

Student Ministries Philosophy of Ministry

Student ministries, in cooperation with adult and children's ministries, exists to glorify God by assisting parents in the calling of students to faith and repentance, and equipping them in the service of Jesus Christ.

I. Student Ministries

We affirm that Junior and Senior High school students are maturing young adults, responsible to God for their sin, called to obey God and their parents, and able through faith to walk in holiness (Psalm 119:9-11; Proverbs 3:1-4; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Ephesians 6:1). Biblical examples of those who have walked with God in holiness as young adults include: Joseph (Genesis 37:2; 39:1-2); Ruth (Ruth 2:5-6); Samuel (1 Samuel 2:11; 3:19); David (1 Samuel 17:42); Josiah (2 Kings 22:3); Esther (Esther 2:8); Daniel (Daniel 1:3-7); Mary (Luke 1:27); Timothy (2 Timothy 3:15); and even Jesus Christ Himself, who as a young adult, "continued in subjection" to his parents, "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke. 2:51-52). With this biblical foundation, we affirm that young adults can serve their Creator in the days of their youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), and reject any ideology which permits or excuses young adults to have experiences with sin under the misguided teaching of a "developmental stage" or "transitional period" in their lives commonly referred to as "adolescence." It is our hope and conviction that as we train students by precept and example to think biblically, and hold them accountable for their thoughts and actions, they will mature both in their faith and in their responsibility to society. We believe this is best accomplished through the teaching of God's Word in worship services, Sunday School, mid-week Bible study, and small group discipleship programs.

II. In Cooperation With Adult and Children's Ministries

We believe that students should be incorporated into the life of our church, which as the Body of Christ is made up of many members of all age groups (1 Corinthians 12:12). Thus, student ministries will endeavor to integrate our young adults into other ministries of the church both to serve and to be discipled by mature adults. Student ministries should not be an isolated effort divorced from other ministries of the church and so become a "church within a church." We will cooperate with both the children's and adult ministries to train parents in child rearing and family worship (Colossians 3:20-21). We acknowledge the importance of having a mindset exist within the church which sees ministry to students as a responsibility of the entire body of Christ. Therefore, it is our responsibility as a church body to proclaim Christ, "admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28).

III. Exist to Glorify God

The purpose of student ministries is to both glorify God and to lead others in the worship of God. To glorify God is to acknowledge that He alone in His glorious nature is worthy of our reverence, obedience, and praise (Revelation 7:10-12). The church exists to glorify God who has saved us "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:4-6). We acknowledge that God has redeemed a people for His name who will "proclaim the excellencies of Him" who has called us out of darkness

into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). We affirm that God receives glory when we worship and obey Him with hearts of gratitude and devotion. God receives glory when others see the fruit of our transformed lives, and when we praise Him with our lips from a pure heart. Our desire to glorify God will determine everything we do in student ministries (1 Corinthians 10:31), and thus the contrast between our ministry and the world will be radically different.

We affirm that young adults should glorify God in all the ways in which the church worships Him: music, prayer, giving, teaching, preaching, the Lord's Supper, baptism, evangelism, missions, holy living, gratitude, and loving service to others, etc.

IV. By Assisting Parents

We affirm that God has placed upon parents the responsibility of presenting the good news of Christ to their children that they might receive Him and be trained to obey His commandments (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Matthew 28:18-20). We also affirm that God has made fathers the primary spiritual leaders of their own children, and that fathers are responsible to raise their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Thus, we believe that fruitful ministry to young adults is really an extension of the ongoing ministry of parents to their children. We will not usurp the responsibility or authority of parents in the biblical discipleship of their children, but rather will assist them in the process. Therefore, we seek to minister to both parents and students, and encourage parental involvement in the ministry.

V. In The Calling Of Students To Faith and Repentance

We affirm that the church exists to evangelize the lost (Matthew 28:18-20), which also involves helping parents to confront their young adults with the gospel of Jesus Christ, calling them to repentance, turning from sin and embracing Christ through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28). We believe student ministries and parents together are to extend the gospel of Jesus Christ beyond the walls of our church, calling all to receive Christ as Lord and Savior (John 1:12).

VI. Equipping Them In the Service of Jesus Christ

We affirm that the church exists to equip believers to do the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). This is accomplished through training students in personal Bible study, prayer, evangelism, service, and social interaction. We believe that students are a vital part of the church, and that when they are trained to exercise their spiritual giftedness (1 Corinthians 12:7) in the fellowship, the entire body will be strengthened and built up in the faith. We design enjoyable activities for the purpose of stimulating fellowship, evangelism, and service rather than for mere entertainment. In summary, we teach students the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), so that they may be equipped both to perform good deeds (Galatians 6:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14), and to provide leadership in the church in the years to come (2 Timothy 2:2).

Missions Policy

The Bible Church of Little Rock defines a missionary as a servant of Christ called to proclaim the gospel, often across geographical and cultural boundaries, in obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-47). Frontier missionaries, like the Apostle Paul, aim to take the gospel to people who have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ, and do not have access to gospel-preaching churches in their own culture (Romans 15:19-23). Cross-cultural missionaries, like Timothy, travel far to serve where the church, though perhaps fairly established, benefits from a missionary's service (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:3). Missions ministry, then, is the task of taking the gospel beyond the immediate influence of the sending church in order to evangelize and to instruct in the Word of God those who have little or no opportunity to hear the gospel, for the purpose of establishing and strengthening local congregations.

The church is entrusted with fulfilling the Great Commission. The Spirit-led advancement of the gospel until all God's elect are gathered from throughout the world is Christ's great purpose (Matthew 28:18-20; John 10:16; Acts 1:8). Through missions ministry, the church participates in God's plan on a world-wide scale. Thus, global missions ministry should be a priority of every local church. It is a way in which congregations and individuals fulfill the will of God.

The proper motivation for world missions is a passionate love for God's glory united with a Christ-like compassion for all peoples. We yearn to see God truly honored as God throughout the world (Matthew 6:9). Therefore, we pray with the psalmist, "God bless us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him." (Psalm 67:7). We desire, like the Apostle Paul, "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake." (Romans 1:5). Moreover, as Jesus Christ was a compassionate and merciful servant to the lost so that God might be glorified for His mercy (Matthew 9:35-36; Romans 15:8-9; Jonah 4), we pursue missions with hearts of compassion and a readiness to sacrifice all for those without Christ (Romans 9:1-5; 10:1; 2 Timothy 2:8-10). We, too, affirm: "a heart for the glory of God and a heart of mercy for the nations make a Christ-like missionary." (John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993, p. 30).

Missionaries are set apart by the Holy Spirit for service (Acts 13:2). A person's call to missionary service will be evident by his or her qualifications. A godly character, faithful service in a local church, and an accurate and thorough knowledge of Scripture are key qualifications of a missionary. In addition, those who are sent out as pastors to establish and to lead churches are to meet the biblical qualifications for an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Through prayer, counsel and observation the Spirit will lead a church to discern and confirm the qualifications and calling of persons to missions ministry.

The church has a responsibility to pray for, identify, train and send only those who are qualified to be missionaries. A missionary is ultimately accountable to the sending church, and serves under the authority of the church (Acts 13:3; 14:26-27). We strongly discourage a missionary candidate from pursuing service with a missions agency before seeking the counsel and blessing of his or her church. Missions agencies have a legitimate and useful role in the sending of missionaries by identifying strategic opportunities for service, and by providing administrative support, specialized training, and on-the-field supervision. However, the missions agency is not a substitute for the church but a partner with the church. For such a partnership to be workable, both church and missions agency should share substantial agreement in doctrine and philosophy of ministry.

The church is responsible to send missionaries “in a manner worthy of God” (3 John 6). Since they go forth as God’s representatives, the church is to send them in a way that will honor God in every respect. This means the church provides substantial support by money, prayers, and other practical means of assistance. In so doing, God is glorified, and the church has the privilege of being a partner with the missionary in spreading the truth (3 John 8).

The pattern of New Testament missions ministry is the proclamation of the gospel with the view of establishing and strengthening self-propagating local churches. Therefore, we believe that evangelism, church planting, and ministry that serves to strengthen churches is the primary work of missions ministry. As of first priority, we are committed to sending pastors to evangelize, to establish churches, and to strengthen churches through preaching, teaching and prayer. We affirm with Dr. Thomas Hale, former medical missionary to , “The essential core ministry in missions is the winning of people to Christ and forming them into congregations—that is, evangelism and church planting It is useless to win people to Christ and then leave them on their own as a bunch of individuals; they will quickly fall away. Not only must there be churches for new believers to join, but also it is the church that is going to be responsible for ongoing evangelism. Hence, in the same breath with church planting, we need to include discipling new believers and imparting to them the vision for further evangelism.” (Thomas Hale, *On Being A Missionary*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1995, p. 252).

We recognize that the gospel has access to some countries only, or most strategically, through community development initiatives such as healthcare services, agricultural projects, and education. In these cases, we will support qualified persons who are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ as they serve through their respective professions or trades, and who have as their ultimate aim the formation and strengthening of local churches. While biblical missions ministry is more than humanitarian assistance, nonetheless, it can include such service as an expression of Christ’s love, and as a means for securing a hearing for the gospel.

We recognize, too, that support missionaries are sent out to provide vital services. Many such as pilots, mechanics, administrators, engineers, and school teachers, are qualified church leaders and mature believers who embrace biblical ministry priorities. In addition to providing administrative or technical assistance, they proclaim the gospel whenever possible, model godly life-styles, and teach the Word of God. As a secondary priority, then, we will send qualified support missionaries who are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ in their spheres of influence.

We believe that it is desirable for missionaries to commit themselves to a life-time of service, while recognizing that God might providentially direct their steps otherwise. Short-term service is usually inadequate for understanding culture and language, building relationships, making disciples and establishing churches. Thus, the most strategic use of a church’s resources is to support career missionaries. Short-term missions service can be useful for ministry training, for educating a church about missions, for tactical support of existing missions ministry, and for the personal encouragement of career missionaries. For these reasons, we will encourage and support short-term missions, especially service with and to our own career missionaries. Nevertheless, short-term missions should be secondary to the training and sending of career missionaries.

Lastly, we believe that the very existence and success of missions ministry depends ultimately upon God. We are committed, then, to petition the Lord of the harvest unceasingly to send out workers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38). Further, we devote ourselves to help those who are sent out by our earnest prayers (2 Corinthians 1:11), so that they may have opportunity and boldness to proclaim

the Word (Colossians 4:3; Ephesians 6:19), and to witness the rapid spread and acceptance of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 3:1). We pray, too, that they will continue to conduct themselves honorably (Hebrews 13:18), and be kept safe from all evil (2 Thessalonians 3:2; Romans 15:30-31), until that Day when the missionary task is finished.

BCLR Student Ministries Sunday Morning Equipping Hour Overview

The following schedule represents a typical Sunday morning Equipping Hour in BCLR Student Ministries:

- **9-9:10 – Students Arrive and Gather in the Senior High Room**
- **9:10-9:15 – Scripture Reading and Prayer**
- **9:15-10:10 – Junior High and Senior High Lessons**

Who are the Teachers? The following men are currently teachers in the Junior and Senior High classes: Douglas Allison, Greg Scheideman, Nolan Games, Garrett Plunkett, Ryan Jones, and Stephen Riemar

What do we teach?

In Junior High, we teach an overview of a book per week; this means we focus on what is called “biblical theology”. Biblical theology asks questions like, “What is X book about?”, “What is the theme of X book?”, “How does the New Testament differ from the Old Testament?”, “Why are there four Gospels?” Specifically, we ask the following basic questions of each book of the Bible:

Where does this text fit in Scripture’s storyline?

What is the Big Idea of the book?

How is the book structured?

How does this book motivate or help us to live for God through Christ?

In Senior High, we ask and answer one important question per week, which means we focus on what is called “systematic theology.” Systematic theology asks questions like, “What does the Bible say about ____?” The following categories represent the basic structure of the Senior High Equipping Hour:

Bibliology – Study of the Bible

Theology Proper – Study of God

Anthropology – Study of Mankind

Christology – Study of Christ

Soteriology – Study of Salvation

Pneumatology – Study of the Holy Spirit

Hamartiology – Study of Sin

Ecclesiology – Study of the Church

Angelology – Study of Angels and Demons

Eschatology – Study of End Time

The overall goal is to help the students to learn to live for God Through Christ. These classes are designed to teach students to do the following:

- To study and read the Scriptures on their own.
- To think critically and biblically.
- To have a strong confidence and trust in the Scriptures.
- To engage biblically the most important questions in life.
- To defend and build up a biblical worldview as the strongest and most viable of all possible worldviews.

What is expected from the students on Sunday mornings?

- Be ready to write; students are expected to record their own observations; analysis is more important than memory for the purposes of this class
- Be ready to engage; asking and answering questions is encouraged
- Don't try to show you know everything; we know you don't and you don't need to impress anyone
- Try to make the most basic observations possible; follow the motto, "basic is best"; the strongest and most complex structures, material or immaterial, are made of basic parts

What is distinctive about the BCLR Student Ministries Equipping Hour?

- Not control or information but equipping; we follow something like Home Depot's motto: "You can do it; we can help."
- To be a safe place to make mistakes and learn from them; we expect heretical ideas from the students; we want what the students really think to come out so we can look at what the Scripture says with them.
- Development by discussion; we seek to interact with students where they are and to work toward what Scripture says.
- Focus on unlearning eisegesis¹ and learning to do exegesis².
- Engaging rather than avoiding the most difficult questions students can ask.

¹ *Eisegesis* is the process of reading into Scripture the meaning that we think it should have or want it to have.

² *Exegesis* is the process of extracting from Scripture the meaning that is there regardless of what we think it should be or want it to be.

BCLR Student Ministries Wednesday Night Overview

The following schedule represents a typical Wednesday evening in BCLR Student Ministries:

- 6:30-7:45 – Worship (Prayer, Scripture Reading, Singing, Preaching, and Announcements)
- 7:45-8:30 – Small Groups (Divided by grade and gender)
- 8:30-9:15 – Games and Hanging Out

Why Should Youth Attend on Wednesday Evenings?

Wednesday evenings represent a key opportunity for youth to be evangelized and discipled by mature believers from BCLR's membership. We recognize that many students who attend are not believers or are unsure of their status. Because they are so young, they are necessarily immature. Wednesday evenings provide a time for youth to come hear Scripture preached and to see it modeled by the leadership. It also allows for dedicated time for small group leaders to engage with students in conversation about God, Scripture, and the current issues in their lives. Small group leaders focus on getting to know the students and developing relationships with them. For youth whose parents are growing believers, the leaders serve as helpful supplements to fill out and expand the students' understanding of what it looks like to follow Christ, as well as why to do it. For youth whose parents are not believers, the leaders may represent some of the only Christians personally invested in knowing, loving, and leading them to follow Christ.

We understand that the adolescent years are a key phase in a person's life. This is the time when youth transition from childhood to adulthood, and learning to live for God through Christ is essential to begin as early as possible. Who ever regretted being saved and maturing too young? This is why the majority of our time on Wednesdays is spent in simple worship and conversation. We are seeking to present the gospel in the Scripture on a regular basis and to teach what it looks like to live for God through Christ.

We believe that biblically faithful preaching is one of the most formative things that anyone can be exposed to. Preaching that accurately proclaims the Word of God brings God's divine message to bear on the hearts of youth. The preaching on Wednesdays is intentionally simple. It is designed to serve as a sort of on-ramp to learning how to listen to sermons in general and to distinguish between preaching that seeks to explain and proclaim what God has said and preaching that seeks merely to share personal opinion.

In summary, Wednesday evenings are designed to help youth to know God through his Word and to learn to live for Him through Christ. They are also a time for students to develop relationships with older believers in the church and with other students, which, God willing, will help them establish godly patterns that serve them well for the rest of their lives.