

ON STUDENT MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Adopted by the Session – September 2020 (updated June 2023)

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

The goal of student ministry at Christ Covenant Church is to work among the youth and alongside their parents (with the support of the church's members) to make more (and more able) disciples of Jesus Christ. We long to see a rising generation gripped by the grace of God, inspired by the glory of God, and alive with a daily sense of gratitude - grateful to know God, to receive His mercy, and to observe His work in and through the Church where He has called them to worship, grow, and serve. We also long for them to be thrilled by the high calling of pressing on for God's glory in a culture increasingly set in opposition to the things of God. Our children are our heritage. The covenant children of the church today will help lead the church tomorrow and therefore we intend to invest with wholehearted intentionality. We accordingly will cultivate youth ministry that is contrary to so many churches that create age-segregated sub-cultures aiming at popularity. We will rather pursue faithful gospel proclamation, and spiritual formation that is grounded in the Word and catechetical instruction. We will also be intentional, as we are in the broader life of our church, in reaching the lost and those new to the Reformed faith. A robust engagement with our young people, inclusive of the (often "orphaned") college-aged years, is a vital aspect of our church life as we seek to foster in them a vibrant personal relationship with Christ as well as a deep commitment to the Reformed Presbyterian tradition and a passion for being equipped to become dedicated disciples within the diverse fabric of our multi-generational church community.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Covenantal:** Children of the Covenant are highly favored by God and can expect His warm fatherly attention from their earliest moments of life.
 - a. Because the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, we will never tire of reminding both the faithful and apparently faithless covenant children of their need to embrace Christ; and because, while this life lasts, no Covenant child can ever move beyond the reach of God's steadfast love, we will never tire of reminding them of the Covenant promises of God which are ordered in all things and sure.
 - b. For some this will mean that they never know a day when they cannot remember trusting and loving Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior.
 - c. Some may not grow in this way until their later teen years, while others may find themselves resisting God's kindness for the entire season of their youth, kicking against the goads of Christian instruction, and preferring to live their lives without Christ.
 - d. The church, along with the parents of the youth, will need great wisdom to shepherd each child along their own unique spiritual journey. As for covenant children, there is a balance of "covenant assumption" with a call to do business with God in making our calling and election sure. As for non-covenantal children, we will endeavor wholeheartedly to reach the lost, and deepen the faith of those new to our Reformed principles. A Communicants Class is offered with this balance in mind for young people rising into the life of the church as well as for people of all ages new to "the Faith...once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude v3).

2. **Worship-Centered:** No Christian can honor God as he ought unless he knows Him as He is.
 - a. We must teach our children to attend and enjoy the public worship of God. This will always be their best opportunity to experience God in His extraordinarily ordinary means of grace.
 - b. The priority and enjoyment of worship must be modeled and taught in the home, or it will seldom be caught at church.

3. **Relational:** As social creatures made in God’s image, each child needs a rich tapestry of relationships to thrive and mature in the Faith. Our Catechism defines such relationships in terms of “superiors” (i.e., elders), “inferiors” (i.e., juniors), and “equals” (i.e., peers). We believe each play a pivotal role in a child’s development:
 - a. In terms of superiors or elders, children thrive best under the nurturing instruction and example of parents who have a vibrant Christian faith. Older church men and women have a key role supporting and reinforcing these efforts, enriching the lives of our youth with their wit and wisdom. Standing against the age-segregated spirit of our culture, we want our ministry to have a backbone of intentional, transgenerational connection.
 - b. In terms of inferiors or juniors, we long to see our more mature children develop mentoring older brother and sister relationships with the younger children of our Church, encouraging them to connect with God, lean into the church, develop a Christian Worldview, and see the relevance of Scripture to all of life.
 - c. In terms of equals or peers, the local church ought to be a place where the youth make warm, life-long, Christian friendships with their peers.

4. **Servant-Hearted:** Every ministry at Christ Covenant exists to equip the saints for the work of service.
 - a. In contrast to a “resort” model of ministry in which the youth gather to receive ministry, we hope in the course of time, our youth will seek out opportunities to serve in the ministries of our church, whether that be in the greeting team, the sound desk, playing an instrument in public worship, helping at church events, or serving on local or international mission teams.
 - b. We want to build a ministry in which the youth give life to the body as fellow servants of Jesus Christ.

5. **Adult-Oriented:** One of the primary goals of our student ministry is to prepare our young people for a life of Christian adulthood and spiritual maturity. To that end, our student ministry will devote attention to preparing our youth for their future with particular focus on training parents to help their children in this transition, starting at the earliest ages.
 - a. **Further Education and/or Work:** Choosing a college, or entering the workforce, must be done with an eye toward glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. In other words, we don’t want our youth to go to a prestigious college for the acclaim or to choose a vocation simply for the financial benefits, but rather to make these decisions based on a robust Christian worldview.
 - b. **Marriage and Relationships:** Rather than promoting a secular or worldly approach to these things, we intend to show our students, from Scripture, what a godly young man or young woman should be pursuing in life.
 - c. **Choosing a Church:** When departing the home — perhaps for college, a job, or a marriage — a student may be presented for the first time with the task of choosing a new church. What questions should they ask? What should they seek in a faithful church? We want to help our youth think about finding a church that is biblically faithful and winsomely Reformed.