



ST. MARK'S

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY

a guide to help you navigate the 2023-2024 year

THE BASICS:

St. Mark's Middle School Ministry will be meeting nearly each Wednesday between September and May.

5th through 8th graders meet to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith through time as a large group and in small groups!



IN THIS HANDBOOK

- Calendar
- Curriculum
- Expectations
- Details/Weather Policy
- Special Opportunities



CULTIVATE

5/6 GRADE

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." - 2 Cor. 9:6

ANTHEM

7/8 GRADE

"Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together."
-Psalm 34:3

ALL ARE WELCOME.

WE ARE SO GLAD YOU ARE HERE!

ST. MARK'S YOUTH MINISTRY CORE VALUES

1. CHRIST-CENTERED
2. PURPOSE-DRIVEN
3. CHURCH-FOCUSED
4. COMMUNITY-BUILDING

CHRIST-CENTERED

(Start with Jesus)

It's all about Jesus all the time! We want to know Him in all things we do and find opportunities to make Him known. He is the foundation for all things we do. Prayer, scripture, and teaching every single week!

"HOW AM I GROWING CLOSER TO GOD IN MY EVERY DAY LIFE?"

CHURCH-FOCUSED

(Relationships)

We should focus on building relationships with others fed by our living relationship with Jesus. Having deeply-rooted friendships within our church community will help us to build friendships outside of church.

"DO I KNOW MY SMALL GROUP? HAVE I DEVELOPED A CORE GROUP OF FRIENDS?"

PURPOSE-DRIVEN

(Life-Changing)

Jesus has the power to change lives for the better. When we know that life-changing power, we know God's purpose of equipping and calling us.

"WHAT ARE MY STRENGTHS? WHAT'S MY PURPOSE & HOW AM I FULFILLING IT?"

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

(Disciple-Making)

We serve the people of God by making disciples. We're more than just a youth group! Instead of looking at ourselves, we want to be outward-facing to those around us.


"DO I KNOW MY NEIGHBORS? DO I SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND CARE FOR OTHERS?"



FALL

- Sep 6**.....**First Day of Ministry**
Beyond Belief (Questions)
- Sep 13**.....Beyond Belief (Questions)
- Sep 20**.....Beyond Belief (Questions)
- Sep 27**.....**United Invite/Family Night**
- Oct 4**.....Most Likely To (Leadership)
- Oct 11**.....Most Likely To (Leadership)
- Oct 18**.....Most Likely To (Leadership)
- Oct 25**.....**Trunk or Treat/Family Night**
- Oct 28 (Sat)**.....**Confirmation**
(current 9th grade)
- Nov 1**.....Enough (Family)
- Nov 8**.....Enough (Family)
- Nov 9 (Thurs)**.....**First Communion Class**
(5th grade)
- Nov 15**.....Enough (Family)
- Nov 19 (Sun)**.....**First Communion**
(5th grade/those who haven't had it)
- Nov 22**.....**Thanksgiving Break**
- Nov 29**.....Grateful (Christmas)
- Dec 6**.....**Giving Tree Night**
- Dec 13**.....Grateful (Christmas)
- Dec 20**.....Grateful (Christmas)
- Dec 27**.....**Christmas Break**

SPRING

- Jan 3**.....Beneath the Surface (Identity)
- Jan 10**.....Beneath the Surface (Identity)
- Jan 17**.....Beneath the Surface (Identity)
- Jan 24**.....**Game Night @ Church**
- Jan 31**.....Justified (Anger)
- Feb 7**.....Justified (Anger)
- Feb 14**.....**Ash Wednesday**
- Feb 21**.....Justified (Anger)
- Feb 28**.....
- March 1-2 (Fri-Sat)**.....**Lock-in**
(7th-8th grades)
- March 6**.....Glow (Easter)
- March 13**.....**Spring Break**
- March 20**.....Glow (Easter)
- March 27**.....**Family Night (Holy Week)**
- April 3**.....I AM (series on Jesus)
- April 10**.....**Give HOPE Food Gathering**
(5th-8th grades)
- April 17**.....I AM (series on Jesus)
- April 24**.....**Family Night**
- May 1**.....I AM (series on Jesus)
- May 8**.....**End of the Year Celebration!**
- May 19 (Sun)**.....**Confirmation**
(current 8th graders)
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CULTIVATE

5th-6th Grade

Cultivate: "To prepare, acquire, and develop"

- 5:30-5:50pm.....Opening
- 5:50-6:15pm.....Large Group
- 6:15-6:35pm.....Dinner
- 6:35-7:05pm.....Small Group
- 7:05-7:30pm.....Service Project / Game

ANTHEM

7th-8th Grade

Anthem: "A rousing or uplifting song for a particular group"

- 5:30-5:50pm.....Opening
- 5:50-6:15pm.....Large Group
- 6:15-6:45pm.....Small Group
- 6:45-7:05pm.....Dinner
- 7:05 - 7:30pm.....Service Project / Game

SMALL GROUPS

We value relationships. We want students to gather and grow in encouraging each other as they walk with Jesus - together!

This is the best part of middle school ministry! Led by an older generation, students are grouped by age to talk about real-life topics as they navigate the connection between church and everyday living.

WHAT IF MY CHILD WANTS TO INVITE A FRIEND?

That's great and highly encouraged! I just ask that you let our team know so we make enough food and that you send over that student's parent information just in case of an emergency.

If they want to continue coming past the initial visit, we want them to register so we can properly get safety information needed and get them on small group rosters for ourselves and leaders.




CURRICULUM.

During large group time, Cultivate and Anthem will both be hearing the same message. We will talk about real life things and how our faith relates to those things. God and the Bible are right here, right now things! We want to equip students to incorporate their faith into each day. We will discuss the following topics:

- **BEYOND BELIEF:** a series on Doubts & Questions, scripture focus = Exodus
 - *When you doubt yourself, God can still use you.*
 - *When you doubt, it's okay to ask questions.*
 - *When you doubt, God still takes care of you.*
- **MOST LIKELY TO:** a series on Leadership, scripture focus = Old AND New Testament stories
 - *Great leaders follow through.*
 - *Great leaders choose integrity.*
 - *Great leaders follow God's lead.*
- **ENOUGH:** a series on Family, scripture focus = Acts and the Epistles
 - *When there isn't enough, God provides.*
 - *Our actions can speak when words aren't enough.*
 - *God's love is always enough.*
- **GRATEFUL:** a series on Christmas, scripture focus = the Gospels
 - *Be thankful for each other.*
 - *Be thankful for God's promises.*
 - *Be thankful even when it's not easy.*
- **BENEATH THE SURFACE:** a series on Identity, scripture focus = the Gospels
 - *God helps us discover who we're becoming.*
 - *God's words help us discover who we are.*
 - *The right relationship helps us discover how to grow.*
 - *Jesus helps us discover purpose.*
- **JUSTIFIED:** a series on Anger, scripture focus = New Testament
 - *When you're angry, pause to ask God why.*
 - *When we're angry, Jesus shows us how to respond.*
 - *When you're angry, you can still show grace by not getting hurtful.*
- **GLOW:** a series on Easter, scripture focus = the Gospels
 - *Jesus is with us in the darkness*
 - *Jesus is THE light in the darkness*
- **I AM:** a series on Jesus, scripture focus = the Gospels
 - *Jesus is love.*
 - *Jesus is truth.*
 - *Jesus is always with us.*
 - *Jesus is our Savior.*

Here are my hopes with this year:

- Our students follow Jesus because they're captured by his heart.
 - Our students are comfortable sharing doubts & questions that ultimately strengthen their faith.
 - Our students see Jesus as a friend, not a distant authority to obey.
 - Our students get to know each other and practice discipling together.
 - We want to get them talking, asking questions, and discovering answers!
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EXPECTATIONS.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ATTENDANCE

We HIGHLY encourage students to be here every week we meet. Missing a night means missing out on some awesome stuff! Of course life happens and we understand there are times when students are under the weather, etc.

We ask for 75% attendance because the material that we cover is critical to a young person's spiritual growth and the development in preparation for students' ongoing faith life! We want them to be as equipped with the armor of God as they can.

BEHAVIOR

We will honor the community values of **kindness, honesty, respect, and responsibility** in St. Mark's Middle School Ministry. Students are expected to treat each other, their leaders, and church property well. This is a space to extend love to everyone, no matter who they are - *all are welcome*. And no student has the right to take away another student's time with God. Students will get 2 or 3 warnings before bringing parents in for more severe action moves, *depending on the behavior*.

***Please note the student/parent covenant for a more thorough description of expectations.**

CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell phones aren't bad - we thank God for the technology He has given us!

We ask that students not be on their phones unless they are asked by the person leading from the stage. We may even incorporate them into what we do on Wednesday evenings! If student cell phones become an issue, they will be asked to either keep them at home or ask them to be put into a bucket until they go home.

***Parents will be brought in if it is a continued problem with a student.**

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

We love when students come on Sunday mornings! Our students being able to learn and worship alongside of their parents is something they'll never forget! We ask that, as a family, you make it a priority to come together. With you being the #1 discipler in your child's life - come, enjoy, and talk as a family together about what you've learned!



PARENTS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

- **Encouragement:** We thank you for the important role in encouraging your young person to be involved in middle school ministry! It's always awesome to see parents excited about their student coming on Wednesday nights.
- **Involvement:** You are the key in making this program work! Please know that we need you! If you are interested in helping with small groups, activity nights, meal prep & service, set up or anything else, WE WILL TAKE YOU! The Family Ministry team can't do it all on our own and we would love to have you be part of it! You can register at stmarkscr.org/familyministry
- **Worship:** You are an advocate for your student - making it a priority for your family to attend worship together is crucial for students to see the importance of a relationship with God.
- **Family Discussion:** Each Wednesday night, we want to challenge you to ask your student what he/she learned! It shows students that you, as a parent, are invested in their spiritual growth. How cool is it to talk about faith & life together?!
- **Family Night:** Generally one Wednesday of each month is a "Family Night" - see the calendar of the year. It's a night reserved for you and your family to spend time together. YAY!

FOOD.

MMM, GOOD

Each week, we have awesome volunteers that get meals ready for us to fuel us for the evening. If you have selected the "add-on" of food for the year, your student will have one week that is dinner, and two weeks of the month that are a hefty snack.

If you have questions on how you can be involved with this aspect of the night, please reach out to Lynne Kendrick at lkendrick@faith-life.org.

WEATHER.

THERE'S A LOT OF UNPREDICTABILITY

St. Mark's will make the determination on whether Wednesday evening classes will be held based on the weather and road conditions at the church. Families will be notified no later than 2:00 pm on Wednesdays with an email and/or text message. Additionally, a cancellation notice will be shared with KCRG.

If Wednesday night programs are not cancelled but you are concerned about the weather, we ask that you use your best judgment regarding safe travel as to whether or not your child will attend that night.



SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

FAMILY NIGHTS

Families are the best!

How awesome is it that parents are the first disciplers in the lives of their children? We want to give YOU a time to pour out even more—so into students. Once a month you will have the opportunity for a night reserved for just you and your family to spend the evening doing whatever you want to do!

Some weeks the church will have a family-friendly event, some we won't. Otherwise, we don't meet in the church building on these nights. We can help you brainstorm ideas if you'd like, too!



RIVERSIDE BIBLE CAMP

Let's go to camp in Story City, IA (north of Ames)!

This is an opportunity for students to go off-site together for some time in community, fun, and nature. Bible studies, chapel, games, incredible food, and more!

FALL 2023

The cost is \$95 for the weekend - Friday night to Saturday night. *Registration is open until they are full!*

Grades 3-6: October 20-21

Grades 6-9: November 10-11

Grades 9-12: November 17-19



SUMMER 2024

A week full of nothing but FUN! One of the greatest weeks/experiences your student could have as they grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus - away from church, away from family, with cabin leaders and peers. It truly is a slice of heaven!

**St. Mark's week is June 23-June 28, but there are other weeks your student can attend :)*

**Partial scholarships are available*



Head to www.riversidelbc.org/youth-programs

CONFIRMATION

The next step for our 8th graders!

Confirmation has been a long-standing tradition where students go through a program learning about Martin Luther and what it means to be Lutheran. From there, students are expected to write a statement of faith.

This will now be a one-year intensive discipleship program. What will this time look like? Acts 2:42 says, "The devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer."

We will be doing just that! We're going to learn from teaching (e.g. Teen Alpha, Lutheran theology) together, eat a meal together, discuss together, and pray together.



*** Confirmation registration for the 23-24 school year is now closed.*

FIRST COMMUNION

Calling all 5th Graders! (and those who haven't had it yet!)

Communion is something we get to celebrate together as a church! We have the opportunity to remember Christ's sacrifice for us through the body and blood (bread & wine). We want to invite 5th grade students to a class to learn what Communion is all about, and then together we will take part in the sacrament during a Sunday morning worship service.

** Class will be Thursday, November 9. First Communion in church will be Sunday, November 19.*

Be sure to mark your calendars!

ANTHEM BAND

Do you have a student who is talented at singing or playing an instrument? We would love to have them as part of the Anthem Band! They gather to practice every week we're in session at St. Mark's and lead worship together once a month for Journey, Cultivate, and Anthem.

** Please email Ralph Kendrick, ralph@ralphkendrick.com.*

HYPE TEAM

Hype Team made its debut in Spring of 2021! Big questions were, "How can we get kiddos more engaged in worship?" AND "How can I show kids a new way to worship?" ENTER HYPE TEAM! With this new ministry, students can now see that we can worship God with our entire bodies. Jesus invites us to a party when come into relationship with Him! Hype Team meets to learn choreography & lead the room in actions from the stage on Wednesday evenings. Its a great leadership opportunity and we'd love to invite more friends to the fun!

** Please email Bailey at blebeau@faith-life.org if your student is interested!*





UNITED INVITE

This is a FREE event for middle and high schoolers put on by St. Mark's, New Covenant Bible Church, and Radiant Church. We'll have food trucks (bring some money!), games, worship, and a message all centered on how much Jesus loves us. We want to encourage students as they have already started their school year to share the love with Jesus with others around them!

Where: Newbo District (near Czech Village)

When: Wednesday, September 27

Time: 5:00pm-8:00pm

**Find out more info at <https://uinight.com/unity-invite-2023>*

THE GIVING TREE

This is a church-wide service project event! As a church, we see a need during Christmas time. There are so many who do not receive a gift in our own community! We join forces and bless so many through this event. Together, as the middle school program, students are sent out with their small groups and leaders to Target on Blairsferry Rd. They will have tags with gifts on them, go shop for those individuals, and then come back to wrap gifts as a group. This night is so special!



GIVE H.O.P.E. FOOD GATHERING

Help Other People Eat

Yes, there is a need for individuals in our community as well when it comes to food. So many of us are fortunate, and so many others are completely blown away by the generosity during this night. We packed our trailer full of food at the end of the night and how sweet it was to see our community thankful for the selflessness of our students and neighborhoods around St. Mark's!

**All donations in Spring 2022 were given to*

- Churches of Marion Food Bank
- Wellington Heights Community Church
- Linn Community Food Bank



A NOTE FROM BAILEY:

I've been on staff at St. Mark's since July 2020 and it's given me so much joy! Middle school students are totally my jam! Relationships are very important as a foundation to what middle school is - I want this to be a place where everyone is welcome, no matter who they are, and feel safe. I'm wildly passionate about students knowing how loved they are by our Father in heaven and then equipping them to turn around and share that love with those in their lives. Connecting faith and life is difficult, but I'm determined to help students begin to figure out what that looks like. When they know where their identity lies, it becomes easier! I've got a TON of excitement. With that, I plan on helping students find their joy & confidence in Jesus!

FUN FACTS:

- I love puppies dogs (*tell me all about yours!*)
- I enjoy going to student activities (*send me their schedules if they want a cheerleader!*)
- Coffee & tacos are my favorite (*let's get coffee & talk about life!*)
- I enjoy being outside & traveling with my husband
- We're welcoming our first baby in December 2023 - yay!



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email: blebeau@faith-life.org | **Cell Phone:** (515)-783-7699 | **Office Phone:** (319)-447-0100

ONE LAST THING!

COMMUNICATION THIS YEAR ...

Family Ministry will be sending out one email at the end of the month with all of the things we can think of that you'll need! (e.g. September 25th you'll receive an email with everything for October).

If you receive more than one email from us -- that means it's important, so make sure you open it!

All emails (and this packet!) will be posted on stmarkscr.org/familyministry each month to refer back to :)