing meaningful relationships with adults in the church; and
- Serving the church in a specific ministry area.

Sending • A mature disciple of Jesus Christ lives on gospel mission, as evidenced by . . .

- Boldly sharing the gospel with others;
- Participating in local mission projects; and
- Going on a mission trip.

OUR PROGRAM

When Do We Meet?

Bible Study • *Sunday Mornings @ 9:30 am*

Our Bible Study combines solid exegesis and student-directed discussion as we study through books of the Bible.



Midweek • *Wednesday Nights @ 6:00 pm*

Our Midweek gathering focuses on teaching the breadth and depth of Scripture through our key areas of discipleship each semester.

Small Groups • *Wednesday Nights @ 7:00 pm*

Our Small Groups build community around biblical discussion, accountability, and Christ-centered fellowship.

What Do We Do?

Throughout the year, Student Discipleship hosts a variety of events that help us share the gospel, teach the Bible, build community, and live on mission together.



Doovalacky • An outreach event designed to encourage students to invite friends and create opportunities to share the gospel.

The Decathlon • An overnight event focused on fellowship while also providing opportunities to share the gospel with friends.

Winter Weekend • A weekend retreat focused on studying the Bible, worshiping, and fellowshiping together.

Impact • An event focused on serving our community and sharing the gospel, both locally and beyond.

Camp • An opportunity to get away, focus on the Lord, grow in Christ, and deepen relationships with one another.

Midweek Missions • Opportunities to serve our community on 5th Wednesdays in place of our regular Midweek gathering.

Back-2-School Bash • An outreach event designed to welcome incoming students, build relationships, and invite new friends to join us.

What Do We Teach?



Our teaching is organized around seven key areas of discipleship that support our broader strategy of Sharing, Teaching, Gathering, and Sending. These seven areas provide a framework for the biblical knowledge, spiritual growth, and faithful obedience we want to see develop throughout their years in Student Discipleship. While each area receives focused attention at different times, they work together to equip students to know Christ, follow Him faithfully, and live for Him in every area of life.



The Gospel • *Romans 1:16*

We teach students the good news of Jesus Christ and how the gospel changes every area of life. We want students to live in light of Christ's grace, allowing the gospel to shape their identity, choices, relationships, and purpose.



Theology • *Colossians 2:6-7*

We teach students the fundamental doctrines of our faith, helping them understand what they believe and why. We want students to build their lives on the truth of God's Word rather than simply knowing the right answers.



Spiritual Growth • *Titus 2:11-14*

We teach students how to grow in their relationship with Christ and become increasingly faithful in following Him. We want students to develop habits that cultivate spiritual growth and help them faithfully live out their relationship with Christ.



Identity • *Genesis 1:26-27*

We teach students to understand who God created them to be and who they are in Christ. We want students to live from that identity as they make decisions and navigate the circumstances of everyday life.



Relationships • *John 13:34-35*

We teach students what godly relationships look like, equipping them to love and relate to others in ways that honor Christ. We help them practice loving, serving, forgiving, and encouraging one another as they learn to live in Christian community.



Evangelism • *Matthew 28:19-20*

We teach students how to share the gospel and participate in God's mission. We want students to recognize opportunities to point others to Christ through their relationships, everyday lives, and service.



Apologetics • *1 Peter 3:15*

We teach students how to understand, explain, and defend biblical truth as they engage the questions and challenges of the world around them. We want students to think carefully about difficult issues and respond with confidence and grace.

OUR LEADERSHIP

Who Oversees Our Ministry?

Student Discipleship is a ministry of Fellowship Baptist Church and is under the authority of our Elders. Our ministry is not separate from the church but is an important ministry of the church.



As a ministry to teenagers, we recognize the primary responsibility of parents to disciple their children. One avenue of family oversight is the Council of Fathers, which consists of fathers who are members of Fellowship Baptist Church who help establish the vision for Student Discipleship as well as advises and consults on matters related to the ministry.

Who Leads the Ministry?

Our team is led by our Lead Pastor, Ed Willoughby, who has faithfully shepherded the ministry for twenty years. The team also includes adults who serve as teachers, small group leaders, mentors, and volunteers.



Teachers • Teach the Sunday morning Bible Study.

Small Group Leaders • Lead a small group during Wednesday night Midweek.

Mentors • Disciple students one-on-one through prayer, relationships, and intentional discipleship.

Volunteers • Help plan and carry out Student Discipleship events.

In addition to these adults, we allow students opportunities to participate in the leadership of Student Discipleship through planning the yearly calendar and preparing for activities and events.

How Do We Lead?

We believe discipleship happens through relationships with faithful adults who know our students and invest in their lives. We seek to build those relationships so that we can teach God's Word, encourage students to follow Christ, and engage them in His church.



How to Become a Leader



Leaders serve in ongoing ministry roles with direct responsibility for discipling and caring for students. To serve as a Student Discipleship leader, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

- Believers who have made a public profession of faith through baptism.
- Members in good standing of Fellowship Baptist Church.
- Individuals who are 19 years of age or older.
- Those who demonstrate on-going discipleship through active participation in the ministries of Fellowship Baptist Church for a minimum of six months.
- Those who have never been convicted of any sexual offense or any crime involving a minor or dependent child.

Those meeting these qualifications may apply to serve in Student Discipleship ministry by

- Completing the Fellowship Baptist Church Leader Application.
- Passing a Background Investigation.
- Completing an interview with our Lead Pastor.

Upon completing these three steps, leader candidates shall be submitted to the Council of Fathers. If there are no concerns from the Council of Fathers, the candidate may be approved as a Student Discipleship leader.

How to Become a Volunteer?



Volunteers serve in supporting roles that help carry out Student Discipleship programs and events. To serve as a Student Discipleship volunteer, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

- Believers who have made a public profession of faith through baptism.
- Members in good standing of Fellowship Baptist Church. (Parents who are not members of Fellowship may volunteer in limited capacities as approved by the Lead Pastor.)
- Individuals who are 18 years of age or older.
- Those who have never been convicted of any sexual offense or any crime involving a minor or dependent child.

Those meeting these qualifications may request to serve as a volunteer by:

- Completing the Fellowship Baptist Church Leader Application.
- Passing a Background Investigation.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

Our Student Discipleship programs and events are opportunities to grow together. These expectations help create an environment that supports that growth and clearly communicates how we want students and leaders to conduct themselves.

What Do We Expect?

We believe in setting high standards for our students and holding them accountable to those standards. The following outlines our core expectations for all students and leaders for our programs and events.



Respect • *Matthew 7:12*

- Submit to Authority
- Treat Others Like You Want to be Treated
- Care for Places and Things

Engage • *1 Corinthians 14:26*

- Come Prepared
- Participate Willingly
- Interact with Others

Lead • *1 Corinthians 14:26*

- Positive Example to Others
- Courage to Do the Right Thing
- Protect Each Other

How Do We Live It Out?

These guidelines, while not exhaustive, communicate our expectations. When situations arise that are not specifically addressed, Student Discipleship leaders will determine the appropriateness of behavior and appropriate consequences.



Respect

Respect Others • We treat one another with dignity, kindness, and care. We do not engage in abuse, fighting, harassment, intimidation, or other behavior that harms or threatens another person.

Respect Physical Boundaries • We respect one another's physical and relational boundaries. Physical affection should be limited to appropriate, non-romantic expressions of friendship and should never become excessive or intimate.

Examples of inappropriate physical affection include kissing, caressing, sitting on laps, lying or lounging on one another, full-frontal hugs, or other excessive physical contact. These expectations apply whether or not students are in a dating relationship. Sexual behavior of any kind is not permitted.

Speak Respectfully • We use language that honors God and encourages others. Profanity and other inappropriate or degrading language are not permitted.

Substance-Free Environment • We expect students and leaders to help maintain a safe and appropriate environment. Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are not permitted at Student Discipleship programs or events.

Dress Appropriately • We strive to dress in a respectful and modest manner appropriate for Student Discipleship programs and events.

To help guide your choices, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Shorts should be fingertip length.
- Leggings, yoga pants, and similar form-fitting pants should be worn with a shirt or top that extends to at least fingertip length.
- Skirts and dresses should cover the knee while standing.
- Shirts should have sleeves. Halter tops, spaghetti straps, and tank tops may be worn when accompanied by a shirt with sleeves.
- Shirts and pants should provide appropriate coverage when standing with arms raised above the head or while seated.
- Clothing should not contain offensive language, sexual innuendo, or drug/alcohol references.
- Swimwear must meet the same standards of modesty and coverage outlined above. A T-shirt must be worn with swimwear, along with appropriate swim trunks, swim shorts, or a swim skirt.

Respect Property • We treat the property of the church, our hosts, and others with care. We ask permission before taking or borrowing another person's belongings, and we do not steal, damage, or intentionally misuse property. Students are responsible for returning, replacing, or repaying items they take or damage.

Respect Safety • We help maintain a safe environment by not bringing weapons or objects intended to harm others to Student Discipleship programs or events. Pocket knives with blades four inches or less are permitted; but knives with longer blades, firearms, explosives, martial arts equipment, and other weapons are prohibited.

Engage

Be Present • We come prepared and ready to participate in the opportunities provided through Student Discipleship. Students are expected to participate in programs and activities rather than intentionally withdrawing from the group.

Honor Curfew • We respect the schedule established for each event and are in our assigned areas at the designated time.

Stay Where We Belong • We remain in areas designated for students and follow the boundaries established for each program or event throughout the event.

Have Fun Responsibly • We enjoy one another through fun and appropriate activities that build community. Pranks or other activities involving another person or their property are not permitted.

Cell Phones & Devices • We want to engage with the people around us and participate fully in all programs and activities. Since cell phones and other electronic devices can become distracting, they should be put away and on silent during programs. Students may use cell phones during travel and free time as long as they do not become isolated or use them inappropriately.

Lead

Follow Instructions • We willingly follow the direction of leaders and take responsibility for doing what is asked of us. Failure to make a reasonable effort to follow instructions may be considered insubordination.

Set a Positive Example • We recognize that our choices influence those around us and seek to be an example that encourages others to follow Christ.

Protect One Another • We look out for the safety and well-being of those around us. We speak up when we see behavior that is unsafe, harmful, or contrary to these expectations. Students who knowingly fail to report violations or unsafe behavior may receive the same consequences as the student responsible.

Take Responsibility • We take responsibility for our choices and make things right when our actions have harmed others or damaged property.

What Happens When We Fall Short?



We believe correction is an important part of helping students grow. When expectations are not met, we seek to correct behavior, restore trust, and maintain a safe and appropriate environment. Responses will depend on the nature and severity of the behavior, as well as any previous violations.

Warning • Students will receive a warning identifying the inappropriate behavior and the consequences of continued violations.

Restrictions • Repeated violations may result in restrictions on a student's freedom or participation for the remainder of the program or event.

Parent Contact • Serious or repeated violations may result in contact with the student's parent or guardian.

Dismissal • Students may be dismissed from a program or event for unsafe behavior, repeated violations, continual insubordination, or sexual misconduct.

Dismissal is a last resort used when a student's behavior makes continued participation unsafe or inappropriate. When a student is dismissed, parents will be notified and are responsible for arranging transportation home. Until the student departs, the student will remain under the supervision of a Student Discipleship leader.

Student Discipleship maintains policies and procedures to help protect the safety and well-being of our students. The following provides an overview of some of the safeguards and emergency procedures that guide our ministry.

Student Protection

We are committed to protecting students from abuse, exploitation, and other harm. Our procedures include **Screening** leaders and volunteers while also **Safeguarding** students through established policies for appropriate interactions and boundaries. Parents and students should **Report** inappropriate behavior directly to one of our Elders and are always welcome to bring them any questions or concerns to them.



Severe Weather

Severe weather may require programs or events to be canceled, delayed, or relocated. Procedures include **Canceling** programs or events ahead of time when possible, **Monitoring** weather conditions, **Securing** students in a safe location when necessary, and **Contacting** parents with information and instructions regarding student pickup.



Medical

Medical incidents will be assessed by the highest medically trained leader available. Procedures include **Assessing** the situation, **Treating** the injury as appropriate and consistent with the leader's training, **Monitoring** the student for the remainder of the program or event, and **Contacting** parents regarding the incident.



Intruders

Procedures for an intruder include **Securing** students in a safe location and **Contacting** the proper authorities. Parents will be notified as soon as possible with information about the situation and instructions for student pickup.



In the event of a violent intruder, students should follow the direction of Student Discipleship leaders and **Run** to a safe location when possible, **Hide** in a secure location when evacuation is not possible, or **Fight** to protect themselves and others when necessary. Students and leaders should follow the direction of emergency personnel when they arrive.