

Welcome to the OC Teen Ministry!

To the parents and teens of the OC Church of Christ,

We are grateful to have you as a part of our ministry! If you are new to the group, we especially want to welcome you. We are committed to doing our very best to serve and help each teen grow in his/her relationship with God. God has done great things in this ministry and we believe He will do even more in the future. Included in this handout are the blessings as well as the expectations for our group.

Blessings

It is our intention to serve and love each and every member of our teen ministry. We look forward to laying down our lives for the good of the entire ministry. To do so, we must first identify who is in this body we call the OC Teen Ministry. Though the title of this body is focused on the youth, we recognize that there are others in this body who are not teens and have different needs. Never will we forget that this ministry is dedicated to fostering the spiritual growth of the next generation, but as to not neglect the needs of all others we have identified four distinct groups that together constitute the OC Teen Ministry.

- Non-Christian Teens
- Christian Teens
- Volunteers (all designated ministry workers and extra-ministry mentors)
- Parents

[Note: The terms “Non-Christian” and “Christian” are based on the Biblical standards of what God states as a disciple of Jesus Christ.]

Ultimately, we believe that a ministry is to be built to give all involved two opportunities: to know God and make God known. At each stage in a person’s life the level of physical, emotional, and spiritual maturity greatly determines the level of participation in those two opportunities. Therefore we want to appropriately customize what we deliver and what we expect from each of the above groups.

Here are just a few of the great blessings to being a member of the teen ministry.

Real-life Bible Teaching. We have a strong emphasis in the teen ministry to teach the word of God in a way that relates to the teens everyday life. We deal with the issues that face the kids today. Some of the topics we cover are the existence of God, the truth of the Bible, teen sexuality, dress, relationships with other teens, relationships with the opposite sex, relationship with parents and siblings, teen depression, self-image and how to walk with God. We understand that teens all develop differently and we strive to meet the teen where they are in their faith.

Great fun and fellowship. We meet often as a teen ministry for fun and fellowship. We occasionally meet with teen ministries from other regions. We encourage and foster close relationships between the teens.

Mentorship. Our goal is that each teen has either a ministry discipler or a mentor. This provides an opportunity for them to spiritually relate to an adult. These relationships have been some of the greatest treasures that the teens have and cherish for years to come.

Positive role models and peer pressure. In a world where there is so much negative influence the teen ministry allows the teens to find other teens that want to please the Lord. We also strive to build a sense of godly pride in who we are and what we expect from each other’s behavior.

Leadership training. For all teens and ministry workers, training will be given on leadership skills. Our society today is starving for ethical, moral, and spiritual leaders. Whether on school campuses or at the work place, we see the charismatic and the popular rise up to take charge. Yet only once their lack of substance is truly revealed then do we see a wake of destruction left in their trail that others must clean up. It is a need for all to learn Biblical leadership skills at any age but it is a special opportunity to learn it at a young age.

Life development. We are honored to have among our ministry workers such a wide variety of individuals and couples from all stages and walks of life. From the current college students to the working professional singles to the happily married with kids and many others, our menagerie of personalities and lifestyles brings a unique set of fortunes and challenges. We want to use the strengths of each member of our group of ministry volunteers to help each other grow in any particular area of life. Whether its developing a proper academic study regimen, sorting out a direction for professional careers, or resolving differing opinions between a husband and wife, we want to ensure that the spiritual well being of each ministry worker is not hindered by the demands of life.

Offer parental input. “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12). It is true that many of us ministry workers in the OC Teen Ministry do not have any kids ourselves. But that should not be an obstacle for cooperation and collaboration. As a matter of fact, it should be an enabler. Standing in a position of being adults that are not “too old” gives the ministry workers the unique position to be the bridge between the teens and their parents. We envision this dynamic to be a two-way dialogue where parents and ministry workers can share conversations and ideas on how to aid the development of the teen. Unlike the relationship between a parent and a high school teacher or sports coach, the relationship between a parent and the ministry worker will be one that will be used to directly impact the teen’s spiritual character and relationship with God.

Expectations

With great blessings comes great responsibility. *“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”* (Luke 12:48) Although we keep them simple, we do want to clearly communicate our expectations of all four groups that embody the OC Teen Ministry.

Expectations of all the teens = “Ownership”

As we move forward, this ministry will be a place that will be built with the input and consultation of the teens. As such, the desire is to make the ministry a place that all spiritual teens will be proud to attend and proud to share invitations with high school friends. This begins with preparation, participation, and preservation.

- Preparation = “Think ahead...”

- Think ahead to know what to bring to midweek, devotionals, Sunday Services, or any other events.
 - Bible (always)
 - Notebook (always)
 - Pen (always)
 - Event specific items
 - Sports equipment
 - Sleeping bag & pillows
 - Food
- Think ahead to know how to dress modestly and appropriately for each event
- Think ahead to set up rides to and from event
- Think ahead to show up on time
- Think ahead to have something to share

- Participation = “Give... and get...”
 - Give your attention and get a lesson on spiritual and character growth.
 - Give a little respect & trust and get a lot of respect & trust.
 - Consider your body language.
 - Consider your verbal language.
 - Consider your written language.
 - Give uninterrupted attention to whoever is speaking and get a chance to voice your opinion when your turn.
 - Give your meaningful thoughts and get a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
 - Give your time to be mentored and get a friendship that will last for years to come.
- Protection = “Above all else, do no harm...”
 - Do no harm to the faith of others and their relationship with God.
 - Do no harm to the worship experience of others.
 - Do no harm to the reputation of others by avoiding gossip and slander.
 - Do no harm to the physical environment where each event is held.

What happens if these simple policies are not followed? After a discussion with the parents, if the teen continues to violate the policies they will face a one month suspension. They must sit with their parents at church and will not be allowed to attend teen activities. If they continue in misbehavior after the one-month suspension they will be indefinitely suspended from the teen ministry until such time as the teen ministry leaders think they have had a substantial change of heart. During this time they must sit with their parents in the church service and they are not allowed to attend teen ministry activities. More specific details will be discussed in the section titled “Disciplinary Behavior Policy.”

Expectations of all the mature teens = “Leadership”

Participation does not stop at the interactions at a midweek or Sunday Service. Each teen that is seasoned enough to rise beyond the standard expectations of all teens can claim the benefits and responsibilities of expectations for mature teens. The call for these teens is to advance their level of ownership to the level of leadership. This is a call to be an example in gospel evangelism, spiritual lifestyle, and ministry involvement.

- Gospel evangelism
 - Invite friends to church
 - Host Bible discussion groups on campus
 - Assist or lead Bible studies
- Spiritual lifestyle
 - “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:16)
 - “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.” (Titus 2:7-8)
- Ministry involvement
 - Show up early to events to help set up.
 - Stay late after events to help clean up.
 - Join meeting for planning and organizing events such as Friday night activities.
 - Give wholeheartedly if asked to preach at midweek services.

Expectations of all the ministry workers = “Mentorship”

The spiritual duty of each ministry volunteer is simply to help teens know God and to help teens make God known. The emotional duty of each ministry volunteer is to invest themselves to become a great friend to the teen. These objectives are accomplished over time through weekly meetings together. The nature of the time spent will depend on where the teen is spiritually but will generally be built on the foundation of the ministry volunteer preparing and implementing the answers to these questions:

- Where is the teen today?
- Where do they want to be?
- What is their plan to get there?
- How can they be helped to hold themselves to their plan?
- What resources do they need to facilitate that plan?
- What other relationships should be introduced to help achieve that plan?

Expectations of all the Parents = “Partnership”

Someone once said it takes a village to raise a child. The OC Teen Ministry wants to be a part of that village but the primary source of development must come from the home. In this collaboration between parents and the OC Teen Ministry, two key functions are needed from the side of the parents.

Support of the OC Teen Ministry leadership. Although the parents are free to speak privately to ministry volunteers or teen ministers about concerns or issues, it is generally expected that the parents will be verbally and spiritually supportive of the teen ministry. This includes such things as praying often for the ministry volunteers, supporting the parent meetings and verbally “backing up” the spiritual leadership in the teens’ lives.

Assist the needs as they arise. We need each parent to be willing to do their part to help out. This includes such things as opening homes, giving rides, helping with fundraisers and generally be willing to help out as needed.

What happens if these simple expectations are not met? We will discuss our concerns with the parents in a private conversation. If needed, we will seek the counsel of the ministry staff in resolving the difficulty.

Disciplinary Behavior Policy

It is a delicate issue to administer discipline to those who misbehave in the ministry. A balance must be found between the truth of the expectations as defined above and the love of the teens as an understanding of their youthful exuberance. This policy was designed to give grace and patience where it is due. Yet it is also designed to protect the hearts of those who genuinely want to learn and worship from disruptions that would otherwise damage their experience. If the expectations are not followed the following phases will be implemented:

- Phase one – A teenager is disruptive
 - A gentle reminder of the expectations will be given.
- Phase two – They continue to be disruptive after a gentle reminder
 - They will receive a warning
 - The Warning:** If it continues you’ll be asked to leave and sit with your parents (if it is a teen service and their parents are present) or a ministry volunteer will stay with them the remainder of the time outside the class.
 - Communicate warning to the parent
 - Either by phone or in person communicate to the parent, in a compassionate way, their teenager’s situation.
- Phase three – They continue to be disruptive after the warning
 - They are not allowed to participate with the teen fellowship for a period of time. A one month discipline is a good start.
 - During that month, at Sunday service, have them sit with their parents and not the youth ministry.
 - Communicate this to the parent in a loving way
 - After the month, if they believe they can participate and follow through on expectations they should be welcomed back with open arms.
- Phase four – Coming back after a month and still disruptive
 - Find an alternative plan with the parent besides the teen ministry.

- Find a big brother or sister for them who doesn't directly work with the teen ministry. Some ideas are another teen parent, single, or campus student.
- This person can do something with the teen (if the teen allows it) periodically so the teenager can stay connected to the fellowship.
- This teen should still be loved by all who participate in the teen ministry.
- There parents should be asked by a church leader or ministry volunteer, at times, about how things are going to show unconditional love.
- Phase Five- After a period of time the teen wants to come back
 - Count the cost with the teen and the parent on the expectations.
 - If leadership (church leader and youth leader) as well as the parent believe the teen is sincere welcome him back with open arms

Bottom line – Being in the teen ministry is a privilege and with unacceptable behavior you can lose the privilege.

Final Thoughts

We anticipate this to be a very positive and faith building time in our ministry. We are very proud of all our teens and look forward to seeing all that God will do through the entire OC Teen Ministry. We really believe that the teen ministry is a family. We believe that with the joint effort of all involved the OC Teen Ministry will continue to be a great success. We are thankful for your support and your prayers. Feel free to contact us with any questions that you have.