

# SMALL GROUP LEADER TRAINING

FALL RETREAT 2023  
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023



# WELCOME

Thank you for volunteering to be a small group leader at Fall Retreat! Small group leaders truly are the MVPs of this amazing weekend! By investing into each student's life, a small group leader can make an eternal difference in that "one" student and the generations to come. Thank you again for your willingness to serve the next generation.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SMALL GROUP LEADER

- Prepare for the weekend
  - Provide a clean vehicle to transport students from the church to the host home and back. You will not have to drive to the Saturday afternoon activities.
  - Plan to stay at the host home with your group for the duration of the weekend. Ensure the safety of the group
  - Never leave the group or individual alone
  - Never be alone with a student
  - Stay in communication with the group, knowing where everyone is at all times during camp.
  - Never allow students to sleep in the same bed with another student or leader
- Act as mentors and confidants, not the student's parents.
- Participate in worship, activities, & take notes (leaders go first!)
  - Ensure students bring their Bible, booklet, and pen to all sessions and small group times.
  - Be energized and stay engaged! Don't sit back and relax!
- Build relationships with the students in your group
  - Have FUN and help students have FUN as well!
- Have a personal, spiritual conversation with each student in the group at some point in the week (during meal times, rec time, devo time, etc)
- Be on time and follow the schedule
- Take up student's cell phones Friday
  - Take up cell phones at check-in (once student arrives to your designated area) Ziplock bag provided
  - Give phones back to students 45 minutes before arriving to Milestone
- Help students take NEXT STEPS (baptism, serving, be part of a small group, etc...)
- Go through the 7 day devotional with your small group after camp

# SESSIONS

Our sessions at Fall Retreat this year will look at the Sermon on the Mount....

Here is an overview of the sessions:

## **Session 1: Friday Night**

Matthew 5:1-12 - The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes teach us the character traits of being a Christian. We will talk about what it means to be righteous and pure in heart to see God

## **Session 2: Saturday Morning**

Matthew 5:21-48

Jesus gives us a new way to live. In this session, we will learn how we should live our life and interact with others,

## **Session 3: Breakouts**

For this session, we will have four different breakouts. The topics are...

High School:

Session Option 1: How to reach your friends and family for Jesus - Matthew 5:13-16

Session Option 2: Worry and Anxiety - Matthew 6:19-34

Middle School:

Session Option 1: How to reach your friends and family for Jesus - Matthew 5:13-16

Session Option 2: Worry and Anxiety - Matthew 6:19-34

## **Session 4: Saturday Night**

Matthew 7

In this session we will talk about what it means to build your life on Jesus.



# SATURDAY REC TIME

On Saturday from 1-4 PM each grade will leave the church and head to an incredible activity that we have planned for them. You may remember this time being at Bear Creek Park in previous years, but we are changing it up this year.

**MIDDLE SCHOOLERS will be going to Urban Air Trampoline Park**

**HIGH SCHOOL GUYS will be going to LaserWhirld in the HEB area**

**HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS will be going to Nytex Sports Center for Ice Skating**

We will be taking charter buses to each location so you won't have to worry about driving. We are looking forward to having a fun-filled afternoon!



# BELIEFS & EXPECTATIONS

At Milestone, we communicate God's truth on love, sex, and dating. What we believe about these issues and how we communicate them to students are both of the utmost importance.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### 1. Marriage

Christian marriage is a beautiful covenant relationship between God, one man, and one woman. Jesus affirms this powerful union in Matthew 19:4-6: 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." - Jesus

### 2. Sex

Sex is meant to be between one man and one woman within the covenant of marriage. Anything outside of that is perversion and sin. Pre-marital sex, homosexual activity, pornography, and anything else outside of sex between a married man and woman is sin.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20: 18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

### 3. Gender

We believe that God created gender and is the one who defines gender. We do not define ourselves, God defines us and gives us our identity.

As such, we believe that bisexuality, transgenderism, and gender fluidity are not what God has intended a person to identify as.

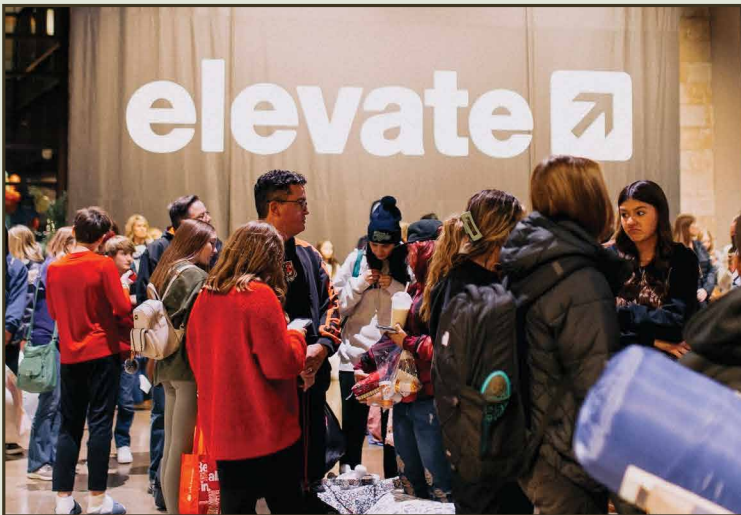
Genesis 1:27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

# BELIEFS & EXPECTATIONS

At Milestone, we communicate God's truth on love, sex, and dating. What we believe about these issues and how we communicate them to students are both of the utmost importance.

## WHAT WE EXPECT

1. We expect you to uphold all the above beliefs regarding marriage, sex, and gender.
2. We expect you to communicate all of God's truth with grace and love. While we may not condone someone's actions, we also do not condemn that person.
3. How you communicate in regard to these topics to a confessed believer is different than how you communicate to someone who does not have a relationship with Jesus.
  - a. We do not expect someone who doesn't have a relationship with God to live their life according to the Bible and God's standard. As such, the best response for a student who is not a confessed believer in Jesus is to love them, pray for them, and believe for God to open their heart to receive from him.
  - b. Someone who is a confessed believer in Jesus, has a relationship with God, yet is living in contraction with God's Word on love, sex, and dating, may be more open to a conversation about God's view on this issue. For that type of student, the best response is to start with the standard of God's Word as authority and go to the Bible for the answers on love, sex, and dating. All of this should always be done with a heart of love, and communicated with grace.



# POST FALL RETREAT EXPECTATIONS (DEVO)

Our heart's desire is not to just put on an event, but to start the discipleship process for hundreds of students! Because of this, we are all going to do a **7 day Devotional on the YouVersion Bible App that the Elevate team has made just for Fall Retreat.**

**Here are our specific expectations of you for this Devotional plan.**

- **Do the devotional with your small group.**
  - Text daily encouragements in the group, text what you got out of the readings, have dialogue in your text group about the habit of Bible reading and growing through God's Word.
- **The goal is for each person in your small group to complete all 7 days within a 14 day period.**
  - If you miss a day or two, no worries! You can make it up.
- **Meet with your small group in person one time in the 2 weeks following Fall Retreat .**
  - Talk about how each one is doing in their relationship with God post camp.
  - Talk about each person's next steps following camp.

Encourage and pray with them!

**How do we make this devotional a success?**

We are making this a staple for all of our camps / retreats moving forward. As we have talked with students, the #1 key for getting students engaged is for you as leader to individually reach out to the student and tell them you want to do it together.

- You as a leader asking the student to do it with you beats any announcement from stage or Instagram post about it.

**Pro tip:** when you give phones back on Sunday after camp, have everyone download the YouVersion app and sign up to start devo together.

- Do the devo "with friends"

# EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP TIME

Small group time is such an important part of camps and retreats. It allows time for students to connect with their leaders as well as others in their group. It's also an opportunity for students to process what God is doing in their hearts. Each small group will happen right after a session. The goal is to get students to share what God is speaking to them.

## Keys to effective small group time

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and give you the words to say! He wants to help you lead your small group.
- Small group leaders are there to facilitate discussion, not dominate the conversation (80% listening 20% talking)
- Engage in meaningful, spiritual dialogue with students during small group time.
  - As needed, you can have small talk / have some fun, but take advantage of every opportunity to process with students what God is speaking to them.
- During small group time, stay on the topic being discussed during the previous session.
- Ask questions to help students process what God is doing in their hearts.
  - Lead off your small groups by asking questions like, "What stuck out to you during the service?" "What was your main takeaway from the message?" "What did you feel like God was speaking to you in this service?"
  - As students share, ask follow up questions like, "Would you tell me more about that?" "What does that mean to you?" "How can you live that out in your life?"
- If students are not opening up, you as the leader go first and share what God is speaking to you.
  - Being open, honest, and transparent with the students you're leading is a great way to build trust with them.
  - Be careful not to "over-share" or let students in on areas that you are currently struggling with. We encourage you to process up with your leaders (dean, pastor, small group leader, etc) about any areas in your life that you are currently struggling with or needing to grow in.
- If there are thoughts / opinions shared that you know are contrary to God's Word, you are entrusted to lovingly bring the small group back to the truth of God's Word



# EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP TIME

## Keys to effective small group time

- Encourage discussion from each person in the small group. As best as you can, don't let one person or just a couple people dominate all the conversation.
- Pray for the students in your group. Especially if a student opens up about something really vulnerable and emotional for them, don't move on too quickly. Take that moment to encourage them, speak life to them, and pray for them right there.



# MINISTRY TIME

During services at camp, we will give opportunities for students to respond to the message and receive prayer from their small group leaders.

## General Prayer Guidelines

- Focus on listening, encouraging, and praying, not trying to teach or preach.
- Start by asking an initial question like, “How can I pray for you?”
- Take time to listen, encourage, and ask follow up questions.
- Be aware of body language and facial expressions. Smile and be compassionate, don't look shocked by what a student shares.
- Prioritize praying with the students in your group.
- Pray with students of the same sex.
  - this includes students praying with students.
- Pray with eyes opened.
  - Always be aware of surroundings & see how God may be ministering to the student you're praying for)
  - Look for students who raise their hand during altar call
- If you are unsure how to handle a situation with the group or individual in the group, contact the assigned dean.
- Ensure that each student that needs prayer gets prayer.
  - Don't spend a long amount of time on one student if others are waiting.
- Use wisdom when praying or prophesying over students.  
It is often unwise to prophesy about major life decisions:
  - Prophesying about future spouses
  - Being called to ministry
  - Going or not going to college, etc...

# LEADING SOMEONE TO CHRIST

During camp, you may have the opportunity to lead a student to Jesus. This is one of the most incredible things to get to be a part of as a leader! Here are some guidelines for you to do this.

- Always ask the student an opening question like, "Why are you responding? How can I pray for you?"
- Don't assume a student is saved, be sure to ask the question, "Have you surrendered your life to Christ?" Tell me about when you gave your life to Christ?"
  - Explain Salvation and lead in prayer
- Use Scripture in your prayer. Praying God's Word is the most powerful prayer you can pray!
- The Romans Road is a great way to explain Salvation
  - Romans 3:23
  - Romans 6:23
  - Romans 5:8
  - Romans 10:9-10
- Here are some helpful truths when talking with someone about salvation
  - "You were created to have a relationship with God."
  - "Sin separates you from God."
  - "Sin leads to death."
  - "Salvation is God's free gift to you."
  - "Jesus is the only way to God."
  - "We are saved by God's Grace, through faith."

# TOUGH ISSUES

Throughout the course of the week, there may be students who open up about tough issues like same sex attraction, drug use, sexual addictions, rape, abuse, etc... Here are a few ways to be equipped on how to handle these situations:

1. Always talk about sensitive topics like this in private, and gather information one-on-one, not in the group setting. We want to protect students in these private and difficult situations.
2. Be aware of your facial expressions and body language. You do not want to look shocked as a student opens up to you.
3. Never promise, "I won't tell anyone." Instead, reassure the student that this is a safe place.
4. If there is ever a report of physical or sexual abuse, we have a legal responsibility to report it immediately. Here is the step-by-step process of what to do:
  - Collect the information told you by the student, but don't dig for more information or specifics than what the student volunteers to share. Report the incident to your small group leader dean the same day you hear of the incident.
  - If any intense spiritual warfare situations come up (where it seems like there may be evil spirits manifesting), please do the following:
    - Call small group leader dean immediately and bring them into situation
    - Separate the student who seems like they may be manifesting from the rest of the group. If the student won't leave, have the rest of the group leave. (See Emotional Disclosure Statement at the end of this handout)

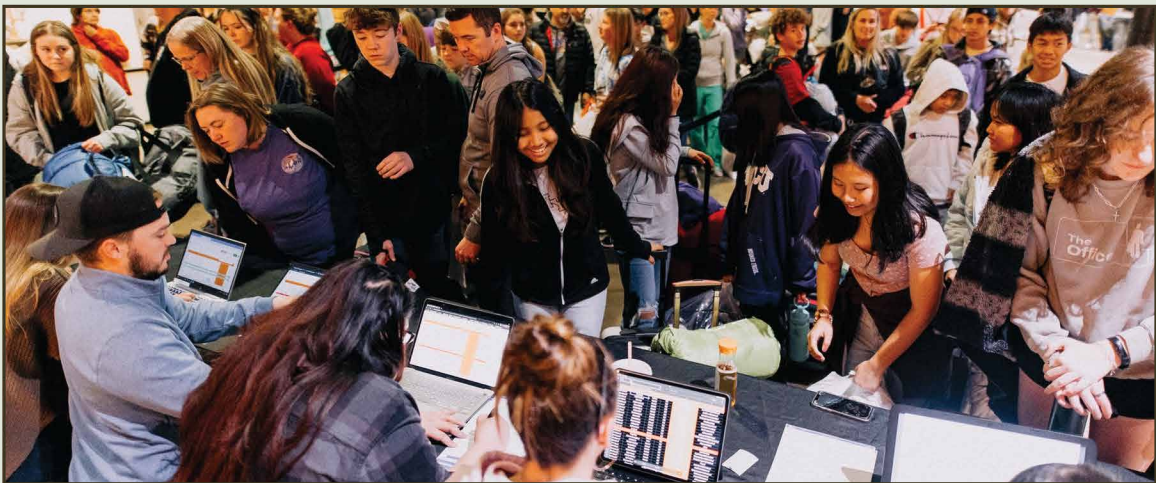
# HOW TO PREPARE FOR FALL RETREAT

Prepare physically by:

- Getting plenty of rest before camp.

Prepare spiritually by:

- Repenting of sin
- Fasting & prayer
- Building up your faith - come expecting for God to move



# SMALL GROUP LEADER DEANS

You will have an assigned “Dean” as a resource to you during camp.

The main objective of a Small Group Leader Dean at camp is to be the primary resource, cheerleader, advocate, and coach for small group leaders. Our deans are seasoned leaders with us who we trust to help you as a small group leader.

Your dean will be your first point of contact for anything you need (practical questions, interpersonal issue with students in your group, advice on how to handle a situation, etc)

## COMMUNICATION

### PARENTS

- When you receive your assigned group, we ask that you individually text the parents of the students in your group.
  - Introduce yourself as their leader
  - Express excitement to get to know their student this weekend
  - Ask how you can be praying for their student going into the weekend

### STUDENTS

- When you receive your assigned group, we ask that you make a group text with the leaders and all students in your group
  - Introduce yourself as their leader
  - Express excitement about getting to know them this weekend
  - Do a “get to know you” text introduction with everyone (name, grade, school, interesting fact, what you’re looking forward to this week, etc)

### DURING THE WEEKEND

- Small Group Leader Deans will communicate with small group leaders that are assigned to them by way of the App GroupMe during camp. The deans will communicate all important information as well as changes that may occur during the weekend.

# COMMUNICATION GUIDE

|   | Message or<br>Check, Group Me       | Group Chat<br>with Dean             | SmallGroup<br>QR Code               | On Call<br>Number                   |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I need to report a harm                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I need help with a student                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Report small group attendance               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I need prayer / help for myself             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A student in my group got saved!            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A student in my group has a story           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A student is interested in getting baptized | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| My cabin needs maintenance                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Someone in my group lost luggage            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I need cleaning supplies                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I need luggage supplies                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| I have questions about the schedule         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I need some encouragement                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I want to give some encouragement           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

# HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

## **SALVATION**

- Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- Romans 10:9-10 “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”
- Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

## **ANGER**

- James 1:19-20 “Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”
- Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

## **DEPRESSION**

- Psalm 118:5 “Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free.”
- Psalm 34:17 “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.”
- John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”



# HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

## LUST

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 “The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”
- John 8:36 “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
- 2 Timothy 2:22 “Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

## WORRY/ANXIETY

- 1 Peter 5:7 “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”
- Psalm 55:22 “Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.”
- John 14:27 I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

## BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere —in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”
- Ephesians 5:18 “Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

## **PRAYER POINTS**

- Students will have open hearts
- Students will encounter God
- Students will build friendships
- Students will connect with their leaders
- Safety
- Continued connection with God and church after Fall Retreat

## **CONTACT INFO**

Pastor Ryan Martinez - 817-262-8042

Pastor Jesse Wagner - 817-941-3268

Pastor Ethan May - 817-374-2346

Kacie Mills - 817-999-0975

Kamalei Martinez - 214-886-4502

Titus Cottone - 512-660-0339

Gabrielle Blakely - 817-907-0620

Carly Branscum - 817-269-2286

# PACKING LIST

- Bible
- Journal
- Pen
- Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc)
- Bath Towel
- Sleeping Bag and Pillow (please place all bedding in trash bags)
- Appropriate clothes for worship and sessions (Friday & Saturday Night, Sunday Morning)
- Athletic clothes for Saturday afternoon activities and free time
- Prescription Medications in original bottles  
(will be checked in during check-in process by parent only)

## Other Optional Packing Items:

- Snacks
- Refillable water bottle
- Slingback or small backpack
- Cash to spend at Saturday activity
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray



## **FREE TIME / HOST HOME TIME**

Fall Retreat is going to be an incredibly fun weekend of connecting with students and helping them take steps in their walk with God. We want to help you steward the time you have with them well, especially the down times in the schedule, like free time, and time at the Host Home.

With that, we are no longer allowing Silent Football, or any other games that involve consequences, to be a part of our camps and retreats.

We ask that you help us uphold this new and higher standard that we are expecting of all small group leaders and students that attend camps and retreats.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

We have updated the terms of our medication policy for camps and retreats.

Going forward, all prescription and over-the-counter medication must be checked in to our medical personnel and **ABSOLUTELY NO** prescription or over-the-counter medication is allowed in Host Homes where minor students are staying. This is for the safety of all students and leaders who attend camp with us.

All medical information is kept confidential and only our medical professional will have details about medications that students and leaders bring to camp.

We will provide our nurse with over-the-counter medications to administer as the need arises. The list of these medications is below for your convenience:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil)
- Phenylephrine decongestant (Sudafed PE)
- Pseudoephedrine decongestant (Sudafed)
- Antihistamine/allergy medicine (Benadryl)
- Guaifenesin cough syrup (Robitussin)
- Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto Bismol)
- Anti-diarrheal medicine (Imodium AD)
- Calcium carbonate (TUMS)
- Anti-nausea medicine (Emetrol)

# BIBLE READING PLAN

As Elevate, we are going to grow together through reading God's Word over the next 21 days!

Here are some helpful tools to help you engage with God's Word.

