



STUDENT LEADER HANDBOOK



COMMON GROUND

Hey There!

We are excited about you potentially becoming a Student Leader. Being a Student Leader at Common Ground Students is a really big deal and just as important and needed as our Adult Leaders. Student Leaders help make this ministry actually function and be effective.

As you go through this handbook be prayerful in this decision. Seek God and His wisdom. Is God calling you to be a leader and take on this responsibility? Are you ready to be used by God to help your peers grow in their faith? If so, get ready for a new chapter in your life, a chapter that will last for the rest of your life. That chapter is being an active servant leader of God and it will be quite the adventure. But we are blessed that God goes on this adventure with us and surrounds us with brothers and sisters in Christ who are all on the same journey as well.

So, what are we waiting for?! Let's get started!



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COMMON GROUND

The Basics

Our Team



Dave Klass

Student Pastor

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Dave has been leading student ministries since 2002. He has a BA in religion and a MA in pastoral counseling from Liberty University. His goal is to partner with Christian parents in their important duty of discipling their children. He has a passion to see young people own their faith and become leaders for Christ in their church, schools, and towns.



Bekah Klass

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Bekah has been married to Dave since 2010 and they have 2 daughters (Ellie & Sera). Bekah has been serving in church ministries since she was in junior high and has helped Dave lead youth ministries (and more) since 2012.



COMMON GROUND

Our Ministry

OUR WEEKLY PROGRAMS

6th-12th Grade | WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30-8:30pm

Our youth ministry meets every Wednesday for fun, worship, teaching, and small groups.

Common Ground Church | SUNDAYS AT 10am

We encourage our teens to attend and serve at our Sunday morning services.

OUR ENVIRONMENTS: Everything we do is designed to strategically invite teenagers on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders, and Jesus. Each environment is designed with every teenager in mind - the kid who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too.

SMALL GROUP: Small groups are the most important part of what we do. They happen every week to end youth group gatherings, but the relationships built in small groups extend outside the walls of our church. They're designed to connect every teenager with a consistent trustworthy adult and community of their peers.

EVENTS: On the first Sunday of every month, we have 2 events. First is our After Party after church in the conference room. It's a time with donuts, coffee, and a prize wheel. But more importantly, a time to catch up with students, their parents, and other Adult Leaders. Our second event is our Game Night at 6:30-8pm with food, games, and prizes. This has been the best way for students to invite their unchurched friends to an event that will feel less foreign to them. They get to meet their peers, make friends, and feel comfortable. The goal is to get them to come back on Wednesday. We also do other events periodically throughout the year (e.g. camp, Christmas party, etc.)



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Our Big Win

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in youth ministry, 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 team, 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.

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.

OWNING THEIR FAITH

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.



Our Big Win

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.



Our Big Win

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 by practicing one, or maybe even all four, of these spiritual habits.



Personal Faith Requirements & Christian Leadership

To be a true Christian leader you must have a continually growing and active relationship with God. That means daily prayer and Bible reading is a must. You must always keep up with our Daily Ten and be ready to discuss it each week in small group. Christian leaders represent Christ in servant leadership at youth group Wednesday nights, at church on Sundays, and outside of church in all areas of life. None of us are perfect and we all will make mistakes and sin. However, if our life goal is to be like Jesus, then we will not live a hypocritical life. A true Christian leader is the first among servants. You are the best servant and the first to serve. You serve with a joyful attitude. Christian leaders should not stand on top of the mountain and simply give orders. Christian leaders join the people in the work and lead by example.



What's Required

Maturity in Christian Leadership

As a Student Leader you will become privy to certain information that others will not (like issues that arise or personal concerns). These must remain private. You are being told because in certain circumstances as a leader you need to know so you can lead your friends well. As a Christian leader you may learn things that are hard to hear (e.g. abuse issues at someone's home) and it is your duty to report them to an adult leader immediately, and outside of that, to keep that private.

Also remember that being mature doesn't equate to always being serious. Being mature means you understand when it's time to be serious and when it's time to have fun.



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Leader Lifestyle Requirements

These requirements are the same as adult leader volunteers.

You must live out Christ-like biblical standards as it pertains to every aspect in life. This includes refraining from under-age alcohol consumption, illegal drug use, and cigarette smoking. You must agree to live out a biblical standard of sexual activity (all sexual activity is to remain between a Christian man and woman in marriage, under God). How we speak and act in public must always reflect Christ well and be a good representation for our church and youth ministry. Any incident will be dealt with on a case to case basis with love and care from Pastor Dave and other church leaders.

Christian leaders follow Christ's example found in John 1:14
"And the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us**, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**."

Jesus was present with people and full of grace and truth. We need to also live out all 3. We must be present (with people, at church, in our towns), we must be full of grace (love others, give the benefit of the doubt, forgive easy, be patient, don't rush to anger), and full of truth (always seeking the truth in all things, always be willing to deliver the truth in all things). If we are missing 1/3 then we fail to be Christ-like in any given situation.



Weekly Expectations

Arrive at 5:45pm for meeting with Pastor Dave. Then setup begins. The areas to setup are the main room, lobby, and the kitchen. After setup is done, those not working in the café will be on the Welcome Wagon. Once youth group begins in the main room, your task is to help keep everyone quiet during game instructions and set a good example during the games. During the sermon try to sit with new people and help keep the room quiet. Then during Small Groups, you might be co-leaders with an adult. Be ready to talk about Daily 10 and that night's sermon. At the end you will help with teardown like putting chairs back and cleanup.

Other Expectations

Any Student Leader meetings must be attended. We will do them at least quarterly. Student Leaders will help with creating, planning, and implementing our quarterly big events and more. The depth of your participation in these ways will vary greatly depending on the event. In these meetings you really have a chance to make a major impact in our decisions. The goals with big events are relational growth (grow friendships between students, and friendships between Adult Leaders & students), evangelism (encourage students to invite friends), & fun (it's important to have fun when living for Jesus).



Adult Leader Expectations for the Students

We expect you to always follow all Adult Leader instructions.

We expect you to always be respectful towards our Adult Leaders.

We expect you to not come here for all the wrong reasons.

We expect that you will make lifelong friendships with both your peers & the Adult Leaders.

We expect you will grow in your faith in Jesus.

Student Expectations fo Adult Leaders

Expect us to be more understanding than you think.

Expect us to always try our best to do what's right by you.

Expect us to never think you're a "bad kid".

Expect us to be real with you.

Expect us to always direct you towards Jesus.

Expect us to admit when we're wrong.

Expect us to be loving and caring.



Setup & Teardown

All Student Leaders will help weekly with both setup & teardown. It's important to spend time with friends and have fun but being a Student Leader means having a "serving first" mindset. Don't get too lost in a conversation with a buddy or a game of 9-Square that you forget to help your fellow Student Leaders teardown.

The biggest part of setup & teardown is always the chairs in the main room. We have a detailed seating chart (with pictures) that will help guide the team in getting everything ready for Sunday's service.

Cafe Team

Being a Cafe Team Leader is a really fun and cool way to serve your friends in this ministry. Every week we have a different Student Leader in the cafe leading a team of students. Each week in the cafe you will setup & teardown, cleanup, sell our CG Students merchandise, and make drinks for people. You will be trained by one of our current Student Leaders and eventually help them in scheduling this role.



Band & Tech Team

Can you sing well? Do you play an instrument? Ever wondered how we control the slides? Ever wanted to run a soundboard? If you answered yes to 1 or more of these questions then we need to talk about getting you on the band & tech team. This team is seasonal and depends on lots of factors if it's active or not. But the more people we have in the band the more likely the band will be consistently playing. We believe musical worship is an important part of worship as a whole. We want to serve our students here with the ability to sing praise to God together.

Welcome Wagon

This will be done weekly by those not working in the café. This team welcomes everyone who enters through the doors. If someone new comes, one of you will lead them through a small tour: check-in, café, 9 Square/hangout/talk, intro to Pastor Dave, intro them to their small group leader (ask Dave about who their leader might be), go through an overview of the night, and sit with them. Girls will welcome girls & boys with boys. New people who come alone need more attention and to sit with them. New people who come with a regular attender still get welcomed and a tour, but need less attention due to their friend being there. Doing the Welcome Wagon well is very important. It's our first impression and will have a big impact of future growth.



Small Group Co-leader

This will become your most important responsibility as a student leader. It is a huge honor to be able to do this. You will be discipling your peers as you co-lead a small group. You will receive the night's order and small group questions in an email a few days before Wednesday night youth group (between Thursday-Saturday the week before). Go over the questions beforehand on your own. You can even text with your adult co-leader and discuss things ahead of time. This will at times be incredibly rewarding and insanely challenging. However, helping to disciple people is an amazing thing that will change your life and others in great and godly ways. Work with adult leaders and allow them to lead you and train you. Your goals are to help the students learn from the message from that night, learn more about God and His Word, learn more about themselves and each other, and to grow in wisdom, closeness with Christ and each other.



References

Being on the Student Leader Team allows you to put your service as a Student Leader on certain resumes and certain college scholarship applications. Pastor Dave will also write anything you need and talk to whoever you want to help you succeed in life. Dave has talked to hundreds of employers and colleges to aid past students and he looks forward to doing that for many years.

Being on Stage

It is possible that some of you will step up in ways that lead to you being on stage. This could include doing announcements, leading certain games, leading worship, prayer, and possibly speaking/giving the message. This can end up being a major benefit depending on God's calling on your life and your future career.

Discipleship with Becka & Dave

We are not entirely sure what this will look like for each Student Leader because we always do it differently in some ways depending on what God is calling us to do & what's most beneficial. It will for sure include time with the girls and Becka (fun times, possible book/bible study sessions, small group time of your own). It will include time with the boys and Dave. (same as above). This will be something we develop to meet your needs and to help you achieve what God is calling you to do. Take advantage of this part of being a student leader. This has led to some of the coolest things Becka and Dave have ever done in ministry and has created life-long friendships.



Summer Internships

This is something that you can ask for or Pastor Dave will ask for you to do. However, not everyone is called to become an intern. An intern would be a role that meets weekly with Dave and other ministry leaders, and takes on a much bigger role within the youth ministry. Interns are not just “future pastor” type roles but can fill different type of leadership roles (based on your spiritual gifting).

Future Adult Ministry Leaders

Dave has had many past Student Leaders become Adult Leaders in college or later. As well as, many others go into full or part-time ministry jobs. That can be something away, where we send you off to help a college campus or a different church. Or maybe you come back or stay in the area and join us as an Adult Leader. God could possibly even call you to join our team as we plan to partner with churches and plant churches in the future. Anyone who showed great Christ-like leadership from a young age (in-house) will always be considered first due to us knowing you so well and seeing how God has and is using you.



Code of Conduct

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

ALL STUDENT LEADERS

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.

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

REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS: As a member of our ministry team, that means you are required to report any dangerous or potentially dangerous situations to our team 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.

SMALL GROUP CO-LEADERS

BE LIKE JESUS: More than any other volunteer role, small group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of teenagers. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every small group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, 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.



Commitment

My name is _____

and I'm ready to serve!

I promise to follow through on my responsibilities. If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to keep our team informed 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 Student Leader Handbook. I understand the mission and strategy of our ministry and will support the vision and leadership of the team.

I promise I've read the requirements and expectations and will abide by them, for my safety and for the safety of our teenagers.

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 team 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 team 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 the teenagers who walk through our doors. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____



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