



**St. Peter**

Lutheran Church & School

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

For Youth Ministry

## HEY THERE!

So you want to volunteer with teenagers, huh? Some people might think you're crazy... but we know better. Middle schoolers and high schoolers are awesome. They're hilarious (sometimes on purpose). They're dramatic. They're complicated. And they're a ton of fun.

But most importantly, middle schoolers and high schoolers are at a time in their lives where they desperately need someone like you to hang out with them, love them (and like them too), and show them what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Consider me your coach. I'm here to set you up to win! If there's ever any way that I can help you thrive as a volunteer, please let me know.

Whatever your role is in our ministry this year, this Volunteer Handbook will show you some of the ways you can begin making a lasting impact in the lives and faith of teenagers. For additional information about volunteering, check out the St. Peter Volunteer Manual here at [fulllifeinchrist.org/get-involved/serve/volunteer-handbook](http://fulllifeinchrist.org/get-involved/serve/volunteer-handbook).

Thanks for being willing to serve. Thanks for caring about teenagers. And thanks for letting God use you.

We can't wait to see what this year has in store.

**Kristin Harman**  
DCE for Youth Ministry

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# THE BASICS

## STAFF YOU SHOULD KNOW



### Rev. Micah Greiner

Lead Pastor  
MGreiner@FullLifeInChrist.org

Pastor Greiner is a big supporter of Youth Ministry at St. Peter. He is highly involved in Confirmation.



### DCE Kristin Harman

Youth Ministry Leader  
KHarman@FullLifeInChrist.org

Kristin oversees Middle and High School Youth Group, Confirmation, and pretty much everything else involving teenagers.

So that's us! There are a whole lot more people who support Youth Ministry here, but they wouldn't all fit in our little booklet! Let us know if there's anything you ever need. We're here to help!

## OUR MINISTRY

### OUR WEEKLY PROGRAM

#### C4: MIDDLE SCHOOL | SUNDAYS FROM 10:00AM TO 10:45AM

Our middle school ministry (grades 6-8) meets almost every Sunday during the school year for games, teaching, and small groups.

#### OASIS: HIGH SCHOOL | SUNDAYS FROM 6:00PM TO 8:00PM

Our high school ministry (grades 9-12) meets almost every Sunday for games, teaching, and small groups.

### OUR ENVIRONMENTS

There are three kinds of environments for students in our ministry. Each one is designed to strategically invite students on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders, and Jesus, and each one is designed with every student in mind - the student who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Throughout the year, we'll have several big events designed to help students connect with their peers and small group leaders. Special events provide a great opportunity for students to invite their friends for the very first time. These events include parties, retreats, camps, and mission trips.

**WEEKLY PROGRAMS:** Our weekly programs happen nearly every single week. They're designed to help students connect with God, connect with others, and lead to a full life in Christ.

**SMALL GROUP:** Small groups are the most important part of what we do. They happen weekly in our programs, but the relationships built in small groups extend outside the walls of our church. They're designed to connect every student with a consistent adult and community where they can be discipled.

## OUR BIG WIN

It's hard sometimes to know when you're winning in youth ministry, you know? Like, is anything we're teaching actually sinking in? Are students really growing in their faith? That's why we decided to go ahead and define the big win for our ministry. It's the one thing that we, as a ministry team, want to achieve. It's the goal we want to keep in mind at all times. And it's what motivates and guides everything we do. (But remember that even when it seems we don't reach the goal, God works through us. He's pretty awesome like that!) It goes like this...

WE WIN WHEN A STUDENT  
TAKES A STEP TOWARD  
*OWNING THEIR FAITH AND  
JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION*

### TAKING A STEP

Now, we say "takes a step" for a reason. It's because there's no finish line or certificate of completion when it comes to spiritual growth. Instead, spiritual growth is a journey (a life-long journey) and no two journeys are identical. That's why our big win doesn't have anything to do with a specific skill or achievement. Instead, we win anytime we see a student take a single step closer to owning their faith and joining Jesus on His mission.

### OWNING THEIR FAITH

What, exactly, does it look like for a student to own their faith? Well, we believe there are four things that are the natural result of living a life of faith in Jesus. When a student begins to own their faith in



Jesus, they will begin to exhibit these four outcomes...

1. **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:** As followers of Jesus, the first outcome of our faith should be our desire to grow our friendship with God through prayer and reading, studying, meditating on, and wrestling with, the Bible. To help students grow in their relationship with God, we provide activities for students to do, post social media devotionals, and create ways for students to connect with God at church.
2. **CHRISTLIKE RELATIONSHIPS:** The second outcome of faith in Jesus has to do with our relationships with others. To help students develop more Christ-like relationships, we provide challenges for students to do individually or with their small group, give students opportunities to practice community with their small groups and small group leaders, and create ways for students to make and build friendships at church.
3. **KNOWING AND USING THEIR GIFTS:** The third outcome is our ability to identify and then use our gifts and talents to give back to love God and others. To help students identify and use their gifts, we provide activities for students to do individually or with their small group, give students opportunities to use their gifts at church, and create ways for students to serve others.
4. **SHARING THEIR STORY:** The fourth outcome of faith is our eagerness to share the story of what God has done in our lives with others. To help students begin to figure out their faith story and then share it, we encourage students in their unique story and discuss ways they can share it with others.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward owning their faith through friendship with God, Christ-like relationships, knowing and using their gifts, or sharing their stories.



## JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

The second part of our big win is seeing students begin to join God on His mission to reach every man, woman, and child with the good news of Jesus.

When it comes to thinking and behaving missionally, **there are three things we believe are our responsibility as believers.** While we don't expect every student to be living out these behaviors just yet, we can still talk about them, encourage them, and create opportunities for students to put them into practice.

1. **PRESENCE:** It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to be present in the world. Rather than isolating ourselves from unbelievers, we must be engaged in the world around us and present in our communities. While our students aren't always at a place in life where they can do this on their own, the adults in their lives can model what this looks like and create opportunities for them to be engaged in the world together.
2. **PROCLAMATION:** It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to use our actions and our words to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's not enough to simply be present in the world - we must also proclaim the Gospel with our words and actions.
3. **SATURATION:** It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to ensure that our communities and circles of influence are saturated with opportunities to see and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this ongoing process, we must create repeated ways for the Gospel to be heard and seen over and over again.

We count it as a win whenever a student takes a step toward joining Jesus on His mission in the world.

## DISCIPLING STUDENTS

Do you know the last thing that Jesus said to His followers while he was on earth? Some people call it The Great Commission: “Go and make disciples.” Duplicate yourselves. Go and make more of you. Take your faith and pass it on to someone else.

**When we talk about helping students own their faith and join Jesus on mission, we’re really just talking about discipleship. So what is discipleship?** Here are three thoughts...

### DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT LIVING, NOT LEARNING

Rather than asking, “What can I teach a student about God?” try asking, “How can I help a student better live out their faith?” It’s not just about teaching them about Jesus - it’s about modeling what faith in Jesus looks like. That’s why it is ideal for our small groups to spend time together outside of church. Because **discipleship isn’t taught in a classroom - it’s modeled in everyday life.**

### DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS IN COMMUNITY

In the Gospels, you don’t really see Jesus doing one-on-one discipleship. That’s because **discipleship happens best in a community of people.** That’s why we focus so much energy on getting students plugged into consistent small groups, why we emphasize that parents are the primary disciplers of their own kids, and why we surround students with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

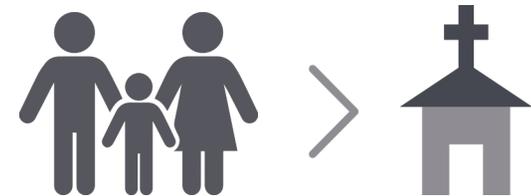
### DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. And because we know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of students who are in it for the long-haul. That’s why our small group leaders don’t bail on their students after a few months, but stick with them - because it’s a process.

## PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

Getting involved in a church is a really important part of the discipleship process. But you know what? (Now, don’t freak out.) **Church isn’t the most important part of discipleship.**

Before we explain any more about what our ministry is all about, we want to make sure one thing is super clear. (We even drew a picture to help you remember it.) We believe that this is true: **in a student’s life, the influence of a family is always greater than the influence of a church.**



“WHAT HAPPENS AT HOME IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT HAPPENS AT CHURCH.” - REGGIE JOINER

No matter what, a student’s family (not their church) will always be the biggest influence in their lives. So doesn’t it make sense for us to partner with the most powerful, influential people in our students’ lives in order to influence their faith?

We use the term “partner” for a reason - because parents and the church need each other. **We need to team up with parents** because they’re ultimately the biggest influence on their own kids’ spirituality. **And parents need to team up with the local church** because their kids need to see faith in Jesus and missional living modeled from a whole community of believers! *We need each other!*

# SMALL GROUP LEADERS

## THE WIN

We already talked about the big win for our ministry - seeing students take a step toward owning their faith and joining God on His mission. Small group leaders have a very crucial part to play in seeing that goal accomplished. Here's what we think the win looks like for small group leaders...

SMALL GROUP LEADERS WIN WHEN THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS AND HELP STUDENTS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

*Small Group Leaders are shepherds, not chaperones.*

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a student's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for small group leaders to build strong relationships with the students they lead. You can't *make* a student own their faith. You can't *make* a student join Jesus on His mission. **But you can build a relationship with that student that allows you to love them and influence their faith.**

So a small group leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the students that God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their relationship to lead students, rather than relying on their position. They win when a student sees their small group leader not as just an authority figure they have to obey, but someone they trust and want to follow.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

As important as a student's relationship with a small group leader is, it's not the only relationship that matters. **Small group leaders win when they help students build relationships with each other** because (remember) discipleship happens best in community. A small group leader isn't the only person a student needs to influence their faith. They need each other, too!

## THE EXPECTATIONS

### THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love Jesus.
- Love students.
- Stick to our Code of Conduct.
- Commit to building a lasting relationship with your students.

### THE SPECIFICS

- Show up to our weekly program every week.
- Connect with students regularly outside of church.
- Partner with the parents of your students. Send an intro email.
- Plan one service project or event for your small group each year.
- Attend special events for students.
- Attend all volunteer meetings (every other month). Volunteer discussion groups are optional.
- Attend occasional one-on-one check-ins with the Youth Ministry Leader



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# GREETERS

## THE WIN

Here's what we think the win looks like for our greeters...

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### GREETERS WIN WHEN THEY MAKE A STUDENT FEEL WELCOME AND LIKED

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Greeters are the first people students meet when they arrive, so they've got a pretty big responsibility!

Greeters have the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have when they walk through our doors. **It's not just about signing students in. It's about making students feel seen, cared for, and liked.** An awesome greeter has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders, and to connect with God.



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## THE EXPECTATIONS

### THE QUALIFICATIONS

- Love students.
- Love smiling.

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### THE SPECIFICS

- Make sure every student is greeted with a smile.
- Make sure every student signs in.
- Identify first-time guests and introduce them to a small group leader for their grade.



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# THE FINE PRINT

## SAFETY GUIDELINES

As a member of our ministry team, it is absolutely essential that you practice healthy boundaries with students at all times, for their safety and yours. You must go through Protection Screening before serving the students face-to-face. These guidelines exist to protect students from harm and to protect you from false allegations.

Keep in mind, while these guidelines apply to your interactions with all students, they are absolutely indisputable when dealing with students not of your gender.

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## NEVER BE ALONE WITH A STUDENT

If you need to have a private conversation with a student, have the conversation in a public place - not behind closed doors or in a room or vehicle alone. Here are some tips to help you navigate through this particular guideline...

- Do not set up one-on-one meetings with students without the knowledge and written consent of their parents. If parental consent is unwise, speak to the Youth Ministry Leader.
  - Avoid initiating one-on-one meetings with students. Allow the student or the students' parents to be the initiators.
  - Never transport a student anywhere alone. If a student needs a ride, arrange to have another adult or student ride with you. If that's not possible, say no. The only exception to this rule is if a parent gives you *written* consent for that instance.
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## MAINTAIN PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Be wise. Maintain healthy and safe physical boundaries with students at all times. This means setting boundaries for yourself, but it may also mean setting and enforcing boundaries with students who push physical limits. If you have any questions about what is or is not appropriate, talk to our staff, and always err on the side of caution.

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## LOG ELECTRONIC CONVERSATIONS

When you find yourself in the midst of a sensitive conversation with a student, keep in mind that words and intentions can be misconstrued - intentionally or unintentionally. Any time you are engaged in a serious conversation with a student, log your conversations (take screen shots, save text messages and emails). This may seem excessive, but if you're ever falsely accused of misconduct from a student or parent, you'll be glad you did it.

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## REPORT DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

As a member of our ministry team, you should report suspected abuse. Report any instance of abuse directly to DCFS, the Pastor, or DCE immediately. Including...

- If a student is being harmed, neglected, or abused.
  - If a student is harming or abusing someone else.
  - If a student is harming or at risk of harming themselves.
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## CODE OF CONDUCT

As a ministry team, there are a few things we'd like everyone to abide by. Here they are!

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### ALL VOLUNTEERS

**WORK HARD:** You are so important to our ministry! We need you! So please, show up on time, give it your all, and be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to you.

*"Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ." (Colossians 3:23)*

**BE KIND:** Ministry is all about people, so to be effective in ministry, you'll need to reflect God's heart for people. With students, parents, other volunteers, and our staff, treat people with gentleness, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and love.

*"Get along amongst yourselves... And be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out." (1 Thessalonians 5:13-15)*

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### SMALL GROUP LEADERS

**BE LIKE JESUS:** More than any other volunteer role, small group leaders have the most responsibility because they have the most influence in the lives of students. While we don't expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect every small group leader to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God with their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day - especially in key areas like their treatment of others on our team, social media presence, drug or alcohol use, and sexual behavior.

*"Watch what God does, and then do it." (Ephesians 5:1)*



## VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT FORM

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm ready to serve!

**I promise to follow through on my responsibilities.** If I can't, for whatever reason, I promise to keep our staff informed and to give them as much notice as I possibly can, knowing they'll need to find a replacement for me and that takes time. I will prepare, pray, and arrive on time.

**I promise I've read this Volunteer Handbook.** I understand the mission and strategy of our ministry and will support the vision and leadership of the staff.

**I promise I've read the Safety Guidelines and will abide by them,** for my safety and for the safety of our students.

**I promise I will abide by the code of conduct.** If I mess up, I promise to be honest with our staff about my actions and will accept whatever consequences they think are reasonable and necessary, knowing that, while they must always act in the best interest of students, they are committed to treating me with respect, love, and grace.

**I promise I understand the expectations of my role and will work hard to fulfill them.** If I'm having trouble fulfilling any of my expectations, I promise to communicate with the staff and ask for help, knowing they're here to support me.

**I promise I will continually be growing.** I understand that a relationship with Jesus is my highest priority. I will pray, attend worship, read my Bible, and more because Jesus is my best friend.

And finally...

**I promise to do my part in making a huge difference in the lives and faith of the students who walk through our doors. And I promise to have a lot of fun doing it.**

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_