

YOUTH 8TH-12TH GRADE

WHAT IS A CULTURE GUIDE?

At Victory Church, we know that culture either happens by design or by default. Rather than allowing our feelings, upbringings, past experiences, or standards of society to take the lead, our goal is to intentionally create a culture that glorifies God.

Culture Guides are intended to do 2 primary things:

1. Give members the information needed to *finalize* their serving team decision.
2. Serve *as the onboarding*, providing all the information and guidance for how the team operates.

C.H.E.C.K. VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COURAGEOUS:

We follow Jesus into the unknown, walking by faith and not by sight, no matter what it costs us.

- We Get Out of the Boat
- We Lead Ourselves

HUMBLE:

We are not led by title. We lead with open hands, always seeking to serve others.

- We Use Our Titles as Towels
- We Fail Forward

EMPOWERING:

We make disciples who make disciples: Equip, empower, and send!

- We Are Gold Miners
- We Hand Over the Keys

CONNECTED:

We stroll through the crowd; we seek to know people and walk alongside them through life.

- We Smell Like the Sheep
- We Pull on the Same Rope

KIND:

People know we are disciples of Jesus by the way we love others.

- We Are Tigger, Not Eeyore
- We Live by the Golden Rule

TEAM POSITIONS

- **Ministry Lead:** provides oversight for an entire ministry for a campus or for Victory Church
- **Coordinator:** leads/supports a group of coaches and/or oversees a specific component of ministry
- **Coach:** leads/supports a group of leaders
- **Team Leader:** leads/supports a group of team members or a small group
- **Team Member:** (replaces the term "volunteer"); usually an individual contributor to a ministry team

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE & GROW

Within Victory Youth 8th–12th, there are many different teams, roles, and leadership opportunities! Each team serves a unique function but carries the same heart of preparing for, looking for, and caring for the one. Here is a list of our teams, a brief explanation of their function and other information you may need to know as you decide which you'd like to try.

Arrival Experience Team – Welcomes students as they enter our lobbies and sanctuaries. Help with New Here, check-in, and connect with new students.

Service Team – This team helps pull off our services. From production to communication to prayer and everything in between, this team helps create the atmosphere for God to move.

Experience Team – Welcomes students and guests. Helps create a welcoming atmosphere for all at each Victory Youth experience.

Crews (Small Groups) – Small groups are crucial for our students' growth.

Events Team – Helps with rally nights, retreats, and special events.

OUR MINISTRY GOAL

At Victory Youth, we know that culture either happens by design or by default. Rather than allowing our feelings, upbringings, past experiences, or standards of our society to take the lead, our goal is to intentionally and consistently create the culture we want to see.

GUIDELINES & TIME COMMITMENTS

Weekends: We encourage our Victory Youth team members to serve at our youth services every week. Our heart is that the students have consistency with their leaders. We know this is not always possible, which is why we have so many different areas and opportunities where you can serve! Let us know the commitment you can give, and we can find the perfect serve team for you.

Trainings: During the year, trainings/refreshers may be scheduled for your team, or even for larger gatherings of all of your campus's Victory Youth teams. We ask that, as these are announced, you make every effort to attend.

Other Opportunities: We will have quarterly Global Rally Nights. These nights will be held at our Norcross campus. Although is not mandatory, we ask you to make every effort to help serve and be a part of these powerful nights!

Scheduling: We use an online tool called Planning Center Online (PCO) for all of our ministry's scheduling. It will communicate to your email inbox, and even your text number if you like, but it will require you to use either its phone app or website to confirm your schedule request or to communicate your upcoming schedule conflicts. Using Planning Center is expected for all Victory Youth team members. But have no fear! It's not complicated, and we will help you until you're comfortable using it on your own.

Communication is a must from all involved. Exchange numbers, confirm email addresses, and ask any questions you can think of about scheduling and Planning Center. You will be expected to use the assigned tools to confirm scheduling requests, to let us know something unexpected has come up (like sickness), to block out upcoming dates you're unavailable, and to communicate any other necessary information – from personal prayer requests to serving related questions. "Communication" starts with "co"... It takes both of us!

Flexibility is a gift from your Victory Youth leaders to you and from you to your Victory Youth leaders. Sometimes a process needs to change. Sometimes something additional/different needs to be done on a weekend. Sometimes mistakes are made. Let's maintain relationship and trust as we navigate the unexpected things of life together.

Real Relationships: It's our hope that friendships grow as you link arms with others to serve! To encourage real relationships, we foster community where life can be shared and supported – both celebrations and struggles. We also have Small Groups built into our teams and encourage you to join one, especially if you are not in a Small Group already.

Physical Contact: As a part of Victory Youth, you could serve hundreds of students at a time! Please be mindful of appropriate contact with these students. A good guideline to follow is: high fives, fist bumps, and, when appropriate, a pat on the back or a side hug. If the opportunity presents itself to pray for someone, a hand on a shoulder or holding hands could be appropriate. Any other physical affection or playful physical contact should be avoided while you serve.

Background Checks are conducted for all team members (ages 18+) in all ministries at Victory. But don't let that stop you! Please have a conversation with us. We love to walk relationally with people and find a way to say "Yes!"

Onboarding and Next Steps: We've got you! Your campus's Victory Youth leaders can help you discern which team might be a good fit and will help you understand your next steps for that particular team. You can expect to be welcomed, to be well-trained, to be introduced to teammates, and to be provided with necessary details like time expectations, what to wear (and not wear), where to meet, and where to park.

FAQs

Is being in a small group required to serve in Victory Youth?

We highly encourage finding a small group to join, but it is not required. We can assist in your quest to find a small group if you're interested in taking that step.

Could I serve at the same (or different) time as my family?

Yes! Our scheduling tool, Planning Center, has functionality to help households serve the same or different weeks, even if people are on different ministry teams! We will work with you.

I have kids. Can I still serve?

Yes! This is a great opportunity to model serving for your children. We'll work with you and will help you know when you can step away to get your kids checked in to their ministry.

What happens if I miss a week I am scheduled?

Communicate, communicate, communicate. If you know in advance, please help your leader by blocking out those dates in Planning Center. If there's a conflict on the day of your serving (like waking up sick or with a sick kid), communicate with your Team Leader as soon as possible. Any heads up is better than no heads up! And if you forgot and missed the scheduled time, please communicate anyway. Communication builds relationship and trust.

I am concerned about having a Background Check.

Please come talk with us! Whether it's concern about what may show up on it, fear of not having necessary documents, or something else, please trust us to walk with you. We can provide guidance, and we can also promise that your personal information will be handled with confidentiality and love by a very small number of necessary staff members.

What's next?

The campus youth pastor will reach out to you about next steps (i.e. shadowing a member of the team during an upcoming weekend service). If a team you try doesn't feel like the right fit, we will help you find the right one, even if it means serving in an entirely different ministry. We're here to help!

VICTORY YOUTH SERVICES

Victory Youth services for our 8th-12th grade students happen weekly at each campus. Services are filled with powerful worship, an encouraging word, and fun connecting with others!

CREW GROUPS

At Victory Youth, we believe one of God's greatest gifts is relationships! Crews provide some of the best opportunities for students to get to know each other on a deeper level, grow spiritually, and form lasting friendships. Crew nights happen the 2nd and 3rd week of each month. These groups are age and gender specific and led by adult Crew leaders.

RALLY NIGHTS

Rally nights happen at the end of each month at each campus. We also have global Victory Youth Rally Nights quarterly at our Norcross campus. We gather for a fun night of community, worship, and a message. These are high energy, powerful events, and we encourage all our students to invite their friends. These nights are our favorite!

VICTORY YOUTH TEAM GUIDELINES

At Victory Youth, we desire that all behavior, communication, and attire be appropriate for a Christian environment. We ask that, as leaders, you ensure that the following standards are upheld.

DISCIPLINE

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline for behavioral management of children or students. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction. If a student is unruly and will not respond to verbal instructions or warnings, then that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so), or the student's parents will be contacted to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff/volunteers will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention.

INTOXICANTS & THE PARTY SCENE

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the possession, use, and influence of alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal drugs while in the presence of students, whether officially or unofficially—while traveling with students, working with or supervising students, or while at any Victory facility. Special care should be taken in every circumstance to never glamorize the party scene. Instead, anything regarding the party scene must be downplayed in efforts to show that Jesus is better (relationally, on social media, etc.).

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS

Leaders, staff, and volunteers must never be alone with a student in a private setting.

The Rule of Three must be followed when not in a public setting. There should always be at least three people (two students and one leader = Good; two leaders and one student = Best) in any given area. Victory Youth recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Remember that the moment you start believing that you are above temptation is the moment you are the most vulnerable. A mere accusation could cause serious damage.

Staff and volunteers are to observe these guidelines when interacting with students:

- One-to-one meetings should be conducted with an individual student when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed (in public).
- In the event that a closed-door meeting must occur, the volunteer/staff member must inform a staff member or other adult and ensure the door remains unlocked.
- Always encourage same-sex counseling/discipling relationships. Steer those members of the opposite sex who are seeking one-on-one help to an appropriate leader of the same gender. Counseling members of the other sex is not allowed.

- Volunteers must notify a staff member when planning on having a one-on-one meeting with a student.

TRANSPORTATION

The following guidelines should be strictly observed when volunteers/staff are involved in the transportation of students:

- Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should never happen. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave a student of the opposite sex in transport with a volunteer/staff member.
- Again, the Rule of Three should be observed, WITH NO EXCEPTIONS, when transporting students. There must be two students in the car with one volunteer/staff or two volunteers/staff members and one student. You may never transport a student one-on-one unless it's been discussed with the Victory Youth pastor or ministry assistant and the student's parents (NO EXCEPTIONS), and the circumstances would make it impossible for that student to be involved otherwise.
- Staff members/volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- Cell phones may NOT be utilized by the driver while transporting students in personal vehicles or vehicles owned or rented by Victory Youth or Victory Church.
 - Exception: an emergency!
- Music must be kept to a level low enough for the volunteer/staff member to have a conversation with the front seat passenger without having to raise one's voice or ask for information to be repeated.
- All traffic laws must be adhered to.
- Reckless driving (swerving, hitting brakes hard, racing over speed bumps or through parking lots, etc.) is never allowed.
- All students must remain in their seatbelts during travel.
- Students should never be transported without parental permission.
- Students are not allowed to use a vehicle belonging to a staff member or volunteer.
- Regarding vans:
 - 12 passenger vans are preferred. If economic or availability factors do not allow for this option, 15 passenger vans are allowed.
 - Each van should have one additional volunteer/staff member other than the driver when possible.
 - Vans will NEVER tow a trailer while students are in transport.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a student in the care of Victory Youth during church services, events, or meetings will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Victory Youth programs.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Victory Church and Victory Youth are committed to protecting students in their care. To this end, Victory Church and Victory Youth have implemented a “physical contact policy”, which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Victory Youth programs.

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in the student programs:

- Side hugs, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and students are important for students’ development and are generally suitable in the church setting. No full-frontal hugs with members of the opposite sex.
- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching, or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, Victory Youth pastor, or ministry assistant.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student, and never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or in the presence of other students or Victory Youth staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers at Victory Youth must always foster trust. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant student. A student’s preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Victory Youth staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, Victory Youth pastor, or ministry assistant.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AFFECTION

Victory Youth is committed to creating and promoting a positive and nurturing environment that

protects our children and youth from abuse and our Victory Youth staff and volunteers from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for students, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate. Otherwise, that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Victory Youth staff and volunteers to comfortably show positive affection in ministry and identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth.

These guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines of touch and talk are to be carefully followed by all Victory Youth staff and volunteers when interacting with students.

Appropriate Touch

- Handshakes and high fives
- Arm around the shoulders
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Side hugs

Not Appropriate Touch

- Back rubs, arm tickles, massages, etc.
- Touching of legs, bottoms, or private parts (no exceptions)
- Touching a child in anger, disgust, or frustration
- Full-frontal hugs with the opposite sex
- Sexual, lengthy embraces
- Massages of any kind
- Girls/boys walking hand-and-hand
- Lap sitting
- Kissing
- Wrestling (cabin, pool, MMA, etc.)
- Tickling
- Any unwanted affection or attention

Appropriate Talk

- Verbal praise for achievement or behavior
- Verbal encouragement
- Scripture-based teaching

Not Appropriate Talk

- Compliments or comments that relate to physique or body
- Discussion of boyfriend/girlfriend's body
- Name calling
- Discussing sexual encounters (kissing, cuddling, relationship with

spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.)

- Cursing
- Telling off-color jokes
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Using harsh language that may frighten or humiliate the student

Appropriate Communication

- Before any personal communication with students, you must have parent involvement and/or approval.
- Ensure all communication is appropriate, spiritual, and encouraging.
- Consider how your words (written or verbal) will be perceived.
- If parents do not want you to communicate with their child, you must honor their request.
- Communication with students must be with the same gender.

Phone Calls & Texting

- All phone calls/texts must have parent involvement and/or approval.
- Phone calls/texts must be with the same gender. Many inappropriate relationships start here.
- Be considerate. All phone calls/texts must be during the following non-school hours:
 - Junior High School: 8am-9pm
 - High School: 8:00am-10:00pm
- Calls should be limited in duration and frequency.

Electronic Communication (Email/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Social Networking/etc.)

Private electronic messages must have parent involvement and/or approval (ex: copy the parents).

- Be careful what “friends” are posting on your profiles. You are responsible for what is on the internet regarding yourself, even if you are not the one to post it.
- Constantly monitor your profiles for inappropriate material.
- Inappropriate material includes (This list is not exhaustive.):
 - Pictures of you or friends dressed inappropriately
 - Pictures that glamorize the party scene (i.e. pictures of you or friends drinking, pictures that call into question your integrity in the party scene, etc.)
 - Messages that involve scandalous talk, glamorization of the party scene, or involve foul language

Written Communication (Cards/Letters)

- All personal written communication must have parent approval or be shared in a transparent way.
- Should be encouraging to the student, honoring to the parent, and edifying to the Lord
- Must follow all prior guidelines to communicating with students
- Postcards are a great option so parents can see what is being sent to their child.

Appropriate Attire

As followers of Christ, our appearance should protect the reputation of the gospel. Therefore, staff and volunteers are expected to dress in the following way and encourage students to do the same.

- Dress appropriately according to the event or activity.
- Dress modestly always. Modesty means more than just appropriate clothing. It also means appropriate attitude toward others, especially the opposite sex.
- Appropriate swimwear:
 - Males (staff/volunteers and students) are permitted to wear board shorts and swim trunks but are not permitted to wear jammers, spandex briefs, or other similar, form-fitting swimwear.
 - Females (staff/volunteers and students) are permitted to wear one-piece suits and conservative tankini-type suits that cover midriff but are not permitted to wear two-piece bikinis.

VICTORY YOUTH TEAM COMMITMENT

As a Victory Youth team member, I, _____, understand that I am committing my time and efforts to this ministry for a **minimum of 6 months**. I agree to make it a priority to invest in the lives of students, develop relationships, and attend services, events, and activities facilitated by Victory Youth.

I agree to uphold the values and guiding principles of Victory Youth.

I agree to make this church my home, involving myself in the life of not only the youth ministry, but the community that is Victory Church.

I agree to make it a point to be a part of the team, bringing fresh ideas, thoughts, and perspectives to the table.

I agree to put first my relationship with Christ, allowing everything else to flow from that foundation. I commit to strive to be more like Christ, taking time to learn and grow in the Word and in the foundation I have in Him.

I agree to be honest and truthful with the Victory Youth staff about any problems or disagreements that may arise. I commit to honoring the team by addressing any issues with those the issues pertain to in a loving and Christ-like manner.

I agree to keep my relationships with students safe and healthy, reporting any extreme behavior, and always making the Victory Youth staff and student parents aware of any concerns that may arise pertaining to their student. I understand that my job as a leader is to mentor and lead, and I submit my authority to that of the parent/guardian of every student.

I agree that I have read and understood the Victory Youth guidelines. I agree to uphold and abide by these guidelines, understanding and acknowledging that if I break these guidelines, my role as a Victory Youth team member will be revoked.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Victory Staff Signature: _____

Area of Focus: Middle School / High School / Both