

☐ Appearance

"People look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart."

The first phrase is not the heart of the verse, but it's the truth. Students and adults will base their impression of our ministry on their impression of us. For this reason we wear appropriate clothing (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

- The activity should dictate the type of clothing worn.
- All of our clothing should be clean, communicating personal discipline and recognition of self-worth, be modest, protecting the reputation and image of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Corinthians 8:27, 1 Thessalonians 4:6a), and avoid masking our inner qualities (1 Peter 3:1-8).

☐ Student relationships

Discretion in staff members' personal lives is fundamental to both spiritual integrity and to continuing to do spiritual ministry among students and their families (Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-16). To live wisely and without any hint of sexual misconduct we keep the following standards:

- Any verbal or nonverbal sexual interaction with any student is inappropriate.
- Dating or going out with any junior or senior high student is forbidden.
- Discretion must be used in physical contact with any students. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. A hug around the shoulders is not sexual abuse, but a full body-to-body hug, stroking, massaging, or affectionate kissing raises questions. Any overt display of affection, appropriate hugging, for example, should be made in a public setting in front of other group members.
- Sexual gestures or overtures to a staff member by a student should be reported to one of the ministry directors or the youth pastor so that discussion can be held with the student.
- Staff should form male/female ministry teams whenever possible.
- One-on-one counseling with a student should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place. As a general rule when counseling a member of the other gender, invite a member of the same gender as the counselee to be the observing staff.
- When a situation arises where you are alone with a student of the other gender, quickly move that situation to a public setting. Make the meeting as brief as necessary to accomplish God's purpose.
- Driving alone with a student of the other gender will be avoided at all times.
- Romantic or sexual attraction for a student by an adult leader should be brought up and discussed with the youth pastor for prayer and guidance.
- All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported to the youth pastor/children's director who will report it to the mandated reporter in the organization. That person will notify the appropriate agency.
- Any knowledge or suspicion of any youth ministry staff having an inappropriate relationship with a student must be reported promptly to the youth pastor. If the person in question is the leader, the report should be made to the supervisor of that person.
- No wrestling or physical horseplay should ever occur between staff and students of the opposite sex.
- Church staff or volunteers should obtain the consent of the student's parent or guardian before meeting with a student of the same gender off campus, or spending time with the student in an unsupervised situation.

□ Dating

Acknowledging that one of the most fulfilling relationships in Scripture and life is the one that a man and woman share, we recognize that a staff member may establish a relationship with a staff member of the other gender. We also recognize the greatest visible destroyer of ministries is moral impurity. The following policies should be understood in that light.

- No staff member will date a student in high school or below.
- Staff members involved in a dating relationship should model appropriate behavior. Particularly during church functions, our focus is to be on the Lord as well as students.
- In the case of premarital sex, extramarital sex, or a homosexual incident, immediate suspension from staff will occur.
- Remember, as you date another member of the staff or church, if the relationship ends, that person will still be around to testify to your behavior and character.

□ Character expectations

• **To keep our integrity:** the motives, attitude, and actions of staff should be completely transparent to any observer. Our honesty should be testable by Luke 16:10-12.

1. *Faithfulness in little things*—being on time, keeping our word, filling requests on time, following through with students and other responsibilities.
2. *Faithfulness in money*—turning in receipts, being very cautious with event cash and petty cash, remembering people have sacrificially given that dollar.
3. *Faithfulness in that which belongs to another*—treating all the church equipment and property with utmost respect.

• **To be teachable:** None of us must claim to have arrived at infallibility. We must continually attend sessions, conferences, worship services, read, and observe with a teachable spirit, continually seeking to grow.

• **To be an appropriate role model:** Staff responsibilities naturally require frequent interaction with students and their families, as well as the community. Staff members come into Christian ministry from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs—especially in the gray areas of Christianity. Because staff are leaders and role models, they must use *careful discretion* when choosing movies, music, etc., for ministry activities. The use of R-rated movies is prohibited with any student group. Use PG-13 movies with extreme caution. *In all cases, preview a movie that you're considering showing at a youth activity.* When in doubt, check with the youth pastor.

Along with entertainment choice, substances used by staff model behavior to students. Since the number one substance abused by teenagers is alcohol, staff will abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

• **To develop a servant's heart:** "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant...He humbled Himself, and became obedient...even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:3-8).

We aren't concerned about rank or position; the one in the pulpit is of no greater importance in God's eyes than the one leading a small group or driving the buses. As we faithfully serve one another within the ministry, the Lord expands our outreach and provides opportunities to serve those outside of the ministry. In homes, at church, and in the community, others should remember us by our willingness to serve them. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (James 4:10 and Luke 17:10).