

09.02.20

Dear middle school and high school students and parents,

I hope that this letter finds you all doing well and getting back into the school rhythm.

I'm writing to let you know what we have in store for the middle school and high school student ministry at Covenant Church this fall. For the past 4 weeks, we have been working hard at making some appropriate modifications to our student ministry for the fall semester. Our updated approach is going to allow us to actively participate in the Re-Imagining Church annual plan, to foster community and discipleship between our students and adult leaders, to take into account the varied comfort levels of each person involved in regards to the Covid epidemic, and it is designed to allow us continue regardless of what may or may not come our way in the next few months. We talked with the students about this approach at our end of the summer gathering on August 19, but I wanted to reshare it with you all again today.

There are two main components to our student ministry approach this fall: Student Ministry Discipleship Groups and Youth Group.

1. Student Ministry Discipleship Groups

During the next few days, each of our middle and high school students is going to be invited to become part of a student ministry discipleship group. Each of these groups, determined primarily by gender and grade level, will be comprised of 1-2 adults and 2-4 students with no more than 6 persons in each group. The adults in each group are our Discipleship Journey guides (many of whom have been journeying with their students for a few years now), MS and HS youth group leaders, as well as some new adults who have heart for youth discipleship. There will be at least 6 middle school discipleship groups and 8 high school discipleship groups.

During the time they spend together, each group will do three main things together. First, they will "check in" with each other, sharing highs and lows of their week and what is going on in their lives. Second, they will work through part of the Re-Imagining Church spiritual formation guide. Our students are an integral part of this church wide spiritual conversation and formation process. We look forward to their voice and participation in our church wide formation process. Finally, they will spend time in prayer together, praying for one another.

Because each of these groups will have people with different risk, comfort, and in-person availability levels regarding the ongoing Covid-19 epidemic, each group will be allowed to determine the when (time and day of the week), where (location), and how (in person or online) their group will meet. We want to honor and respect the comfort levels of everyone involved. Each group will figure out and determine what is best for them. We are encouraging these groups to try and commit to meeting 3 times (weeks) a month to maintain a consistent spiritual formation process.

Each student will receive an invitation inviting them to join a group. Keep an eye out for these invitations coming in the next 2 weeks!

## 2. Youth Group

In addition to these discipleship groups, we are also going to try and meet at least once a month as a larger youth group for some social/fun gatherings as well as some possible service opportunities. To maintain the health and safety of the students, these larger gatherings will primarily be outdoor activities, and we will require our students and leaders to wear masks. Given the ongoing uncertainty of what might be available, allowed, or wise to do in the next few months, we will be planning these youth group gatherings “just in time”, about 2-3 weeks out. We will do our best to promote and communicate when these outings will be with as much lead time as possible.

Please follow the **msmcovcrc** (middle school ministry) and **hsmcovcrc** (high school ministry) Instagram feeds to stay up to date regarding upcoming student ministry gatherings and events.

You can also sign up for text and/or email reminders and updates regarding the student ministry here:

Middle School Ministry: <https://www.remind.com/join/msmcovcrc>

High School Ministry: <https://www.remind.com/join/hsmcovcrc>

You can also visit the student ministry webpages for information and dates regarding what is in store for student ministry at Covenant Church.

Middle School Ministry: <https://covenant-crc.org/middle-school/>

High School Ministry: <https://covenant-crc.org/high-school/>

Finally, each fall we send out a link to our online Covenant Children & Youth Registration liability and consent form. We will be sending out an email with this link next week. Keep an eye out for that.

We are looking forward to our next season of student ministry. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me ([henry.schenkel@covenant-crc.org](mailto:henry.schenkel@covenant-crc.org), office – 616.455.5120, cell 616.745.0006).

Blessings!

Pastor Henry