

Sojourn

New Life Assembly of God

Leadership Information

Purpose:

According to Rick Warren, Jesus set before the church five purposes to fulfill while he was away. These are derived from the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38).

Worship – *Love the Lord... with all your heart*

Evangelism – *Go... preach*

Discipleship – *Teach them...*

Ministry – *Love thy neighbor*

Fellowship – *Baptizing them*

All of these purposes can be identified in our purpose statement.

Our purpose as Sojourn Student Ministry is to lead students in the pursuit of His presence where His passion will grip their hearts and His praise will be on their lips. It is there that our proclamation of the gospel will be heard – and He will change the nation.

These purposes must be fulfilled now! This generation is lost and dying... they need a savior, a father figure, a family, a home, a sanctuary, a purpose, a hope, and a vision. Christ offers all of these things and more. It is our job to lift up Christ to this whole generation! – Ok, that sounds like an overwhelming task.

Philosophy

Jesus does not expect us individually to change the world, only to change our world. The people whom we affect will lift up Christ and others will be affected. It is a domino effect. Christianity is contagious. All we have to do is “infect” our area.

In order to do this efficiently, we must focus our efforts. It has been said that if you aim at nothing, you will hit every time. In these last hours, a shot in the dark is the same as no shot at all. Our target is the student population of the Little Rock area which includes several school systems and dozens of communities. Students in these or any area may be divided into categories based on their relationship to the youth ministry. These group identifications help us plan and program to meet individual needs. They are as follows (excuse the names, I was in school for too long):

1. **Kryptonite** – does not exist: These students have never been to our services or events and most likely do not know we exist.
2. **Tritium** – exists in very limited quantities. Potential for a great release of energy if we could only get them together: These students have come once, but do not feel attachment. These students know us and we know a little about them (the first time attendee’s cards), but there is no relationship.
3. **Uranium 235** – exists naturally but is very unstable. Energy may be either harmful or productive depending on the environment: These students are committed to attending most Sojourn services and activities. We have a working relationship with them.

4. **Hydrogen** – exists alone but is usually paired with others. These students are committed not just to attending services, but to growing spiritually. These students participate in ministry because we have a good relationship with them, and they bought our vision. They generally follow someone else's spiritual lead.
5. **Oxygen** – is everywhere and it would be tough to live as a youth ministry without it: These students are not only committed to participating in ministry but also to leading ministry. They are interested in growing as leaders in order to be more effective ministers. These students sell the vision.

We must realize what students are looking for and attempt to satisfy their hunger. The following is a summary of the Millennial Generation (birth dates from 1982-) as presented in a 2000 study by Howe and Strauss:

Characteristics of Millennials

1. Millennial teens “discard race as a criterion for judging people and behavior” (p.221).
2. Millennials have given more time to assist those less fortunate than any other generation. Between 1980 and 1999, the percentage of high schools offering community service through organized programs grew from 27 to 83 percent.
3. Millennials have raised the bar. They have set higher standards than those set for them. They are drawn toward institutions that have clear and well articulated values.
4. Millennials list failures as their greatest fear. The Millennials have been raised in a society where the expectations for success have never been higher. A large majority of high school Millennials say that they have “highly detailed five- and ten-year plans for their future...have given serious thought to college financing, degrees, salaries, employment trends and the like.”
5. Millennials are driven by relationships. A large majority of high school students list having a personal relationship with a mentor as a high priority.
6. Millennials promote the concept of teams: “[t]heir belief in team play has broadened their capacity for friendship with peers. They are drawn to circles and cliques”.
7. Millennials are better behaved than you would like to think. Teenage America has been sprucing up its conduct. Nearly everywhere, and especially in urban areas, teenagers have reduced their sexual risk-taking, substance abuse, crime and violence” (Howe and Strauss, p. 189.)
8. Women now earn 55 percent of all bachelor's and master's degrees.

***All citations come from Howe and Strauss (2000). Millennials Rising: The next great generation. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Please take time to review these characteristics. Not all of them will apply to everyone we try to minister to; however, we must strive to be relevant to this generation. We must present the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ to them on their terms and in their language.

Vision

I believe that if we lift Jesus up, he will draw everyone (even students) to him. I believe that with enough prayer, coupled with repentance and humility, we can see the revival fire of God burning at New Life Assembly of God.

My vision is to continue growing in both numbers and spiritually. I believe that Sojourn can minister to 150 students on any given Wednesday night. I believe that these students will come not for games or for pizza but to see the face of God and feel the love of His children.

A ministry of this size requires many leaders. By the numbers, one person can only minister to 12 students. (Hey, Jesus only had 12 disciples, and he walked on water). The math says that a youth ministry of 150 students will require about 12 hands-on leaders to guide students in ministry.

That is where you come in. Leadership is vital. However, to whom much is given, much is required. The following is my general list of expectations for leaders.

Expectations

Since every leadership position is different, please refer to your ministry-specific handout for details of what I expect. However, there are a few leadership qualities that I find universal and nonnegotiable.

- **Live a life that is above reproach:** Everybody makes mistakes, but as people who influence others, our mistakes can cost people their salvation, not just ours. Pray continually as David did:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
Psalms 139:23-24

A life above reproach should follow the guidelines established in I Timothy 3:1-13. In addition, do not do anything that is not *necessarily* wrong but may be morally or socially questionable, such as use of tobacco, etc. The idea is to avoid being the “stumbling block” we were warned of in I Corinthians chapter eight.

- **ALWAYS publicly support the Youth Pastor:** It is not that I actually believe that I am correct the majority of the time, but God has called me to lead these students. Any discord in leadership spreads quickly to the students and they will quit following us. I invite everyone to “let me have it” in my office, home, or any place where we can speak privately, but please do not sow seeds of disrespect in students.

- **Fully disclose all pertinent information:** As youth leaders, your first job is to push students closer to Christ. You will become good friends with the students as you accomplish this goal. In many cases, close friendships are necessary in order to influence students to the desired degree. However, your first responsibility to the student is to be their spiritual leader and to protect the youth ministry as a whole. I ask that you tell either Candace or me everything that involves the student's spiritual or physical wellbeing. As a leader, you are accountable to the youth pastor as the youth pastor is accountable to the senior pastor.

- **Influence the students:** Leadership is influence, according to John Maxwell. If you want to lead them, you must make them want to follow you. Below are just a few practical ways to accomplish this.
 - Encourage them: everyone likes a pat on the back
 - Let them know that you care: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" – John Maxwell
 - Remember names and personal interests

- **Make every student feel welcome:** Let new and old students know you care by loving them with a *LOOK*, with a *WORD*, and with a *TOUCH*
 - **LOOK:** That is to say, give students eye contact (this makes them feel respected and important)
 - **WORD:** Tell them "hello", or "Glad you made it" – call them by name when possible
 - **TOUCH:** It is OK to touch students! Shake their hand, touch their shoulder, give them a hug (same sex only, of course). This makes students feel connected.

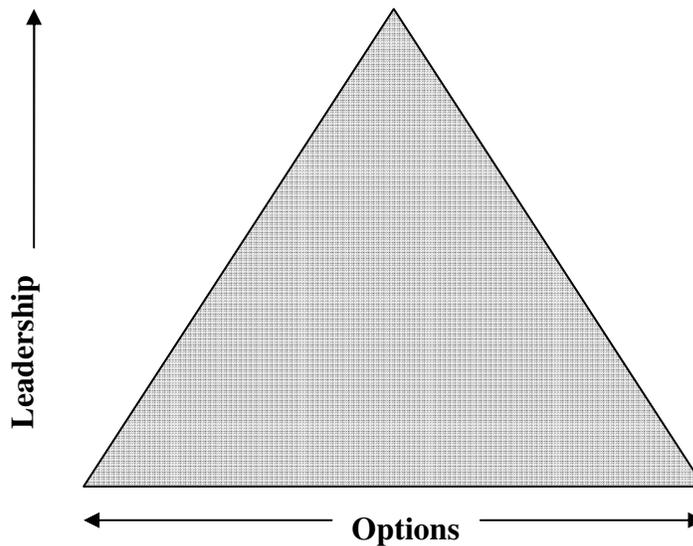
- **Obey the TEN minute rule:** No matter what your function in ministry, if you are a designated leader, it is my expectation that you will be 100% ready ten minutes *before students start arriving*. Notice I did not say ten minutes before service (or program) starts. The reason behind this is simple. We should work to produce an environment where people are comfortable. It is hard to be comfortable when everyone around you is stressing out in a buried attempt to get through something together. Also, this chaos leaves very little room to sit back and develop relationships with the students as they arrive.

- **Model compartmentalized intensity:** This generation needs to see that Christianity can be fun. By all means, have fun around students. But – church time is God's time. I ask you to be intense in your worship, sermon focus, and altar service participation.

- **Initial Training:** Every Spring Semester, Sojourn will offer a leadership class. Student leaders are expected to enroll in the course. Adult leaders are expected to participate in the course (don't worry – you will not be graded!)

- **Continued Learning:** I believe in continued education. From time to time, I may ask you to read a book or attend a class, etc. I will never ask you to attend a class I have not attended or ask you to read a book I have not read. These requests will greatly depend on the position of leadership you assume.
- **Take is easy sometimes:** I do not expect every leader to be at every event and program. There is no need to become burned out, and whatever you do, **DO NOT NEGLECT YOUR FAMILY FOR MINISTRY.** If you cannot attend an event, please let me know as soon as possible so I can make other arrangements and then encourage students to participate anyway. A relationship of a student with the youth ministry and then Jesus should not hang on the influence of one personality anyway – true Christianity is bigger than that.

The level of leadership attained is inversely proportional to the options you have when making choices. When you have a lot of people relying on you, it is imperative that you make the right decision for the people following you. Often, this is contrary to what is most beneficial for you personally.



Closing Remarks

Now you know our purpose, our philosophy, our vision and my expectations. Your next step is to pray and use wisdom in your decision to become a leader. Candace and I will do the same. Because leadership is so important to the overall health of the ministry, this is a decision that must be driven by a holy revelation.

I hope that I did not rain on your parade. We are looking for people that are interested in growing by mentoring others. It is not easy work. Ministry can be exhausting, thankless, stressful, and full of heartache. Yet, if you have a passion for God, a heart for students, and if you feel that God has called you to a higher level, leadership is for you.

I leave you with these words from I Peter chapter five (Revised Standard Version).

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.

Take plenty of time to review your specific ministry description and expectations. I will give you a week or so to read everything and pray and then we will meet together and talk through any questions/concerns you or I may have. At that time, if we both feel that God would have you in leadership, you will sign the commitment card in your ministry-specific information packet. Then, you can get started leading students to a life changing, personal, intimate relationship with the Ancient of Days!

“This thing we do, we do to reveal Christ to the nations”

- Jeremy & Candace Eckart