

NextGen

Student Ministry

2016-2017 GRACE CHAPEL Student Ministry Volunteer Packet



3 Militia Drive
Lexington, MA 02421

So you're thinking of becoming a volunteer...

Welcome! We are very excited that you have taken a step in your faith and are thinking about serving students in the Grace Chapel Student Ministry. When we talk with potential leaders, we try to share with them three reasons why we need people like you to get involved as leaders in our ministry:

Students need attention. Students are desperate to be noticed...when we give students our attention, we give them value and significance. We give them attention with:

TIME: Love is spelled T-I-M-E (most people never give kids time). Your presence in their life communicates care and concern.

CONTACT: Phone calls, notes, email, Facebook, postcards... anything that shows personal touch in the life of a student communicates value

HEART: We communicate with the heart by using our eyes/ears to see and hear whether students are hurting, yearning, questioning, doubting or struggling.

Students need role models. Students need to see Christianity lived out in life.

Discipleship is not a program (knowledge- transference); it's about life-transformation! Students don't need adults that act like kids; they need adults that care about them and are crazy about them... willing to open their lives to them to see Christianity lived authentically through the highs and lows of life.

Students need spiritual encouragement. Students need someone who will encourage them to be all that God desires for them to be (Ephesians 2:10).

The next several pages are designed to better equip your decision about serving in student ministry. You will learn about our philosophy, values and program. Our prayer is that you truly sense a nudge from the Holy Spirit to take this step. If our team can do anything to help you in the process, please don't hesitate to ask!

Peace & hope,

THE GRACE CHAPEL STUDENT MINISTRY STAFF

"Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

TOP TEN MYTHS ABOUT BEING A VOLUNTEER

Working with students can appear to be very complex when actually it is not. Here are some of the common misconceptions about working with students.

Myth #1: You must be YOUNG. Older leaders bring great wisdom, maturity and experience to any team. Students need to be exposed to Christians of all ages in order for them to see the Christian life modeled.

Myth #2: You must have advanced BIBLE TRAINING. Seminary degrees not required. We aren't here to wow students with our Bible knowledge, but show the ways that Scripture has come alive for us in our own lives.

Myth #3: You must be PERFECT. We are saved by grace not works! And actually it's our imperfections that keep us humble, focused on God, and allows God to work through us. Students don't want to see that you're perfect, they want to see that you are real. Let students see the ways that you are growing and learning to depend on God more deeply with time.

Myth #4: You must be a CAPTIVATING COMMUNICATOR. The Apostle Paul who told the Corinthian church that he preached the gospel with fear, weakness and trembling, and that the only reason his message was captivating was because it was the power of God who made it captivating! (1 Corinthians 2:1-4)

Myth #5: You must be able to ACT LIKE A STUDENT. Students need a role model, not another friend. At the same time, feel freedom to laugh, and have fun!

Myth #6: You must have plenty of FREE TIME. Use the time you have as an offering to God, and God will multiply the fruits of your labor. There are small things you can do like send a student a note or ask them how that test went that can make a big impact.

Myth #7: You must know everything about the latest YOUTH CULTURE. The truth is that youth culture changes about every three years. The idea is to be a continual learner in the culture in which you are ministering to. Instead of trying to be an expert, ask students about the things they love!

Myth #8: You must be WILD, CRAZY, AND DYNAMIC. We need you to care, listen, challenge, support, serve and pray. It doesn't matter what kind of personality or energy you have. Many of our students are quiet introverts, who need someone similar who they can relate to.

Myth #9: You must KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS to every question. You don't have to know all the right answers. It's OK and healthy to say "I don't know." Share your experiences. Look up Scripture together. Talk to a pastor. Go on a journey together.

Myth #10: You must CARRY THE CONVERSATION. Ministry to students is much less about what you say and much more about listening. So don't be so quick to talk all the time! Learn the art of asking good questions.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

What is my role as a student ministries volunteer?

Research shows that most Christians make faith commitment during their teenage years. We are committed to providing a safe space relationally and programmatically for the Holy Spirit to work in and through our students' lives during these important years. As youth leaders, your primary role is to build authentic and real relationships with students as you walk alongside them sharing Christ in their greatest joys, deepest pains and everything in between. We are journeying with students as they discover life with God for the good of the world.

What is the typical time commitment?

We ask for a minimum 1 year commitment September through June. The programs you decide to serve in regularly are up to you. But wherever you serve (whether Sun mornings or house groups or both) we ask that you remain consistent throughout the year & are committed to investing in the lives of our students during & outside of our regular programming, including organizing bi-monthly small group events.

What are the qualifications of a volunteer leader?

- ✓ Acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ.
- ✓ Is committed to growing and maturing in their relationship with God through quiet times, active attendance at church, and involvement in accountability. Is committed to stop serving if, at any time, personal spirituality becomes compromised.
- ✓ Is committed to a lifestyle that is both godly and above reproach. Is committed to making wise choices, realizing that lifestyle and decisions are a model for students.
- ✓ Is committed to prioritizing regular leader meetings throughout the year. Is also committed to reading weekly email communication (conversely, we are committed to keeping communication as short and succinct as possible!)
- ✓ Will not post anything on a personal blog, website, or Facebook that would be damaging to the reputation of Grace Chapel Student Ministries.
- ✓ Understands the philosophy of this ministry and agrees with its purpose and commits to shepherding the students that God brings. Commits to rejecting divisive behavior and to bringing any disagreements, concerns, or problems about the ministry to a Grace Chapel Student Ministries Staff Member without talking or gossiping to students, Grace Chapel Student Ministries volunteers, or church members.
- ✓ Is committed to being consistent and timely to the program(s) committed to, and will communicate absences with a Grace Chapel Student Ministries Staff Member.

Understanding our students

(the following information is from Orange Conference 2015)

The goal in middle school is to affirm their personal journey so they can own their own faith and value a faith community

- ▶ Thinks like an engineer: they construct new thoughts and learn best through trial and error

sixth grade: the who cares phase. The phase when there's never enough groceries, too many hormones & a dramatic kid that needs someone to prove *who cares*.

- ▶ Wants to know: **who do I like?**
- ▶ The goal: **gain stability**

seventh & eighth grade: the yeah...i know phase. The phase when nothing you do is cool, everything is fun in a crowd, and one smart kid will keep reminding you yeah...i know.

- ▶ Wants to know: **who am I?**
- ▶ The goal: **discover uniqueness**



The goal in high school is to mobilize their faith so they can keep pursuing authentic faith and discover their personal mission

- ▶ Thinks like a philosopher: they want to discover meaning and learn best by processing out loud

ninth grade: the this is me now phase. The phase when friendships shift, grades count, and interests change so often your teenager has to explain *this is me now*.

- ▶ Wants to know: **where do I belong?**
- ▶ The goal: **value community**

tenth grade: the why not? phase The phase when "everyone else can...", "nobody else has to...", and your resolute teen will push you to answer *why not?*

- ▶ Wants to know: **why should I believe?**
- ▶ The goal: **clarify values**

eleventh grade: the just trust me phase The phase when there's less drama, more stress, and your very busy teenager answers all your questions with *just trust me*.

- ▶ Wants to know: **how can I matter?**
- ▶ The goal: **refine skills**

twelfth grade: the what's next phase The phase when your emerging adult pulls away, gets closer, does things for the last time and you will both start asking *what's next?*

- ▶ Wants to know: **what will I do?**
- ▶ The goal: **create vision**

Understanding our Purpose

What do we do? Our *mission* is to journey with students as together we discover life with God for the good of the world.

Why do we do this? We envision a vibrant, growing body of students who are empowered to impact their families, schools, communities, country and world by mobilizing them as disciples for Jesus Christ.

How do we do this? A commitment to three next steps help us to accomplish our mission and vision. These "steps" describe our priorities and culture as a community.

BELONG – Young people have a deep need to belong, therefore establishing a sense of community among our students that is real and diverse is a priority. We invite them to be **growing closer** to one another, to the adults who are investing in them, to the wider church family both during and beyond our program times.

Some of the key characteristics of **growing closer** are:

- ▶ *Acceptance* – welcoming and getting to know every student
- ▶ *Encouragement* – adults actively seek out students to include them
- ▶ *Laughter and Fun* – we try not to take ourselves too seriously
- ▶ *Transparency* – we aim to be real, sharing our hurts, struggles, successes and failures

BELIEVE – We aim to creatively communicate the good news of Christ through our lives and words. Every student has been created in the image of God and as such are loved by Him. We want them to discover that truth by **going deeper** in their journey of faith.

Some of the key characteristics of **going deeper** are:

- ▶ *Spiritual growth* – learning to apply scriptural truths to our everyday lives
- ▶ *Relational growth* – building deeper community through small groups
- ▶ *Personal growth* – making wise decisions about personal habits & lifestyle choices
- ▶ *Missional growth* – having a heart for those students who have yet to connect with Jesus and the Church.

BE ON MISSION – We work hard to boldly mobilize students to live on mission in their world. Students have a unique opportunity to be **reaching wider** into their schools, communities, and friendship circles with the love and grace of Jesus Christ. We want to help students live out their faith in their everyday lives, experience where God is at work in the world around them, and discover their purpose as they become partners in God's kingdom work.

Some of the key characteristics of **reaching wider** are:

- ▶ *Leading within* – contributing to planning and implementation of our ministry
- ▶ *Inviting in* – making it safe to invite friends
- ▶ *Looking outward* – finding ways for students to impact their community
- ▶ *Sending out* – providing opportunities for teams of students and adults to serve in their communities.

UNDERSTANDING OUR MODEL & PROGRAMS

High School Ministry & Middle School Ministry - Lexington Campus

Teenagers connected to Grace Chapel are encouraged to get involved in everything we do as a church community (i.e serving in Kidstown or the Cafe). In addition to being a part of the life of the church we have specific events and programs intended to help teenagers discover life with God.

We have two main programs that meet on a weekly basis on Sunday mornings and House groups that meet during the week. In addition to these weekly programs, throughout the year there are a number of opportunities for students to connect and grow through small group specials, retreats, service opportunities, mission trips, special events, and our student leadership teams.

MSM & HSM Sunday Morning is primarily about **growing closer (belonging)** and **going deeper (believing)** as students build relationships with peers and caring adults through small groups and grow in their understanding of the Christian life together.

Sunday mornings meet during the 9:15 hour. MS students meet in the gym for large group during the first half of the hour, and connection groups for the second half. HS students will meet in the game room and large group space for large group time during the second half of the hour and connection groups for the first half.

- Small Groups on Sunday morning will continue to be grouped by grade and gender. While we will continue to use the term "small group" for our Sunday morning groups, connection groups may be a better way to think about them. Because only so much can happen in the life of a teenager during 30 minutes on a Sunday morning, connection with one another is really the goal. If students want to be a part of a group that has more intentional discipleship and outreach (which we hope they do!), being a part of our House Groups is a key way to do that.

MSM & HSM House Groups are primarily about **going deeper (believing)** and **reaching wider (being on mission)**. It's a place where students can deepen friendships with students who live near them and with God through discussion, testimonies, prayer, worship, Scripture, service, and community. It's also a place where students can explore their purpose and calling as they think about

House groups are small groups that meet on various evenings on a weekly bases in homes within different towns surrounding Grace Chapel. There will be separate groups for middle school and high school students. House groups are an opportunity for localized, decentralized, neighborhood Christian community and we encourage these groups to be places where we can invite unchurched students.

LEADERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

In order to help you, the students, and the existing Volunteer leaders, we do not allow people to immediately begin serving; we ask that you complete a healthy process in order to make your experience safe and meaningful.



Communicate Interest: You may have an interest, but are unsure as to where you can help, or you may have just received a tap on the shoulder asking if you would consider getting involved. Some of the most unlikely people make the greatest leaders; so take the next step as you prayerfully consider this ministry and connect with us!

Email Andrew Breton (Middle School Pastor)
[**abreton@grace.org**](mailto:abreton@grace.org)

Email Leah Knight Breton (High School Pastor)
[**lknight@grace.org**](mailto:lknight@grace.org)

Fill out Application: All new leaders fill out an application to help us better learn more about you, your journey, and your availability

for ministry. We hope you find this application as a way to help articulate your passion and calling for student ministry!

Observe Programs: While you are still in process of completing the application packet, you are encouraged to observe our programs. This is an important opportunity to get a feel for the ministry without having expectations or responsibilities placed on you. You will have a chance to meet students, other leaders, and gather questions and thoughts for the upcoming meeting.

Interview with Ministry Leader: This is an opportunity for you to share thoughts from your observations, describe your spiritual journey, and discuss in more detail your gifts and desires for working with students.

Complete CORI Background Check: All volunteers must be complete a CORI background check. This is both a student ministries policy and a church policy.

Review the Safety Policy for Student and Children Ministry and Return Signed Authorization and Release Form: Once you've decided you want to make a commitment, you'll sign a commitment contract, which lays out agreements and expectations for ministry. We will also make sure all of your application material is received.