

BECOMING A BOLD B-GROUP LEADER

WELCOME TO BOLD YTH

Bethany's mission statement is to bring all people into the life, family, and purpose of God.

We desire to be a healthy and growing local church that impacts both our city and the nations around the world.

Bold YTH is how we impact students in our local cities.

Every Bold YTH B-Group (small group) looks different, but they all fulfill the purpose and vision of discipling young people to make Jesus the center of their lives. Our Bold YTH B-Groups help students fulfill the calling God has placed on them.

Bold YTH B-Groups help others connect and build relationships with one another. This is how we make a big church feel small.

Commitment and consistency are integral details to leading a Bold YTH B-Group. Students thrive on consistent, committed relationships in their lives. Leading a group means that you get to build deep, impacting relationships with students to help them encounter the power of God.

Your Bold youth pastor and Bold YTH staff are here to help guide you along the way as you minister to the students in your group. We believe in you and know that the passion you have for people makes a huge impact in the lives of students. With this booklet, we want to equip you with the tools to become an amazing Bold YTH B-Group leader.

Let's run the race of endurance together as we impact those around us for God's kingdom!

The Bold YTH Staff

YOUR SMALL GROUP LAUNCH KIT

Listed below are the sections you will find in this launch kit.

BOLD LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

There are so many areas to be involved in within Bold YTH, including small groups, worship, Bold Nights, and school clubs. For every area, we have a Bold YTH leadership standard of expectations. You can view our leadership expectations for Bold YTH in our [*Bold Leader Expectations doc.*](#)

SMALL GROUP FUNDAMENTALS

This section of our small group launch kit is essential to leading a Bold YTH small group. Read through the details, take notes, and apply these principles to your weekly small group meetings.

THE FIRST SMALL GROUP MEETING

When you are about to lead your first small group meeting, refer back to this guide. Use it as a checklist to help you stay on track and hit all the primary goals of a small group.

LEADING BEYOND SQUAD PARTY

What does it look like to have relationships with students outside of Squad Party?

REPORTING AND INFORMING

It is important to learn how and what to report and whom to contact for difficult situations that may arise in your group.

LEADING A B-GROUP IN BOLD YTH

JOINING THE BOLD YTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Joining the Bold YTH leadership team is one of the most exciting endeavors you can undertake at Bethany Church! Bold leadership is filled with amazing people who are passionate about students encountering God. Becoming a Bold YTH leader means occupying a place of influence. To carry this weight of influence well, take a look at the questions and guidelines below to become an effective leader in our community. These guidelines will help you understand the requirements of leading in the student ministry.

- Have you been water baptized?
- Have you completed Next Steps?
- Have you completed the Life Book? This book is for all Bethany members.
- Have you completed the Purple Book?
- Have you served consistently in a Bold YTH Squad Party for three months and interviewed with a campus youth director?
- Are you currently being discipled by a church leader in our Collective Young Adults ministry, Bold YTH leadership, a B-Group leader, or a Bethany staff pastor?
- Have they encouraged you to lead in Bold YTH as a small group leader?
- Have you attended three Team Nights?
- Have you finished watching the Bible Project videos? These videos help with understanding our faith.
- Has your leader filled out the Bold Leadership Interest form?

BECOMING A LEADER

If you answered yes to ALL of the questions above, then you are ready to become a Bold YTH B-Group leader. The rest of this booklet will help guide and equip you for leading a B-Group within the Bold YTH ministry. As we begin, let's get you caught up on some Bold YTH terms.

B-GROUPS AND SMALL GROUPS

In Bold YTH, the terms “B-Groups” and “small groups” are used synonymously. Your B-Group is most often referred to as a small group in Bold YTH.

CAMPUS SQUAD PARTY

Squad Parties are campus specific and take place at most Bethany Church campuses. These gatherings typically occur on either Sunday or Wednesday nights, depending on the campus.

These events feature food, games, worship, and a message. However, the primary purpose of a Squad Party is to provide a time for students to meet with their small groups.

BOLD NIGHTS

Bold Nights are held once a month at the end of the month. This is when all Bold YTH Squad Parties and small groups get together at our South Baton Rouge campus for an epic night of worship, community, games, food, and a dynamic message.

BOLD CAMP

Camp happens every summer. This is a place where students are reenergized for the upcoming school year and have an opportunity to develop spiritually.

ENCOUNTERS

Encounters happen several times during the year. Typically, these are 48-hour retreats at our Baker campus.

BOLD YTH LEADERSHIP DISCIPLINES

Below we have outlined disciplines that all Bold YTH B-Group leaders should be practicing in their day-to-day lives.

SPIRITUAL SHARPNESS

- This generation is looking for leaders who ***model what they believe before expecting others to believe what they say. (We have to have a standard.)***
 - Even though most students are on social media, they understand that what you see is not always what you get.
 - How's your language, your social media interactions, the media you are taking in? As a leader in student ministry, the standard you live by is more important than the words you speak.
 - The disciplines of the faith lived out consistently is what will influence students in the right direction.
- In youth leadership, prayer and fasting are more important than ever.
 - When leading students, it is important to develop a sensitivity to God's voice cultivated through the reading of the Word, prayer, and fasting.
 - This doesn't mean constant fasting.
 - This means that seeing breakthrough in the lives of students is won in the place of prayer.

- Prayer is also where God releases fresh burden to see the next generation won for Christ.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- As a leader, you are expected to be accountable to Bold leadership. If you are struggling in any way (emotionally, spiritually, financially, physically, etc.), say something!
- As a member of a leadership community, it is up to you to speak up about struggles in your life. You can maintain accountability with a Collective leader, staff pastor, or another church leader, but your campus youth pastor must know who your leader is and will maintain an open line of communication with them.

DISCIPLESHIP

- Everything that we do is for the purpose of being disciples who make disciples. We cannot disciple unless we ourselves are being disciplined. Just as you are expected to be accountable to Bold leadership, you are also expected to be in active discipleship. Please read through Pastor Tahe Governor's document on discipleship [HERE](#).
- We are helping students take their next steps in spiritual growth.
- We are actively involved in the lives of our students.

PUNCTUALITY

- We make it our aim to show up to everything on time!
- We leave only when the job is done.
- If you are going to be late or miss an event, you must notify your campus youth pastor or Bold leader.

COMMUNICATION

- If you are running late or are not planning on attending a Bold meeting or serving event, you must communicate with your Bold youth pastor as to why you will be late or are not attending an event.
- We all must be proactive in communicating frustration or anything else that would affect the unity of our team.
- Gossip is not an acceptable means of communication on any of our teams.

SCHEDULE EXPECTATIONS

SQUAD PARTIES

- Unless you are given exemption by a Bold youth pastor, you are expected to be at every Squad Party. We understand scheduling conflicts and will work with you, but you **MUST** communicate with your Bold YTH Director.
- Most Squad Parties begin at 6:30pm on Sunday nights.
- Leaders are required to be at the 5:45 leaders and volunteers' meeting before every Squad Party.
- Leaders arrive early and stay at least 20 minutes after Squad Party has ended.
- Unapproved absences may result in removal from Bold leadership.
- Come ready, excited, and expectant!

BOLD NIGHTS

- Unless you are given exemption by a Bold YTH Director, you are expected to be at every Bold Night. We understand scheduling conflicts and will work with you but you **MUST** communicate with your Bold youth pastor.
- All Bold Nights begin at 6:30pm on Sunday nights.
- Leaders are required to communicate where they can volunteer for Bold Night setup (times may vary*). Every leader will attend a volunteer meeting at 5:30pm.
- Leaders arrive early and stay to help with cleanup after Bold Night has ended.

BOLD CAMP, ENCOUNTERS, AND YTH FEST

- These are huge events that happen throughout the year.
- As a leader, you must make your best effort to attend and participate in these events. To help with scheduling, we have provided the dates below:
 - Youth Fest: February 23–24
 - Bold: Fasting and Prayer Retreat: April 10–11
 - Bold Camp: July 20–24
 - Bold Encounter: October 18–19

BETHANY CHURCH HONOR CODE

THE LEADER CODE

As an essential part of the Bethany Church family, you have a responsibility to develop and exemplify mature Christian behavior becoming of a representative of Christ Jesus (see Ephesians 5:1–33).

While serving the body of Christ as a B-Group leader at Bethany, you pledge to present a good appearance at all times. In both attire and behavior, you should strive to demonstrate biblical standards in all situations.

As a Christian, the way you present yourself to others is vitally important to the way others perceive Christ; therefore, your conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ, but rather exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and follower of Jesus.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, you are expected to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. Additionally, as a leader, you must refrain from such things as the following:

- Profanity
- Gambling
- Any alcohol consumption or use of tobacco-related products
- Unethical practices
- Illegal drugs
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, and homosexual acts)
- Any and all behavior that might cause Christ to be grieved and others to stumble

By providing an example in speech and action, you encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant leaders themselves. Being a leader is a way of life that is measured by the commitment of the heart and reflected in appropriate actions. You should regard this honor code as an essential part of your development, not as an imposition.

SMALL GROUP FUNDAMENTALS

This section of our small group launch kit is essential to leading a Bold YTH small group. Read through the details, take notes, and apply these principles to your weekly small group meetings.

1. **Healthy Student Discipleship**
2. **Atmosphere Is Everything**
3. **The Elephants**
4. **Breaking the Ice**
5. **Leading the Discussion**

HEALTHY STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP

THE WIN FOR EVERY STUDENT

The Bold YTH ministry is exciting and passionate. As a leader, you get the opportunity to walk with students in their discovery of God. A focus on discipleship is key to this journey.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

In Christianity, a disciple is any believer in Christ. However, it is helpful to differentiate between a “convert” and a “disciple.” A convert is one who simply believes in Jesus, and a disciple is someone who has devoted him- or herself to the progressive work of becoming more like Christ. Every Christian is called to be a disciple of Christ.

The question isn’t whether or not a Christian is a disciple of Christ. It’s more about whether a person is a good disciple or a bad disciple of Christ. At school, everyone enrolled is a student; whether they have an A in a class or an F, they’re a student. Similarly, those who claim to be followers of Christ are disciples of Christ.

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

Discipleship is reproducing the Christ in you in another so that they can reproduce the Christ in them in another. You can only form Christ in someone to the degree that Christ has been formed in you. That means your effectiveness in discipleship is directly connected to your effectiveness in pursuing discipleship yourself.

Discipleship is not a deeper Bible study; it’s Christ-centered multiplication. Discipleship isn’t sitting down at a coffee shop with someone for an hour for one-on-one time. It may include that, but that’s not the totality of what it is.

Discipleship is baptizing others in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded.

WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE DISCIPLES?

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:19–20 ESV).

You should make disciples because all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus.

Jesus' authority speaks of two things:**1. Our submission to Him**

- a. Jesus has authority over our lives. When we explicitly say, "He is Lord," we implicitly say, "I am not." We are submitted to Him. He doesn't command us to go get jobs, get married, pursue an education, obtain success, earn money, start a family, or buy a house, but for many of us, that has become the pursuit. Culture commands us to pursue those things, but Christ commands us to make disciples. If you're going to obtain those things but are not going to make disciples, you are not submitted to Jesus. He is not your Lord.

2. His commission to us

- a. We can't just randomly pull another car over on the highway. It's not because we're not smart enough, strong enough, old enough, tall enough, experienced enough, etc. It's because we haven't been given the authority to do so by the law. That authority must be conferred onto a citizen by a higher authority. In a similar fashion, Jesus gives us authority in our lives. He is the higher authority that confers on us the authority to make disciples. You've been commissioned. You're not stepping out in your own authority—you're stepping out in His authority.

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP

You're a relational leader: As you disciple students, build genuine, loving relationships with them. Empower them to follow Christ and God's Word. Everything should be done in the spirit of love and honor. Do not lord over students, judge them harshly, parent them, or disqualify them.

You're an encouraging leader: Lift up students emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Even if they have done something wrong or are in an unfortunate situation, stand with them and encourage them.

You're an accountable leader: Everything you do stems from a place of accountability and honesty. Be open about yourself and your students.

You're a Spirit-led leader: God is your focus and His Word is your standard. Follow Him and His Word with passion and zeal. Don't let your own preferences divert you from God's Word. Also, listen to God's voice as He speaks to you concerning your students.

THE MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

- Maintains a consistent devotional life
- Is planted in the community of the local church
- Is submitted to spiritual authority within that local church
- Demonstrates financial generosity
- Exhibits progressive sanctification

- Develops a regular rhythm of Bible study
- Lives a lifestyle of confession and repentance
- Has a servant's heart and hands
- Lives a Spirit-filled life
- Has a missional lifestyle

WHAT A DISCIPLE SHOULD KNOW

- God's love
- How to read the Bible
- How to pray
- How to evangelize
- How to develop godly character
- Foundational doctrine (*Cultivate* discipleship book)
- Foundational overview of the Bible (Bible Project videos)
- Foundational theology—attributes of God and Trinity

DISCIPLESHIP IN BOLD YTH

In Bold YTH, discipleship occurs through students being in proximity with their leaders. This occurs most often at Squad Parties and Bold Nights but should also occur often outside of the services. When Jesus discipled His Twelve, He brought them close to Him; they walked with Him and ate with Him. We want to take this same approach with our students. As a leader, you are on the journey of pursuing God and His purpose for your life. Bring your students with you in your journey of the pursuit of God.

The most practical way to start discipleship is in our small groups. Below we will outline how to have an effective small group at Squad Parties and during common hangouts with your group.

ATMOSPHERE IS EVERYTHING

Trying to get work done in a busy office space is very difficult. Having spiritually deep and meaningful conversations in a cluttered and noisy environment is equally difficult.

Whether you are at a Squad Party or you're meeting with your small group somewhere else, take a moment to prepare your space. Environments are *huge* and can determine the effectiveness of your group's ability to communicate.

Doing little things like dimming the lights or brewing coffee can make all the difference. Have the chairs set up instead of making everyone grab one on the way in. Whatever you need to do to make an environment more welcoming and inviting, do it!

SIMPLE TIPS TO CHANGING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR GOOD SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Setup and cleanup: Don't walk into a room expecting it to be ready to go. Whether you're at home, in a coffee shop, or at one of our Bethany campuses, check on the room you are going to meet in before everyone else gets there.

Smells and visuals: What is visually appealing about where you are meeting? How does it smell? Are there any simple changes you can make to improve where you are meeting, such as making coffee or placing some greenery in the corner of the room?

Sitting and standing: Does everyone have a spot? Usually the odd man out is the one who is distracted the easiest.

THE ELEPHANTS

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Leading a student small group is thrilling, exciting, and at times frustrating. The frustrating parts usually come from two thoughts: "No one is talking," or "So-and-so is being a distraction." This usually leads to the small group leader proactively talking during the entire small group discussion.

Realizing that these "elephants" are going to be a part of your small group, you can take steps early on to handle them.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ELEPHANTS

Come prepared with questions and follow-up questions: If you have only one or two questions for your small group, that's probably not enough. There is also an art to asking follow-up questions. Don't accept a one-word answer before moving on to the next person. Asking simple things like, "Tell me more about that," or "What does that look like for you?" or "Give me an example" can help push conversations to the next level.

Setting the tone for distractions: Come up with a game plan for distraction before you begin your small group. Establish clear expectations from the very beginning. Explain what the students can expect from you and what you expect from them.

Take charge with a calm but firm demeanor: As a leader, you want to help students, even if they are being disruptive. Help guide them back on track. Don't ignore them, but rather encourage them to be part of what is happening.

BREAKING THE ICE

LET'S NOT BE AWKWARD

Icebreakers can instantly change the dynamic of a group. They humanize you as a leader and create lanes of relationship for others to drive on. It is *always* a good idea to start off a group discussion with an icebreaker.

NEED SOME IDEAS? HERE YOU GO!

The shoe game: This is a Bold staple. It's a mixture of Simon Says and grabbing a shoe.

The human knot: Have everyone in your group stand in a tight circle, each facing inward. With each hand, reach across the circle and grab someone else's hand. Each hand should be connected to someone different, but you cannot grab the hand of the person directly next to you. Then try to untangle the knot by stepping over, around, and beneath each other until you are back to a perfect circle. Letting go is not an option!

Rock, paper, and scissors battle: No explanation necessary

Your perfect day: Ask everyone what their perfect day would look like. What would they do, what would they eat, who would they see?

Two truths and a lie: Have everyone in the room share three facts about themselves, two that are correct and one that is not. Let the group decide which one is completely wild and untrue.

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE CENTER

Every B-Group at Bethany Church centers around discipling people to be like Christ. We are all here to disciple others to look like Christ. All of our discussions in small groups need to revolve around this focus.

CREATIVE COMMUNICATION

Relationships are the strategy: Use the time in small groups to build relationships. Sometimes you may need to just talk about sports or the latest movie. One week you may have an incredibly deep conversation about the message, and the next week about Fortnite. That is okay. Building relationships with the students is key.

Christ is the focus: Use the everyday life of your students to show how Christ can impact them. If it's Fortnite, use that as a way to connect students to Christ. Be prepared to get creative while staying biblically grounded.

Confidence is key: Lead your small group discussion with confidence. Come prepared and ready to talk through the message as it pertains to the lives of your students. The best way to be confident in your small group is to come prepared. Pray before you go and lead, familiarize yourself with the message content, and get excited about your group.

TRY THESE

Start the conversation with something easy: This can be an icebreaker, fun questions, or simple surface-level conversation. This is the way to open the door for deeper and more meaningful conversations to follow.

Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions: Be mindful of how the conversation is going. Ask more detailed questions that follow up with what everyone is saying. Although most people never give a full picture of their feelings and emotions, follow-up questions can help them feel comfortable to express their thoughts.

Give space: Give your questions breathing room in the group. Having a moment of silence isn't bad and can allow room for reflection. Also, don't focus too much on one student by asking several follow-up questions. Move on to another student to allow the first to have space.

Bring the focus back: There are always going to be tangents. Allow them to happen, but follow your instincts to know when to bring the focus back on the discussion.

End every conversation on a good note: Sometimes small group time ends at the most inconvenient moment. Try not to end a small group of discussion, however, on a somber note. Always have a moment of encouragement and strengthening before your small group ends.

SMALL GROUP

YOUR FIRST SMALL GROUP MEETING

When you are about to lead your first small group meeting, refer back to this guide. Use it as a checklist to help you stay on track and hit all the primary goals of a small group.

THE CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU LEAD

- Check with your Campus YTH Director about which group you will lead.
- Invite students to be in your group on Sunday mornings or from Bold Clubs.
- Make sure any new students know when Squad Party meets and the start time.
- Be familiar with the Squad Party message and questions.
- Pray that God would use you in a unique way before you lead.

SQUAD FLOW

ATTEND PRESERVICE MEETING (15 MINUTES)

- This usually happens 45 minutes before Squad Party starts.
- Campus YTH Director will give direction and tasks for the night.

HANG OUT (10–15 MINUTES)

- Welcome people as they arrive to Squad.
- Make sure whatever task you were given is prepped and ready.

GAME OR FUN ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

- This is usually a game or a fun activity. We ask that every leader be involved with the excitement of the activity.

WORSHIP (15 MINUTES)

- Worship with the students. Don't be a spectator in worship unless you're on the bathroom watch team.

MESSAGE (15 MINUTES)

- Listen and take notes. This will be the meat of your discussion time while you are in your small group.

SMALL GROUP (20–25 MINUTES)

- Have a small icebreaker moment.
- Recommunicate the main idea of the message.
- Ask questions and lead the discussion.

POSTSERVICE MEETING (5 MINUTES)

LEADING BEYOND SQUAD PARTY

WHAT'S NEXT?

Leading a Bold YTH small group is huge, but what's next? At Bethany, we want to be connected to the life of our students. In this next section, we will show you how!

THE FOLLOW-UP LIFE

THE WEEKLY GRIND OF BOLD YTH FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is essential to being a Bold YTH Leader. In fact, it may be one of the most important things you do with students in Bold. Other essential parts of our culture are social media, weekend experiences at Bethany, and hangouts.

NEW STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Make sure your new student has checked in on Planning Center online before they leave Squad.
- Visitor follow-up (new students to small group)
 - Text on Tuesday.
 - Call on Saturday to encourage them to come back.

YOUR GROUP'S EXPECTATIONS

- Check in with your small group during the week.
 - We highly recommend using GroupMe to have a group chat with your small group.
 - Send them scriptures and encouraging thoughts, and talk with them during the week at least two or three times.
- Hang out with your small group outside of Squad Parties at least once or twice a month.
 - This is so important to the life of Bold YTH.
 - Go to football games, concerts if they are in a band, the movies, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Post at least one post promoting Squad Party for the upcoming week.
 - If it is a Bold Night weekend, then your post should consist of Bold Night promotion.
 - All promotion material will be provided to you and your Squad leadership.

WEEKENDS AT BETHANY

- Attend weekend services on campus.
- You are expected to attend a weekend service at Bethany consistently.
- You are expected to actively engage and connect with youth students at the service you attend. Arrive 15 minutes early and stay 15 minutes after your weekend service to connect with them.
- Consistent absence from attending Bethany services on the weekend will lead to removal from leadership.

WHAT DOES HANGING OUT WITH STUDENTS LOOK LIKE?

THE PARENTS AND HANGOUTS

We strongly encourage you to be part of the life of the students in your small group. Whether you are going to a football game, getting coffee, or going to a movie, you should be connecting with students outside of Squad, clubs, and Bold Nights. Also, connect with the students' parents when possible. Remember, you are partnering with them.

In Bold YTH, whenever and wherever you are hanging out with students, create an encouraging, life-giving, and safe environment.

- Always obtain parental approval. Make a point to meet their parents at pickup so that this will be possible.
- Hang out in groups when possible. If you are in a one-on-one situation or a planned appointment with a student, let your Campus YTH Director know. Stay accountable.
- Don't hang out in adult-oriented environments, such as bars, lounges, clubs, etc.
- Create space during the day to meet. Go to coffee and hang out during the day. If you are with a group at night, end activities by 9:00.
- Don't listen to or watch adult-oriented content. This includes music in the car, R-rated movies, etc.
- Never be alone in a car or isolated environment with a student of the opposite sex.
- You are not the parent of your small group, so don't make parental decisions for them.

THE LIFE OF A STUDENT

The life of a student in your group is amazing to observe. Sometimes life throws them curveballs, and in those moments you get to step in and remind them of the hope that is theirs and their amazing heavenly Father who loves them. If your student is going through a tough time, let your Campus YTH Director know, but stay connected to them as much as possible.

MULTIGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Discipleship and leadership are like a race, but not a relay race where one generation passes the baton to the next and then retires to the locker room. Multigenerational discipleship and leadership are more akin to two generations crossing the finish line together. In most older organizations, the next generation of leaders was expected to do their jobs, bide their time, and remember their place; then one day it would be their turn to lead. This model is not what we want in Bold YTH.

The best young talent in a corporation is probably not going to sit patiently waiting for their turn. Similarly, if we do not empower the next generation in some way now, we will lose them. That's why we need to always look for, equip, and empower next-generation leaders.

DON'T WAIT FOR THEM TO BE PERFECT

If we wait for our students to be perfect before they can lead, we will be waiting for a very long time, which will probably never come. We want to empower them to lead now! We want them to step out and witness to others now!

Put your group in places where they can lead together. Encourage them to join the Bold crew to serve. If there is a Bold Club at their high school, encourage them to connect to it and lead. If they can sing or play an instrument, put them on the worship team for practices.

Don't wait till they are perfect before letting them be involved.

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REPORTING AND INFORMING

SITUATIONS, CONTACTS

This document was prepared for you to know how and when to communicate relevant issues to parents and to authorities. If you have any questions, please be sure to ask a Bold staff member or a campus youth director.

INFORMING AND REPORTING

HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Unfortunately, sometimes students will go through difficult, even traumatic, situations. As a leader, you will become aware of students' personal lives, their families, and their struggles. Students do need to trust you and feel comfortable around you, but there always needs to be a key distinction: you are a **leader** to them first before being a **friend**. As a leader in Bold YTH and at Bethany Church, you are a **mandatory reporter** of **ANY and ALL** illegal activity as it pertains to students. Below are two distinct areas that require reporting.

Nonlegal Situations | Informing Parents and Legal Guardians

There are things that we are not legally required to report as a ministry, but in which we want to work with our students and their families. These are potentially problematic areas, such as students who are gambling, smoking, drinking, having suicidal thoughts, engaging in premarital sex, or putting themselves in potentially harmful situations.

Legally, as a church leadership team, we aren't required to report these things to authorities, but we do want parents to be aware of them. Below we have outlined what a leader's process should look like when dealing with these issues.

Student Disclosure to a Bold Leader

1. What you should do

- a. Inform your campus youth director. Usually there is a buildup to the disclosure of serious issues. Keep your campus youth director apprised of the situation.
- b. If the situation takes a serious turn where the parents need to be notified, we will work with you to help the student communicate to their parents or legal guardian.
- c. When appropriate, in the 24-hour period after disclosure, we strongly encourage students to tell their parents or legal guardian what they have shared with a leader. Depending on the family and the situation, we always want the students to tell their parents what is going on. They have the option to do this in one of two ways:
 - i. They can tell their parents alone, but we will follow up with their parents to make sure everything has been communicated properly.
 - ii. They can tell their parents with a Bold leader present. The main goal here is to make sure there is open and honest communication from the student to the parents.

2. The follow-up

- a. Some students come from strong families with Christian values, but unfortunately, others do not. Regardless of a student's family background, we want to walk with them through the situations of life.
- b. This means walking with them when it's easy and also when it's tough. Even if the parental figure in the student's life does not care to be involved, we will still walk with our students in a godly fashion to exemplify the trustworthy and supportive people that God's church is.

Note: Always inform your campus youth director of situations students disclose to you that are of a serious nature as outlined above. When situations rise to this level of seriousness, you should not be the sole holder of information. It should also be given to your Campus YTH Director and/or Student Pastor.

Legal Situations and Authorities

Legal Situations

Unfortunately, some students will go through struggles and situations that require authorities to be involved. This includes any type of abuse, abandonment, or major safety issues. **These situations have to be reported regardless of relationship and personal preference.** If you come across an issue like this, report it immediately to your youth director, and that director will help you report it to the proper authorities. Although your campus youth director will help, it is legally your responsibility to report abuse, neglect, or the immediate danger of a student. This should take place no longer than an hour after disclosure. If your campus youth director isn't available, please contact Bethany's Student Pastor or your Campus YTH Director immediately.

Disclosure to a Bold Leader

1. What you should do

- a. Inform your campus youth director. Usually there is a buildup to the disclosure of serious issues. Keep your campus youth director apprised of the situation.
 - i. If a student discloses abuse of any type, you should inform your youth director immediately. Do not wait!
- b. They will work with you and the student to report it to the DCFS Child Protection Services hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437) toll-free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- c. More direction will be given after the incident has been reported.

After the report has been made, we will continue to maintain a very close connection with the student through the entire process. We don't just report and then let go. Most major issues like these require close intentionality from a leader and the Bold YTH team.

WHAT IS ABUSE/NEGLECT?

The Louisiana Children's Code provides the following definitions of abuse and neglect by a parent or caretaker:

Caretaker means any person legally obligated to provide or secure adequate care for a child, including a parent, tutor, guardian, legal custodian, foster home parent, an employee of a public or private day-care center, an operator or employee of a registered family child day-care home, or other person providing a residence for the child.

Abuse means any one of the following acts that seriously endanger the physical, mental, or emotional health and safety of a child:

- The infliction, attempted infliction, or, as a result of inadequate supervision, the allowance of the infliction or attempted infliction of physical or mental injury upon the child by a parent or any other person.
- The exploitation or overwork of a child by a parent or any other person, including but not limited to commercial sexual exploitation of the child.
- The involvement of the child in any sexual act with a parent or any other person, or the aiding or toleration by the parent, caretaker, or any other person of the child's involvement in any of the following:
 - Any sexual act with any other person
 - Pornographic displays
 - Any sexual activity constituting a crime under the laws of this state
 - A coerced abortion conducted upon a child
 - Female genital mutilation as defined by R.S. 14:43.4

Neglect means the refusal or unreasonable failure of a parent or caretaker to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, care, treatment, or counseling for any injury, illness, or condition of the child, as a result of which the child's physical, mental, or emotional health and safety is substantially threatened or impaired. Neglect includes prenatal neglect. Consistent with Article 606(B), the inability of a parent or caretaker to provide for a child due to inadequate financial resources shall not, for that reason alone, be considered neglect. Whenever, in lieu of medical care, a child is being provided treatment in accordance with the tenets of a well-recognized religious method of healing that has a reasonable, proven record of success, the child shall not, for that reason alone, be considered to be neglected or maltreated. However, nothing herein shall prohibit the court from ordering medical services for the child when there is a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare.

Prenatal neglect means exposure to chronic or severe use of alcohol or the unlawful use of any controlled dangerous substance, or in a manner not lawfully prescribed, which results in symptoms of withdrawal in the newborn or the presence of a controlled substance or a metabolic thereof in his body, blood, urine, or meconium that is not the result of medical treatment, or observable and harmful effects in his physical appearance or functioning.

What are the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect?

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.