



# **Parent Handbook**

**2019-2020 School Year**



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# Mission and Values

The mission of Calvary Lutheran Church is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

## NextGen Core Values:

We believe that...

- Every person is created in the image of God.
- Every person needs to know they are loved, they belong, and they are not alone.
- Every person needs to know the life-changing truth of the Bible.
- Families have the greatest influence in a kid's life.
- Every person needs to know they can trust Jesus no matter what.

Our mission statement and these five core values are the “**WHY**” behind everything we do in NextGen Ministries at Calvary. Our hope is that you will embrace these core values and make them a part of your family’s values as we work together to grow in our faith in Jesus.



# NextGen Culture

We want NextGen to be a place where everyone knows they are loved, they belong and they are not alone. Creating this type of culture starts with us. We want both adults and kids to be on board with the vision we have for the year. If we set the tone for this type of environment, our hope is that kids will start to take some responsibility to see that it happens.

How students treat each other changes how they're going to experience NextGen ministries. As parents, here are specific things you can help us communicate with kids about what we expect from everyone.

## **We want to create a culture where...**

- We are examples of Christ in how we love God, love others, and reach out.
- New people are noticed, welcomed, and integrated into our groups.
- Everyone is respected.
- We are proactive in creating a positive environment.
- People choose not to just hear, but actively listen when others are speaking.
- Everyone participates because we understand the power in community.
- We communicate when we have issues with one another, or have challenging experiences at NextGen.



# Discipleship

We believe effective discipleship happens within the context of relationships. In NextGen ministries, we prioritize creating opportunities for relationships to be formed. We believe that all students should have at least 5 key adults in their life who are investing in them.

We believe that a student needs to feel they belong before they can believe. That's why we focus so much energy on getting students plugged into consistent small groups, why we emphasize that parents are the primary disciplers of their own kids, and why we surround kids with tons of Jesus followers. Because discipleship takes all of us!

This year, Grace Place leaders and volunteers will be reading the book, *It's Personal*, which outlines 5 dimensions of a student's personal life we should know if we want to make a real connection. We will be discussing these five questions to find ways to reach deeper into kids' lives, to know them better, so that we can help them know Jesus better:

*Do you know my name?*  
*Do you know what matters to me?*  
*Do you know where I live?*  
*Do you know what I've done?*  
*Do you know what I can do?*



# Discipleship is a Process

Discipleship is never really complete because learning to live out our faith is a life-long process. Our kids are at the beginning of their faith journey. And because we know discipleship takes time, we want to put people in the lives of students who are in it for the long haul. That's why our small group leaders don't bail on their students after a few months, but make a commitment to care, watch over and pray for the kids in their groups for the long term.

We believe Jesus set the ultimate example of discipleship. If we look to how Jesus interacted with people and how he addressed these questions, we see the importance and impact of knowing someone's story.

Do you know the last thing that Jesus said to His followers while He was on earth? "Go and make disciples." Duplicate yourselves. Go and make more of you. Take your faith and pass it on to someone else.

When we talk about helping students begin to own and affirm the faith of their baptism and enter into a relationship with Jesus, we're really just talking about discipleship.



# Partnering With Parents

People are formed by the families they are raised in. We form our perspective of the world, learn how to interact with others, and form our self-identity within the context of our families. On average, volunteers will have forty hours a year set aside to spend with their students/small group. The average parent has over 3,000 hours a year to spend with their child. At best, we will have temporary influence. By default, a student's family has a lifelong influence.

*That's why a student's family will always be the biggest influence in their lives. When we choose to partner with parents, we nurture authentic faith.*



# KID EXPECTATIONS

We want Grace Place to be a place where everyone knows they are loved, they belong and they are not alone. We expect kids to...

## HAVE FUN:

“At the risk of oversimplifying... If we played, laughed, danced and smiled a little more at church and at home, kids and teenagers might grow up with a healthier perspective on their family and Christian community.”

From *Playing for Keeps* by Reggie Joiner

## WORK HARD & BE KIND:

- Welcome new people and be aware of people who are not as connected.
- Listen to the adults who are there to support them.
- Participate in the music or the game, being respectful of the leader and the others who want to participate, even if they do not.
- Use words that encourage, not tear down

*“Do your best... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you’re serving is Christ..” (Colossians 3:23)*

## BE LIKE JESUS:

While we don’t expect anyone to be perfect, we do expect everyone to be striving to make wise decisions, to glorify God with their lives, and to strive to look more like Jesus every day.

*“Watch what God does, and then do it.” (Ephesians 5:1)*

**Our small group leaders are there to build relationships, not to be the behavior management police.** That said, it is important for kids to know the boundaries and to know that there are consequences if they choose not to follow the expectations. Families are important supporters of these expectations.





# THE ROLE OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

Kids need other adults who ...

- Believe in God.
- Believe in them.
- Give them a place to belong.

Being a small group leader (SGL) is an opportunity to walk alongside 5-8 kids and meet with them weekly. Each SGL must embrace Calvary's mission and priorities, and be passionate about creating an environment where all kids experience love, belonging and a Jesus-focused community. We believe that circles are better than rows and that spiritual growth happens best in small groups.

**SMALL GROUP LEADERS WIN WHEN  
THEY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH  
STUDENTS AND HELP STUDENTS BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH  
EACH OTHER**

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Without a relationship, it's impossible to influence a student's faith in a significant way. That's why it's so important for small group leaders to build strong relationships with the students they lead. You can't make a student own their faith. You can't make a student join God on His mission. **But you can build a relationship with that student that allows you to love them and influence their faith.**

So a small group leader wins when they choose to love and embrace the students that God has entrusted to them. They win when they leverage their relationship to lead students, rather than relying on their position. **They win when students see their small group leader not as just an authority figure they have to obey, but someone they trust and want to follow.**



# ROLE & EXPECTATIONS OF GE TEAM

We already talked about the big win for our ministry: seeing students take a step toward owning their faith. Here's what we think the win looks like for our **Guest Experience (GE) Team**...

## **GUEST EXPERIENCE TEAM MEMBERS WIN WHEN THEY MAKE A STUDENT FEEL WELCOME AND A SENSE OF BELONGING**

Our GE Team members are the first people students meet when they arrive and the last people they see before they leave, so they've got a pretty big responsibility!

Our GE Team has the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have when they walk through our doors. **It's not just about signing students in. It's about making students feel seen, cared for and liked.** An awesome GE Team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders and to connect with God.

### **THE QUALIFICATIONS**

- Love students.
- Love smiling.

### **THE SPECIFICS**

- Be present when you are scheduled to be there.
- Make sure every student is greeted with a smile.
- Make sure every student signs in.
- Identify first-time guests and introduce them to a small group leader for their grade. Make sure they receive registration information as needed.
- Attend all events, meetings and gatherings for the GE Team.



# ROLE & EXPECTATIONS OF SE TEAM

Here's what we think the win looks like for our **Special Events** (SE) Team...

## **SPECIAL EVENTS TEAM MEMBERS WIN WHEN THEY HELP STUDENTS HAVE FUN AND CONNECT WITH A COMMUNITY OF FAITH**

Our SE Team members have an important role in making sure kids experience how much fun it can be to follow Jesus. Fun doesn't trivialize our mission. We are called to celebrate, fellowship and live life to the fullest.

Our SE Team has the ability to set the tone for the kind of day students are going to have. **It's not just about hosting a fun event. It's about helping students experience Jesus through having fun together.** An awesome SE Team member has the opportunity to begin breaking down walls so that, for the rest of our program, students are more open to connect with others, to connect with their small group leaders, and to connect with God.

### **THE QUALIFICATIONS**

- Love students.
- Love planning and organizing fun events.

### **THE SPECIFICS**

- Be present when you are scheduled to be there.
- Make sure every student is greeted with a smile, and create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Make sure the event is set up and cleaned up on time.
- Pay attention to details and remain flexible.
- Attend events, meetings and gatherings for SE Team.



## Details

**AGE 2 - GRADE 5 | THURSDAYS 6:30 P.M. & SUNDAYS 9 & 10:30 A.M.**

Our kids' ministry meets weekly for small groups, worship, and activities.

### **FAMILY WORSHIP**

Families play the most important part in how kids come to know, love and follow Jesus. A kid will feel more like church is a place where they belong if we intentionally welcome them into the worship life of our church family. The first Sunday of each month, Grace Place kids come up to the front to sing with the worship team. Families are encouraged to worship together on these weekends.

### **OUR ENVIRONMENTS**

There are three kinds of environments for kids in our ministry. Each one is designed strategically to invite kids on a journey into deeper relationships with their peers, leaders and Jesus, and each one is designed with every kid in mind including the kid who's grown up in church and the first-time visitor too.

**SMALL GROUP TIME:** Small groups are the most important part of what we do. They're designed to connect every student with a consistent adult and a community where they can get to know Jesus better. In Grace Place, kids hear the Bible story in small group time.

**LARGE GROUP TIME:** This is designed to help kids see how the Bible story relates to their lives today. We engage in age appropriate worship and songs.

**SPECIAL EVENTS & RETREATS:** Throughout the year, we'll host several big events designed to help kids connect with their peers and small group leaders. We hope kids will be excited to invite friends to our special events. Retreats and special events are often the place where kids will walk into our ministry for the very first time.



# GRACE PLACE TEACHING CALENDAR

## First weekend of every month: Family Worship

### September

15 Jesus and Kids  
22 Noah  
29 Noah

### October

6 3rd Grade Bibles in worship  
13 Hannah & Samuel  
    3rd Grade Bible Class  
20 Esther  
26 Costume Carnival  
27 Esther

### November

10 Baby Moses  
18 Moses- Gym Day  
24 Moses

### December

8 Bethlehem  
    3rd Grade Bible Class  
15 Bethlehem  
22 Bethlehem  
29 No programming

### January

5 Lead Small Training  
12 Miracles  
19 Feed My Starving Children  
26 Miracles

### February

9 Four Friends- Gym Day  
    3rd Grade Bible Class  
16 Four Friends  
21-23 4th & 5th Grade Retreat  
23 Parable-Lost Sheep  
    My Baptism– MFJ Grades 1 & 2

### March

8 Parable-Good Samaritan  
15 Parable- Good Samaritan  
22 Palm Sunday  
29 Holy Week and Easter

### April

4 Celebrate Spring  
12 No Programming- Easter  
19 Ascension  
    3rd Grade Bible Class  
26 Pentecost

### May

3 Leader Wrap Up  
10 Lydia  
17 Lydia– Last Grace Place



# FAMILY COVENANT

## FAMILY COVENANT - Calvary Staff

### Calvary staff, pastors and youth directors covenant to the following:

- Praying regularly for the children, youth and families in our community.
- Provide clear, consistent and regular avenues of communication to parents and teenagers.
- Prepare events and experiences that enrich the faith development of teenagers and adults.
- Grow in our own personal walk with Jesus through regular times of prayer, worship and community-building as we seek to set an example for the next generation.
- Create an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe where teenagers share openly, invite friends, wrestle with questions of faith and build meaningful relationships with significant adults.
- Be good stewards of the time, money and resources with which God has entrusted us.

**We understand the significance of this covenant and will be authentic with teenagers and adults in the event we are unable to follow through with aspects of our commitment. We understand that this is a process and the goal is not perfection, but faithfulness to the work to which God has invited us.**



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