



Barefoot

STUDENT MINISTRY

Information and Policy Handbook

Fall 2019 - Summer 2020



Welcome! Let me take just a moment to introduce myself, tell you about why we exist, and describe to you a few of our general safety practices. First, my name is Linda Smith and I am the Assistant Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries here at First UMC of Mount Dora. I love working alongside parents and families to help their teens come to understand the grace of our Lord. I have been a member of First UMC of Mount Dora for nine years. My husband, Frank Gonzalez, and I have been married for 31 years and have two beautiful daughters.

Now, a little bit more about why Barefoot Student Ministries exists. BSM exists to REACH teens with the gospel of Jesus Christ, to help them GROW as His disciples, and to transform the world by helping teens SERVE others. I believe that your teen has the capacity to be a committed follower of Jesus. In addition, I believe your teen has the ability to transform our world through God's overflowing grace that he or she experiences. Everything we as a ministry team design is based around our mission - a mission designed to see your teen grow in faith and service to God.

In addition to being deeply committed to our mission, we take safety very seriously. We see the participation of your teen in our program as a great sign of trust. It is a sign that we do not take lightly. We are thorough in our screening process and the training of our team. We are also dedicated to procedures and guidelines that most effectively serve this ministry and protect students, adult volunteers, and the staff of our church. Throughout this handbook you will note a few of these policies and guidelines.

Finally, BSM and its leadership share a passion for young people. We look forward to working with you as you take on your mission, faithfully raising your teen to be a responsible citizen of God's Kingdom. If you ever have questions or need prayer, please contact me!

Blessings,

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Why does Barefoot Student Ministries exist?
Is it just for fun or is there more going on beneath the surface of
what we are doing?

BSM exists to REACH teens with the
gospel of Jesus Christ, help them GROW
as His disciples, and to transform the world
by helping teens SERVE others.

These are in all of our activities...they
help us shape how we act as a group.

This helps us determine what we will
and will not do...because this is our
whole reason to exist.

Core Values

Trinity-Centered
Inclusive
Enjoyable

Relational
Relevant

PROGRAM INFORMATION

In accordance with our mission statement, it is our belief that everything we do should fall within one of three categories. These categories are Reach, Grow, and Serve. You will notice that all of our program offerings indicate which of these categories they fulfill. Please take a few moments and browse through the many opportunities we have for your teen.

Wednesdays

Barefoot Hangout - Reach

1:30pm - 5:45pm

On most Wednesdays throughout the school year we open the youth room at 1:30pm until dinner at 5:45pm. High school and middle school students are invited to play games, study or just “hangout.” Our Barefoot snack bar will be open during this time. Many of our teens find hangout as a time to relax and interact with their friends.

All students are required to sign the Barefoot Student Agreement on a yearly basis. This Agreement indicates the rules and expectations for student behavior during the Hangout and Worship times. High School students are expected to follow the sign-out procedures listed in the Agreement. Middle school students must be signed out by a parent if they need to leave campus after signing in for Hangout.



Barefoot Worship - Reach, Grow

6:15pm - 8:00pm



Nearly every Wednesday during the school year, and many Wednesday nights in the summer, Barefoot hosts its main gathering. It is during Barefoot Worship that both middle school and high school students meet for life-changing worship of God. Worship is led by our student worship band. Our Circle groups, messages and teachings are also equally powerful. It is during these nights that students will find great fellowship, challenging teachings, and spiritual encouragement.

Barefoot Worship is an incredible and engaging experience that we strongly encourage all students to attend!

Circles - Grow, Serve

Circles meet on Wednesday nights. These groups are incorporated into our Barefoot Worship time. Circles are groups of students of the same gender and/or similar age with two Circle Leaders. These groups are designed to be a space where students can become part of the discussion, encourage one another, and challenge one another. Circles are where we move students from being part of an audience to being active participants in the body of Christ.



In each Circle there will be Circle Leaders. These leaders are adults or student leaders that we have pre-screened and trained. Their role is to build a mentoring type relationship with your student. Don't be surprised if they show up to one of your student's dances, plays, or sporting events. Circle leaders want to be another positive voice speaking into your student's life!

Sundays

Sunday School - Grow

Sunday school meets from 11am until Noon on Sunday mornings in the youth room. These meeting times are a time of fellowship and discipleship where students study the Bible together. Topics vary but are always engaging and relevant to a student's life.



Various Times

Mission Trips - Serve

Our mission trips are designed to remove students from their comfort zones and push them into situations of serving and loving others. We believe by doing this we are helping students experience the grace of God. Each mission trip is between 6-10 days long. Currently our mission trips operate on a rotating basis. For instance, year one will be a stateside mission trip. Year two would then be an international mission trip.



Summer Camp - Reach, Grow

Each summer, BSM attends Summer Camp at Warren Willis Camp. Warren Willis Summer Camp is by far one of the highlights of our year. The camp is a week long, usually occurring in mid-June. Dates for Summer Camp will be announced in late December.

Other Non-Regular Events - Reach, Grow & Serve

Throughout the year we participate in many different forms of events. Some possible events are Beach Retreats, laser tag, movie nights, caroling, church picnics, homecoming pictures and appetizers, messy game nights, etc. These events are announced various ways but most can be found on the Barefoot calendars.



Student Involvement Opportunities

We strongly encourage all students to get involved in BSM through Barefoot Worship, Circles and Sunday School. In addition, we seek to connect them to the various events we hold throughout the year. For some students we know that they would like to participate in the planning and development of BSM. We are THANKFUL for these students and have developed a few ways for them to invest in Barefoot. Below are a few ways these students can become further invested in BSM. Please note that these groups require serious commitment from both the student and their family.

Barefoot Worship Team - Grow, Serve

“They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom” - Psalm 145:11-12

The Barefoot Worship Team is primarily made up of students who are passionate about leading other students in the worship of our Lord. Their primary goal is to lead students in worshipping God through music on Wednesday nights. Occasionally they will lead worship on Sunday mornings and other special worship services.

Band practices are typically on Sunday afternoons and with run-through being on Wednesday evenings at 5:00pm. Please note that practice times can vary. New musicians of at least seventh grade or higher are always welcome. Each band member will be asked to sign a covenant and will be held accountable to that covenant. Should you have any questions about the covenant, please contact the Director of Youth Ministries.



Student Leadership Team - Grow, Serve



“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes...”

The Student Leadership Team or SLT has three primary goals. First, to develop within its students the heart and character of a servant leader. Second, to give students an opportunity to give insights into the planning of events, teaching series, games, etc. Finally, to give students an opportunity to teach others through word and action the meaning of servant leadership.

The SLT is open to any 9th-12th grade student who has a growing relationship with Christ, and has a strong desire to care for their peers. The SLT is a great opportunity for students who may be considering a life of full-time service in ministry. Applications are available in the youth room.

*Please note that the SLT is a big commitment and will require a lot from your student. Also note that not all teens who apply will make this team.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

Many of our parents desire to be involved within BSM. We highly value parents and love to see parents involved in this ministry! Some parents get involved by praying for the ministry and students, some open up their homes for events, others provide food, paint walls, build stages, volunteer on Wednesday nights, are Circle Leaders, donate funds or other needed items. We strongly encourage your involvement within Barefoot. If you are interested in helping on a regular basis, for a one-time event or see a need we have that you can fill then please contact the Director of Youth Ministries.

Communications

It is our hope that students will immerse themselves in the programs and events that BSM hosts. We understand that communication is a vital component of a student's ability to participate. It is because of this importance that we attempt to communicate all events as early and as clearly as possible. Information regarding Barefoot can be found in the Barefoot Updates e-mail, on the church website (MtdoraFumc.org), Facebook (facebook.com/BarefootStudents), Instagram (@BarefootSM), Twitter (@BarefootMtDora), Snapchat (barefootstudent), via text messages or the church bulletin.

While we understand the importance of communication, we also understand that part of our role is to help students grow. One of those areas of growth is the understanding of responsibility. Therefore, we see it as the responsibility of your student to communicate necessary information to parents or Barefoot leaders. Barefoot cannot be held accountable for missed deadlines or missed information. Again, please understand we see this as a growth opportunity for your student. Should you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Youth Ministries.

Join the BSM text message list!

Simply text the word "Barefoot" to 86677

Then, follow the on-screen directions
and you are all done.



How To Afford And Pay For Events

We understand that having a student is expensive! Some of our families can have three students in Barefoot at the same time and we realize they still need to eat! So we work very hard to make our events as affordable as possible. In addition we provide two avenues to assist your family.

Student Accounts

Barefoot hosts three major car parking fundraisers every year. Two of the three are open to anyone in Barefoot while the other is open to those attending the mission trip. When students work at one of these fundraisers, or at one of our other special fundraisers, we divide a portion of the money into a student account for them. The more fundraisers your student participates in, the more money they get in their student account and the less comes out of your pocket!

Student account money may be used as payment for any event or trip that Barefoot offers. Teens should fill out a student account funds request form when using their student accounts. Payments will not be credited to events until this form is filled out in its entirety. These forms are available in the youth room. Student accounts cannot be used for the snack bar or Wednesday night dinners.

Student account funds will remain available to students until their high school graduation or the passing of a six-month time frame in which the teen does not attend a Barefoot program outlined in this handbook. An account that meets one of the previous criteria will be classified as a dead account. Dead account funds will either rollover into an active sibling's account, or in the event that there is no active sibling, the money will move into either the general scholarship fund or dedicated youth account.



Scholarships

In addition to student accounts, Barefoot also provides general scholarships. For students who require financial assistance, we have scholarship funds available. Scholarship applications are available in the youth room. Information will remain confidential and will be maintained within the student ministry and pastoral staff as required for accounting purposes.

If you would like to donate towards our general scholarship fund, please contact the Director of Youth Ministries.

Payment Methods

Currently we are only able to accept cash or check for event registrations. If possible, we prefer check payments. Checks can be made to FUMC Mount Dora. Please include your student's name and event name in the memo line of the check. Registrations can be turned into the drop box located by the sound booth in the youth room.

Barefoot Student Ministry Policies

Child And Youth Protection Policy

A central tenet of the Christian faith is the inherent value and worth of all children, students, and adults. Children and students are least able to protect themselves in our society, and are particularly vulnerable to abuse or neglect. First United Methodist Church of Mount Dora is desirous of doing what it can to protect the students and children who participate in the life of this congregation.

We believe implementing a policy and adopting procedures to protect our children recognizes that:

“Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state, “...children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse.” Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, and exploitation...occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines...God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from abuse.”

In compliance with the Child & Youth Protection Policy, we will thoroughly screen all volunteers in the student ministry. To complete the screening process, volunteers must complete a volunteer application, complete an interview process, provide references and undergo a background check. All volunteers must agree to abide by and adhere to the Child & Youth Protection Policy and all policies listed within this handbook. A copy of the Child & Youth Protection Policy is always available in the church office.

Grade Level And Age Policies

We respect that many students have the opportunity to skip grade levels. We also understand and respect that teens are more than just intellectual beings. They are also in the process of developing socially and emotionally. It is these understandings that inform our need for both grade and age level policies. In order for a student to participate in middle school events they must be in 6th grade through 8th grade and be at least 11 years old on or before the first day of the school year. For a student to participate in high school events they must be in 9th grade through 12th grade and be 14 years old on or before the first day of the school year.

In situations where a student may be too old for an event, the Director of Youth Ministries will determine the best course of action for all parties involved.



Cell Phone And Technological Device Policy

We understand that cell phones are part of everyday life. At the same time it is our goal to focus students on building relationships and growing in their faith. Students may have cell phones during BSM activities. Students may be asked to put their phone away during portions of Barefoot activities. Failure to comply with this request could result in the confiscation of the cell phone or other technological devices.

Behavior Guidelines

As seen in our core values of relational, inclusive and enjoyable, we at BSM desire our events and programs to be positive environments for all parties involved. At times students who fail to comply with rules and expectations can hinder our ability to create a positive environment. For this reason we expect all students to respect their peers, adult volunteers and staff. We also expect students to comply with event schedules, directions given by adult volunteers, student leaders or staff, and to participate with the group.

Failure to follow these general and basic expectations could result in your child being sent home. We will attempt to communicate with parents, in hopes that they can help us find a positive solution to any matter that may arise. If we are unable to come to a place of agreement, one in which the student complies with expectations of any student within BSM, then we reserve the right to ask your student to take a break from Barefoot. This break could be for a week or more and in the most extreme cases, permanent expulsion.

Our hope is to see redemption within students and we will attempt to show grace. Parents, please help us in our efforts of helping your student grow by holding them accountable for their actions. We are a team with you and hope to help you raise a student that is a responsible member of God's Kingdom.



Hangout Sign-In/Out Procedures and Consequences

During the period of Hangout (1:30 - 5:45p), High School students have the privilege of being able to sign themselves in/out of Barefoot. When signed out, they must leave the church campus. However, upon their return, they are required to sign back in. This privilege is offered only for Hangout and does not extend to Worship. Because the period of Worship includes small groups which meet at various sites around campus, we require that any student (Middle or High School) who is checked in remain until Worship has been completed. If a student must leave, we require that a parent come down to the Youth Room to check the student out.

Signing in and out of Hangout is a student's responsibility. In order to help them understand its seriousness and value, we have established consequences for not meeting this requirement. If a student forgets to sign in, they will receive a first warning via text or in person. This warning will let them know that they forgot to sign in and remind them to sign in the next time they come. If a student forgets to sign in a second time, they will receive a two-week suspension from Hangout attendance only. Further options will be considered if this behavior proves habitual.

Transportation Policy

The church will provide buses or other forms of transportation for weekly programs, events, trips, or retreats that require transportation. Students are not permitted to drive themselves and/or other students during any of these activities. The only exception to a teen driving to an event is with written consent from a parent or guardian at least 48 hours in advance and the drive is not further in miles than Warren Willis campground. If there are not enough seats on the church vehicles, other arrangements will be made by the Director of Youth Ministries.

Each vehicle will have enough seat belts for each passenger and seat belts must be worn at all times. Vehicles should be kept clean and trash picked up after each use.

Cleaning And Maintenance of Student Areas



It is a shared responsibility of each person in BSM to maintain all spaces and to keep all facilities clean, neat and orderly. The appearance of the student area creates an important first impression for new students, their families, and our church. Every student is expected to stay until our facilities are clean- this is especially true for Wednesday nights.

Medical Forms

All students must have a church medical form and release on file in order to participate in off-site activities. Many times our off-site location host requires additional paperwork. Any student that has not completed all required

forms will not be able to participate in the off-site activity.

Participation In Trips And Events

Barefoot Student Ministry hosts many trips, events, and retreats throughout the year. Some of these may include: Summer Camp, mission trips, beach retreats, confirmation retreats, etc. Unless otherwise stated, all events should be considered open to anyone in grades 6-12. Although there are additional costs for most of these trips, we want everyone who would like to participate to attend regardless of the cost. The student ministry offers various opportunities to offset these costs including, but not limited to, scholarships, student accounts and sponsorships.

All events will have registration and payment deadlines. **Students are expected to be on time with payment and registration.** Missing a deadline will mean missing out on an event or forfeiting a spot to another person.

Please remember that students represent the church through their actions and language when they are participating in any off-site activity. Our interactions with others, use of outside facilities, and our concern for the environment should exemplify Christ-like behavior. While disciplinary actions are rare, we will do our best to handle behavior issues in positive and redemptive manners. If we cannot resolve an issue or if the problem involves drugs, alcohol or weapons, or deemed necessary by the Director of Youth Ministries, we will contact the student's family immediately. If deemed necessary, we will send the student home immediately at the expense of the student's family. There will not be a refund for any portion of the trip missed due to behavioral issues. **We should always remember that participation in any BSM activity is not a right, but rather a privilege that may be revoked at anytime.**

All of the previously stated policies are at the discretion of the Director of Youth Ministries and may be modified for individual cases.

