

# Journey Ministries Leader Expectations

Being a leader isn't always easy, especially when you are working with students! You may not believe how much students notice your attitude, actions, words or relationships, and as a leader they will follow your example, for better or worse. It is especially important to give students healthy examples of leaders with Christ-like characters. Your character and life often speak much louder than any bible study or lesson you'll ever do. Timothy 3:1-12 offers great guidelines for leaders and ministries and says that leaders must be "above reproach". So although you may find some of the following guidelines to be a bit harsh, we want to give students an example that is above reproach to help guide them towards Christ-likeness. Living by these expectations is *part* of your ministry to students, not a prerequisite to ministering.

## Appearance

*"People look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart."*

The first phrase is not the heart of the verse, but it's the truth. Students and adults will base their impression of our ministry on their impression of us. For this reason we wear appropriate clothing.

- The activity should dictate the type of clothing worn.
- Clothing should be clean and modest, reflecting self-worth and showing true beauty comes from within.

## Student relationships

Staff members and volunteer leaders need high spiritual integrity and wisdom when building relationships with students. All too often we hear about appropriate boundaries being crossed so we have set high standards for relationships that will be above reproach. The following guidelines *must* be followed in all situations and relationships:

- Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction with any student is inappropriate.
- Dating or going out with any junior or senior high student is forbidden.
- Discretion must be used in physical contact with any students. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug around the shoulders is not sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing raises questions. Any overt display of affection, appropriate hugging, for example, should be made in a public setting in front of other group members.
- Sexual gestures or overtures to a staff member by a student should be reported to one of the ministry directors or the student ministries pastor so that discussion can be held with the student.
- Staff should form male/female ministry teams whenever possible whenever working with co-ed groups of students.
- One-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. As a general rule when counseling a member of the other gender, invite a member of the same gender as the counselee to be the observing staff.
- When a situation arises where you are alone with a student of the other gender, quickly move that situation to a public setting. Make the meeting as brief as necessary to accomplish God's purpose.
- Driving alone with a student of the other gender should be avoided at all times.
- Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by an adult leader should be brought up and discussed with the ministry director for prayer and guidance.
- All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported to the ministry director who will report it to the mandated reporter in the organization. That person will notify the appropriate agency.
- Any knowledge or suspicion of any youth ministry staff having an inappropriate relationship with a student must be reported promptly to the youth ministry leader. If the person in question is the leader, the report should be made to the supervisor of that person.
- No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between staff and students of the opposite sex.
- Church staff or volunteers should obtain the consent of the student's parent or guardian before going out with that student, or spending time with the student in an unsupervised situation.

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## Dating

Acknowledging that one of the most fulfilling relationships in Scripture and life is the one that a man and woman share, we recognize that a staff member may establish a relationship with a staff member of the other gender. We also recognize the greatest visible destroyer of ministries is moral impurity. The following policies should be understood in that light.

- No staff member will date a student in junior high or high school.
- Staff members involved in a dating relationship should model appropriate behavior. Particularly during church functions, our focus is to be on the Lord as well as students.
- Staff and leaders are expected to display healthy relationships with one another and are to use wisdom when displaying affection towards one another. When in doubt, refrain from public displays of affection.
- In the case of premarital sex, extramarital sex, or a homosexual incident, immediate suspension from staff will occur.
- Remember, as you date another member of the staff or church, that if the relationship ends that person will still be around to testify to your behavior and character.

## Character expectations

**To keep our integrity:** the motives, attitude, and actions of staff should be completely transparent to any observer. Our honesty should be testable by Luke 16:10-12.

1. *Faithfulness in little things*—being on time, keeping our word, filling requests on time, following through with students and other responsibilities.
2. *Faithfulness in money*—turning in receipts, being very cautious with event cash and petty cash, remembering people have sacrificially given that dollar.
3. *Faithfulness in that which belongs to another*—treating all the church equipment and property with utmost respect.

**To be teachable:** None of us must claim to have arrived at infallibility. We must continually attend sessions, conferences, worship services, read, and observe with a teachable spirit, continually seeking to grow.

**To be an appropriate role model:** Staff responsibilities naturally require frequent interaction with students and their families, as well as the community. Youth staff member come into Christian ministry from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs—especially in the gray areas of Christianity.

1. *Media use:* Because staff are leaders and role models, they must use *careful discretion* when choosing movies, music, etc., for ministry activities. The use of R-rated movies is prohibited with junior high students and parental permission is required with senior highers. Use PG-13 movies with extreme caution. *In all cases, preview a movie that you're considering showing at a youth activity.* When in doubt, check with parents or a ministry director.
2. *Substance use:* Along with entertainment choice, substances used by staff model behavior to students. Since the number one substance abused by teenagers is alcohol, staff will abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages in the presence of students. Staff will also abstain from using tobacco in the presence of students. The use of controlled substances and drugs will result in suspension from the ministry.

**To develop a servant's heart:** Like Jesus, we ask that you strive to be a humble servant while ministering. We ask that you be faithful to one another and not compete for leadership or prestige. By humbling and generously serving we can show students, the church, and the community Christ's love. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant...He humbled Himself, and became obedient...even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:3-8).