

Everyone Everywhere

SM leader guide
HSM and MSM

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WELCOME

We are so excited about the opportunity to serve alongside you in the year to come. Our vision at OCC is to see EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE experience and be transformed by the love of God, and we believe there is no better place to live out that vision than in Student Ministries! The adolescent years are some of the most crucial and influential in a person's life, and we want the BEST humans walking alongside them as they journey to discover their own identity in Jesus and how that serves the purpose of bringing more of His kingdom to earth. We can't wait to see what God has in store for both our students and YOU this year. It's going to be the best!

THE STUDENT MINISTRIES STAFF



WHO WE ARE

OUR STAFF



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OUR PURPOSE

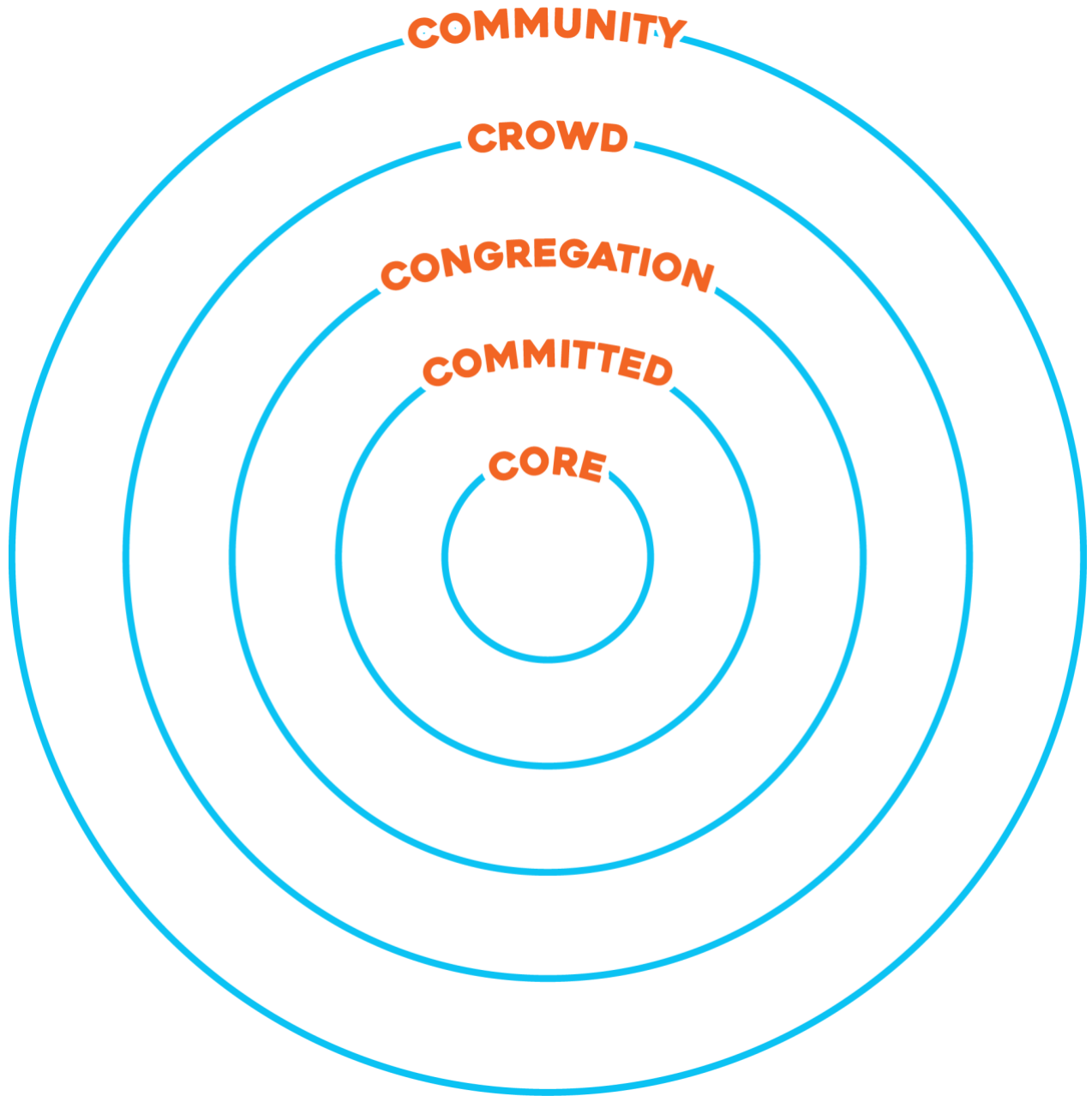
To see EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE- experience and be transformed by the love of God

OUR PROCESS

Creating a safe place where every student would be **LOVED, KNOWN, HEARD, SUPPORTED**, and **CHALLENGED** by a caring adult.

Research shows that the likelihood of a student remaining connected to the Church upon graduation and living a vibrant faith increases significantly when they have 5 adults in their life (outside of family) invested in their spiritual development. It's not the sermon at camp that made them cry, or the fancy lights during worship, but it is YOU and ME walking alongside them in their crucial years showing them that they are **LOVED** and they **BELONG** to God and to the local church.

TARGET AUDIENCE



RELATIONAL MINISTRY

The Apostle John wrote, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” (John 1:14 MSG) This is the foundation of our ministry. That we would go out of our way to lean into the world of students and show them the hope and love of Jesus. Chances are a student won’t remember our creative Bible studies, crazy events, or a carefully crafted camp talk. What they remember is YOU! They won’t forget the leader who LOVED GOD and LIKED THEM. The leader that talked to them when no one else would, who went into their world, who was there for them when family life got tough. You’re the physical and incarnational means in which our students will experience God’s love.

RELATIONAL VALUE

Our ministry strives to create a place where **EVERY** student is **LOVED, KNOWN, HEARD, SUPPORTED** and **CHALLENGED** by a caring adult.

TIPS FOR REACHING OUR RELATIONAL VALUE

These are the three values that every leader must strive to CONSISTENTLY embody:

1 - SHOW UP

One of the first ways for a student to experience God's LOVE is through the context of relationships. It's often the beginning of every spiritual decision they will make. We have a small window of time together to develop those...so your presence matters. Show up faithfully and consistently.

2 – BE PRESENT

The best way for a student to be KNOWN and HEARD is for someone to be present with them. Students are bright and can tell when someone is genuinely interested in them or checked out thinking about other things. The best thing you can do is know their name and remember something that matters to them. Ask good questions, get to know their likes and dislikes.

3 - POINT THEM FORWARD

Point out a student's potential. Encourage them to take the next step in their faith journey. For some this will be showing up weekly to small group, for others it might mean committing to a daily Bible reading plan or serving on a ministry team. Help them see how their strengths and abilities can be used to make an impact in this world. Become a personal cheerleader when they win.

4 – FOLLOW UP

If we are going to CHALLENGE students to take the next step in their faith, they are going to need SUPPORT. As you see students make decisions and commitments in their faith over this year, follow up to see how they are doing and how you can encourage them in the process.

MISCONCEPTIONS

For most sane adults, investing into teenagers can be a bit intimidating, but it's not as hard as you might think! We've heard the same old misconceptions time and time again. Misconceptions that unfortunately prevent adults from getting started in ministry and making a real difference in the life of a student.

MISCONCEPTIONS...

- I must be young and hip
- I must have adequate Bible training
- I must be a perfect example of a Christian
- I must be "older" and wise.
- I must be able to act like one of the students
- I must have plenty of free time
- I must know everything about the latest youth culture
- I must be wild, crazy, and dynamic
- I must be liked by all students

Let's be honest, this isn't the most comfortable ministry in the church. So it's completely normal for you to feel slightly inadequate about your skills and ability to relate. But know this: your confidence will grow the more you're around students and you'll see how God can use inadequate people (all of us) to do great things. Here's the truth about what students need:

STUDENTS NEED ADULTS WHO WILL...

- Remember their name
- Enter their world
- Pray for them
- Laugh with them and at themselves
- Take initiative to spend a little time with them
- Believe in them
- Love Jesus authentically in front of them

Simply put, a teenager needs someone who cares. We do this thing as a team. The differences in each of us are what make our leadership team work! We can't be all things to students... young, old, crazy, wise, funny, sociable, quiet, etc. We just need to be the person God made us to be and someone else will fill in the gaps of what we aren't!

MSM & HSM EXPECTATIONS

Sundays are THE BEST DAY OF THE WEEK.

MSM meets from 11:00-12:30

HSM meets from 4-5:30.

This is where our small groups happen and YOU become the pastor to your small group. Each Sunday we will gather for a time of fun, worship, teaching, and SMALL GROUP discussion.

LEADER MEETING

We will gather for a 15 minute leader meeting each week before program begins. For MSM, this will begin at 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM for HSM. This will be a time where we will share resources and prepare you for what is ahead for our time together and how you can make the most of your time as a small group.

PROGRAM

The first 45 minutes of our time together will consist of a welcome, game, worship, and a message that helps students connect their faith and the teachings of scripture to what is happening in their day to day world. Our desire is that what happens on stage equips you to have significant time in your Small Group. While teaching and fun helps students engage and grow, we believe processing together with their group is the most significant thing that will help them grow this year.

SMALL GROUPS

Connection through pastoral care is the most important thing that we do in SM to help students grow in their faith. The great part about this community is that we might have a different style of leading and that is to be celebrated. There is no pastor who pastors the exact same way, but there are some key things that help a group thrive, and we want to make sure each of those are implemented especially in this different season of ministry. Here are a few tips on how to navigate your virtual small groups:

CREATE COMMUNITY

Work hard to create a positive community where every student feels safe to share, socially accepted, challenged, and encouraged. Spend a few minutes on the front end or back end sharing highs and lows of the week. Ask about their lives and make prayer together a priority.

GROW TOGETHER

Every group is in a unique spot as they are experiencing and being transformed by Jesus. Transformation and growth will look very different for sixth grade boys compared to junior girls. While it is easy for conversations to get off topic, we would ask that as a leader, you help detour it back to the scripture and topic that was presented during large group time. While we want to create community and talk about our lives, we believe that happens best when we prioritize Jesus and his teachings.

FOLLOW UP

When something significant is shared in group, make sure you aren't waiting until the next week to check in. If someone has had a moment of vulnerability, check in on them after group time or the following day if it feels more appropriate. If they have shared something with you that might feel bigger than what you know how to answer or navigate, it would be a great time to connect with your coach. God is moving in our conversations and in the hearts of students. Our consistency with follow up more important than ever!

THE BIG 5

	LOVED (Send a text)	KNOWN (Send a Postcard)	HEARD (Follow up and pray)	SUPPORTED (Encourage to join a team)	CHALLENGED (Invite students invite friends)
WEEK 1					
WEEK 2					
WEEK 3					
WEEK 4					
WEEK 5					
WEEK 6					

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- How are your pets? (Middle School)
What has been your favorite song/game/show you're into?
- What is bringing you joy?
- What do you feel grateful for?
- What has been hard?
- How is life at home?
- Where could you use some extra support right now?
- Where are you seeing God in the midst of your circumstances?
- What are you learning?
- What's the most fun you've had this week?
- How are things going with your friends?
- Where do you feel most connected or known?

TIPS FOR LEADERS

GUIDE DISCUSSION, DON'T PREACH

Too often, group time becomes “The Sermon, Part Two”. Our job is to facilitate discussion. So strive to become the guide who fades into the background of the conversation... not the one dominating it.

CONTROL THE DIRECTION OF YOUR GROUP

Establish the atmosphere. Don't be afraid to redirect conversation when it goes off topic for too long.

CHALLENGE COOKIE-CUTTER ANSWERS

While no answer is necessarily bad, our goal is to grow rather than prove we know the answer. Ask follow up questions when answers seem to cut and dry. Sometimes simply following up with “why” leads to deeper discussion.

BE OK WITH SILENCE

Students need time to process, so if you ask a question and no one answers immediately, don't assume they don't want to talk about it. Sometimes encouraging them to write down their answer before they share it with the group is helpful.

LET THEM LEAD

A great way to put life into the discussion is to ask a solid student to lead. Most of the time they'll rise to the occasion and lead the conversation to great places.

ECHO INPUT

If a student's answer or input is long-winded or unclear, repeat it back for clarity. This proves you're listening to them and it keeps the attention of the rest of the group.

LET THEM BE VERY REAL

Our students usually know the answers we're going for... but they should also feel the freedom to express the hard things about their faith. They should be encouraged after they talk about doubt or disagreement, never embarrassed. They should feel like they're safe to seek after Jesus under your care.

TRANSPARENCY & AUTHENTICITY

It's important to be yourself, lower the masks, and be a little vulnerable with the students. Key word there... “little.” Use discernment.

DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS

If a question comes up you can't answer, be honest! Say something like, “I don't know... but I can find out!”

PARENT EMAIL

Hi parents,

My name is _____, and I am going to be your student's small group leader this year.

Here are a couple things to know about me:

Share something you love (Being outside, Games, Baking, Music- give them something that might make for a personal piece or a good christmas gift idea. Ha!)

I said yes to leading in SM because _____ (Use this opportunity to share a reason your excited to invest in the group, rather than "because staff begged me to do it")

While small group looks different from previous years, we will still be meeting weekly to create a safe place where your student is loved, known, heard, supported, and challenged. I am looking forward to growing deeper in our relationship with God and one another this year.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to connect,

(Insert your name here)

SMALL GROUP LEADER COMMITMENTS

BE ON TIME

Arrive at 10:30 for MSM & 3:30 for HSM weekly leaders meeting.

THE BIG 5:

Practice the Big 5 regularly to ensure that your students are being Loved, Known, Heard, Supported, and Challenged.

CONNECT IN THEIR WORLD:

The power of just “being there” is huge. It’s vital to be present in our student’s lives outside of the church walls. Showing up could be to an event or by engaging with them on social media. As adults, it is easy for us to seem like we don’t understand what is happening in their world. And while that is true, there are also great opportunities for us to ask questions, connect, show up, and let them have an opportunity to be an expert in something. This is where and how they know we really care.

NEVER BE ALONE WITH A STUDENT:

This is put in place to protect our students and you. If you are meeting students we ask that it is in a public setting. There are times where it is appropriate for an exception to be made, knowing that unique needs may arise in your group. If there is a reason that you feel you may need to give a student a ride or be in a situation that would cause you to be alone with them, you should first get approval from your coach or an SM Pastor.

LIVING ABOVE REPROACH:

Students are some of the most impressionable people ever. Families are entrusting us to help partner in shepherding the hearts of their students. Our desire is not to police your actions or choices, but as someone serving in our ministry please know that families and people in our community will have different expectations of you than they might have for others in our church. Things to ask: “What does my social media communicate when a parent searches me?,” (they will find you), “Do the choices I’m making feel appropriate to share with students or something I would encourage students to do?” As leaders, we want to make sure we are modeling integrity.

PRAYER:

It’s important to pray for our students, each other, our church, and this ministry. We want God’s best, and the only way to find it is to ask Him for it!

OVERLAKE LEADERSHIP LIFESTYLE COMMITMENTS

I WILL

- Grow in my personal relationship with Jesus and my emotional/social health.
- Be an active attendee of Overlake Christian Church (participating, giving, serving) committed to carrying out the vision.
- Be sober, seek purity in relationships and heart, resolve conflicts, and speak well of others.
- Be wise in public spaces (community bars/social media), knowing that students and parents see us as representatives of spiritual care at Overlake.
- Be wise in my conduct with students in one on one and relational settings. Do not put myself in a situation that would cause people to question or make accusations against my integrity.