

grace
vineyard church

Youth Leaders Manual

YouthAlive  TRUST

Serving young people in New Brighton since 1989

February 2013

What's this booklet all about?

As leaders we want to be high achievers in the kingdom of God! We want to be a body of people united in our vision, values and boundaries. This booklet aims to fuse us in our ministry and help us be the best disciples and disciple growers we can be. It is not our intention for this to be viewed as a booklet of rules and regulations, but rather an inspiration to become more Christ-like in our ministry and daily lives.

The Vineyard Priorities

WORSHIP - We desire to worship God with our whole being. We want Jesus at the centre as our Lord. We desire Spirit-enabled worship in a style that is intimate, dynamic, culture-current, and life-changing.

THE WORD - We want to hear the Word of God taught in a practical, inspiring way, under the administration of the Holy Spirit. We aim to hear and obey God's word to us: to be "doers of the Word" who are being transformed into the likeness of Christ.

FELLOWSHIP - We are the family of God, one body in Jesus Christ, joined together as brothers and sisters forever. We seek to develop real, intimate, enabling friendships, built on covenant love, mutual responsibility, and faithfulness.

MINISTRY - We believe that all Christians are called to serve Christ in the power of His Spirit in ways that build up the local church. We are called to do the ministry of Christ in the world today. To preach the gospel of the kingdom, to persuade people to repent and believe in Jesus, to heal the sick, to care for the poor and those in need, to counsel those in need of God's wisdom, to teach believers to follow Christ and serve the Lord, and to give our resources to the work of Christ.

TRAINING - We believe that all Christians should be trained to "do the works of Christ." We are committed to the show and tell model of training, in which trainees are introduced to doing ministry functions with trainers and then are taught during and after the training experience. We aim to provide training for all aspects of responsible Christian life and ministry.

SENDING - We aim to renew, refresh, and enable existing churches by sending trained personnel out on short-term ministry trips. We aim to build the Church of Jesus Christ by sending trained personnel to plant churches around the world.

Leadership Commitment

I stand before God and commit to the following:

- ⇒ *A commitment to growing in your own personal relationship with Jesus and furthering His kingdom.*
- ⇒ *A commitment and willingness to serve the children and young people in Grace Vineyard youth programmes.*
- ⇒ *A commitment to a weekly church service, acknowledging the need for the church family, worship, biblical teaching and financial support.*
- ⇒ *A commitment to a lifestyle that is appropriate for Grace Vineyard leadership (see "Above Reproach" Policy and its Priorities).*
- ⇒ *A commitment to being a team player. This requires an understanding that leadership involves a high priority of time and energy. It also means that what we do as individuals affects the whole team eg: punctuality, reliability and integrity.*
- ⇒ *A commitment to being accountable in both life and ministry. This will primarily happen through being accountable to your cell group or small group, as well as your leadership team and your team leader.*

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Grace Vineyard Church & Youth Alive Trust—Youth Leaders Manual

Leadership Commitment

Becoming a youth leader at Grace Vineyard or Youth Alive Trust is a great opportunity to get involved in a practical way in our community. Pursuing the Lord's call to be a light in the darkness, and to bring a true hope to the young people of our generation, as part of a team truly seeking to see young people's lives fulfilled by the promises of God.

*It is about making ourselves willing vessels to the Lord.
We know the Lord is able to do all these things;
all he is looking for is willing vessels to work through.*

The responsibility of leadership is a privilege that cannot be taken lightly. It is a serious commitment to a team and its young people. It's about fostering a community of young people that draws them in and helps them mature holistically; emotionally, socially, mentally, and spiritually. This all starts with us as leaders – we provide genuine friendship, community, Christian love and a living example that shows young people what it means to Love God and Love One Another.

"Above Reproach" Policy

1 Tim 3^{1-2a} "If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer [leader] he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach,"

We want to grow a community that is characterised by love and forgiveness, not by rules and regulations. But the Bible is concerned that Christian leaders have particularly high standards in their personal life, standards that are above reproach. By agreeing to be a leader we ask you to accept this responsibility and agree to follow these standards that centre on personal growth and integrity.

The most important thing is that our personal relationship with God is healthy. It is God's strength and God's grace which empowers us to live the way he has created us to. Therefore it is of paramount importance that we spend regular time reading His Word, praying and developing our intimacy with God.

It is also important that you make yourself formally accountable to respected Christian friends for your own spiritual growth – "one hand in – one hand out". We are all sinners and we need each other to speak truth into our lives at times. A relationship like this really can help you in your journey with Jesus. Your team leader and small group leader are the best people to work this through with.

We have chosen a number of areas to expand upon in regards to being "above reproach". By no means are the issues dealt with below exhaustive, but are simply areas that we find people struggle with the most or are most likely to want clarification of. They are also areas that are particularly relevant to youth ministry.

Above Reproach in

- Personal Relationships
- Romantic Relationships
- Our Words
- Drugs and Smoking
- Alcohol
- Sexuality
- Driving
- Our Submission to Authority and Others
- Social Networking

If there is any breach of these guidelines – do not panic! It will never be the end of the world. We still love you dearly. However, when there is any breach *accidentally or intentionally* your team leader **MUST** be notified. This is so we can work through the situation in a way that faces all consequences and works in grace towards restoration. We have also included a formal complaints procedure for when things go wrong.

Personal Relationships

We want a genuine Christian community of love, grace and forgiveness amongst the leadership team. It is an awesome picture, however a community like this will not just happen; we all need to make an intentional effort to make our relationships honest and healthy.

Conflict or tension between people will naturally and necessarily occur in Christian community. It is important that we handle these issues well. These situations need to be handled prayerfully, in love and directly to the person involved. If you need help to do this, your team leader is the best person to talk to. ^a

We need to be characterised by our friendliness. We need to keep our relationship emphasis inclusive and outward focussed. New people to Grace can easily tell where our focus is.

Appendix

^a Matthew 18:15-16 *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*

^b Matthew 12:34^b-35 *"For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of the good stored up in them, and the evil person brings evil things out of the evil stored up in them."*

^c 1 Corinthians 6:19 *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;"*

^d Ephesians 5:18 *"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit"*

^e Matthew 18:6 *"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."*

^f Hebrews 13:17 *Obey your teachers and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as people who must give account.*

^g Romans 13:1 *Everyone must submit themselves to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.*

^h Ephesians 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*

Complaint Procedure

Where a complaint is received regarding a leader, either from a young person, their family or their advocate, the procedure outlined below will be followed.

1. The complaint is to be notified to their team leader within 24 hours, sooner if possible. If the complaint is regarding their team leader, it is to be notified to their line manager or Pastor.
2. If the allegation involves sexual or physical abuse or some illegal behaviour, the leader may be asked to step down immediately until a full investigation has taken place. This decision will be made by the senior manager or Pastor.
3. The senior manager will conduct a full investigation into the complaint and may request help from appropriate parties.
4. All parties have the right to a fair hearing of their viewpoint. Where necessary, a mediator will be brought in to ensure a fair discussion takes place.
5. Proof of admission of guilt may result in the leader being removed from the leadership team. In severe instances, the police may be involved in the process.

Romantic Relationships

At Grace we are excited about people who are in the process of falling in love. It is a beautiful thing to see two people who are making each other happy. This, as much as anything else, is a fantastic opportunity to display the Christian life. Simply treating each other with the utmost respect can seem exceptional for many young people.

We are not excited about relationships between leaders and high school students. This is unacceptable.

We strongly encourage our leaders not to be involved with non-Christians. It has been our experience that most of these sorts of relationships have ended in grief. If this becomes an issue, we would urge you to talk it through with at least your team leader and mentor first.

We expect leaders to set appropriate physical boundaries. Leaders should not be involved in sex outside of marriage or anything even close – please talk through with your team leader for clarification. We do not recommend that leaders stay the night alone in a house with their girl/boyfriend – think how this could be viewed by others. Chaperones sound old fashioned but they are a great idea when it comes to holidays and the like. Simply, be aware of how others may perceive your actions, while you may know nothing untoward is going on, we don't want to put ourselves or our leadership witness at risk.

Our Words

This is of great importance. We must strive to speak with purity, so as not to degrade God or anything good He has created. Work to create an emotionally-safe environment, e.g. make sure humour is constructive, not destructive; it is important to laugh *with* people, not *at* them; avoid "in" jokes that exclude part of the group, or put-downs. ^b

If we have been entrusted with personal information about a leader or a young person, we have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality.

Sometimes there are issues raised that require further action and extra help. If you perceive there is a risk of harm to the young person, yourself or others - ask their permission to speak to your team leader. If you are ever in the slightest doubt about what to do or feel like you need support please talk to your team leader as soon as possible.

Drugs and Smoking

We want to create a drug and smoke free environment; therefore leaders should not use illegal drugs/smoke cigarettes. It is a different situation if the leader is genuinely attempting to give up (this will need to be discussed with their team leader). It is not appropriate to be smoking around young people. ^c

Alcohol Policy

Having listened to our leaders we feel this is too much of a grey area to have a strict no alcohol policy. However we would ask all leaders to seriously consider their own alcohol consumption in the light of their ministry role. So how much can you drink? The Bible clearly states that drunkenness is not of God (1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:10, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 4:3). I suggest that our emphasis should be more about the good we can fill ourselves with – rather than how far we can push the boundaries. ^d

Remember we are called to be salt AND light (Matthew 5), and not wanting our freedoms to become stumbling stones for weaker brothers and sisters (1 Corinthians 8). If your drinking is going to cause someone else to sin – don't do it! We want to be the best possible role model to our young people and they do look up to us, they copy what we do and if you do it – it can well be seen as acceptable in their eyes. Beware of Matthew 18:6. There are a few areas we would do take a stand on however. We are asking all leaders not to drink in the company of young people, unless exceptional circumstances – see your Team Leader. We don't want leaders smelling of alcohol on a youth programme, therefore please refrain from drinking

Ratios Policy

Always try to have at least two workers – 1 is dangerous, eg, a backup supervisor is needed in case of accident or other emergency situation. A useful guideline is 1:10 for children and young adults inside, 1:8 for outside activities and 1:4 for water activities. But 1:3 for small children and babies. Ensure that you are keeping up with the most recent legislation. Remember it is illegal to leave children under 14 unsupervised for any length of time – this applies to young people acting as assistants – there must always be an accessible adult. Consider gender balance.

Privacy & Consent Policy

Relevant details should be collected from the young person and parents as soon as possible; contact details and emergency contact details, any medical condition or needs which might affect the young person at any time, any special dietary needs. These details should be stored in accordance with NZ law and not given out unless consent is given.

Parental consent should be obtained for off-site activities, overnight programmes, sensitive topics, or any potentially dangerous activities. This can be done through termly or annual Consent Forms. Care should be taken when informing, reporting to or obtaining consent from 'parents' of children and young people who do not live/stay with their mother and/or father. Remember these people have certain rights.

If a young person discloses issues of abuse, you must not keep this to yourself or promise to keep this a secret. Do not ask probing questions, allow the young person to speak their own words. Immediately write down what you have been told, then speak to your team leader who will work with you through this process. Where a child or young person presents with symptoms of any mental health issue the worker must seek professional advice, preferably in consultation with their team leader. It is wise to refer young people onto other agencies that are more specialised in certain areas, see your team leader for lists of other appropriate agencies.

Submission to Authority and Others

Submission is not a word that is used much these days where submission usually means to be dominated. Yet the principle of submission is still very important and biblical. Leadership throughout the Bible is through servanthood, therefore submission to a Christian leadership can be seen to be edifying and building up rather than dominating. The way we do this ourselves teaches young people to do the same.

We all must model submission to those who have pastoral oversight over us who in turn do the same. ^f Our obedience to the Governing Authorities should be evidenced in our lifestyles. This means things like road rules, taxation and copyright. ^g Lets put each other first. ^h

Social Network Policy

Facebook and other social network platforms are a public forum. Your Comments, Photos and Videos are seen by other leaders, young people and your unchurched friends. If you can't say it, or show it on a club night in front of everyone – don't say it or show it online. Lets keep it clean and lead by example!

Choose your friends carefully – as their comments and photos can often be also seen by everyone who's also friends with you. Therefore volunteers and staff are not being a 'friend' with anyone in Year 8 or below – unless they have written parental consent. Be wise about friendships with different gender teenagers – male's should be extra vigilant about being 'friends' with teenage girls. We would recommend against this. Please be open with your team leader about young people facebook 'friends' you have and your reasons for doing so. Beware of the chat function, as there's no way to prove what you said and what was said to you, behind closed doors! Report any inappropriate comments to your coordinator, to keep you accountable, and break any friendships that cause concern. The internet is a dangerous place, and parent/or young person complaints will be taken Very Seriously! A stain causes tarnish to everyone...

alcohol before programme starts. We ask that leaders don't brag about or glorify alcohol amongst other leaders, young people or online.

May God speak to you strongly and give you wisdom.

Sexual Safety Policy

As a Christ centred youth community, we need to be clear about the messages we represent to young people, both overtly and subtly. How young people may interpret these messages always needs to be considered. While we hope to be a community that is able to discuss and express sexuality in an approachable way, we also need to be "above reproach" and to protect our vibrancy as a community of faith. It is critical in today's environment that leaders take all precautions to avoid accusations of sexual misconduct. To prevent such accusations and provide a safe environment for young people the following policy must be adhered to. Our "leader – young person" relationships are extremely privileged. No abuse of this relationship is tolerated.

1. Only counsel young persons of the same gender as you. If you find yourself in a situation where a young person of the opposite gender comes to you for counselling, explain that you need to get another leader of that gender to sit in with you or for another leader to talk to the young person separately. This also applies to praying with young people.
2. When providing transport, never travel with only one person of the opposite gender from you. It is OK to drop two or more people of the same gender off at the same destination. However, always ensure you will not be left with only one person of the opposite gender in the vehicle with you. This may require some planning and thinking ahead.
3. There is to be no mixed tenting. This includes young people tenting together, and leaders tenting with young people. It also applies to sharing bunkrooms or bedrooms. Females and males should be reasonably separated when tenting.

4. Leaders should refrain from touching young people of the opposite gender and should respect young people's integrity by not touching anyone in a potentially sexual way. Handshakes, Hi 5's and the like are great ways to affirm and strengthen relationships with young people of both genders – please use them.
5. Leaders should not be in potentially dangerous situations with young people, even of the same gender. For example being alone in a young person's bedroom or your bedroom. Try to remain in places that are in view of others and easily interrupted. For example a café, or a conversation in a crowded hall.
6. Leaders need to ensure that contact with students of the opposite gender is not open to misinterpretation. No leader should be phone calling, texting, emailing, writing or visiting a young person of the opposite gender, unless under exceptional circumstances and with accountability.
7. Modesty. "Modesty" may be perceived as an out-of-date word, but it is difficult to find another word that describes what we're trying to say. For example: mooning, public nudity and 'lewd acts' are not "above reproach" in the context of youth leadership and what we are trying to role model as a community. We need to be mindful of the language we use – even the clothes we wear.

Driving Policy

Regularly it is required that leaders transport our young people. For group nights, events, camps, or simply to drop them home. It is vital that driving is done with the utmost integrity and safety. We regularly pray for safety on the roads and to date we have been really blessed, but we must play our part too. It is essential that the following procedures are adhered to:

1. Every passenger must have seatbelts on.
2. The speed limit must be complied with.
3. Reckless driving of any form must not occur.

4. All body parts must be kept inside the vehicle.
5. The passengers must respect other motorists.
6. A full license is required to transport any young people.
7. When appropriate, young people should use the transport provided, and not their own vehicle.
8. Any damage or accidents must be reported to their Team Leader.
9. Traffic infringements, including speed camera fines are the responsibility of the driver and will not be paid for by Grace.

Church/Trust Vehicles Rules

10. Only those who have permission from their team leader are allowed to drive the church/Trust vehicles.
11. Van's should not be transporting young people without a leader in the back (unless under exceptional circumstances).
12. Leaders in the back of vans have a responsibility to report reckless driving to their team leader.
13. Church/Trust vehicles must be tidied internally after each use and externally if needed.
14. All breakdowns should be notified to their team leader as soon as practical. No repairs should be attempted without the approval of their team leader. Approved costs of repair will be refunded if they are required to repair the vehicle in an emergency.
15. Should the vehicle be involved in an accident, we may, at our discretion, hold you responsible for the cost of repairs to the vehicle and for any claim/s by a third party. A large excess is on any insurance claim, and if you're grossly negligent, you will be asked to pay the full amount! Any excess claims will be decided by the leadership.

Leaders who fail to follow these driving guidelines, can be asked to step down from the leadership team and also liable for dismissal of any employment.