

STUDENT MOVEMENT HANDBOOK



STUDENT MOVEMENT

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PURPOSE & VISION

PURPOSE

The Crosstown Student MOVEMENT is a nurturing Christian community that equips teenagers with the clear understanding of the Gospel so that they might desire a personal relationship with Christ and feel compelled to move the gospel forward with excitement, energy, and creativity. It is my desire that our teens develop hearts that hunger for the Lord, minds that seek His ways, and spirits that long to give Him glory. Sometimes glorifying God will look like participating in a service project or engaging in a worship night. At other times, it may simply be enjoying the mutual bond we share as believers in Christ through fellowship. In all things, big or small, we want to give praise to the one who made us and redeemed us, and we desire to see this generation take a stand for Jesus Christ.

VISION

The Crosstown Student Movement is a ministry that works with teens from the 6th grade through 12th grade. It is the goal of this student movement that each student feel loved and accepted no matter who they are, what they look like, or how many friends they have.

At the core of any ministry are relationships. That's why one of the primary focuses of The Crosstown Student Movement is building relationships with the kids that extend far beyond just knowing their name and school. Jesus modeled discipleship by poring over his apostles' lives. We hope to do the same. As an old ministry saying goes:

“They won't care what you know, until they know that you care.”

The end-goal of The Crosstown Student Movement is to help parents and guardians equip their teenagers to be disciples of Jesus who are theologically sound, who in turn will go on to become vital members of the church in the college years and beyond.

Hopefully, with God's direction and blessing, each student that graduates out of The Crosstown Student Movement will do so loving Jesus more than before and growing in a faith they can claim as their own.

EXPECTATIONS

Although there is nothing as good as first-hand experience, the following section has been created to provide a basic understanding of what can be expected from The Crosstown Student Movement and what we can expect from you, the parent or guardian, and your teen.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US...

ATMOSPHERE

We will strive to provide an atmosphere that is fun, uplifting, and comfortable. We're pretty relaxed and fun-loving on most occasions, but we also try to maintain a degree of reverence and respect when it's time to be serious, especially when worshipping and focusing on God's Word.

FRIENDS

We hope that The Crosstown Student Movement will provide an encouraging Christian peer group for all middle school and high school students. We promote unity within our group and will provide many opportunities for fellowship. Ideally, we want everyone to feel that they belong here.

LEADERS

Our aim is to enlist adult volunteers who are responsible, spiritually mature, and love working with teenagers. Their goal will be to foster spiritual desire in the hearts of the students and to be a source of encouragement and acceptance.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Any time travel is required for an event or activity, parents and guardians can rest assure that we will take all appropriate precautions to ensure the safety of the kids in our safekeeping. Drivers will always be well-rested and alert, and all passengers will be required to wear safety belts at all times, even in the van. Adults will not send or read text messages on their cell phones while driving. Speeding will also not be permitted, even when running behind schedule. As a general rule, students will not be allowed to drive themselves or other students to events where the youth group is traveling together. There will be some exceptions, but they must be cleared with the Student Minister in advance.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the teens at a Student Movement function primarily rests with the Student Minister, and secondarily with the other adult leaders present. That responsibility is taken very seriously. All of the adults who work with The Crosstown Student Movement are committed to the safety and well-being of the teens under their care. That being said, responsibility for the students rests in the hands of the parents or guardian who brought them during the general worship assembly and when they are at Crosstown not participating in a Student Movement activity.

COMMUNICATION

We will make every effort to communicate with parents as effectively and thoroughly as possible. Regular forms of communication include: newsletters, Sunday bulletin, website, monthly calendars, emails, in-class announcements, One Calls, and Sunday morning announcements in the worship assembly. Occasionally, phone calls will be made to a parent or guardian to address a specific issue. We strive to keep lines of communication open both ways, and we are glad to address any questions, comments, or concerns that a parent or guardian might have.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PARENTS AND GUARDIANS...

PRAYER

Parental prayer support is an incredibly important part of the spiritual development of teenagers. As Christians, we should take everything to God first, and this certainly includes the spiritual well-being of our children. We also ask that parents and guardians pray specifically for the Student Movement and its leaders, that they will have the wisdom, patience, and love to pour their hearts into sharing the love of God with our teens.

SUPPORT

The only way the Crosstown Student Movement can be an influential aspect of our teens' lives is if we have the support of their parents. We ask that parents and guardians advocate the Student Movement in the larger body of the church, encouraging and uplifting the work that is done with the students. Also, we hope that parents and guardians will support any disciplinary action that must be taken with their child, and we hope they will understand that while we strive to be

gracious and forgiving, we are also looking out for the safety and well-being of all the students under our care.

SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents and guardians are asked to take on the responsibility of being the primary spiritual influence in the life of their teenagers. Survey after survey has shown that even today's youth rate their parents as having the greatest spiritual impact on them. Obviously, this is a large and critical responsibility, but our Student Movement should ideally serve as a supplement to the spiritual nurturing a teen receives from home.

INVOLVEMENT

The Crosstown Student Movement cannot exist without volunteer support. Because our Student Movement desires to partner with parents and guardians in ministering to our teens, all parents and guardians are encouraged to look for a way to get involved. I know it's impossible for every parent and guardian to be involved in every activity we do, but there are numerous opportunities during the year through which an interested parent or guardian may participate.

FEEDBACK

Communication should never be one-way, which is why parents and guardians are free to communicate with the Student Minister about any questions, comments, problems or concerns they may have. Ideas for future events, possible lesson topics, even criticisms; all are welcome as long as they are presented respectfully and out of a genuine desire to see the Student Movement be as effective as possible.

RULES

We expect the support and understanding of parents and guardians with the enforcement of our rules and discipline. We ask that parents and guardians convey to their teen why we have certain rules, and the responsibility they have to respect those in authority.

SPONSORS

Sponsors have discretion of dealing with issues themselves, but they must always notify the Student Minister of the issue and the action taken as soon as it is reasonable. For instance, a sponsor shouldn't go find the Student Minister to ask a couple to stop PDA activity. They should address it themselves, then let the Student Minister know so that behavior can be monitored in the future.

PUNCTUALITY

Every effort is made by the leaders to abide by the stated departure and arrival times of a given event. Parents and guardians can aid in this effort by being punctual in dropping-off and picking-up their kids. Leaving late for a Student Movement event because of the tardiness of one individual is considered disrespectful to the whole group. Also, parents and guardians should be ready to pick-up their kids at the predetermined time. We will call ahead if pick-up times need to be revised.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM TEENS...

RESPONSIBILITY

Even with a 1-to-1 adult-to-student ratio it would be difficult to keep an eye on every teen at all times, which is why we expect our students to take responsibility for their own actions during Student Movement activities. We expect students to understand that they are representing our church and our faith when we are away at an event. We also expect them to act appropriately for their age, acknowledging that teenagers are capable of greater maturity than is often credited to them.

RESPECT

- Just as the adult leaders will show respect to the students, there is an expectation that the same level of respect be shown back to the adults as well as to their fellow students. Everyone who participates in a class, activity, or trip with the Crosstown Student Movement is as deserving of respect as everyone else. Disrespecting one's peers and one's leaders is not, and will not, be tolerated.
- If a sponsor asks a student to do something, the student is expected to do it (unless doing so would be a moral problem or would put the student in danger). This includes things like: cleaning facilities, stopping an activity that may be against the rules or getting dangerous or interfering with the rest of the group, changing clothes if determined inappropriate in style/fit/content (content meaning inappropriate language/pictures), etc.
- We expect all students to respect the property of others, including the property of Crosstown Church of Christ (church building, van, bus, classrooms, fellowship room, etc.). This is also important when we go on trips and stay at hotels or homes.
- We expect students to clean up after themselves. If they bring food or drink on the van or bus, they need to take their trash off after they are finished. There will be trash bags provided on every trip. Thorough cleanup is also

expected whenever the Student Movement meets outside of trips. Nobody leaves until the cleanup is complete.

PARTICIPATION

The whole point of planning events, activities, trips, and silly games is to provide an opportunity for teens to “plug-in” to The Crosstown Student Movement. When a function has been planned, there is an expectation that those who choose to attend will also participate. Besides, it’s much more fun to be involved than just observing!

RULES & GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following are **always** prohibited when at a student function with The Crosstown Student Movement and apply to both adults and teens:

- Illegal drugs, tobacco products, and alcohol
- Weapons (exceptions may include small pocket knives on some trips)
- Excessive flirting and physical affection
- Sexually promiscuous behavior
- Rude and offensive language
- Acts of violence and aggression

Cell Phones: Students' cell phones are not generally prohibited, but there will often be times when using them will be considered inappropriate and even disrespectful. Examples of such times include during class and small groups. In the event that a student is caught using his or her cell phone during an inappropriate time, they will receive a warning to put it away, but if it poses a further distraction, it will be taken away until the end of the event.

Music players: Music players are usually permitted at student events, but adult leaders reserve the right to confiscate them until the conclusion of the event if they become a distraction.

Appropriate Dress: Modesty is the name of the game in The Crosstown Student Movement. Not all modern fashion trends are reflective of the righteousness God calls us to, and we want to create an atmosphere that is largely free of distractions and temptations due to inappropriate dress. For girls, we do not tolerate spaghetti straps, tube tops, or low-cut shirts. Shorts must have 5 inch inseam. Guys must wear shirts at all mixed gender events (except for swim events). Concerning swimming events, girls' bathing suits must either be one piece, a modest tankini, or they must wear a non-white shirt over their bikini top. Guys will not be permitted to wear Speedo-style swimwear or other tight-fitting swim trunks. These rules will be adjusted as necessary as required by the facilities we use.

Snacks: On retreats and other extended trips, snacks may be brought or purchased, but are considered a privilege that may be taken away if they produce a mess. In all situations we will abide by facility rules, and respect the decision for that event.

SAFETY GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

The following is intended to serve as a general guide for establishing safety protocol for a variety of events and activities. Safety is a major priority for The Crosstown Student Movement and it is important to have these well-established guidelines to ensure that all appropriate precautions have been taken.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

- Parents and guardians will complete the Medical Release Form. Students will sign the Code of Conduct.
- Parents will receive information regarding location and arrival and departure times. They will also be given emergency contact information.
- Student drivers will not be permitted to leave an overnight event unless given special permission by the Student Minister and the student's parents or guardian.
- If there is special medication that must be administered to a student, this should be put in written instructions and be discussed with the Student Minister before the group leaves.

TRANSPORTATION

- All vehicles, church vans and private vehicles, will be driven by responsible adults who will obey all traffic laws including requiring all passengers to wear seat belts.
- Vehicles will not exceed the maximum capacity for passengers.
- Rowdy behavior will not be permitted inside a vehicle.
- The driver of a vehicle has ultimate authority for what constitutes inappropriate behavior in the vehicle.
- For trips over 5 hours there will be a second adult present in the vehicle.
- Students will not drive themselves to events where the youth group is traveling together unless special permission has been granted. In such a case, other students may ride with the driving student only if their parent has given permission directly to the student leader in charge.

SWIMMING & LAKE EVENTS

- Around water where no certified lifeguard is present, at least one adult will be designated to watch over the swimmers and to enforce safe behavior. No students will ever be permitted to swim without adult supervision.

- No jumping off rocks or trees if higher than 15 ft., and only after an adult has ensured there is no risk of injury in the water below.
- On a lake, students are not permitted to swim more than 15 yards away from the shore unless aided by a flotation device. Swimming across a lake is prohibited.
- Boats will be piloted by adults with experience in water craft.
- When skiing/rafting/tubing/wake boarding (etc.), all participants must wear life jackets.

HIKING

- Solo-hiking is not permitted.
- Middle School students are never allowed to go hiking without an adult.
- Off-trail hiking is only permitted when accompanied by a qualified adult.
- Mines and caves are not to be entered. (Unless accompanied by a guide)
- When hiking without adult supervision is permitted, students must take a watch or cell phone with them and must return by a pre-determined time as set by an adult leader. They must also describe their intended hike to an adult.
- Hikers intending to hike for longer than 30 minutes are required to take water.

STAFFING

- For overnight trips (retreats, lock-ins, etc.) - 1:7 staff to student ratio.
- Day trips and activities - 1:10 staff to student ratio.
- All adult leaders will have undergone a standard background check.

BOY/GIRL POLICIES

As a general rule, boys and girls are not permitted in each other's rooms, cabins, or tents. This is to protect the privacy of both groups. In some circumstances, there may be the need to establish "girls-only" or "boys-only" zones or boundaries. These should be respected without exception unless a student is accompanied by an adult.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Every emergency situation is different and requires a different response, but these guidelines serve to provide a basis for an appropriate plan of action.

- In the event that one or more students are missing or lost, youth leaders will ascertain their last known whereabouts and then send one or more adults to that area to begin searching. When applicable, the facilities manager (*ex: a retreat center host*) will be notified and consulted. The search will not cease until the missing individuals are found.
- In the event of an injury, the most qualified adult will be brought in to handle the medical situation. The parents of the injured teen will be notified immediately for anything more serious than minor bumps and scrapes.
- In the event of a natural disaster while at a youth function, the adult leaders will gather all students to a single well-protected place. Depending on the circumstances, parents will be notified during or immediately following the emergency situation.
- In the event of a serious vehicle accident, parents will be notified immediately. Trained emergency response teams will be trusted with the medical treatment.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline in The Crosstown Student Movement is not so much an issue of controlling the behavior of our teenagers but creating the best possible setting for them to experience God.

3 STRIKES

Discipline during Sunday and Wednesday class time is handled via a simple 3-strikes policy. For the first disruption, a student will be given a verbal warning. On the second disruption, they will be relocated to another seat. Upon the third disruption, they will be asked to leave the class and may be escorted to their parents, guardian, or a sponsor. The reason for a strict policy is a matter of respect. For a student to get to the point where they are asked to leave means that they were disrespecting the teacher and the other teens by not controlling their behavior and causing distractions and disruptions. Such actions have a negative impact on the entire class.

BEING SENT HOME

This worst-case-scenario will, hopefully, never be realized, and will only apply to extreme cases of delinquent behavior. In such an event, the parents or guardian of the student will be called and will have to come and pick up their child at their own expense. The student will serve a two week suspension from all events, and will not be allowed back at events, until a parent or guardian has met with the Student Minister, Elder, or other Adult sponsor and an understanding of behavioral improvement has been agreed upon.

SIGNING UP & PAYING FOR EVENTS

SIGNING UP

When preparing for various events, it is often necessary to know how many students will be attending weeks in advance of the actual event. Signing up for an event is **always** better when it is done sooner than later.

There are two ways to sign up for an event:

1. A student can write his/her name and info on a sign-up sheet in the Student Movement event metal board located in the main gathering room.
2. Students or parents can communicate directly with the Student Minister. Sign up deadlines exist for a reason, and it is important that an accurate count be established by the deadline date. Occasionally, it will be possible to add a student after the fact, but everything is much simpler when deadlines are observed.

PAYMENTS

Payments for Student Movement events may be made in the form of cash or check, but the money should always be given directly to the Student Minister unless otherwise noted. If cash is given, please put in a sealed envelope with Student's name, and event name the money is for. If check is given, please make it out to Crosstown Church of Christ, and put the event/child's name on the memo line. Payment deadlines should also be respected unless a special agreement has been made with the Student Minister.

NONREFUNDABLE

Please understand that there is no refund of set money given for any Student Movement event. Once your teenager has signed up and paid the cost you will not be refunded if they pull out of going. The only exception to this is in case of a family emergency, death or if they can find someone to take their spot. Please make sure that the money is turned in by the specific date given. This is very important and something we need to implement. If for any reason you cannot turn it in by or on that day, please contact the Student Minister. Don't let money stop you from letting your teenager go on a trip; there are Scholarships available if needed.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Crosstown Student Movement does not want financial hardship to be a reason for a student being unable to go on a trip. Special arrangements can be made by discussing the matter with the Student Minister. We want all our teens to enjoy the same opportunities as the rest of the group. If a scholarship is given, the teen receiving the scholarship must complete service hours. Hours will be handled by the ratio of 1 hour for every \$20.00 needed. If the event already requires community service like the mission trip, these hours will be added on top of the rest. All hours will be completed before an event; in a case where this does not happen, hours must be made up afterward or future scholarships will not be provided. These hours will be made by completing tasks around the church or other approved tasks by the Student Minister.

SCHOLARSHIP CAP

The Student Movement Scholarship program will cover as many students as possible, but to make the funds last the Student Movement has put a cap on how much scholarship it will provide. The Student Movement will only provide \$250-\$300 to a single student for summer activities.

MAIN SUMMER EVENTS

Church Camp - Service hours are not required to attend this event. Service hours are only required for scholarships to this event. As this event happens early in the summer scholarship hours will begin to take effect after 8 hours have been reached. This event is usually a week long and is full of fun, spiritual growth, youth bonding, leadership development, and gain of Biblical knowledge.

Mission Trip - Service hours are not required to attend this event. Service hours are only required for scholarships to this event. Scholarship hours will begin to take effect after 12 hours have been reached. This event is usually a week long and is full of hard work, spiritual growth, and youth bonding.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents and guardians often ask how they can become involved with the ministry their teen participates in. The Crosstown Student Movement has many opportunities for parents and guardians who want to join the effort to teach the love of God to our teenagers. Truthfully, this ministry would not be able to function without the help and support of our wonderful parents, guardians, and sponsors. It would be great if every parent and guardian was involved with the Student Movement in some aspect. With that in mind, the following guide has been created to describe some of the basic ways parents and guardians can join in the work of The Crosstown Student Movement.

BE A CHAPERONE FOR EVENTS

We are always looking for adults who are willing to accompany our students on the various events and activities throughout the year. We always ask that our volunteers do more than simply “babysit;” we want them to interact with the teens and participate along with the rest of the group. There will usually be events each month, and every event needs willing adult volunteers to pull it off successfully. Anytime an event takes place away from the church building, there is the possibility that volunteers will be asked to drive kids to the destination.

BE A LEADER ON TRIPS

Student Movement trips are different from monthly events and activities in that they typically involve going somewhere out of town for more than one day. This extended time requires a larger commitment from our adult volunteer leaders, but the relational and spiritual benefits for our kids are usually greater on these trips. A volunteer leader on a Student Movement trip will often be asked to perform a larger range of tasks than simply chaperoning, such as leading a small group, organizing kids for a game, helping with clean-up and take down, etc.

BE A TEACHER

Our regularly scheduled class time is Sunday, 9:15-10:15am. Because we usually separate the Middle and High School groups, we need two teachers each Sunday. We are always looking for additional teachers who are willing and eager to work with our students. The most critical need is for teachers who can commit to weeks or months at a time, but substitute teachers are always needed as well. Curriculum is provided each week for teachers to ease the stress of lesson planning.

CONTACT INFORMATION

I just want to emphasize that communication is essential to our Student Movement's success. Please call the Student Minister when you have a need and he will call you when he has a need. The Student Minister would appreciate hearing from you, both positive and suggestive comments.

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We trust that you have benefited from the introductory information in this packet. We are also confident that the Student Movement experience your teenager has in store for them will be positive and spiritually rewarding. Once again, if you ever have any questions, or comments, feel free to call the Student Minister. Your home will be blessed with newsletters, flyers, and postcards with lots of details....but call if you need more information, or just want to talk. Together, we can make your teens' Student Movement experience a joyful and rewarding time in their life when God becomes more real, and they find fellowship, encouragement and peace at the foot of the cross. We are praying for God's richest blessings on you and your precious children.