

A group of students are shown in a dark setting, likely at night, with their hands raised and high-fiving each other. The scene is illuminated by a soft, warm light, possibly from a stage or event. The students are wearing various casual clothing, and some are wearing wristbands. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and celebration.

LEADER HANDBOOK

WHO WE ARE & WHAT OUR
LEADERS ARE ABOUT.


CITY STUDENTS



We are beyond excited for you to consider joining the best team of small group leaders on this planet! City Students is Church of the City's ministry for Middle and High School students (6th – 12th grades). Even though we are a little biased, we believe that serving as a Small Group Leader in City Students is one of the greatest investments you can make in the next generation. Time and time again, we see men and women (like YOU) make huge, lasting impacts in the lives of students...and have fun doing so.

These next few pages will give you a glimpse into what City Students is all about and will show you how significant your role as a Small Group Leader is to the students in this ministry. Our hope is that you will see the incredible impact YOU can make in these students' lives as you simply walk this crucial phase of their life with them.

We're excited that you are thinking and praying through this incredible opportunity. So turn the page, start reading, and invite God to show you what He can do through you in City Students.



"My parents say it's their house, but when it's time to clean, it magically becomes my house too."

WHO WE ARE

What is City Students?

Our mission is **to join God in transforming students into passionate followers of Jesus**. That mission drives everything we do. Every program, event, and activity is filtered through this goal.

STRATEGY

To live out our mission, we emphasize four key things:


CONNECT RELATIONALLY
CHALLENGE SPIRITUALLY
ENGAGE PARENTS
MOBILIZE SERVING

WHAT WE DO

The secret to success in City Students is relationships. We want every student who walks through our doors to be known. We accomplish that by connecting them to a caring adult who loves them for who they are. That adult (meaning YOU) connects them to a small group of peers who are in the same phase that they are in. This small group does everything together: sit together during the service, have meaningful conversations during small group time, hang out throughout the year outside of church, etc.

WHEN WE DO IT

City Students happens on Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:30PM in The Auditorium. Doors open at 6:15PM for students to come and hang out and get some dinner or snacks. At 6:05PM, all small group leaders come to our Leader Huddle in Room 100.



*"I wore this yesterday,
but I'm going to a
different place so it
doesn't matter."*

Besides bringing the City Students staff enormous amounts of coffee.

Here at City Students, we put a heavy emphasis on small groups and believe they are the backbone of the ministry. Why? Small groups are the best way to help students fulfill the mission of becoming passionate followers of Jesus. Therefore, one of the main goals of a small group leader is to develop meaningful relationships with their students so they can become more of who God made them to be.

So how do we do this? What's the strategy of helping our students become passionate followers of Jesus? I'm glad you asked! On the next couple of pages we will unpack what this will practically look like, but as you're reading the details, ask yourself two questions: "Would I enjoy doing this?" and "Is this something I can see myself being good at?"

"When someone texts you 'hahahahaha!'" instead of "haha" or "lol", you know you've done well."

WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

Four Key Things

**CONNECT
RELATIONALLY**

**CHALLENGE
SPIRITUALLY**

**ENGAGE
PARENTS**

**MOBILIZE
SERVING**

*“That little dance your
thumbs do when you
aren’t sure how to reply
to a text.”*

“STUDENTS NEED TO BELONG BEFORE THEY CAN BELIEVE.”

- *Creating A Lead Small Culture* -


A key ingredient for students becoming passionate followers of Jesus is to connect them with people who are passionate followers of Jesus. Students tend to become who they hang around. We want to create a safe environment where students can talk about real life with people they are connected to. So how do we actually do this? Below we have listed a few key expectations for small group leaders to connect relationally with their students.

Wednesday Nights

- Hang out with YOUR students.
- During Service: Sit together with your group during worship.
- Small Group Time: Ice breakers, ask them about their week, play a quick game.

Ongoing

- Communicate with your group throughout the week. (Text, call, email, social media, fax machines, Morse code, etc.)
- Hang out and have fun with your group outside of church at least once a semester (and be sure to let a City Students staff member know what you're doing.)
- Find out what your group participates in (sports, band, dance, underwater basket weaving, etc.) and go cheer them on!
- Attend different events that City Students throws throughout the year - these are prime time to relationally invest in your group.



*“Slow wifi is worse than
no wifi at all.”*

WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

Challenge Spiritually

Every Wednesday night, students will enter into a time of worship and teaching time during our student service. The truth is, each student is in a different place spiritually. One of the best ways we can join with God in what He wants to do in our students' lives is to create a safe environment where each student can be challenged spiritually. That's where YOU come in! Below we have listed a few key expectations for small group leaders to spiritually challenge their students.


Wednesday Nights

We want students to learn to own their relationship with Jesus. The more that students open up and figure out the answers on their own, the more likely they are to live out what they've learned throughout the week. Therefore, small groups are a place where students sit in a circle and are challenged spiritually. The primary role of the small group leader is to facilitate discussion.

Ongoing

- Set up meetings with your students over lunch or coffee and challenge them on a deeper level.
- Summer Camps and Winter Retreats are key times to spiritually challenge your students in deeper ways.

The best way we spiritually challenge our students is through YOU.



"I think we can all agree that one of the hardest things in life is trying to plug in your charger in the dark."

Parents are, by far, the biggest influence on their child's life, so we want to partner with them during this specific phase. Let's be honest, this phase can be scary, fun, awkward, exciting, confusing, exhausting and smelly. So we want to come alongside parents and be their biggest fan in this crucial season of their child's life.

One of the primary ways we engage parents is by communicating with them on a regular basis. Our student staff, and YOU, keeps parents informed on whats coming up as well as encourages them on what God is doing in our ministry. Below we have listed a few key expectations for small group leaders to engage the parents of their students.

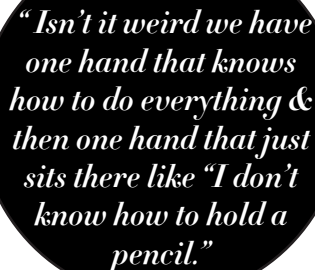
Wednesday Nights

Utilize this time to meet your small group's parents as they drop off or pick up their child.

Ongoing

- Early in the fall, you will receive your small group roster, which will include parent contact info. This is a great time to introduce yourself and get to know the parents of your group.
- Occasionally you will communicate with parents regarding camps/retreats/ events coming up.
- Whenever you get a new student in your group, we ask that you follow up with their parent within 3 days.

One of the best ways we engage parents is through YOU.



“Isn't it weird we have one hand that knows how to do everything & then one hand that just sits there like “I don't know how to hold a pencil.””

WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

Mobilize Serving

During this unique phase of life, students can fall into the trap of thinking life is all about me, me, me. At City Students, we want each student to understand that they were created on purpose, for a purpose greater than themselves. One of the best ways we can help them understand this truth is by mobilizing them to serve. Below we have listed a few key expectations for small group leaders to help mobilize their students to serve.

Wednesday Nights


Encourage your students to help with setting up & tearing down the environment.

Challenge your students who love all things music, singing and tech to step up and get involved.

Ongoing

- Once a year, serve with your small group outside the church walls. (We will equip you with what you need.)
- At different times throughout the year, we will have international mission trips for students to get involved in. Encourage your students to be a part of a bigger story.
- Throughout the year COTC will have church wide initiatives that City Students will play a role in, such as Operation Christmas Child & What If?

The best way we mobilize serving is through YOU.



*“Lazy Rule: Can’t reach
what I dropped, don’t
need it.”*

SMALL GROUP LEADERS

How am I equipped to lead?

Small Group Discussion Guide:

Each week, you'll receive a summary/discussion guide for what will be discussed in service that following Wednesday. This is meant to be a tool to help you facilitate discussion. We ask that you read over it in advance to prepare you for small group time.

Leader Huddle

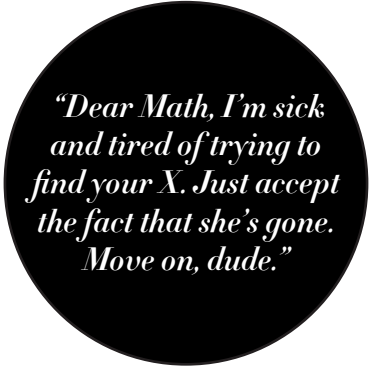
Each Wednesday we will have a Leader Huddle from 6:05-6:15. This is a great time for you to meet the other leaders and also for us to give you a run through of the night, any pressing items and also prepare our hearts for the evening.

Quarterly Leader Training

Every 3 months we will have a Leader Training. This is a great and helpful time for you to gain some knowledge and understanding on how to better reach your students and tackle any challenges that you may face. These trainings are crucial to the success of our small groups, so we ask that you strive to make it a point to be there at these quarterly trainings.

Small Group Coaches:

A Small Group Coach is an experienced small group leader who will serve as a point leader over a handful of small group leaders. Each small group leader will be assigned to a small group coach. The coach's responsibility is to help make sure you are set up for success each Wednesday. Coaches are a great resource for you to bounce ideas off of, seek help from regarding challenging students, or to ask any questions regarding Wednesday night.



*“Dear Math, I’m sick
and tired of trying to
find your X. Just accept
the fact that she’s gone.
Move on, dude.”*

FINAL THOUGHTS

Tips

All students love humor.

Students tend to rise to the expectations and challenges that are set before them.

To better understand students, meet them where they are: get into their world, go on their turf, and step in their shoes.


Remember, this is more like a marathon than a sprint.

Be patient. Each student is on his or her own spiritual journey.

Guiding is more important than resolving.

Questions are more important than answers.

Listening is more important than talking.




*"We are best friends.
Always remember that
if you fall, I will pick
you up...after I finish
laughing."*

Think back to when you were a teenager. The greatest memories and lessons you learned were not through a textbook, classroom or even a sermon; but through a relationship. That's why ministry is best done through relationships. That's why our students need YOU.

One of the main goals of City Students is for each student to be connected to a loving, caring adult. That's why we need YOU.

Even though parents are the main influencers in a student's life, their relational and spiritual impact on their teen is increased greatly when we come alongside them and partner with them. That's why our parents need YOU.

Some of life's greatest moments are when we simply give back, especially to the next generation. That's why YOU need to be a part of joining God in transforming students into passionate followers of Jesus.



“Dear sneeze, if you’re gonna happen, happen. Don’t put a stupid look on my face and leave.”

THANK YOU

Closing Thoughts


Thanks for taking the time to read through this booklet. Hopefully you have a better grasp of what City Students is and how valuable small group leaders are to this ministry. We literally could not do this without YOU.

Here are a few next steps you can take.

1. Believe that you can truly make a difference in the lives of our students on a weekly basis... no, really, you can! Every student needs an adult who loves them and believes in them.
2. Contact Brendan Owen at Brendan@churchofthecity.com and let them know your interest in City Students and when you would like to observe a service and set up an interview
2. Fill out a City Students Volunteer Application. Visit www.churchofthecity.com/application.

Thanks again for considering coming on board with City Students as a Small Group Leader. We truly believe God can and wants to use you to help transform these students into passionate followers of Jesus. Please contact Caleb with any questions you may have.

We look forward to connecting with you soon!



“My room may be a mess, but I know where everything is.”



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
CHURCHOFTHECITY.COM/SPRINGHILL

CITY STUDENTS