

THE IDEAL STUDENT ACTIVITY

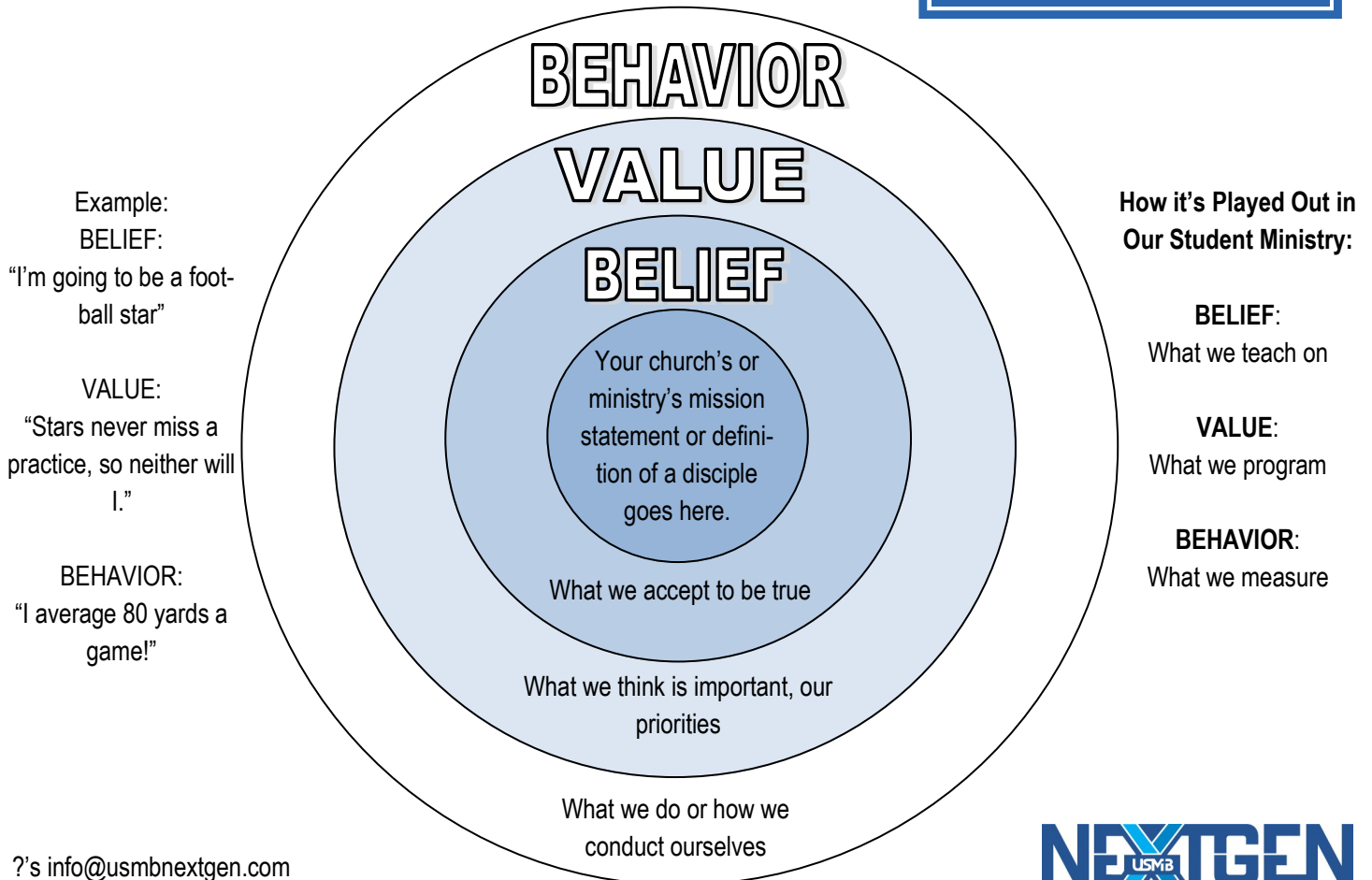
The Ideal Student is our extended version of our definition of being a disciple. This is a list of characteristics and experiences we want every student to have by the time they graduate high school. This list determines the subjects we teach, the programs we offer, and the experiences that happen. Although we cannot control a person's spiritual growth, we can create an environment that fosters spiritual growth.



Just like Shrek said (in the movie Shrek) "Ogres are like onions, we have many layers." Every person has different layers. Even though most of what people see from us is our behavior that is only the tip of the ice berg. Our **behaviors** (the way in which a person acts or conducts oneself) is dictated by our **values** (what a person thinks is important so it affects their priorities) which is driven by our **beliefs** (what a person views as truth, what they build their life upon). Discipleship is about life transformation not just behavior modification.

If beliefs are the inner most part of our being and have the most influence on everything else, than simply teaching on "behavior change" issues won't bring about much long lasting change. Each layer must be impacted if any real change is to occur, especially the belief layer. We use a 'target' as our illustration to explain the three layers because it shows what we are aiming for which is our definition of a disciple of Jesus.

Just hitting anywhere on a target is not enough. We have to hit what we aim for, the bullseye.



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THE IDEAL STUDENT EXAMPLE



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Our target is to have a student who is following Jesus, was changed by Him, and is living on mission with Him (our definition of a disciple). That is what we aim for, what we teach, and how we determine our program. We are guided by our three values of being real people, having a real faith, making a real impact. Our target is called the "Ideal Student" and it guides us and filters our decisions. This is our detailed version of "The Ideal Student" on what characteristics and experiences we want every teenager to have by the time they graduate high school starting in sixth grade. With each layer of a person (belief, value, and behavior), it requires a different explanation of what we would like to see in that layer. And since we cannot control a person's spiritual growth, only God can, there is no "order" or exact way a person grows from this list. The complete list is ideal.

Definition of a Disciple: A person who follows, is changed by, and on mission with Jesus.

The Student	REAL PEOPLE	REAL FAITH	REAL IMPACT
<p>BELIEFS</p> <p>What we accept to be true and build our life upon <i>(What we teach)</i></p>	<p>Students Discover: Their true identity in Christ & their need for authentic community.</p> <p><i>"Follow me": A disciple is in a relationship with Jesus (Matt. 4:19a)</i></p> <p><i>Acts 2:42-47 & Romans 10:9-10</i></p>	<p>Students Develop: Integrity and character through an abiding relationship with Jesus by taking ownership of their faith.</p> <p><i>"...and I will make you...": a disciple is being changed by Jesus (Matt 4:19b)</i></p> <p><i>Deut. 6:4-7 & John 15:1-9</i></p>	<p>Students Accept: Their God-given calling, possess a heart for the lost, and sees needs in the world and longs to meet them.</p> <p><i>"...fishers of people.": a disciple is committed to the mission of Jesus (Matt. 4:19c)</i></p> <p><i>James 1:22 and Matthew 5:13-16</i></p>
<p>VALUES</p> <p>What we think is important and determines our priorities <i>(What we program)</i></p>	<p>Students Will Begin to: Experience worship in a whole new way, develop strong friendships with other believers, and desires to be invested in by an adult mentor.</p> <p><i>Motto: "Embrace the awkward"</i></p>  <p>High School (9-12 grade): (Youth Group with Small Groups)</p>  <p>Middle School (6-8 grade): (Youth Group with Small Groups)</p>	<p>Students Will Begin to: Prioritize spiritual disciplines, becomes self-sufficient with their spiritual growth, and publicly declare their faith through baptism.</p> <p><i>Motto: "Own of your faith"</i></p>  <p>For High School: D-Groups (Bible studies throughout the week)</p>  <p>Middle School: Sunday@11 (Bible study on Sunday mornings)</p>	<p>Students Will Begin to: Link personal actions with faith rooted in the Bible, cultivate empathy towards others, and see their world as a mission field for Jesus.</p> <p><i>Motto:</i> <i>"Develop a missional mindset"</i></p>  <p>For High School: Impact Opps (Serving in and out of the Church)</p>  <p>Middle School: Impact Opps (Serving in and out of the Church)</p>
<p>BEHAVIORS</p> <p>What we do and how we conduct ourselves <i>(What we measure)</i></p>	<p>We will see students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept Jesus as their Savior • Praise God through worship • Develop friendships through a small group at AXIS • Participate in ministry events • Attend a The Point Gaming events 	<p>We will see students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly declare their faith through baptism • Participate in various d-groups • Have a hunger for God's Word • Learn to pray and care for others • Invite their friends to attend 	<p>We will see students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve throughout the church and in the community • Experience a local, national, or foreign mission trip • Be able to share their faith story • Begin to disciple another student • Have a vibrant prayer life

THE IDEAL STUDENT ACTIVITY

Grab some of your most dedicated leaders (could be student leaders but per adult leaders or core invested parents), and find an hour or two to meet together (although this might mean more than one meeting). Then share how you will be brainstorming your end goal of your youth ministry. (Hint: think of it as if you were a factory and what product do you want to produce). Explain how you as a ministry only have a few short years with influence on the teenagers and to make the most of it you need to narrow it down. Simply “love God and love others” is not enough when planning, budgeting, and training.

First Step: Begin Brainstorming

After you have set the boundaries choose a way to collect answers either write on a white board with everyone sharing answers at the same time or pass out posted notes have them write their answers on them. Ask the group (then give several minutes for them to think):

What are some current and future needs of a teenager?

(Think emotionally, spiritually, socially, etc.) Either you or someone else begin to collect those answers and make a master list. Keeping track of how many times the same answer comes up. Then rank the most similar answers at the top of the list to the least (due this while you have the leaders move on).

Then ask your leaders to answer another question.

If money, time or time was not a factor, what characteristics and experiences do you want every teenager to have before they graduate?

Again, collect the answers and rank the most common answers to the least (this is a good time for a 5 minute break while you combine both lists).

Second Step: Finalize the Master List

Combine both lists into one master one and post it so everyone can see. Then discuss as a group using these questions:

- What trends do you notice? (Circle or make note of the trends)
- What is missing from this list? (Add any that are missing)
- What is something that shouldn't be on this list, for whatever reason? (Then eliminate)

Once done finalize the list and either have your leaders take a picture of the white board on their phones or someone print off a typed up list, making sure everyone has a copy.

Third Step: First Draft (done on their own)

Option: You can either do this on your own, form a sub team, or let everyone bring their copies the next time they met.

Give each person a copy of the handout on page 3.4 and assign them the task of taking the finalized master list and choosing which areas in each of the Belief, Value, and Behavior boxes their characteristic or experience goes. Remind them that it isn't about being correct on whether it is belief or value. It is more about finding the areas that are light or missing altogether. Is your team too heavily focused on one area over another? Does any of your ideas match your definition of a disciple?

Fourth Step: Finalize Ideal Student Sheet

Then after some time (or at the next meeting) compare lists and discuss which belongs where this might be better suited for the lead youth worker or a sub-team). Once the list is completed type it up and give it out to your team one last time for “final approval.” Then meet with your director report or lead pastor for their opinion.

Feel free to use our Ideal Student as your guide but every ministry is different so make it your own!

HINT: Remind them this is a “safe place” and no judgement will be given for their answers.

We use this principle:

“No Idea Ownership”

Meaning once you share an idea it is no longer yours but the groups. That way if someone doesn't like the idea, it doesn't mean they don't like you. Since you no longer own the idea, you don't need to defend it or worry about what happens to it, it's now the groups.

HINT: This might take more than one meeting. Don't rush this process and always bathe it in prayer!

THE IDEA STUDENT WORKSHEET

You don't have to have 3 values or 3 columns each ministry is different. The empty boxes on the top are usually use for the values of the church/ministry.

The Student			
<p>BELIEFS</p> <p>What we accept to be true and build our life upon</p> <p><i>(What we teach)</i></p>	<p>Students Discover:</p>	<p>Students Develop:</p>	<p>Students Accept:</p>
<p>VALUES</p> <p>What we think is important and determines our priorities</p> <p><i>(What we program)</i></p>	<p>Students will begin to:</p>	<p>Students will begin to:</p>	<p>Students will begin to:</p>
<p>BEHAVIORS</p> <p>What we do and how we conduct ourselves</p> <p><i>(What we measure)</i></p>	<p>We will see students:</p>	<p>We will see students:</p>	<p>We will see students:</p>