



**PARENT
HANDBOOK**



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HEY THERE!

So you're the parent of a teenager, huh? Congratulations! You have one of the most important (and sometimes the most difficult) jobs on the planet.

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

No matter how connected (or not connected) you are with our church, this Parent Handbook will show you some of the ways we're trying to care for your kid and serve you at the same time.

Thanks for letting us be another voice in the life of your teenager. Your trust and partnership means a lot to us.

We can't wait to see what this year has in store!



THE BIG PICTURE

OUR VISION

Our **SCRIPTURAL VISION** will be centered around the concepts within **Romans 12:1-2** and **Mark 1:15**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

-Romans 12:1-2

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

- Mark 1:15

THE VISION for **Rooted Students** is to *equip, encourage, and empower* students, families, and volunteers to make a difference for the Kingdom of God in everything we do and say.



OUR GOALS

THE GOALS that flow from our vision are...

- * Focus on ***SIMPLE and REPRODUCIBLE*** events, teachings and applications.
 - * In my experience and in my understanding of Christian history as a whole, ministry grows and multiplies best when things are simple and reproducible. If Jesus called 12 young men who were far from ideal/perfect to change the world with His mission, then I think we must consider a similar simple and reproducible pattern and posture with how we approach such things.

- * Remain ***F.A.T*** to the Lord and each other.
 - * A close friend, professor and discipler in my life once taught me that a disciple of Christ must remain Faithful, Available and Teachable (FAT).
 - * We must learn to be Faithful, Available and Teachable. Without those traits, we cannot hope to learn to be like Christ or reflect Him. If we can remain Faithful, Available and Teachable to the Lord and each other, then we will begin to see our lives transformed in Christ.





ROOTED AT A GLANCE

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

SUNDAY MORN @10:45AM

Our Rooted Sundays (grades 6-12) meet every Sunday for teaching, and small groups.

ROOTED WEDNESDAYS @6PM-7:30PM

Our Rooted Wednesdays (grades 6-12) meets every Wednesday for fun, worship, teaching, and small groups.

OUR ENVIRONMENTS

There are 2 environments for teenagers in our ministry. Each one is focused on inviting teenagers on a journey into a deeper relationship with Jesus. Each environment is designed with every 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 grow. Events are often the environment where teenagers will 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 in **four key areas**. (We'll get to those in a minute.)

SMALL GROUP: Small groups are a HUGE part of what we do. They happen most weeks, and the relationships built in small groups extend outside the walls of our church. They're designed to connect every teenager with trustworthy adults and a community of their peers.



ROOTED DETAILS

Annual Planning and Programing

4 ROOTS

- * **Discipleship** (quarterly focuses/habits)
- * **Teaching** (lesson plans with scriptural emphasis)
- * **Programming** (games, small activities, communication, leadership, training, etc.)
- * **Events** (large and small events to build relationships and live as Christ)

We plan things with Rooted youth annually starting with **4 Quarterly Discipleship focuses** (or Spiritual Habits). Those are then emphasized through the same broad scope of 12-14 **teachings**. We then look at our weekly **programming** like Wednesday and Sunday that set the stage for Discipleship and Teaching. Lastly, we plan **events** to encourage and connect back to the discipleship emphasis and cultivate a time to build new relationship and grow current relationships in Christ.

The main point behind this is to have a simple, reproducible and consistent structure to build authentic, life-sharing, discipleship relationships with the students and the church.



ROOTED DETAILS (Cont.)

Annual Planning and Programing (Cont.)

4 DISCIPLESHIP FOCUSES (Spiritual Habits):

- * Spending time with God
- * Spending time with Others
- * Knowing and Using your Gifts
- * Sharing Your Story

Programing:

- * **Create weekly environments** where students want to be and can know and grow in Christ
- * **Games-** engaging activities to build relationships and to have a stinkin' good time!
- * **Weekly Small Group Conversations** and **Large Group Teaching** (equal parts and both are essential)
- * **Small Group** - A consistent group with a consistent adult that meets with them consistently.
- * **Large Group-** Sermon followed by conversation or discussion



ROOTED DETAILS (Cont.)

Annual Planning and Programing (Cont.)

Teaching:

- * **Emphasis on the Word of God and objective truth-** scripture is where teaching must always start and end.

- * **Every Year We Typically Discuss:**
 - * Spiritual Habits
 - * Friendships
 - * Prayer
 - * Family
 - * Wisdom
 - * Evangelism
 - * Jesus
 - * Identity
 - * Justice
 - * Christmas/Advent
 - * Easter

- * **Every Other Year We Typically Discuss:**
 - * Authority
 - * Doubt
 - * Hurt
 - * Loving Others



ROOTED DETAILS (Cont.)

Annual Planning and Programing (Cont.)

Annual Event Strategy:

- * **Plan events** that cultivate a time to build new relationship and grow current relationships in Christ.
- * Plan **FEWER events** that make a **BIGGER impact**.
- * Plan **Small events** with **smaller groups** that are simple and reproducible that build meaningful relationships
 - * Movie nights
 - * Sporting events
 - * Dinner parties
 - * Life-sharing events (dinner, shopping, coexisting for enjoyment)
- * **Plan events** that directly connect to **Discipleship Emphasis**
 - * Does this event move us closer to the next thing?
- * **Every Year We Typically Plan:**
 - * Summer Camp (June)
 - * Mission Experience (July/Aug)
 - * Fall Event (Nov)
 - * Christmas Party/Service Project (Dec)
 - * Winter Event (Jan)
 - * Spring Event (April)
 - * Summer Event/Early School Outreach Event (Aug/Sept)





1. **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** This is an obvious one, right? Sometimes it's the only spiritual habit we can name. After all, isn't "growing spiritually" synonymous with "spending time with God"? Well, not exactly, but it's still pretty important. After all, if teenagers are ever going to make their faith their own, they've got to start spending time with God on their own. It means opening the Bible on their own, having conversations with God on their own, and discovering how they best connect with God through worship on their own.
2. **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** Engaging in healthy community can, and should, be a spiritual habit we help our students develop. But "healthy community" doesn't just mean hanging out with Christians. This spiritual habit is about growing in Christlike relationships with everyone.
3. **USE THEIR GIFTS:** Teenagers need to know that God made them unique, and special, and with really specific gifts, talents, passions, and resources. Then they need to use those gifts to love God, love others, and influence the world around them. Because when teenagers begin to discover who God made them to be, and then use their unique identity to love both God and others, they grow.
4. **SHARE THEIR STORY:** Teenagers need to learn how to talk about God. Sharing your story is the spiritual habit of making faith a regular, everyday, go-to topic of conversation in our lives. Because when we talk about God and His place in our story (or, more accurately, our place in His story), it helps us believe, helps us understand, and helps us take ownership of our own faith.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward owning their faith in Christ by practicing one, or maybe even all four, of these spiritual habits.





OUR BIG WIN

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning with teenagers, you know? Like, is anything we're teaching actually sinking in? Are teenagers 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 that we, as a ministry, want to achieve. It's 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 IN CHRIST (Mark 1:15)

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 in Christ to repent and believe in the Gospel.

OWNING THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST

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. We call these four things our four spiritual habits. They can all be traced back to what it means to REPENT and BELIEVE in the GOSPEL (Mark 1:15)





DISCIPLING STUDENTS

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 in Christ and pass it on to someone else. (Matt 28:18-20)

When we talk about helping teenagers begin to own their faith, we’re really 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 in Christ?” It’s not just about teaching them about Jesus - it’s about modeling what faith in Jesus looks like. That’s why we spend time together outside of church. Because discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom - it’s modeled in everyday life.

DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the Gospels, you don’t really see Jesus doing one-on-one discipleship’s much. That’s because discipleship happens best in a community of people. That’s why we focus so much energy on getting teenagers plugged into 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

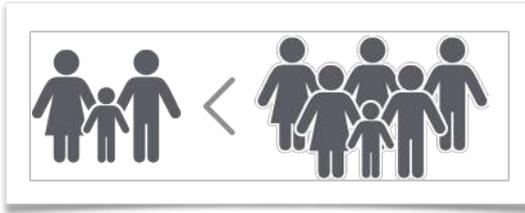
Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. And, because we know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of teenagers who are in it for the long-haul. That’s why our youth leaders don’t bail on their teenagers after a few months, but intend to stick with them for several years - because it’s a process.



ENGAGING WITH YOUTH LEADERS

As a parent, you are making a huge impact in your teenager's life. The impact you're 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 of 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.



Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark, authors of *Sticky Faith*, encourage parents to **“develop a sticky web of relationships”** for their kids.

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. It takes a village!

That's why we are so committed to connecting in smaller groups. Small groups exist to connect your kid with other adults you can trust so you can better influence their faith and future.

So, this year, get to know our youth leaders. They can be a powerful ally for you and your family!



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 are vetted by leadership and background checks.

WE SET BOUNDARIES

We have set a number of 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 the knowledge and consent of you, their parents.
- No staff member or volunteer should transport a teenager in a vehicle alone (unless permitted by the parent). If a teenager needs a ride, we must arrange to have another adult or teenager rider accompany them (unless otherwise permitted by the parent)
- All staff members and volunteers must maintain appropriate physical boundaries with teenagers at all times.



WE REQUIRE PERMISSION SLIPS

We will ask for your consent in order for your teenager to attend any event, retreat, or gathering outside of our regular weekly program.

WE REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

Every staff member and volunteer in our ministry is 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.

WE ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE

If you ever have a concern about your teenager's care or safety, please reach out to us. We're just a phone call or email away!





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 every other week. It's packed with information on our ministry and on how to be a more awesome parent of a teenager. Subscribe with the button at www.memorialchurch.net/students

SOCIAL MEDIA

We post photos, videos, and updates from our ministry frequently. Follow along at . . .

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/MemorialBaptistStudents/

INSTAGRAM: instagram.com/rootedmbc

REMIND: remind.com/join/mbcrooted

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