

**Staff Manual**  
**Ignite Middle School Ministries**

# Ignite Philosophy of Ministry

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## 1. WHY DO WE DO IT? (Biblical foundations for Ignite)

1. **He first loved us (I John 4:19)**
  - a. This is where it all begins. We MUST start here. We are motivated to do what we do because Jesus loved us first.
2. **He came to us (John 1:14a)**
  - a. Jesus gave up everything (Philippians 2:6-8) to become flesh and live among us. He came to our world and demonstrated this is a POWERFUL way to impact people. Likewise, we strive to be incarnational with our students.
3. **He showed us the model**
  - a. Jesus' ministry was three years. Similarly, we have three years with middle schoolers. Jesus didn't focus on evangelistic crusades, he focused on 12 men. Among those 12 He went even deeper and built into the lives of 3. We seek to minister in small groups as Jesus did and see the Holy Spirit bring about life change within the context of deep relationships.
4. **He called us to make followers (Matthew 28:19-20)**
  - a. This is a command that Jesus gave to EVERY believer. We take this command seriously and seek to go, make followers, baptize, and teach in the context of middle school age students.

## 2. WHAT DO WE DO? (Mission for Ignite)

At Ignite Middle School Ministries, our mission is to:

*"Ignite a passion in middle schoolers to follow Jesus Christ"*

### **ig·nite [ig-nahyt]-to set on fire**

This word describes our context. To ignite is the beginning of a fire. These students, 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 11 to 14 year olds, are at a PIVOTAL time in their lives. They are at the beginnings of emotional, relational, physical, social, and spiritual growth. It is a HUGE privilege to be able to walk with them as they discover who Jesus is and their hearts are set on fire for Him.

### **pas·sion [pash-uh n]-any powerful or compelling emotion or feeling**

At this age, our students encounter many contenders for their passions, but they have a limited understanding of what it truly means to be passionate for something. Our desire is to see middle school students compelled to follow Jesus Christ above all else.

### **fol·low [fol-oh] - to accept as a guide or leader; accept the authority of or give allegiance to**

We accept Jesus Christ as our life guide. Moreover, He is our Savior and Master. He deserves our allegiance and is the final authority in our life because HE IS GOD. We seek to make following Christ something that touches ALL PARTS of the lives of our middle schoolers.

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### 3. HOW DO WE DO IT? (Ministry strategy/methods for Ignite)

Our goal is to teach middle schoolers to passionately follow Jesus Christ and model it with our lives.

#### How do do that?

We have chosen to implement a 4 fold strategy that helps our students to follow Him daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly through a series of activities, initiatives, events, programs, and most importantly, through relationships.

#### **GATHER to encounter Christ**

We get together with other believers in our church family, encourage one another, and celebrate who God is and what He's done.

The following are **ENVIRONMENTS** we create for our middle schoolers to **GATHER**:

- Wednesday Night Ignite (Games, Shake-It-Up, and Worship)
- Fall Kickoff
- Hawaiian Ice
- Zeteo
- Ignite @ the Movies
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Welcome Week

**\*\*Though we GATHER throughout the year using the environments seen above, we focus more intently on GATHERING in the fall from September to November. Inviting friends is a very important part of the equation as we GATHER.\*\***

#### **GROW in love for God & others**

In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus reminds us that growing in love is the greatest commandment. There are environments and activities that aid in growing our love including spending time together and studying the Word.

The following are **ENVIRONMENTS** we create for our middle schoolers to **GROW**:

- Wednesday Night Ignite (Message from God's Word, Small Group Discussion Time)
- Yearly Growth Conference (ATF)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat
- Small Group Nights
- Sunday School
- Legacy Bible Study
- Camp Spalding

**\*\*Though we always GROW throughout the year using the environments seen above, we focus more intently on GROWING in the winter from December to February. Teaching moves from an evangelistic focus to a greater thrust on discipleship.\*\***

#### **GO to live and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit**

Though they are young, middle schoolers have the blessing of being able to GO in the name of Jesus and be USEFUL to Him. Not only do we provide opportunities for SERVICE and EVANGELISM, but students

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are blessed to attend a mission field every day with their involvement in school, sports teams and other activities. Our students are encouraged to live out their faith in the world around them.

The following are **ENVIRONMENTS** we create for our middle schoolers to **GO**:

Wednesday Night Ignite (Service Opportunities)  
Spring Break Missions Trip to Spokane

**\*\*Though we always GO throughout the year using the environments seen above, we focus more intently on GOING in the spring from March to May. Our teaching and activities reflect emphasis on making an impact for Christ in the world around us.\*\***

### **CONNECT to one another through fellowship**

Summer: Students have ALOT of time on their hands and this is a fantastic opportunity to be incarnational with them. CONNECT is all about hanging out with students, building deeper relationships, and creating much-needed UNITY for the youth group that can often be clearly seen throughout the year.

The following are **ENVIRONMENTS** we create for our middle schoolers to **CONNECT**:

Wednesday Night Ignite (all elements)  
Small Group Nights  
Ignite @ the Movies  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade Welcome Week  
Camp Spalding  
Boo-oo

**\*\*Though we always CONNECT throughout the year using the environments seen above, we focus more intently on CONNECTING in the summer from June to August. Our students are on summer break and have lots of time to hang out and grow together in relationship.\*\***

## **4. WHAT DO WE VALUE? (Style of ministry at Ignite)**

### **Building Relationships**

Relationships are the NUMBER 1 vehicle for communicating Christ's love, mercy, and grace to middle school students. If we hope to help them "ignite a passion for following Christ", we must show them that through relationships. When we build relationships with students, we gain trust and earn the right to be heard.

### **Environments**

Though the Holy Spirit does the work, it is our job to help create environments for students to be comfortable, become vulnerable, and experience the Holy Spirit's work of changing their hearts.

### **Consistency**

Middle School students need adults whom they can count on as a stable influence in their life. Consistent leaders can build trust with students, which allow relationships to grow deeper.

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### 5. HOW DO WE DO SMALL GROUPS?

As mentioned above, we believe involving our youth in small groups is the best way to “ignite a passion in middle schoolers to follow Jesus Christ”. We approach small groups in the following ways:

#### Time

Our philosophy at Ignite is that small group leaders walk with the SAME GROUP of students through all **3 years** of their time at Ignite. For example, a small group leader would start with the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade boys as they enter Ignite, walk with them for a year, and then continue with them as they go into 7<sup>th</sup> and finally, 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We understand it is unfair to expect a leader to commit for 3 years at a time, but it is our hope that they grow to love their students so much that they will walk with them all the way through Ignite. We do ask our small group leaders to commit to walk with a small group for **at least 1 year**.

#### Breakdown

Boys and girls are separated into small groups organized by grade level & gender. For example, we have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls and a 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys small group. However, it is common to have too many students in one grade to make one small group a successful environment for sharing and growth. At Ignite we place 2 to 3 same gender small group leaders with a small group of students, and they are free to break up their students into as many mini-small groups as needed (when the group is at 6 or more) on a given night. This allows small group leaders to tag team and benefit from partnership. Also, students do not have to face the fear of ‘never’ being in the same small group as their good friend. One week they may be with their friends and the next week they may be placed in another group. Finally, this strategy of further dividing the small group allows for flexibility in the weekly breakdown of small groups depending on how many students are present.

#### Focus

The goal is to have 2 to 3 small group leaders per grade. This allows us to have a smaller student-to-small-group-leader ratio. This also allows a small group leader to not just focus on all twelve students in the small group, but, as Jesus did, to pick 3 to 4 out of the small group to focus on. In doing this, our students build deeper and deeper relationships with their small group leaders, which ultimately leads to students more passionately following Christ.

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# Ignite Small Group Leader Job Description

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## Mission for small group leader:

Ignite a passion in middle schoolers to follow Jesus Christ  
*BY INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS & EVENTS*

## 1. What does a small group leader need? (Requirements to lead at Ignite)

1. Actively and passionately following Jesus Christ
2. Faithfully attending Easthaven Baptist Church (*membership is not required*)
3. Consistency and Faithfulness in service
4. Patience
  - a. An understanding that we are working with students who are in a unique phase in their life.
  - b. An understanding that middle school fruit often takes a long time to ripen.

## 2. What does a small group leader do? (Expectations and roles at Ignite)

1. **Lead Weekly Small Group Time (mini-pastor)**
  - a. Help your students to unpack the message from God's Word using discussion questions.
  - b. Minimum of 1 year commitment.
2. **Attend and Lead in weekly Wednesday night program**
  - a. Be available to pray with Ignite Staff team at 6:00pm.
  - b. Open to leading games, worship, talks, administrative elements, etc. (*subject to individual's desire*).
3. **Attend Monthly Ignite staff meeting**
  - a. First Thursday of every month at 6:30pm at Easthaven Baptist Church.
  - b. Pray for students, small group leader training, vision casting, and fellowship.
4. **Connect with students outside of church**
  - a. This is the BEST way to deepen relationships with students.
  - b. We encourage and provide opportunities for connection with "Small Group Nights" once a quarter.
  - c. Connect with your students in some capacity (facebook, hangout, phone call, email, encouragement card, invite to your home, GO TO GAMES & CONCERTS, etc.) **AS OFTEN AS YOU ARE ABLE.**
5. **Attend/lead special events**
  - a. We offer special GATHER, GROW, & GO events (Zeteo, Hawaiian Ice, Ignite @ the Movies, Spring Break Mission Trip to Spokane, Camp Spalding, and Growth Conference, etc.) throughout the year for our students that would not be possible without the involvement of our volunteer leaders.
  - b. We often need drivers, cooks, organizers, leaders, game players, and adult presence in order for these events to run smoothly and successfully.
  - c. **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE SPECIAL EVENTS AS OFTEN AS YOU ARE ABLE.**

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# Ignite Small Group Leader Application

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Share the story of how you came to follow Jesus Christ.

Describe your relationship with God now:

Why do you want to be involved in Ignite?

Please list previous ministry experience below:

Signature of Agreement & Commitment:

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the Ignite Staff Manual and I agree with the philosophy and commit to my responsibilities as a small group leader.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please be sure to complete BACKGROUND CHECK FORM and hand in with APPLICATIONS to Pastor Andy  
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Pastor Andy McPeak: (406) 752-7021 or amcpeak@easthaven.org*

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# **Killer Tips for Small Group Leaders**

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- 1. Pray for your students.**
- 2. Learn your students' names.**
- 3. Spend time with students OUTSIDE of church.**
- 4. Come prepared (ready self, read email and scripture passage).**
- 5. Create healthy balance between being a leader and friend.**
- 6. Get to know parents (builds trust & unlocks understanding of students).**
- 7. Act like a leader, not a kid.**
- 8. Ask open-ended questions, don't be afraid to dig deep.**
- 9. Use the THREE R'S (see FAQ sheet for more info).**
- 10. Bring Candy.**
- 11. Invite them to your house.**

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# Ignite FAQ Sheet

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*Frequently Asked Questions for Parents, Students, & Small Group Leaders*

## **Why Ignite?**

Our mission in Middle School Ministry is to **'ignite a passion in middle schoolers to follow Jesus Christ'**. We are so excited for the opportunity to minister to Middle schoolers...and we get to do it during such a formative time in their lives. In MANY CASES these Middle schoolers are in the BEGINNING stages of development emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually. We call our ministry Ignite, because it is the BEGINNING stages of a fire and our hope is to see middle schoolers ignited for Christ and growing into a fire for Him!

## **What is the Wednesday Night Schedule for students?**

Wednesday Night activities are the foundation of our Ignite Middle School Ministries. **Every Wednesday night** we meet in the **theater (room 412)** of Easthaven Baptist Church at **6:15pm** and wrap up at **8:00pm**.

## **What do you do on Wednesday Nights?**

We do a lot on Wednesday nights! We spend time worshipping the Lord, we play games, we grow in small groups, we laugh together, and we look into God's Word, allowing its Truth to guide our lives.

## **What about Sunday mornings?**

Our Sunday Morning Bible study meets at **11:00am** on **Sunday mornings** and wraps up at **12:00pm**. We meet in a room off of the gym, **room 402A**.

## **What do you do during Sunday Morning Bible Study?**

On Sunday Mornings we continue to pursue following Jesus Christ. We do that through interactive lessons, bible studies, and topical studies. One month we may focus on reading a biography of a famous missionary and the next month we may dive into the book of Nehemiah.

## **Who are the leaders?**

The Pastor of Middle School Ministry is Andy McPeak and he ministers with his wife Rebekah. Our leadership team is made of volunteers from Easthaven Baptist Church who care for middle school students & have a desire to help them in following Christ!

## **What is BOOLOO?**

BOOLOO is a THREE DAY EVENT that we have for our students who are GRADUATING 8<sup>th</sup> grade and ENTERING 9<sup>th</sup> grade. BOOLOO takes place in the middle of June, and it is a way for Ignite (Middle School) to say goodbye to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders and Fusion (High School) to say hello! During BOOLOO students will go

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to Silverwood Theme Park and spend the weekend at a cabin in the Northfork area of the Flathead Valley. The word BOOLOO actually means nothing. It is just a goofy word that we made up to name the event.

### **What are Small Group Nights?**

A major focus in Ignite Middle School Ministry is small groups. We believe that students should grow in love for God and others in smaller more manageable environments. Small Groups connect EVERY WEEK during Wednesday Night and are also encouraged to 'hangout' at least once a quarter. Small Group Nights is our quarterly push for small groups to do a fun activity outside of the church. This draws students closer to each other and their leaders!

### **What do you do for Summer Camp?**

During the summer we attend a camp called CAMP SPALDING, located at Davis Lake, outside of New Port, WA. For more information on this fantastic, non-denominational Christian camp, go to [www.campspalding.org](http://www.campspalding.org)

### **Do you have Missions opportunities?**

We encourage our students to see their ENTIRE LIVES as missions opportunities. Our students are challenged to always be looking for ways to care for those in need and share their faith with all around them. We also use our spring quarter as our 'missions focus'. Every year we bring a group of middle school students to Spokane, WA to serve in a Homeless Shelter AND participate in outdoor labor at a Christian camp for underprivileged kids.

### **How do you deal with students not wanting to participate?**

We are not interested in forcing students to participate in certain activities. However, if a student is present we do ask that they respect and honor others who are involved in activities.

### **How do you deal with students who are disruptive?**

At Ignite we use the '3 Rs' which is a 3 phase disciplinary policy. This policy is taken from the well-known Middle School pastor at Saddleback Church. First, we REMIND the student to be respectful and remain quiet and under control. Secondly, if the student continues to distract and make noise we RESEAT him/her. And finally, if the student refuses to cooperate and is continually disrespectful to his/her leaders and peers we will REMOVE him/her. Once REMOVED the parents of the student will be contacted.

### **Do you inform parents when you discuss sensitive topics?**

### **How do you deal with topics like sex, abuse, cutting, etc.?**

Absolutely! Each year we spend about 4-7 weeks addressing the issue of purity in the lives of our middle schoolers. We always send out a warning letter to parents making them aware of the subject matter of these lessons and the dates that they will be taught.

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# Ministry Resources

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### **BOOKS** *(Some very useful ministry tools for our middle schoolers and some of my favorites)*

**Help! I'm a Small Group Leader**, Laurie Polich

**Middle School Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide to Working w/ Early Adolescents**, Mark Oestreicher

**Junior High Ministry**, Wayne Rice

**Not Even A Hint: Guarding Your Heart Against Lust**, Joshua Harris

**Bruchko**, Bruce Olson

**In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership**, Henri Nouwen

**On Being a Servant of God**, Warren Wiersbe

**A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness**, Gene Edwards

### **FACEBOOK**

**Ignite Staff Team-** <http://www.facebook.com/groups/128729403899247/>

The most up-to-date information on small group leading and Ignite. This group is for Ignite Staff only

**Ignite Middle School Ministries-** <http://www.facebook.com/groups/128729403899247/>

Your information source for ALL THINGS Ignite. This group is for anyone interested in Ignite

### **WEBSITES**

**Youth Specialties-** [www.youthspecialties.com](http://www.youthspecialties.com)

Fantastic website with great articles, ideas, resources, & support

**Camp Spalding-** [www.campspalding.org](http://www.campspalding.org)

Get all the information you need about our summer camp

**Egad! Ideas-** [www.egadideas.com](http://www.egadideas.com)

You have a small group party in 10 minutes and have NO IDEA WHAT TO DO!? Egad Ideas does.

### **VIDEOS**

**The Stool-** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3qh2dJxUy8>

A fantastic video that encourages our students to give ALL OF THEIR LIFE to God

**Killer Youth Ministry Tips-** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qd2WituBRRQ>

Ever wonder how you can be a better youth leader? Well, this video gets you started.

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