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The purpose of Green Student Ministry is to see every student known, becoming encouragers and kingdom workers who are changed by the truth of the Gospel.
01 **BE KNOWN**  
Isaiah 43:1-2, John 10:3

Being known is foundational to what we do. Students are constantly asking, “Who am I?” and are seeking acceptance and affirmation from peers, parents, and others. Students not only want to know who they are, but they want others to know them as well. God models to us what love is throughout Scripture, manifested in Jesus seeking deep relationships with those around Him (knowing them!) and the invitation we all receive to know Christ personally. We believe the places we are truly known are where we feel connected, safe, and cared for.

02 **GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT**  
Acts 2:42. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-18

We are created to live in community with believers, and the best way for this to work is for us to continue to support and give hope to one another. Students need encouragement, and our desire is that they not only receive it from peers and adult leaders, but that they would grow to encourage others, constantly building up those around them through words of affirmation, acts of service, prayer, and use of their spiritual gifts. In so doing, they continue to make GSM a welcoming, safe, and restorative environment.

03 **BE KINGDOM WORKERS**  
Matthew 28:19-20

Jesus clearly calls believers to reach everyone with the good news of salvation. Daily, we are given the opportunity to continue sharing our faith with friends and neighbors. We also strive to grow in grace as the Spirit of God works in our lives to conform us to Christ’s image. Spiritual disciplines teach us the joy of elevating God’s Kingdom, and not our own.
THE 3-2-1 APPROACH

When we gather with students, we have the opportunity to help them feel cared for and connected. You could say that relationship-building is “job one” of student ministry leaders. Programs don’t change the lives of students; caring adults do! These simple steps will help you connect with students relationally every time we gather:

3 LEARN THREE NAMES
The most valuable thing to anyone is his or her name. We, as a team, must make it a priority to learn the names of our students. Nothing helps a student feel more connected and cared for than when an adult leader remembers them. Whether you’re at a special event or a weekly program, make it a priority to learn three new names every time we gather.

2 HAVE TWO MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS
When you interact with a student, aim to get to the “fourth question” - seek to go beyond the basic three questions of Student Ministry (name, school, grade level). Have a fourth, or even a fifth, question ready to go ahead of time to get to a more meaningful conversation. The goal is for you to get to at least four questions with two different students every time we gather. As you get to know more students, meaningful conversations become easier.

1 PRAY WITH/FOR ONE STUDENT
This one can be a bit awkward the first few times. We know that praying out loud can be intimidating for some. If this is true for you, we have a suggestion. First, pray for one student silently, without them knowing. Second, let your student ministry pastor know that this is awkward for you. The pastor will show you how to do it, model it for you, and eventually turn it over to you to do on your own. (Matthew 6:10)
STUDENT MINISTRY GUARDRAILS

Specific guardrails are in place to promote healthy ministry and to protect students and leaders. These boundaries are firmly in place and are never to be crossed at any time, for any reason.

POLICIES

The following policies apply to all GSM staff members, leaders, & volunteers:

01 Opposite Sex Ministry: It is our policy that male leaders should seek to minister to male students and female leaders should seek to minister to female students. Any exceptions to this must be conducted in a public setting with a supervisor’s prior and present knowledge.

02 Dating / Romantic Relationships: Romantic relationships of any kind between adult youth leaders & students are strictly forbidden. There are no exceptions to this rule.

03 Transportation: Only screened and approved adult Student Ministry leaders may drive during a Student Ministry event. Students may drive if they are the only person in the vehicle and if they have a valid driver’s license; however, this is allowed in extreme circumstances only. Prior permission must be requested by the student and be approved by the student’s parent / legal guardian and the Student Ministry pastor(s).

04 Abuse: Any and all allegations of abuse directed toward a leader will be thoroughly investigated. Leaders must use strict discretion when engaging in physical contact of any kind with a student (e.g., full-body hugs, playful shoving, etc.). Please see our definition of sexual abuse on page 9 of this manual.
05 Appropriate Relationships: There is a big difference between being a “friend” and being a “leader.” It is expected that adult youth leaders will cultivate healthy adult relationships in addition to the relationships they have with students. It is not healthy for Student Ministry events to be the primary outlet for the social needs of an adult leader.

06 TV / Movies / Music: Never bring a student to an R-rated movie, and never bring a student younger than 13 years of age to a PG-13 movie. While we do not want to promote legalism, we must protect our reputations as leaders. With TV shows, music, and movies rated PG-13 or lower, please use godly discernment. More to the point, we would generally advise leaders to avoid television and movies when planning activities with students.

07 Two or More Adults: Two or more screened Student Ministry staff members or volunteers should be present at all times, whenever Student Ministry activities are conducted. All staff and volunteers are strictly prohibited from having sole custody of a student. Classroom doors should remain unlocked at all times.

08 Discipline Guidelines: Never touch any student in a disrespectful manner, and never make derogatory remarks of any kind. Corporal punishment is never allowed. The only acceptable time to physically restrain a student is when you believe that a student is attempting to physically harm themselves or another student.

09 Social Media: We desire to be good role models for our students. Therefore, if you allow students to have access to your online presence (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, etc.), we ask that you be discerning in what you post. Please use wisdom when sending messages to students or posting on their social media pages. Avoid private messaging when possible. The Student Ministry pastors do not function as “social media police;” however, we will not hesitate to address anything questionable that comes to our attention, either on students’ or leaders’ social media pages.

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**A Note on Consequences for Leaders**

Consequences for violations of the above policies or any Green Student Ministry moral guidelines will be determined by GSM pastoral staff. Such consequences may range from a verbal warning to dismissal from all involvement with students.
DEFINITION OF
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

DEFINITION
Child sexual abuse includes any form of sexual contact, activity, or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. Sexual abuse involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. All abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness.

Child sexual abuse can involve touching and non-touching aspects. Touching may include fondling; oral, genital, or anal penetration; intercourse; and/or rape. Non-touching sexual abuse may include verbal comments; pornographic pictures or videos; obscene phone calls, and/or allowing a child to witness sexual activity.

REPORTING
Leaders are required to report to the Student Ministry pastor(s) if a student shares about any incident of abuse toward either themselves or another student. The reporting of sexual abuse is necessary if:

(1) a student is in danger of harming himself or herself.
(2) a student is in danger of harming someone else.
(3) a student is in danger of being harmed by someone else.
OUR ROUTINE: KNOW, SHOW, GROW

There are 3 basic steps to being a world-class leader and helping others mature as Christians. They are basic in theory; however, their application requires diligence and intentionality. The leader who makes this their routine will discover a new level of effectiveness and joy as they serve.

01 KNOW
One Name at a Time

The first step for any leader is to get to know the people in their group. Many leaders make the mistake of treating this step lightly and moving right past it. Whoa! Slow down! How can you lead someone you don’t even know? Do you know the people in your group? What are their names? What are their families like? Where do they go to school/work? What do they like or dislike? Why do they come to your group or church? Where are they in their walk with God? The list could go on and on.

The fact of the matter is that knowing the people in your group does two things: first, it allows them to know that you value them as people. Second, it helps you understand how to lead them more effectively. Knowing is the first step and it is an ongoing process. A leader who skips this step, or who treats it lightly, will most likely feel distant from and ineffective with their group. Have you been a leader for a while but still feel like you don’t know your students very well? It’s not too late! Get to know them!
02  SHOW
One Note at a Time

An effective leader intentionally finds ways to show the people in their group that they care. How do you do that? Try some of these: encouraging words, text messages, social media interactions, cards, going to watch their performances or games, planning an activity with your group, etc. There are lots of ways to show that you care! The key is to do something (outside of just meeting with them at your group’s regular time) that shows you have an interest in their lives.

You will find that an intentional effort in this area will begin to reap some major rewards. You will feel more connected with them, they will be more comfortable sharing personal things with you, and you will notice a difference. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking this is something leaders do “above and beyond the call of duty.” It is what leaders do! Do you care about your students? Show them!

03  GROW
One Step at a Time

You want to see the people in your group grow in their relationship with God. How do you do that? Most of us tend to feel inadequate when we think about “discipling” someone. What if I say the wrong thing? What if I make a mistake? What if I don’t know the answers to their questions? Those thoughts and the recognition of our personal inconsistencies can leave us paralyzed as leaders.

Instead of carrying all the weight on your shoulders, think of ways to offload some of the pressure. Imagine yourself as a traffic cop for the individuals in your group. You are trying to steer them all in the right direction. What are some opportunities out there from which your students could benefit? An effective leader is good at being aware of what is available and pointing the people in their group toward those growing opportunities. Ask, “What would be a good next step for this person?” People grow one step at a time. Be looking for the opportunity to arise. Christianity is a team sport. Together, we can grow them!
A Final Thought on “Know, Show, Grow”

These three steps cover the basics of effective leadership when it comes to helping the people in your group experience spiritual growth. If you are the kind of person who desires to see others grow (this is probably why you do what you do), then you most likely get frustrated and/or discouraged when you don’t see that growth you want. Just remember two things: First, every person grows at their own rate. Second, you can’t change a heart; only God can do that! If you do your best to know, show, and grow, then you can stand with your head held high, knowing that you have done your best to invest in the lives of your students.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9
11 KEYS TO GREAT DISCUSSION

These eleven principles govern good group facilitation. Leading a good discussion is skill like cooking or playing an instrument: it can be learned and developed with increasing effectiveness. These keys can be applied by anyone who desires to excel at facilitating good discussion.

PRINCIPLES
Use these techniques to facilitate conversation effectively:

01 **Create a good tone.** You can make or break a good discussion before you even begin. Some important environmental conditions are:
  · a good circle in which everyone can make eye contact (no outsiders)
  · adequate lighting and a comfortable temperature
  · away from distractions

02 **Create a good spiritual atmosphere.** Remind group members of these basic values:
  · Everyone’s input, opinions, and questions are valued.
  · You can disagree, but you may not engage in put-downs or personal attacks.
  · Nothing leaves the group (unless it is so serious that help is needed).
  · None of us are perfect. Let’s grow together!

03 **Establish yourself as the leader.** They will take their cues from you. Don’t let yourself non-verbally communicate that “what we are doing isn’t important” by not controlling the group.
  · You must graciously discipline anyone who distracts others (preferably not during the group). Pull the distracting student(s) aside after group time.
  · You must keep your group on task. The discussion guides and/or group studies have been created and selected for a reason.
04 **Tangents**: they can be a "God thing" or a "goof thing."
   - **Goof-off tangents**: Sometimes the group just wants to goof off and will get off-topic by talking about people, cars, events. The leader needs to insist on getting back on track.
   - **God-thing tangents**: Sometimes something happens that makes it appropriate to set aside the guide and talk about something else. Certainly, this is the exception, not the rule. (For example, if a student dies in an accident and your students are noticeably upset.)

05 **Remember the "20% rule."** A good facilitator of discussion will talk no more than 20% of the time. The more you talk, the less effective you will be as a small group leader.

06 **Silence is okay.** Avoid the temptation to fill in the blanks. When there is silence, wait them out. If you jump in, you’ll teach them that they don’t have to answer or think.

07 **Kindness is key.** Watch how you react to anyone’s comment, view, or opinion, even if someone says something that you believe to be heretical or just plain goofy. If you overreact, or make someone feel dumb, you will lose your group. We are not looking for people to spew out church answers. We want them to have honest, meaningful discussion.

08 **Ask the right questions.** Your questions should be open-ended and should facilitate thought and discussion. Avoid "yes-or-no" questions unless there is a follow-up question like “Why?”

09 **Recognize the individuality of your group members.** The people in your group are very different, and this means you’ll need to interact with each of them differently. It is a challenge to learn to deal with the talkers, the non-talkers, the shy ones, etc. There is a great book on this topic titled, “Help, I’m a Small Group Leader!” that we can make available to you.

10 **Watch non-verbal cues.** Is someone in your group counting ceiling tiles? Leaning back in their chair, outside the circle? These are physical signs that they have disengaged mentally.
   - Reeling a student back in may be as easy as asking them to move back into the circle or asking them the next question.
   - Each night with your group will be different - sometimes you have great discussion; other times, it’s like pulling teeth. Pay attention to them, and go longer or shorter as needed.

11 **Be spiritually prepared.** Most leaders come to their time of ministry after a busy day. We recommend taking some time before you enter the building to prepare yourself spiritually: pray for your group, be still, talk to the Lord for a few minutes. Then, go for it!
The purpose of your leadership is to make passionate disciples of Jesus Christ who will be known, who encourage others, and who are becoming kingdom workers.