

LETTER TO LEADERS

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

Thank you for choosing to be a forerunner of the faith, uniting with us to help students find and follow Jesus! There is no better time than now to get into the trenches of student ministry. Students desperately need adults to invest in them and walk through life with them. Here at Rush Creek, we take the call to go and make disciples seriously and desire to see that call multiply in the hearts of our students and leaders. We believe God has chosen you to be a part of His mission here at Rush Creek!

In Christ,

Student Ministry Team

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FALL 2023 CALENDAR

August 6 || All Campus Leader Training
August 16 || Student Ministry Kick-Off Party
August 23 || First Wednesday Night/Parent Night
August 28 || JH Hangout

September 11 || HS Hangout

October 4 || All Campus Worship @ MW
October 16 || JH Hangout
October 30 || HS Hangout

November 5 || Student Weekend Registration Opens

December 13 || Last Wednesday Night/Christmas Party

SPRING 2024 CALENDAR

January 10 || Spring Kickoff /All Campus Student Weekend Rally @ GO
January 12-14 || Student Weekend
January 17 || Parent Night
January 29 || JH Hangout

February 19 || HS Hangout

March 3 || Senior Launch Registration Opens
March 11-15 || Spring Break Mission Trips
March 17 || Summer Camp Registration Opens
March 25 || JH Hangout
March 27 || All Campus Worship @ ML

April 15 || HS Hangout

May 15 || Last Wednesday Night of Semester
May 19 || Senior Launch 2023

MISSION, VISION AND PRIORITIES

OUR MISSION

Rush Creek exists to help people far from God become contagious followers of Jesus.

OUR VISION

We are forerunners of the faith united to help people find and follow Jesus.

OUR PRIORITIES

Our priorities reflect the priorities of the church when it was established in Acts 2:42-47: worship, fellowship, maturity, service, evangelism, and stewardship - the way we say this with Rush Creek Students is...

BELONG | BELIEVE | BECOME

ENGAGE

“You don’t have to be interesting, if you are interested.”

LEARN NAMES: Names help students feel seen and remembered.

INITIATE CONVERSATION: Reach first, as the leader, take on the awkwardness.

LISTEN WELL: Understand first and ask questions.

REACH OUT to new/lonely/tough students.

SPIRITUALLY:

- Ask them where they see themselves with God.
- Ask who they think God is?
- Always be encouraging.

PLAY

“Entertainment is to do something FOR them to impress them, play is something we do WITH them.”

CELEBRATE: Find anything you can celebrate with students.

LAUGH: Choose to have a good time when hanging with students. SMILE!

ADVENTURE: Go beyond Wednesday nights.

GUIDE

“Follow me, as I follow Christ.” - 1 Corinthians 11:1

GOD’S WORD: Read and share it!

LEAD BY EXAMPLE: You can’t take others where you’re not going.

DISCUSSION: Clarify before you confront.

INVITE STUDENTS into a better way. “God’s way is right, but not just right, it is good.”

PRAY

“It’s impossible to lead like Christ without a consistent prayer life.”

FOR: Praying for students constantly and consistently

WITH: Ask permission, listen to the need behind the need, keep it simple, don’t rush.

TOGETHER: A culture where this is just what we do, praying for their friends. Remind them that they have access to the living God!

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

GET TO KNOW PARENTS: Parents are primary disciplers in students' lives.

HOW CAN I HELP? Communicate our desire to help parents disciple students.

BE A RESOURCE: Listen and pray with parents for their student.

SMALL GROUP

What's expected:

BE PRESENT: Show up consistently, mentally, and emotionally.

LEAD, DON'T LECTURE: Let students talk, aim for 80/20.

DON'T FEAR THE SILENCE: Silence can be your friend, let them think.

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

7TH

- Discover their identity in Christ
- Develop a basic understanding of the Bible

8TH

- Deepen student's understanding of their identity in Christ
- Develop an understanding of essential Christian beliefs

9TH

- Discover God's design for relationships
- Display a life on mission

10TH

- Discover why Christianity is a reasonable faith
- Develop a biblical understanding of truth

11TH

- Disciple others
- Dwell in God's word

12TH

- Defend essential Christian beliefs
- Display the marks of a true disciple of Christ.

CONFLICT

FIRST, DECIDE WHETHER THE PROBLEM IS WORTH GETTING INVOLVED IN. Ask yourself, “What’s the worst that can happen if I don’t step in and make this a conflict?” Ask the opinion of a neutral third party, since the closer you are to the situation, the stronger your feelings toward it tend to be.

SECOND, CONSIDER CAREFULLY HOW YOU SHOULD RESPOND [and get the advice of the Student Pastor]. Should you use the Hammer or the Fly Swatter? If you use a hammer to kill a mosquito on your friend’s arm, your friend is going to be angrier about your method than about having to deal with a mosquito. So try to handle conflict in a way that helps both sides welcome an agreed upon resolution.

USE MATTHEW 18:15-20 FOR YOUR GUIDE FOR STUDENT MINISTRY. Should I get involved? Think about your response [inform Student Pastor]. Inform the parent. Speak to parent and student individually about the conflict in person. Ask Student Pastor for further follow up.

REQUIRED TO REPORT

Sometimes students will share personal struggles or the situation they face at home. Here is what Student Pastors **NEED** to be informed of for legal reasons and for the well-being of the student.

1. Suicidal thoughts, active self-injury, active eating disorders, and anything else that causes harm to them.
2. An abusive home environment (physical, sexual, verbal, or neglect). *This includes past abuse.
3. Actions that can cause harm to themselves or others.
4. You have 24 hours LEGALLY to report abuse to:
Child Protective Services: [817] 255-8700
Online Incident Report: rushcreek.org/child-safety/

RUSH CREEK STUDENTS INTEGRITY COVENANT

EPHESIANS 5:3 | “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...”

1 TIMOTHY 3:2 | “Now the overseer must be above reproach...” ·

1 PETER 2:12 | “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.” ·

1 PETER 3:16 | “...keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

JOHN 17:20-21 | “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one...”

Because our desire is to maintain an atmosphere which causes no one—inside or outside our church—to question the moral integrity of our ministry, and because all it takes is one accusation—with or without basis—to wreak havoc on a ministry, it is imperative that every member of our student ministry understands and abides by the following guidelines:

1. The bottom line: Leaders and staff should avoid being alone with a member of the opposite sex—student or staff—at any time for any reason.
2. Transportation:
 - a. If a student needs a ride home, please take another leader [or student, if necessary] with you.
 - b. When taking multiple students home, please see to it that your last stop is at the home of a same-sex student.
3. Counseling: Encourage students desiring counsel to meet with a leader of the same sex. If this isn't possible, then take the following precautions:
 - a. Have another leader sit in on the discussion with you.
 - b. Talk with the student in a public place [within view of a crowd].
 - c. You are not at liberty to invite students of the opposite-sex to your home for counseling unless your spouse is present and the Student Pastor is made aware of the conversation. When student ministry activities make use of adult leader's homes, it is vital that:
 - i. Ahead-of-time setup and/or after-the-fact clean-up involve more than one male and one female leader.
 - ii. No adult leader can be home alone—even for a few minutes—with a single student [wait in front yard for other group members to arrive if there is no other option].

4. Affection:

- a. Physical touch is good, so long as:
 - i. It's public
 - ii. It's extended equally to both gals & guys.
 - iii. It's extended freely, and not only to select students.
 - iv. It's the right kind of affection ["high fives" are best, side-hugs are acceptable, hand shakes are manly and sophisticated]
- b. Don't touch anyone in a way that could be construed as romantic or flirtatious.
- c. Specific types of touch that should be avoided at all times:
 - i. Holding hands when the entire group isn't holding hands.
 - ii. Inappropriate hugs
 - iii. Extended touch ie. Lap-sitting
- d. Leaders should also be aware that in most cases "perception is reality." If there are any "hints" of sexual thoughts or motives, the leader should avoid physical contact with that individual.
- e. Adult Leaders are not permitted to date students [whether in our church or outside].

5. Humor:

- a. Ephesians 5:4 – "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking, which are out of place..." [Guys need to be especially wary here.]

6. Honor and strictly enforce our modesty and PDA guidelines. Be discerning in the movies and TV shows you watch with students.

7. Texting and Social Media

It is expected that male leaders only text male students and female leaders only text female students.

a. Texting students should not happen after 10pm.

b. Any messages on phone or social media between adults and students should never be deleted when possible. Just makes sense.

Social Media can be a great tool for ministry or a tool for Satan. Be conscious of what you post and remember that once it's out there you can never take it back.

SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES (For full policies, see page 20 for QR code)

FOR ME:

- If you're ever worried that you are in danger, even from someone who doesn't attend Rush Creek, please tell your leader. If you believe you have been physically abused, emotionally abused, sexually abused, or neglected please tell us. We will listen to you and help you in every way we can.- [policy page 4]

THE LEADERS AND ME:

- We are incredibly careful about who has access to our student ministry areas. If you think you see someone who isn't supposed to be there, tell someone. [policy page 5]
- Rule of 3. A student should never be alone with an adult leader when at all possible. [policy page 7]
 - Utilize additional and guidelines for approved one-on-one interactions [policy page 7]
- A student should never receive a private, electronic message from a Rush Creek adult for any reason. This includes emails, texts, and direct messages on social media. Leaders may "friend" or "follow" a student age 14 or older and participate in group messages, but those social media platforms should not be used for private messaging.- [policy page 10]

- Sometimes students will receive gifts at RC that encourage spiritual growth. Gifts, however, should never be given in private or without the approval of Rush Creek staff. - [policy page 10-11]
- Examples of appropriate physical touch: side hugs, pats on the shoulder or back, handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, arms around shoulders - [policy page 10]
- Examples of inappropriate touching: hugging from the front, kisses, lap-sitting, wrestling, tickling, piggyback rides- [policy page 10]

MY PEERS AND ME:

- Students serve weekly at RC in a ministry called Servant's Heart. Servant's Heart is encouraged for all students. Application is required with references. You should never be serving alone with other kids.- [policy page 7]

We want all words used at RC to be kind, encouraging, and uplifting. If you ever hear anyone using profanity, name-calling, or any other hurtful speech please tell a leader. - [policy page 10]

- Physical, verbal, relational bullying, including cyberbullying is not tolerated at Rush Creek from adults or students. Any form of abuse will be eliminated and perpetrators of the bullying may be asked to removed from ministry programming. Please report this to a leader.

A NOTE FOR YOU:

We are absolutely committed to creating the safest environment for students and leaders at Rush Creek. We believe that the more people who know our child protection guidelines, the safer we become as an organization. Please take a minute to visit rushcreek.org/childsafety to download our policies and find other tools to keep your family well-informed and safe. If you need to report an incident or suspicion, please call (817) 527-5250 or email childsafety@rushcreek.org.

CHILD SAFETY

At Rush Creek we are absolutely committed to providing a safe environment for children, leaders, and families. We utilize tools such as policies, background checks, child safety training, monitoring, supervision, and reporting to safeguard our ministries and protect the precious lives in our care. We believe Rush Creek should be a place where every child and every family finds pure love and holy acceptance, and a vital component of creating that atmosphere is maintaining environments that are safe and secure.

And you can help! We believe the more people know and understand our policies, the safer we can be in every environment. Please scan the QR code for our guidelines and report any suspicions or concerns you have concerning child safety. Thank you for helping us protect children, families, and leaders at Rush Creek!

