



# WELLSPRING CHURCH

## Youth Ministry Handbook

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## **Welcome!**

Welcome to our Wellspring Youth Team! We believe God has allowed us to serve youth in a way that changes their life. And we are so excited to have you as part of the team that makes it happen.

At Wellspring Church, we believe the younger generation is essential to the community. We must create opportunities to be *in church* with youth as they discover how to “love God and love others,” giving them opportunities for discipleship and friendship. We desire to offer a vibrant Christian community experience for each youth and support their family in developing spiritual foundations. The church environment is physically and emotionally safe, where youth can explore the truths of God at their own pace and in God’s timing. We believe that people, not just programs, bring the Kingdom of God to life and that youth have a role to play in God’s work.

This handbook is designed to give you an idea of what Wellspring Youth offers while also providing information and guidelines for serving in it. We hope to put you in a position that will be purposeful and life-giving.

We are here to support, train, communicate, listen, and engage with you! Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have questions. WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

### **Youth Ministry Team**

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## **Our Programs**

Middle School Service | Youth Well Groups | Events

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICE\***

6th - 8th graders can connect with each other, finding a place where they are encouraged to grow in their knowledge and love of God. The Middle School service will occur almost every Sunday **during** service (being dismissed after worship) in The Basement.

General Structure [45 minutes]:

15 min - Hangout/Game

25 min - Lesson and/or Group Discussion

5 min - Hangout/Dismiss

Quarterly, Wellspring Church has an **All Church Family Service**, where the Children's ministry moves into the sanctuary; children and youth will join parents, guardians, and hosts for the morning service. These usually last 1- 1.5 hours and are designed to be accessible to the youngest.

*\*This program is currently tentative and will depend on the # of volunteers available*

### **YOUTH WELL GROUPS**

Groups are a place where youth can develop authentic relationships with one another. Group offerings will vary, creating new opportunities for youth to connect with one another and discover ways to approach and engage with God's word.

### **EVENTS**

Invitational, connection-focused, and lots of fun! These will vary in time, date, location, and frequency.

## **Volunteers**

“Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

*Galatians 6:2*

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

- *Application* - complete a confidential application; this will include a reference check and background check
- *Pray* - meet with the Youth Ministry staff to discuss and pray about your role in the ministry of the church

### **ON-BOARDING PROCESS**

- *First Look* - observe the program in which you intend to serve
- *Begin Serving* - new volunteers are asked to co-lead before leading on their own, allowing for consistent service, shadowing, and training adjustments

### **TRAINING**

The youth ministry staff will provide training opportunities throughout the year, and all volunteers should feel free to contact staff with questions.

### **TIME COMMITMENT**

This will vary depending on HOW volunteers choose to serve in our youth ministry.

- Middle School Service - at least twice a month (if possible)
- Youth Well Groups - parallels Wellspring’s season Connect-Serve-Bless Launches; typically once a week for 8-12 weeks depending on the study or group purpose

### **ADULT/YOUTH RATIOS**

For any youth program or event, we want to keep a ratio of 1 adult to 12 youth.

### **High School Volunteers?**

High schoolers (9th-12th grade) can apply to be full volunteers in the Middle School Service. They will go through appropriate security checks, receive training, and serve with an adult volunteer.

## **THE VOLUNTEER ROLE**

A volunteer's goal is to build bridges with youth by creating a safe and fun atmosphere. The most important thing is to come prepared and ready to serve!

- **Relational** - know who students are, what they struggle with, and how to encourage them
- **Facilitator** - help guide discussions, providing opportunities for youth to dive into God's word, be challenged to take the next step, and create space for to talk and share
- **Committed** - support the leadership of Wellspring Youth and Wellspring Church, promoting events and programs, and representing the ministry to parents and other church members

Go one step further: **be a Connector**. Initiate outings and/or serving opportunities to build a community outside regularly scheduled programs (attending games or performances, meeting for coffee/tea, hosting a group)

## FAQ's

### ***Why am I being asked to create a Planning Center Account?***

Planning Center is a set of software tools allowing us to run our ministry as smoothly as possible. You will receive an email to create your account when you join a serving team. We recommend downloading the mobile app!

<https://planning.center/services>.

- *Services* - used for scheduling & letting you know when you are serving!\*
- *Check-ins* - used as a safety precaution, allowing us to track who is present, specifically for Middle School Services, and parent information if needed

***Trying to find your schedule for serving?*** Access Planning Center Services on your desktop or through the app on your phone - find the tab that says "My Schedule," and you will find all upcoming events that have been planned!

***What happens if you've been scheduled but can no longer attend?*** We understand things come up last minute! Please notify the youth staff as soon as possible. If you can, please help us find someone else on the team that can help cover.

***Are there dates you know in advance that you cannot serve?*** Block them out right on the Planning Center app by tapping "blackout" at the bottom left-hand side of the drop-down menu. In addition, make sure your Wellspring Youth staff knows ahead of time!

## **Reporting and Response Procedures**

### **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

*Volunteers or staff are to immediately report any behavior, which seems abusive or inappropriate, or any incident reported by a child or adolescent.*

### **LINE OF REPORTING**

1. Report directly to the Youth Ministry Director
2. Youth Ministry staff shall report directly to the pastoral staff.
  - a. If the allegation is directed toward a pastoral staff member, reporting may be made to another pastoral staff member and/or elder.
3. The pastoral staff or church chair shall report directly to the police department for any allegation of abuse.
4. The police department will then investigate the allegations.
5. In some states, the police may require the person to report the incident to Child Protective Services. In that case, the Incident Report Form should list the contact person and case number.

### **RESPONSE PLAN**

1. When an allegation of abuse is brought to the attention of a designated care person, the designated care person should fill out an Incident Report Form and immediately arrange a meeting with the complainant and any other witnesses to clarify the allegation.
2. If the complainant is a minor, the church staff should meet with the child's parents or guardians, notifying them of the incident and the steps being taken, as well as offering support and prayer.
3. If the alleged perpetrator is a volunteer, the pastoral staff will:
  - a. Meet with the volunteer to notify them that an allegation has been made and will be investigated by local authorities. If the volunteer is a minor this meeting should also include the parent(s).
  - b. Inform the volunteer that he/she may not participate in children's or youth ministry until the investigation into the allegation is complete.
  - c. Offer support and prayer during the investigation.

4. The church will report any allegation of abuse to the local police and in some states to Child Protective Services.
5. The pastoral staff will also make note of the allegation and its outcome on the volunteer's confidential application form, as well as the allegation's outcome.
6. If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, then another pastoral staff member and/or elder will:
  - a. Meet with the staff member and notify them that an allegation has been made and will be investigated by local authorities as well as the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECO) conference office.
  - b. The conference office should be notified immediately. They will assist the church through the process and notify the ECO's Ordered Ministry who will be involved in the investigation.
  - c. Inform the staff member that he/she may not participate in children's or youth ministry until the investigation into the allegation is complete.
  - d. Offer support and prayer during the investigation.
7. Notation of the allegation and its outcome will be made in the staff person's confidential file.
8. The pastoral staff and/or elder will report the allegation to the police, conference office, and insurance company.
9. Written records can be subpoenaed.