

THALIA LYNN BAPTIST CHURCH

STUDENT MINISTRY EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Expectations and guidelines can be quite ambiguous in many areas of life. Therefore, we believe that it is important to make it known to you as a student and / or parent what you can expect from us and what we will expect from you. We will also provide guidelines that will be followed for all that we will do within the Thalia Lynn Baptist Church Student Ministry

EXPECTATIONS

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE TLBC STUDENT MINISTRY TEAM

FRIENDS

We will provide a Christian peer group. We will make every effort to provide an environment where spiritual growth and fellowship can occur in the midst of Christian friendships. (**Hebrews 10:25**)

LEADERS

We will strive to provide a team of responsible adult leaders who desire to serve others with hearts and hands and model a devoted and passionate relationship with Christ.

TRANSPORTATION

You can expect safe, efficient, and dependable transportation while traveling with the youth group. Drivers will insure that all students will be wearing seat belts appropriately, and will operate vehicles in a legal and cautious manner. Your safety is paramount to us!

RESPONSIBILITY

While on youth functions, we will take the responsibility of the students in our care. We take that responsibility very serious while they are under our supervision. However, responsibility of teenagers during worship service, before and after Bible Studies and events, on the church parking lot, etc. lies in the hands of parents. When student actions are brought to our attention during these times, we will direct those comments to you as parents. At no point do we plan on undermining the parents' authority and decided course of disciplinary action. (If for any reason the authorities must be called in, parents need to understand that we must make the right decision for ALL students involved, and not just do what is most convenient for any offender's family.)

COMMUNICATION

We will make every effort to communicate to you as a family in every way. This will include communicating things that come to our attention about what is going on in your student(s) life. It will also include communicating with you ways in which you can grow as a family. Communication will also be provided to you concerning what is going on in the Student Ministry (email, mail, church publications).

COOPERATION

We will involve you in any discipline situation that may arise involving your student(s) (see "Discipline Policy & Procedures" sheet). We strongly believe that a cooperative approach to correction returns the God-given responsibility of discipline to you as parents (Proverbs 29:17).

We will make provisions for any and all safety and first aid needs that arise at any given time during a Student Ministry activity or event.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM STUDENT MINISTRY PARENTS

PRAYER

We covet your prayers as ministers and for this ministry. We will only move forward as God's people if we petition Him daily for strength, humility, growth, and the ability to look beyond ourselves. Pray for your student(s), the youth group, and the TLBC Student Ministry team. (**Jeremiah 33:3, Ephesians 6:18**)

SUPPORT

We ask you to help and support us in this ministry. When decisions are made that the students may not like, please help us by supporting us (knowing that we are making these decisions to help the group as a whole). If there is something that we do that you do not agree with, please come to us personally and share it with us so that we can grow and learn together. Please do not go to someone else and share it with them. You can be assured that we are supporting you and will also come to you with disagreements that may arise. We are making every effort with the students to help them in the area of gossip and talking about others. We need your help in this as we model this principle to our teens. This is a Biblical principle that we must all work hard to follow (**Matthew 5:22-24 & 18:15-17**).

RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that parents are the number one influence in a teen's life. We ask that you remember that you bear the primary responsibility for spiritual growth in your student(s). There is little we can do to replace the training and instruction of a Godly parent (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 22:6**).

INVOLVEMENT

We NEED your help. Please make every effort to be involved in this ministry for your student(s) and all the other families in this ministry. We are not perfect and we definitely do not have all the answers. If we work together as a team, we feel confident that God will use us all as instruments in helping our teens grow in the Lord. Please make sure to attend Student Ministry Parents' meetings in order to find ways to get involved.

FEEDBACK

Please provide us with any feedback that could be beneficial to us and this ministry as a whole. Let us know of special needs and prayer requests for your student(s) and your family.

RULES & DISCIPLINE

Please make sure to read through the attached "Discipline Policy & Procedures" sheet. We expect your support and understanding in the enforcing of these guidelines and rules. Please remember that these are in place for reasons that benefit the group as a whole and not necessarily your individual child(ren). Please also support us in conveying to your student(s) the importance and Biblical principle of respect to all the adult leaders that help out in this ministry. If we cannot receive your support and cooperation in these areas, then we ask that your student(s) not accompany us on any of our TLBC Student Ministry sponsored activities and events. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THIS!!!

PROBLEMS

As unforeseen problems arise, please do not hesitate to contact any one of the TLBC Student Ministry team and let us know. We are here for YOU. Communication is a key element to all aspects of life and ministry. We realize that there are things that cannot be helped and situations that must have special attention. Please let us know when those come up. WE UNDERSTAND!

PUNCTUALITY

It is important when working with a group this size that we get going on time. We will always communicate a time of departure and arrival. This is to help both you as parents and us as leaders. If your student(s) is late, they may find that we have already left. We do not wish to leave anyone behind, but we also have reasons for leaving at a designated time. We need your help in this. We also commit to you to do all we can to be on time ourselves. We will be early to meet the teens and we will make every effort to

arrive back at the designated time. If, for some unseen reason, we will not make it back at the designated time, we will communicate to you as soon as possible. While on trips, communication will be available by contacting / calling from the cellular phones of the TLBC Student Ministry Leaders.

ONE OTHER NOTE: After events we have adult leaders who are tired and ready to go home. Please make sure to be here promptly to pick up your teen to help us out with this.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM THE STUDENTS

RESPONSIBILITY

We expect each teen to take responsibility for his / her actions, and to conduct themselves in accordance with Scriptural standards. (*"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."* **1 Timothy 4:12**)

RESPECT

We expect each student to respect all adults and adult leaders, and to acknowledge the authority that those in leadership hold. (**Hebrews 13:17**)

We expect each student to respect other students by lifting each other up rather than tearing them down. The world beats down Christians enough, we expect our Student Ministry to be a place of encouragement. (**Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 27:17**)

We expect each teen to respect the property of others, the church building, and the areas and property we visit while away. (**Matthew 7:12**)

PARTICIPATION

We expect each teen to participate in all activities with the entire group when deciding to be a part of a particular event, trip, or class. In other words--if you're here, BE HERE and participate in what we're doing. Considerations will be made in case of illness, injury, and other special circumstances.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things." **Philippians 4:8**

Rules and guidelines are not put into place just to hold people down and use authority over them, but to help maintain the unity and health of the group and guide us to shine as Christian examples out of love for God (**Matthew 5:16, Matthew 22:37-40**).

The following are rules & guidelines that we will work from in everything we do in order minimize conflicts among the group and maximize spiritual growth. Most of these are common sense Christian guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND BOUNDARIES

Jesus Christ is to be lifted up in all actions and attitudes of those participating in events and activities (**Romans 12:1**). No disruptive behavior will be allowed. That includes, but is not limited to fighting, cussing, vandalism, pranks, disrespect of authority, etc. Speech that is inappropriate, crude, sexual in nature, insulting, downgrading, etc. will not be tolerated. (**James 3:9-10, Ephesians 4:29, Ephesians 5:4**)

When requested, "Permission / Medical Release" forms must be turned in for your student in order for them to participate in certain events and activities. For some trips and activities, "Discipline Covenant" forms will be made available for students and parents to sign in and turn in before we leave, in order to reinforce what is expected of the students while we are away, and why.

To encourage the growth of relationships and interaction among those in the youth group during trips and/or retreats, there will be very specific guidelines regarding audio players, cell phones, or any other personal media devices. The policy regarding each activity will be given on all correspondence sent regarding that event. In all cases, Christian Music will be provided, and adult chaperones will make their cell phones available for calls home.

TRANSPORTATION

All students are expected to ride the church vehicles when space is available. Those driving to the church will be able to leave their vehicles on the church property. Some exceptions may be made, but only by the mutual consent of the TLBC Student Minister and the parents of students needing the special consideration.

Student drivers are not allowed to carry other students as passengers to or from a Student Ministry event or activity unless prior written consent is given, or if all sets of involved parents have spoken directly with the Student Minister either by phone or in person. (Consent is understood when the older sibling is a driver and is bringing any younger siblings in the same family vehicle.)

WEAPONS (Colossians 3:8)

The physical safety of the students is a top priority for us. Therefore, no student may possess a gun, pocketknife, open knife, martial arts item, or anything else deemed as a weapon by adult leaders at any time on the Youth Hall, at the church, or on any TLBC Student Ministry Sponsored event.

The presence of any of the above may result in an immediate call to 911, and full cooperation will be given to the authorities who respond. At the moment of discovery, and if at all safely possible, the Student Minister and/or the Adult leader in charge will confiscate any weapon present, and will immediately call the student's parents to report the incident. The student may be subject to both immediate dismissal from the current event, and/or a possible mandatory "cool down" period where the student will be asked to refrain from coming to any Student Ministry activities or events. Any "cool down" time periods will be determined based on the severity of the situation, and will be decided by the TLBC Student Minister, the adult leaders (if any) who were present for the infraction, and in council with other members of the TLBC Ministry staff. (Professional counseling may be requested for the student before they are allowed to return.)

ILLEGAL OR IMMORAL ITEMS

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, fireworks, pornographic material, or anything else that is illegal or immoral by law and/or Biblical standards will NOT be allowed at ANY event.

(Romans 13:1, 2 Timothy 2:22, 2 Peter 1:5-7)

If any of the above listed items are discovered, they will be confiscated, and an immediate call to the student's parents will be made to report the incident. The student's actions may result in dismissal from the current Student Ministry event, and a "cool down" period from the Student Ministry may also be enforced, with the length of time will being decided between the TLBC Student Minister and the parents of the student involved.

Prescription and non-prescription medicines should be discussed between a parent and the appropriate adult leader attending the event. Instructions in writing are always preferred.

PURITY (Psalm 119:9)

Public Displays of Affection (or "PDA") is not acceptable at any time while participating in Student Ministry events or activities. Dating couples should remember to set a Christian example to everyone. Physical contact with your boyfriend or girlfriend should not be any more than you should give any of

your other friends. Mixed-gender friends must avoid anything that could carry even subtle sexual overtones such as sitting in laps, sleeping on each others shoulders on long van/bus rides, long hugs, and anything of a similar nature. (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**) Any infraction of this guideline will be discussed by adults in attendance, and actions taken will be determined based on the type of infraction. These actions could result in a simple warning to a phone call to parents along with dismissal from the event and a “cool down” from Student Ministry events being put forth for students.

Clothing should be modest at all times. (According to **1 Timothy 2:9**, modest means not drawing attention to yourself.) If you have doubts about what you are wearing or taking to wear, it is probably not acceptable. No “bare” anything that is normally covered by clothing will be acceptable at any time. If in doubt about appropriate clothing, please first check with your parents or if already in attendance at an event or activity, check with an adult chaperone. Male adults will address issues with male students, and female adults will address any issues with female students.

Swimsuits worn to any TLBC Student Ministry water event should be modest (see above) and provide appropriate coverage in front and back. They should fit properly to prevent slipping and excessive exposure. Girls must wear a modest one-piece swimsuit or tankini that shows NO midriff area. If any other type of swimsuit is worn, a dark t-shirt must be worn over it. Boys must wear modest swim trunks or board shorts that fit properly and do not sag down and expose any boxers or underwear or worse. Male adults will address issues with male students, and female adults will address any issues with female students.

We understand that each family determines what is modest for their student(s). However, while on TLBC Student Ministry events, there are guidelines that must be followed or the student(s) will be asked to change clothes or leave.

It is our genuine and sincere hope that by taking the time to specifically address what we believe to be important guidelines for our Student Ministry, we challenge our students to become who God created them to be. When they act within these guidelines and boundaries, they are helping to create an atmosphere that is ideal for The Holy Spirit to work in the hearts and lives of ALL of the Students. This cooperation also moves them closer to the place spiritually, emotionally, and mentally where they can learn how to better demonstrate their love for Christ in their lives (**Colossians 1:10**), and obey His command to go and make Disciples. (**Matthew 28:19-20**)