

Dear Parents of Youth,



Blessings to you! The purpose of this letter is to orient you to what is happening in the youth group this year. If you are a veteran parent (you've had students in the youth group before), then there's not too much new. But read this letter carefully anyway so that you KNOW what is going on.

1. **Our Thinking** – I wanted to remind you of the way we at Bethel view youth ministry. Our aim is not to be the primary Bible teacher of your children. Biblically speaking, that is your job (Deut 6, Eph 6:4). We see our role as supporting what you should already be doing at home. Our task is to encourage your student to trust Christ as Savior, and once that happens, to challenge them to grow and change and become more like Christ in every area of life (Rom 8:29).
2. **Focus** – this year, the focus will be on SERVICE. We want each student to be involved in some type of ministry whether it is inside or outside the walls of the church. To that end, you will see several items on the youth calendar that are service opportunities. We will also be taking time in the youth group on a regular basis to challenge and develop your student's gifts in order to serve.
3. **MTA's** – MTA stands for 'Ministry Training Area'. These are specific areas of emphasis that we will encourage students to participate in according to their interests and gifts. Some MTA's include: special music, preaching, teaching, puppets, and more. In May, students who participate in certain MTA's will gather with other students from churches around the state who have developed in these areas to show their stuff and compare notes. The purpose of this is to encourage them to serve and help them to develop in their ministry skills.
4. **Meetings** – The youth group meets regularly on Sunday morning for Sunday School and on Wednesday night for youth group meeting. Past that, there are small groups (explained below), and various events. It is up to you and your student to determine how you are going to set priorities for meetings and events (realizing that students may have work and sports commitments).
5. **Quiet Times** – We will be challenging your student to spend time in the Bible on a consistent basis. We will be making at least 2 tools available to do that. One is a quiet time diary from Word of Life, and the other is a weekly quiet time that I write and handout (and publish to the website). We will be checking up on their quiet times on a regular basis. You should feel free to do the same.
6. **Small Groups** – In a change from last year, we are going to move small groups so that they happen outside of regular meeting times at a time that is convenient for your student and their small group leader. Every student will be encouraged to be in a small group, but it is not required. Our desire is to disciple students who wish to grow. As a rule, small groups will try to gather about twice a month, and small group leaders will try to take their group out for a special time away twice per school year.
7. **Scholarships** – This year students will be able to earn scholarships if they work in their spiritual disciplines. Middle School students can earn a full scholarship (\$100) to Checkpoint Bible Camp, and High School students can earn a partial scholarship (\$150) to be used either for the IFCA Youth Convention or the summer mission trip. In order to earn these scholarships, students must average 3 quiet times per week all year, participate in 3 Christian service activities, and take a verse test over 10 memory verses (the verse test is

- fill-in-the-blank). The verse test will be given on the first Wednesday in May (I will issue a practice test a month before). Scholarships will be awarded on the last day of Youth Group.
8. **Calendar** – speaking of the calendar, a copy of the youth calendar is attached to this letter. If you lose it, don't fret. Ask me for another copy or, better yet, go online to www.bethelbiblechurch.org and click on 'ministries' then 'youth' to print a replacement. Also, check this online calendar for any updated information.
 9. **Website** – the youth section of the church website will be the main hub for all information this year. There, students can see the calendar, download release forms, see event details, and sign up for events. A copy of this letter will be posted on the website. I will also be posting questions the students ask in youth group as well as answers to those questions. I hope that the youth section of the website becomes a 'knowledge base' or 'think tank' for students to use to help find answers to life's questions.
 10. **Texting** – there will be no texting allowed during youth group unless I specifically give them permission to do so. If this becomes a problem, I will be taking their phones and returning them after youth group is over. I want students and parents to feel free to text me questions or comments anytime, but not during youth group 😊
 11. **Facebook** – There is a Bethel Bible Church Youth Facebook Page. If you are on Facebook, send me a request to be part of that group and I will add you. There you can see comments about upcoming events and pictures from events that have happened.
 12. **Event Policy** – Students should not feel like they must participate in all youth events. Certainly family time should take priority. I have tried to schedule many events this year that are low cost or zero cost to the students. However, some events do have a cost to attend. For those events, the students must have the money and any forms turned in by the stated deadline or a ticket for them will not be purchased and a ride may not be available. If the student decides not to attend the event after paying for a ticket, then there will be no refund unless the student can find a replacement to attend the event. You must complete a 'BBC Youth Release Form' before your student(s) can attend any BBC events (that form is attached – complete one per family). This policy is more clearly laid out on the website.
 13. **Camp** – Checkpoint Bible Camp is a great opportunity for Middle School students to attend and a great chance for High School students to minister as CIT's, lifeguards, craft helpers, set up and tear down helpers, etc. Please encourage your student(s) to participate.
 14. **Mission Trip** – This year, the summer mission trip will be to New Tribes Mission in Sanford, Florida. This will be open to High School students (in high school as of this year) and adults. It will be primarily a work trip. All the details for the trip will be available by January 1 at the latest.
 15. **Family Devo Resources** – wondering how to lead your family in the study of God's Word? Don't sweat it if you've never done it before. I have lots of great resources to help you start leading your family now. See me if you'd like to see what I've got.

Sorry for the lengthy letter. As always, see me with any questions.

Because of Him,

Scott Tiede, Assistant Pastor