

**traders
point**

YOUTH

TEAM MEMBER HANDBOOK: COVID EDITION

welcome to youth ministry

WELCOME

Hey, there!

So you want to serve with teenagers, huh? Some people might think you're crazy, but we know better. Middle schoolers and high schoolers are awesome. They're hilarious (sometimes on purpose). They're dramatic. They're complicated. And they're a ton of fun.

But most importantly, middle schoolers and high schoolers are at a time in their lives where they desperately need someone like you to hang out with them, love them (and like them too), and show them what it looks like to follow Jesus. Especially during COVID.

Whatever your role is in our ministry this year, this handbook will show you some of the ways you can begin making a lasting impact in the lives and faith of teenagers.

Thanks for being willing to serve. Thanks for caring about young people. And thanks for letting God use you.

-Traders Point Youth Team

Part 1:

THE BASICS

meet the team

our why

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discipling teenagers

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meet the team

BASICS

central team:

Anne Wilson // Lead youth minister (team lead)

Tyler Lemmel // Youth operations lead

Ciara Ross // Leadership resident

Lauren Mallory // Leadership resident

campus team:

Eric Pendley // Northwest youth minister

Jake Perry // North youth minister

Josiah Brock // West youth minister

Mike Evans // Northwest youth groups minister

Natalie Evans // Downtown youth minister

our why **BASICS**

Where did you feel the most safe when you were a teenager? Think back to your most insecure or embarrassing moment as a teenager—what happened, who saw, who was there?

We ask this because the way these stories were told were radically different. Teenagers are now living in a world where their every moment is memorialized forever on social media—places are not separate for them—everything lives in their phones. Every social interaction, every bad memory, all of it lives with them 24/7.

When we think about what teenagers are up against, there are different realities for them, even if you were a teenager only five years ago. They're a moving target. The digital age and COVID world we are in has had massive impacts on teenagers that we probably won't know fully until the next generation. We want to see young people not only meet Jesus, but discover their Kingdom purpose.

In *Growing Young*¹, Dr. Kara Powell identifies five struggles that can make faith impersonal and causes students to walk away from faith as an adult.

1. incomplete theology

Not giving them the full gospel, that Jesus came to save us from sin so that we can live for His kingdom forever--not behavior modification but heart transformation.

2. lacking participation

Not being involved in the entire picture but just being entertained. Being consumers instead of contributors, not participating in the full life of the church.

3. unwise choices/sin issues

Engaging in sin that leads them to think they are unworthy of God's love and acceptance.

4. pivotal circumstances

Experiencing tragedy, loss, crisis of faith, mistakes or sin issues of someone else in their lives.

5. wrong voices

40-50% start drifting from God and the church after high school.

¹ Powell, Kara. *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church.*

We want to turn those five struggles into things that fuel our ministry:

1. Share the full gospel.

Our teaching team does this every week!

2. Hand teens the keys of leadership.

Engage youth in all aspects of church life: serving, groups, worship experiences, making a difference in the community and around the world.

3. Give them a faith community that's safe to come to when they've messed up.

Let them know we are here for them always, no matter what.

4. Help them navigate change with consistent community.

When life gets chaotic, we are stable and present.

5. Give teens a team of adults and peers that love them and cheer for them.

Research shows that every kid needs five adults who are in their corner and on their team. We hope to provide two of those adults.

BASICS

connect to christ & community

Worship and learn: Teens experience powerful worship and hear relevant, biblical teaching during our main services. Studies show that involvement in all-church worship during adolescence is more consistently linked with mature faith in both high school and college than any other form of church participation. While we're online for services, we want to encourage youth to watch service on Sundays!

Groups: Age and gender-based groups help teens grow in their relationships with each other and with God. Teens go to groups where they can connect with their crew, their leaders, and be real, ask questions, and learn from God's word together. This is true in person and online.

After-party: When we're in person, we'll host after parties outdoors after group to play some socially-distanced games, eat a snack, and allow teenagers to connect and have fun.

Online: For those who are unable or uncomfortable joining in person this year, we will offer several opportunities and ways to engage online. Check tpcc.org/students for updates.

our values

BASICS

We focus on three things for our ministry specifically to teenagers:

1. We are **consistent**.

We show up, and when we do, we're not distracted and ready to engage.

2. We **connect**.

We look for ways to connect with teens and look for those on the fringe.

3. We **cheerlead**.

We want to be a safe place and a haven for teenagers, recognizing that many spaces in their lives are discouraging. We want to be a place that is warm and encouraging.

our big win BASICS

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in youth ministry. Is anything we're saying actually sinking in? Are young people really growing in their faith? That's why we decided to go ahead and define the big win for our ministry. It's the one thing we hope teens walk away from our ministry with, and the goal we want to keep in mind at all times. And it's what motivates and guides everything we do.

It goes like this:

WE WIN WHEN A TEENAGER
TAKES A STEP TOWARD
OWNING THEIR FAITH AND
JOINING GOD ON HIS MISSION.

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 lifelong 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 and joining God on his mission.

owning their faith & joining God in his mission

What, exactly, does it look like for a teenager to own their faith? We believe there are four things that are the natural result of living a life of faith in Jesus. When a student begins to own their faith in Jesus, they will begin to exhibit the four outcomes listed on the next page.

1. **Friendship With God (Follow Jesus):** As followers of Jesus, the first outcome of our faith should be our desire to accept him as our Lord and Savior and grow our friendship with God through prayer and reading, studying and wrestling with the Bible.

2. **Christlike Relationships (Be in a group):** The second outcome of faith in Jesus has to do with our relationships with others. To help teens develop more Christlike relationships, we want to give young people opportunities to practice community with their small groups and small group leaders, and create ways for them to make and build friendships at church that extend beyond Sundays.

3. **Knowing and Using Their Gifts (Serve):** The third outcome is our ability to identify and use our gifts and talents to give back to love God and others. To help teens identify and use their gifts, we want to provide opportunities to use their gifts at church, and create ways for young people to serve others throughout the church and their community.

4. **Share Their Story (Go):** The fourth outcome of faith is our eagerness to share the story of what God has done in our lives with others. We want to see young people take what they've been given into their communities, their schools, and to their friends who don't know Jesus.

WE COUNT IT AS A WIN
WHENEVER A TEEN TAKES A
STEP TOWARD OWNING THEIR
FAITH THROUGH FRIENDSHIP WITH
GOD, CHRISTLIKE RELATIONSHIPS,
KNOWING AND USING THEIR GIFTS,
OR SHARING THEIR STORIES.

BASICS

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 teens begin to own their faith and join God on mission, we’re really just talking about discipleship. So what is discipleship? Here are three key parts:

1. Discipleship is about living, not learning.

Rather than asking, “What can I teach a student about God?” try asking, “How can I help a student better 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 we would encourage groups to spend time together outside of church sometime during the year. Because discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom—it’s modeled in everyday life.

2. Discipleship happens in community.

In the gospels, you see Jesus prioritizing community in discipleship, and that's because discipleship happens best in a community of people. That's why we focus so much energy on getting teens plugged into consistent groups, why we emphasize that parents are the primary disciplers of their kids, and why we surround young people with tons of Jesus followers. Discipleship takes all of us!

3. Discipleship is a process.

Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. We know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of students who are in it for the long-haul. It's a big commitment, but it's worth. That's why we encourage group leaders to not bail after a few months, but to stick with them through 12th grade, because it's a process.

BASICS

partnering with parents

Getting involved in a church is a really important part of the discipleship process. But you know what? (Now, don't freak out.) Church isn't the most important part of discipleship.

We believe that, in every teen's life, this is true: in a young person's life, the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church. In fact, the church has an average of 40 hours a year to influence a life, whereas the parent has an average of 3,000 hours per year to influence a child or teenager's life.

Here's another way to phrase it, from the smart people at *Orange*, who help churches everywhere better partner with parents:

“What happens at home is more important than what happens at church.”

—Reggie Joiner

No matter what, a young person's family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives (for good or for bad). So doesn't it

make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in our teenager's lives in order to influence their faith?

We use the term “partner” for a reason, because parents and the church need each other. We need to team up with parents because they're ultimately the biggest influence on their own kids' spirituality. And parents need to team up with the local church because their kids need to see faith in Jesus and missional living modeled from a whole community of believers! We need each other!

When you become a group leader, you will have access to your student's parent's email in your group info through Rock. We encourage you to send out an email introducing yourself to students, which can be very simple—introduce yourself, who you are, and your contact info if their parents want to reach out to you. This can be an easy way for the parents of your teens to know who is discipling them and who is joining them as they disciple their teens. And! If their parents don't know Jesus or go to church, it's an easy way to build a connection and just let them know you are here for them.

Part 2:

SERVING

**serving in traders point youth
experience team
group leaders**

SERVING

serving in traders point youth

We already talked about the big win for our ministry—seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on his mission. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished.

No matter what your role is on our team—whether you help prepare food, help set up environments, coach group leaders, or lead a group of 7th grade squirrely guys, team members win when they seek to be humble, hungry, and healthy.

All team members win—from youth staff, group leaders, and experience team members—when we seek to be humble, hungry, and healthy.

HUMBLE: Being humble is a key part to serving in any ministry area, but specifically youth ministry. Being coachable, willing to receive feedback, and always open to be flexible when needed are key components of remaining humble.

HUNGRY: Remaining hungry before God is pivotal when serving others—we cannot give to anyone what we don't have. Being focused on the role we have to play, motivating others to join in, and looking for ways

to connect with young people are all parts of seeking to grow in servant leadership.

HEALTHY: Perhaps most important for any of our team members, coaches, and staff are that we're in a healthy place spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. Our own personal development and spiritual formation are essential to helping teenagers grow. In other words, make sure you show up filled up. Personal Bible study and prayer, weekly church attendance, and being involved in a group who can pour into you are two ways you can safe-guard yourself in staying spiritually healthy.

experience team **SERVING**

We already talked about the big win for our ministry—seeing teens take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on His mission. But not every member of our team has the same role in trying to see that goal accomplished. Here’s what we think the win looks like for our experience team:

Experience teams win when students feel valued and like they belong.

Our experience teams help Traders Point Youth happen on a weekly basis, and have the ability to set the tone for the kind of day teenagers are going to have when they walk through our doors. After all, experience team members are often the first people teenagers see when they arrive and some of the last people they see before they leave. It’s not just about holding signs in the auditorium, setting up 9-square, handing out masks, or preparing food. It’s about making teenagers feel seen, cared for, and valued.

Also, food is a pretty powerful thing. Seriously, think about the memories, the conversations, and the friendships that you’ve built around food! A

meal, a cup of coffee, or a fun treat can bring people together and make them smile. For our food team, whether you're handing a seventh grade boy a bag of Doritos, mixing custom Italian sodas for a group of tenth grade girls, it's never just about the food or the environment. It's about the experience of kindness, generosity, and service you create for teens each week through prep or service.

An awesome environments team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down barriers so that, for the rest of our night, teens are more open to connect with others, with group leaders, and with Jesus.

The Specifics

- Positions: set up, tear down, check-in, and welcome team.
- Show up with energy and ready to serve.
- Make sure every student is greeted.
- Attend all events, leader huddles, and gatherings for team members
- Each area will be given more specifics about their roles and the expectations involved.

SERVING

group leaders

Group leaders have a very crucial role to play in helping teenagers take a step toward their faith and joining God on his mission. Depending on the age and gender of the group you're leading, you might feel like you're walking into a battlefield every week. Here's what we think the win looks like for group leaders:

Group leaders win when they build relationships with teenagers, and help teenagers build relationships with each other.

Relationship With Students

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a young person's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for group leaders to build strong relationships with the teenagers they lead. You can't make a teenager own their faith. You can't make a young person join God on his mission. But you can build a relationship with that teen that allows you to love them and influence their faith.

So a group leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the teenagers God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their

relationship to lead teens, rather than relying on their position. They win when a teenager sees their group leader not as just an authority figure they have to obey, but someone they trust and want to follow.

Relationships With Each Other

As important as a teenager's relationship with a group leader is, it's not the only relationship that matters. Group leaders win when they help teenagers build relationships with each other because (remember) discipleship happens best in community. A group leader isn't the only person a teen needs to influence their faith. They need each other, too!

The Specifics

- Show up prepared every week.
- Connect with teenagers outside of church.
- Partner with the parents of your teens by introducing yourself when possible.
- Plan one service project for your group each year, and a group gathering outside of Traders Point Youth. Connect with your youth minister for budget for this!

Part 3:

THE FINE PRINT

safety guidelines
code of conduct
leader commitment

THE FINE PRINT

safety guidelines

As a member of our ministry team, it is absolutely essential that you practice healthy boundaries with teenagers at all times, for their safety and yours. These guidelines exist to protect teens from harm and to protect you from false allegations.

While these guidelines apply to your interactions with all students, they are especially important with working and ministering to teenagers of the opposite gender.

Be mindful when you're alone with a student.

If you need to have a private conversation with a student, have the conversation in a public place at a campus or in a public space—not behind closed doors or in a room alone. Here are some tips to help you navigate through this particular guideline:

- In an effort to partner with parents, when setting up meetings one-on-one with students, make sure parents know you and are aware you're meeting.
- If a teenager needs a ride, try to arrange to have another adult or teenager ride with you. Always make sure the parent is aware.

Maintain physical boundaries.

Be wise. Maintain healthy and safe physical boundaries with teenagers at all times. This means setting boundaries for yourself, but it may also mean setting and enforcing boundaries with teens who push physical limits. If you have any questions about what is or isn't appropriate, talk with our staff and always err on the side of caution.

For example:

1. **Never** physically harm or discipline a student.
2. **For this year, elbow bumps and air high fives are great!**
3. **Bring a mask.** We will be relying on our local and national public health experts including the CDC, Marion County Health Department, and Indiana State Department of Health. Face masks will be required when we are gathering in-person together until experts tell us otherwise.

Log electronic conversations.

When you find yourself in the midst of a sensitive conversation with a teenager, keep in mind that words and intentions can be misconstrued—intentionally or unintentionally. Any time you are engaged in a serious

conversation with a student, log your conversations (take screen shots, save text messages and emails). This may seem excessive, but if you're ever falsely accused of misconduct from a teenager or parent, you'll be glad you did it.

Report dangerous situations, or any suspicion of abuse or neglect.

As a member of our ministry team, you are a mandated reporter. That means you are legally required to report any dangerous or potentially dangerous situations to our staff immediately. Including:

- If a teenager is being harmed, neglected, or abused.
 - If a teenager is harming or abusing someone else.
- If a teenager is harming or at risk of harming themselves.

If you suspect a teenager is experiencing abuse, please contact your campus team leader right away to let them know. Do not go more than a couple of hours, as a report needs to be made within 12 hours for everyone's safety.

If for some reason you cannot talk to your campus youth minister right away, you can call the CPS hotline yourself at 1-800-800-5556. When you make the call, the receiver will guide you through the process. Let your youth minister know right away when you've done so.

code of conduct THE FINE PRINT

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by. Here they are!

ALL TEAM MEMBERS

Work Hard: You are so important to our ministry! We need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

"Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ..." (Colossians 3:23)

Be Kind: Ministry is all about people, so to be effective in ministry, you'll need to reflect God's heart for people. With teenagers, parents, other team members, and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love.

"Get along amongst yourselves... And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out."
(1 Thessalonians 5:13-15)

GROUP LEADERS

Be Like Jesus: More than any other serving role, group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of young people. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, remain above reproach, to glorify God with their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day—especially in key areas like their treatment of others on our team, social media presence, drug or alcohol use, and sexual behavior.

“Watch what God does, and then do it.” (Ephesians 5:1)

“Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12)

leader commitment

THE FINE PRINT

I promise to follow through on what I've committed to. If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to let the staff know and to give them as much notice as I possibly can, knowing they'll need to find a replacement for me and that takes time.

I promise I've read this Youth Ministry Handbook. I understand the mission and strategy of our ministry and will support the vision and leadership of the staff.

I promise I've read the Safety Guidelines and will abide by them, for my safety and for the safety of teens.

I promise I've read the Code of Conduct and will abide by it. If I mess up, I promise to be honest with our staff about my actions and will accept whatever consequences they think are reasonable and necessary, knowing that, while they must always act in the best interest of teenagers, they are committed to treating me with respect, love, and grace.

I promise I understand the expectations of my role and will work hard to fulfill them. If I'm having trouble fulfilling any of my expectations, I promise to communicate with the staff and ask for help, knowing they're here to support me.

And finally...

I promise to do my part in making a huge difference in the lives and faith of young people who engage with Traders Point Youth. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____