



THRIVE

Student Ministry

parent/student handbook

Greetings Parents and Students!

Over the last 12+ years of working with students I've found that one of the most difficult hurdles to overcome is the transition to a new student ministry. Whether they are moving from another church student ministry, they are graduating up from elementary school ministries, or they are brand new to Christianity, it can be a challenge to find where you fit. For many students, they never get to experience all that our student ministry offers because they didn't get involved during the first few weeks. I want you to know that I'm very concerned about getting your son or daughter involved in our ministry and want to help in whatever way I can.

When I talk to incoming students about the transition into our ministry I use these 5 key words.



FEAR: I tell them that the transition from being known in one group to being unknown in another group is scary. I want them to know that their feelings are natural and real. It is scary walking into a room of students who know each other and/or are older than you. Don't let that fear stop you from finding your place.

FUN: I explain that our youth ministry will be fun. We want students to have a good time. "Laughter" and "celebration" are two key words we use to describe this value of fun. Most students use the word "boring" when they describe church. Because of this, we attempt to shatter that stereotype. You may hear of some wild things happening over the next six years, and chances are good that they were intentional (although occasionally wild things happen that weren't planned, and these can sometimes be bad). We believe that if you really invest in our ministry that you will find that it is a ton of fun.

FAITH: Our primary goal is to help your child mature in his or her faith in Jesus Christ. We have a defined strategy with quality programs that assist students in their spiritual growth. Our goal is the same goal God has for all Christians, and that is to grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. I want to emphasize the word "assist" because I know that one's spiritual growth isn't solely dependent on our student ministry. I believe with all my heart that we have some of the best teaching, adult leaders, curriculum, small groups, practical tools, and spiritual growth opportunities around. If a student wants to grow in his or her faith we can help at any place in their spiritual journey.

FINISH: I want to see students finish their teenage years strong in their faith. Our adult leadership team is affirmed when graduating seniors have strong convictions about their faith, a lifestyle that reflects their convictions, and plans to serve God through doing ministry. Because these next six years can be pivotal for your child, we want to help them make the most of this time so they can have the tools to continue developing a strong faith even after they have graduated from our ministry.

FRIENDS: "Students become like the people they hang out with." Even though students don't like to hear these words, I've seen that truth played out hundreds of times over the years. Almost everything in your teenage years revolves around friends! To finish strong, good friends are vital. Our ministry is a place where students can develop friendships with other students who are pursuing a Godly life.

While we have a large number of students actively involved in our ministry, we have many ways for it to feel small. Since there is no way I can minister to each student personally, it's my goal for every student to be known by a caring adult who will play the role of youth pastor to your son or daughter. Please don't be afraid to ask for help—if I can't help, someone on our team can and will do whatever is possible to help your family.

I hope that this packet helps you understand who we are, how we do ministry, and where you and your student fit. Please email or call me if you have questions.

I look forward to getting to know you and your family,

Josh Brown
Pastor of Youth & Children
South Canyon Baptist Church
pastorjosh@southcanyonbaptist.org
605-342-9000 – office
605-593-7362 – cell

WELCOME



Primary Programs

Events and activities are great, but lasting spiritual transformation is more of a marathon than a sprint. Our weekly program is the foundation upon which the rest of the student ministry is built. Meeting and sharing life week in and week out, praying for one another, encouraging one another, studying God's Word together and worshiping together are crucial to living a Christ-honoring life. The national statistics say that more than 70% of church-going Christian teenagers completely reject their faith after graduating from high school. This trend will change only if students and their families place a high priority on their own spiritual growth by actively participating in their local church on a consistent weekly basis. The principle of "you get what you put in to it" is definitely true when it comes to the student ministry specifically and spiritual growth generally.

Sunday Night Youth Group

Sunday Night Youth Group meets most every Sunday night during the school year. We start at 6:00 pm in the gym with food and hanging out. Around 6:15 we participate in some sort of fun activity and ice breaker to help break down barriers and help students make friends. At 6:45 we transition to the youth room where we are led in a few worship songs by our student led band. Pastor Josh shares a Biblical and relevant message with the students. After the message students break into age and gender specific groups for discussion and application of the message. These groups are coached and led by qualified adult leaders who love Jesus, love students, and are uniquely equipped to mentor them into a thriving walk with God. The goal for youth group is for students to encounter Jesus in a personal, creative, and non-threatening way. This is the student's best entry point into Student Ministry and the church overall. We want your students to be deeply and regularly involved.



Sunday Morning LifeGroups

While Sunday Night Youth Group provides an opportunity to connect with one another and to God, the Sunday Morning Bible Study is where we hope that the next level of true discipleship and lasting transformation will take place. All 7th through 12th grade students meet in the Youth Room from 9:00am to 10:00am for this morning Bible Study time. We believe that the truths of Scripture were meant to be communicated in the context of relationship. God calls us to have a love relationship with Him but also to be in loving relationships with one another. The Sunday Morning Bible Study is designed to take those that have made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ into the core teachings and disciplines of the Christian faith. The format is basically the same as Sunday Night Youth Group but the content is a little more intense. Most Sundays we begin with some announcements and some sort of activity to wake everybody up. Pastor Josh then leads the students in an exploration of the scriptures. Students sit in gender specific small groups with a qualified adult during the study. The last twenty minutes is spent in small groups digging further into the truths of scripture and discussing together the implications for life. If Sunday Night Youth Group is the entry point for the youth ministry and church, then Sunday Morning Bible Study is the next level of digging into what it really means to grow in our walk with Jesus.

Summer Youth Group

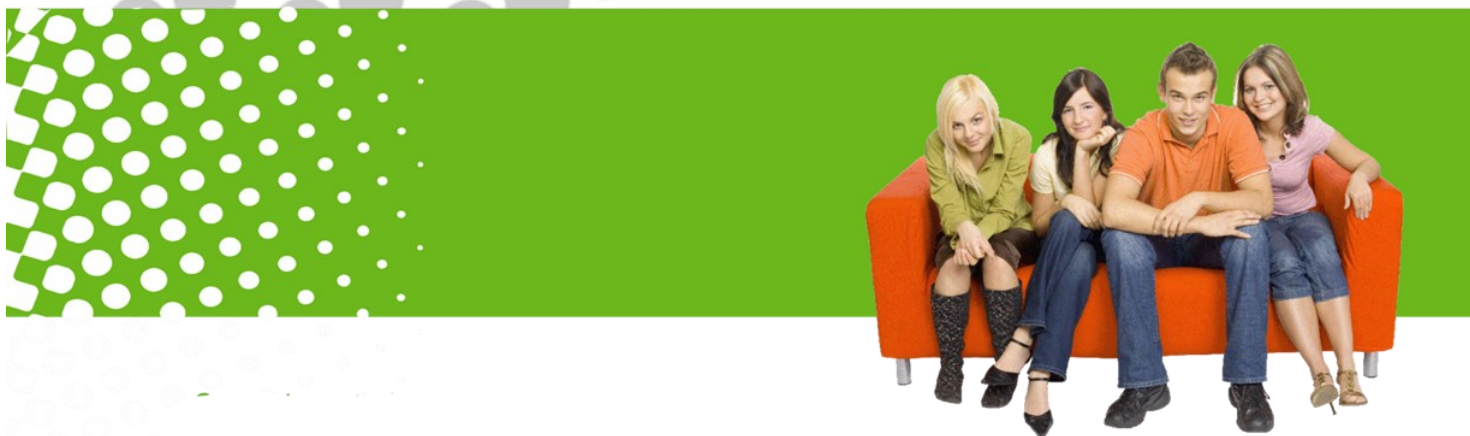
Rapid City is a busy place in the summer! Families take vacations, students get summer jobs, activities and trips make attendance a little less consistent. Therefore our Student Ministry makes some adjustments in the summer time to account for this. We move Youth Group from Sunday nights to Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. We often take advantage of the nice weather by meeting in parks or downtown. Much of the time is spent building relationships, enjoying recreation together, and getting out in the community. A lesson is shared each youth group but tends to be a more standalone type lesson as students are in and out often. This is a great time for newer students to get to connected into the group. We will meet most every week over the summer with a few exceptions. We encourage students to stay connected over the summer as we build some incredible memories together.

Monthly Service Projects

Jesus said that He came not to be served but to serve. Studies have shown that Christian teenagers who take an active serving role in their church and community are exponentially more likely to maintain a strong faith through college and beyond. We want to build the heart of Jesus into our students by regularly involving them in selfless projects for the benefit of others. We are scheduled to help with LifeINC classes every other month on the third Thursday of the month from 4:45 to 8:00 pm. We help bag food for hungry families, serve a meal to families in need, and help care for children while parents attend a variety of training classes. To find out more about LifeINC go to <http://www.loveinonline.com/life-inc/>. The months we are not serving at LifeINC we schedule random projects as they come up. We have helped a sister church with a community block party, served at the Storybook Island Christmas display, and other types of projects. A high percentage of our students also serve in weekly ministries like Awana, Children's Church, and nursery during the week as well.

Meet Us

It is good for a Student Ministry to meet together regularly in a public place to simply enjoy being together. Meet Us is a once a month hang out time after youth group at a local fast food location. It goes from 8:00-9:00ish pm. Parents, friends, siblings, and anybody else that wants to, can come grab a coke and just enjoy some time together. This is a great time to invite a friend to a neutral place where they can meet friendly Christians. Bring some money for your own food and drinks.



Key Events For Students

These events are designed to augment the regular programs. The goal is to create unique experiences where students can encounter the message of Jesus Christ in special and profound ways. Students can hear the voice of God and connect with Him when they separate from their regular routine and focused solely on Jesus. Pulling away from “normal” and connecting with God is a great thing for every believer!



Dare 2 Share

Dare 2 Share is three-day weekend conference in Denver in the February or March months. D2S is focused solely on how to share the gospel. Several of our students come to Christ at this event every year and many others get pumped up to share their faith with their friends. Gathering with 6000 other students from around the midwest and hearing big-time musicians and speakers make this event really exciting and powerful. Cost is typically around \$100.

Summer Local Mission Trip

Most summers we plan some sort of multi-day mission trip or project. It really changes from year to year where we go and what we do but it's a great way to get out of our comfort zone and position ourselves to be used by God in a way we've never experienced before. I think every student should go on at least one local and at least one overseas mission trip before they graduate high school.

Student Life Summer Camp

This week-long camp is the most intense and rewarding ministry event of the year. It's been years since we've done a summer camp here at South Canyon but in my experience, more people give their lives to Christ at Summer Camp than almost any other Student Ministry program a church does. Students recommit their lives to Christ, receive a call to vocational ministry, and deal with a myriad of issues at camp. There is something about getting away from the normal flow of life for a week and focusing on Christ that transforms the heart and mind. Typically, I will spend more ministry hours with a student at Summer Camp than all the rest of the events of the year combined. Do not miss out on this opportunity! This usually takes place in July and is typically around \$350.

Personal Note from Pastor Josh: Do not let fear keep your student from going. They will absolutely love it and will definitely regret not going when they hear what the other students say when they return. Don't miss out on this one!

Fall Retreat

This annual event is designed to get away from it all for a weekend and recharge our spiritual batteries. Focus on spending time with God and personal spiritual disciplines is a primary part of the time together. We participate in activities like paintball, games, and a bonfire. Cost is usually about \$40.

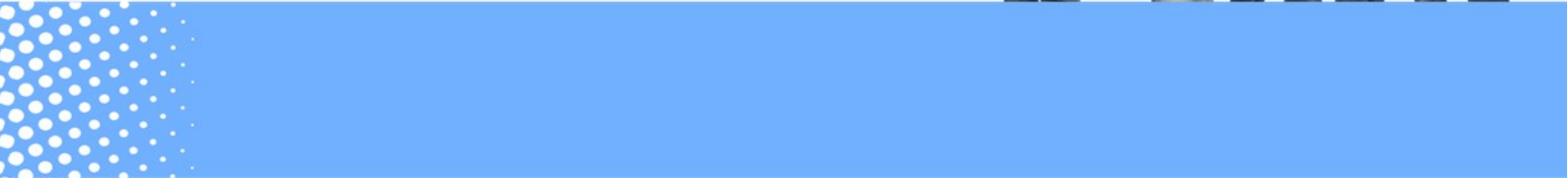
New Year's Lock-In

The New Year's Lock-In is crazy and fun. This event is designed to provide a safe place for students to celebrate the New Year. The event starts at 7:00 pm Dec 31st and ends at 7:00 am Jan 1st. The night will be backed with competitions, games, tournaments, snacks, pizza, and more fun that you can imagine. We will also present the gospel clearly. We hope students will bring lots of friends and we'll have a great opportunity to participate in safe activities and build relationships.

Other Events

Throughout the year we do various different activities just for fun. These events are designed to get students together to have fun and invite their friends. We hope to get the chance to meet new people and build a relationship with them so that we can tell them about Jesus. Student ministry should always be fun and these events exist just because we love getting together and having fun with students.

- Film Festival
- Movie Nights
- Ranch Amusement Park



Key Events For Parents

Parents are called of God to be the primary disciplers of their children. Student Ministry should not and absolutely does not replace the influence of parents as the most important spiritual influences on a child. It may not always seem like it but your role is most important to their future spiritual health. As such, we see Student Ministry as a supplement or support to what you are impressing on your student at home. We want to help, empower, and support you in any way that we can. We want to provide that extra voice and Godly influence in your student's life. We want to stay connected with you both so that you can know what we are planning but also so we can know what you are facing as parents.

Parent Meetings

Two or three times a year, the Student Ministry calls special parent only meetings on a Sunday night in the youth room. The Student ministry shoots for having a meeting just prior to the summer, just prior to the school year, and just after the new year. Typically Pastor Josh will lead parents through the upcoming events, address special issues, and share some insightful information on the culture. These are never more than an hour long and are designed to be a helpful resource to you as you disciple and parent your student through the difficult teen years. I highly recommend taking one hour out of your busy lives to be a part of this meeting.

Spontaneous Events

From time to time Pastor Josh will become aware of a local conference or event that would be of benefit for parents of students. Pastor Josh will pass these along as he comes across them and offer opportunities to join in on these experiences. Being on Pastor Josh's email list will ensure you get the appropriate information when these opportunities



Expectations of Students

When on the church campus:

The bulk of the activities that take place in the church facility itself are devoted to the student's spiritual growth through teaching from the Word of God, fun, fellowship, and worship. Because this is the focus, there are several expectations that go with our normal activities and programs:

- To listen and obey any instruction from any adult leader
- To listen and not talk when any leader or student is attempting to communicate while the group is in session
- To be present in every activity we do as a group
- To not swear or use any sort of profanity
- To not show any sort of public or private displays of affection (P.D.A.)
- To not smoke, drink any alcoholic beverage, chew tobacco, use or possess any illegal drugs, pornography, fireworks, or weapons.
- To respect God, each other, and each others' things (no name calling or bullying).
- To respect the church facility and equipment.

When off the church campus:

- To not show any sort of public or private displays of affection (P.D.A.)
- To not smoke, drink any alcoholic beverage, chew tobacco, use or possess any illegal drugs, pornography, fireworks, or weapons at any youth activity
- To respect other people and their property (luggage, personal belongings, homes, churches, or camp facilities, etc.)
- To wear modest clothing, especially swimsuits. Students will be asked to wear a dark t-shirt over all swimsuits.
- To attend all meetings/sessions at each event



Communicating With Pastor Josh

Pastor Josh's office hours are generally Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM with Friday as his regular day off. Online communication (email, facebook, and texting) are the primary ways that Pastor Josh communicates information out to students and parents.

Email – Pastor Josh communicates with parents primarily through email. Pastor Josh sends out an update email every four to six weeks to keep everyone up to speed on what is happening. Make sure you send your email address to pastorjosh@southcanyonbaptist.org to get added to his list.

Text – Pastor Josh communicates primarily with students through text but parents can be included as well. He typically sends one or two a week. Send your number to pastorjosh@southcanyonbaptist.org or 605 593 7362 to be added to his regular text list.

Facebook – Pastor Josh uses facebook as well to keep parents and students up to date on events and information. Like our South Canyon Baptist Church facebook page and add Pastor Josh as a friend to be in the loop on facebook.

Pastor Josh loves to go to school events and student activities but needs those communicated to him regularly. It is impossible for him to keep up with 50+ students spread out over 6+ different schools and their changing schedules. Josh cannot attend every event but tries to make every one that he is made aware of in advance. Pastor Josh is available to meet with students and families individually.



Student Ministry Method for Correcting Inappropriate Behavior

We are dealing with sinful human beings and as such we will occasionally run into behavior that does not comply with the standards we have set forth. Our goal is not to force them into compliance but to give them the opportunity to make the right decision and change their behavior. Every single issue is an opportunity to mold their character and attitude. Therefore we will always treat each student with respect no matter what the issue. We will make every effort to refrain from embarrassing a student publicly. We will not allow our immediate emotions dictate how we treat a student. We want to train the student to make the proper decision because it is the right thing to do. Obviously each situation can vary but generally our procedure for correcting inappropriate behavior will be as follows.

Student has violated a standard

Step 1 – We will lovingly and respectfully remind the student of the standard and that we expect them to comply. We now leave them alone and let them choose how they will respond. Give the student space and opportunity to make the correct decision themselves.

Student has again violated the standard

Step 2 – We will repeat step 1 but now make it clear the consequences of violating the standard. We will remain positive, respectful, and loving. We will give them room, time, and opportunity to choose appropriately.

Student has again violated the standard

Step 3 – We will lovingly enforce the consequences. We will then remind them of the standard and what is expected of them. We will then give them room, time, and opportunity to change their behavior.

The process will continue until the student has either corrected their behavior or they are sent home from the event at their parent's expense. *(Parents may be contacted at Pastor Josh's discretion)*

Unconditional love is what these students need to experience in the midst of discipline. Therefore we will always focus on correcting the behavior and will never allow their conduct to affect how we treat and respond to them. God loves us unconditionally and that never changes no matter how we behave. However, God does give us the consequences of our decisions. We are simply trying to model this same thing with students. We will strive to never use manipulative and demeaning discipline with a student (withdrawing from them, verbally assaulting them, blowing them off, etc).

Respectful discipline within the context of an unconditional love relationship will be far more transformational in the life of a student (or any human being for that matter) than anything else.



Student Ministry Policy on Adult/Student Interactions

All adult workers must fill out a background check form for our church before they serve in the Student Ministry.

The following policy is established to set a standard of behavior as it pertains to interaction between students and adult leaders. Our goal is to guard students and adult leaders from inappropriate behavior. Following this policy should ensure the safety of all.

There are two basic statements to summarize this policy; never be alone with a student and keep a “many-to-one” ratio. The following will outline how these two statements are applied. This is not an exhaustive list and will not cover every known situation. Using good common sense and this guideline should provide security for the vast majority of situations.

Adult leaders will guard against inappropriate behavior and accusations of inappropriate behavior by never being alone with a student that is not their own child.

We’ll define “alone” as in a closed, private space with no other person present. Adults will stay near other people when dealing with a student; an adult leader will not go with a student in a closed room together, or a basement, etc. Sometimes the situation puts an adult worker alone in a room with a student. In this situation, the adult worker will keep the door open and position himself or herself near the door so that people can see him or her. Adult workers will avoid driving or sitting in a vehicle alone with a student unless expressed permission by a parent is given and no other alternative is possible. Adult workers will not ride or drive alone with a teen that is not their own child unless expressed permission by a parent is given and no other alternative is possible.

Adult leaders will also guard against inappropriate behavior and accusations of inappropriate behavior by keeping a “many-to-one” ratio. By this we mean that we will always have another adult or student present in addition to an adult and student. It is appropriate for an adult leader and a class of five 12-year old or above students. It is also fitting for two adults to be in a room with one 12-year old student. We do not have a rigid two-adult rule but that is always preferable.

The ideal situation is to have another trusted adult with you at all times, but we know this is not always possible. Our policy is that we keep these two principles; never be alone with a student and keep a “many-to-one” ratio at all times.

A special consideration should be given to overnight stays. Lock-ins may be treated as any other events since we do not sleep during these events.

The below list is our policy concerning events where an overnight stay is concerned (such as camps, mission trips, and retreats)

1. At least one person in each room must be 18 or older.
2. Adult leaders will not sleep in the same bed as a student
3. Adult leaders will not enter the sleeping rooms of members of the opposite sex except for extreme emergency situations
4. Adult leaders will avoid being alone in a room with a student in any way possible. Calling over another adult or asking another student to stay in the room would be an appropriate way to avoid being alone with a student.

Special Circumstances

From time to time a student will share something with a sponsor concerning abuse (physical and/or sexual). It is important that we handle these issues appropriately because of the spiritual, emotional, physical, and legal implications of this. We will never promise a student that we will keep something in confidence until we know what it is. We are required by law to report anything resembling physical or sexual abuse involving a minor. Always, always bring Pastor Josh into the situation as soon as reasonably possible – he deals with these issues regularly and is aware on how to deal with them appropriately. We will always remember to stay calm and supportive. A person in this situation needs love and encouragement more than anything else.