



Living the Life of a Leader

Expectations of Leadership in Youth for Christ/USA (YFC/USA)

YFC/USA has been called to evangelize young people and raise them up to be contributing leaders in the body of Christ. Our strategy focuses on practicing the 5 Essentials (Widespread Prayer, Loving Relationships, Faithful Bible Teaching, Collaborative Community Strategy, and Adults Who Empower) through community-embedded ministry sites. YFC leaders carry out this evangelistic endeavor. These leaders include paid employees, boards of directors, advisory boards, volunteers and anyone who has been placed to have influence on the chapter, staff, or young people.

YFC expects these leaders to be involved in a local Christian faith community for fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25) as well as spiritual accountability. We consider each of these people who are called into the YFC/USA ministry to be charged to live by standards of Christian leadership. The Bible instructs us that grace is freely given and will ultimately be demonstrated in the life of every Christian. But the Scriptures also takes those expectations to higher levels when it describes the life of a Christian leader.

Paul wrote to Titus with instructions on what to look for in a leader (Titus 1:7-9) and we believe the same principles apply to those in YFC's leadership. Though many scriptures speak to lifestyle standards, this passage in Titus summarizes the expectations given by the whole Bible regarding Christian leadership. *"For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."*

The Bible instructs us that following Jesus Christ means we are not to be conformed to the world, *"... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may*

prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
(Romans 12:2)

Further explanation of these principles is spelled out in other YFC documents, including the “YFC/USA Statement of Faith”, “YFC/USA Standards of Conduct” and “YFC/USA Employee Handbook”, whether local or national, that applies to each respective staff, volunteer or board member as stated in the Charter Covenant.

As leaders in the YFC/USA movement, we are committed to hold each other mutually accountable to be the leaders we are called to be in Scripture. All failures to follow these standards will be addressed fairly and consistently, but behaviors that are non-compliant, unrepentant, and ongoing are of particular concern. Such individuals will not meet our qualifications for hiring or retention.

Staff, volunteers and board members: By signing below I acknowledge that I have read and agree with YFC/USA’s Statement of Faith. I further agree to comply with YFC/USA’s Standards of Conduct in my lifestyle and teaching. For staff only, your signature also acknowledges you have read and agree with the applicable Employee Handbook.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Staff

Board

Volunteer

YFC/USA Standards of Conduct

YFC/USA Leaders

I. Sexual Relationships

Marriage

The Bible teaches that the appropriate place for sexual expression is in the context of a marriage relationship. The biblical description of marriage is one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment. In Matthew 19:4-5, Jesus says, *“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”*

Repeatedly, God uses the symbolism of His relationship with believers as the picture of marriage. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives as Christ loves the Church and wives are exhorted to honor their husbands as the Church does Christ. With this imagery and the truth of God’s ideal for marriage in mind, any sexual relationship outside the marriage context is described in the Bible as either fornication or adultery and (as stated in the sixth commandment) is prohibited throughout the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, sexual advance, activity or relationship between individuals not in a Biblical marriage covenant is sin. YFC leaders must not engage in sexual activity or cohabitation outside of marriage, but conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the above in such a way that their sexual expression and lifestyle is above reproach.

Sexual Identity

Scripture is clear in sharing that all Christians are to find their identity in Christ, including sexual identity. 1 Peter 2:9-10 tells us, *“He called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God’s people.”* Because of God’s redemption of our identity, we find complete and appropriate expression of who we are, including our sexuality, when our actions align with God’s design. God’s design for sexual expression is in the context of a biblical marriage relationship.

Scripture is clear that sexual activity or sexual relationships between individuals of the same gender is sin (Romans 1:26-27) just as is any sexual relationship falling outside of God’s biblical design. Therefore YFC leaders must not engage in same-gender sexual advance, activity or relationship. ⁱ

Gender Identity

Scripture is clear that God created two genders, distinct and mutually exclusive. Genesis 1:27 tells us, *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* God's created order has given unique identities to men and women for His glory, and each person's gender identity is assigned to them by God's design, therefore YFC leaders must not engage in transgender-related activities.

The purpose of these policy statements is not intended to judge, exclude or punish. It is to ask our leaders to be consistent with Scripture's prescriptions for those who deal with sexual and gender identity issues, and to see every leader experience the fullness of identity possible only in Christ's redemption of our lives, including our sexuality.

Pornography

Sexual immorality such as the use of pornography is described in scripture as sin (Matt. 5:27-28). As servants furthering the gospel and providing spiritual leadership, we must live lives that are holy and consider the interests of others above our own. In so doing, YFC leaders must not engage in immoral behaviors such as the use of sexually explicit materials, products and pornography.

The purpose of this policy is not to be punitive to those who deal with sexual temptation or addiction, but to see every leader experience freedom in Christ.

Divorce

YFC/USA places a high priority on healthy marriages, strongly discourages divorce, and supports the overriding scriptural "one-flesh" principle. While divorce, in and of itself, might not eliminate a man or woman from the ministry, it must be remembered that, in the light of Scripture, God's ideal is that there be no divorce and that husbands and wives stay together until death separates them.

YFC/USA adheres to the Biblical model that divorce is only acceptable in the following instances:

1. Unfaithfulness of a spouse involved in an adulterous or illicit sexual relationship (Matthew 5:32)
2. Desertion by a spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-15)
3. Spousal violence or abuse breaking the one-flesh principle (1 Corinthians 7:33-34)

In instances of marital difficulties, YFC/USA encourages reconciliation, that God may be glorified in the healing of relationships. Leaders are encouraged to prioritize the health of their marriages, and special consideration will be given to accommodating elective leaves of absence to resolve serious marital difficulties.ⁱⁱ

YFC/USA leadership retains the discretion to make assessments about the leader's divorce, whether the divorce is consistent with Biblical principles and the ministry principles of YFC/USA and the effect this divorce will have any impact upon employment or other service with YFC/USA.

II. Substance Use/Abuse and Addictions

Addiction is a tragic but prevalent reality in our society and therefore must be addressed in particular by a ministry that works directly with young people. We are a ministry of restoration and transformation into the likeness of Christ. The outreach of YFC/USA is often to those who are struggling with or directly impacted by *addictions of all kinds*. While we desire to be redemptive of all leaders who struggle with *addictions of any kind*, we maintain a primary commitment to high standards and expectations of anyone involved with our mission and pray for restoration for those who cycle back into addictions. Leaders with a history of addiction must be in recovery.

Use of alcohol or tobacco should not take place in the presence of students, and any use is expected to always be in moderation, and with sensitivity to others who may have addictions (Romans 14:21).

III. Financial Responsibilities

YFC/USA expects our leaders to manage all finances of the organization and their personal finances with upmost integrity. As stated in 2 Corinthians 8:20-21, "*We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.*" Financial misconduct includes, but is not limited to, mismanagement of donations and other ministry funds, embezzlement, theft, misuse or abuse of YFC/USA property or assets, identity theft, and misuse of financial and personal data. Such misuse of YFC/USA assets will not be tolerated.

IV. Behavioral Appropriateness

Our goal is to strive to maintain a culture of employees, volunteers and boards who live a life free from intimidation, threats, or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, or any other act, which, in management's opinion, is inappropriate. In addition, insensitive or offensive comments are not tolerated. Except in cases of emergency, employees are expected to contact Human Resources if they believe there is a serious threat to the safety and health of themselves or others.

CONCLUSION

YFC/USA leadership retains the discretion to make assessments about the leader's sin and their ability to continue in this ministry. While we desire to be redemptive toward those who struggle with sin of any kind, we maintain a primary commitment to biblical standards and expectations of anyone involved with our mission. We pray for restoration for those dealing with sin but are uncompromising in our commitment to protect young people providing for them appropriate supervision and ministry role models. Additional guidelines for responding to leaders who are struggling with the areas covered in these Standards are available. Contact YFC/USA Human Resources for further guidance.

YFC/USA expects every leader to be consistent with these standards in their lifestyle and in their teaching, and to use YFC/USA's reporting processesⁱⁱⁱ whenever they have a good faith belief that these Standards of Conduct are not being followed. The areas of concern listed in this document are not an exhaustive list. Youth for Christ desires that every involved leader should live a life above reproach using good and appropriate judgment in all matters. Policies within local YFC Chapters should not be in conflict with the standards contained in "Living the Life of a Leader". Issues of a more serious nature are expected to be communicated to YFC/USA for counsel and guidance. We desire to be transparent and systematic in addressing these issues. Any concerns, questions, or requests for assistance by YFC Chapters to the National Service Center are encouraged and welcomed.

The Christian faith is clearly a welcoming respite for wanderers who fall short of God's glory, but for those involved in ministry, particularly ministry with young people, we are held to a higher standard. Being a part of the ministry of YFC/USA is not a "right", it is a calling and privilege that must be affirmed by those placed in positions of authority within YFC/USA. Individuals who are truly called to the YFC/USA ministry will gladly strive to serve Christ with lives marked by holiness and godliness in lifestyle.

Youth for Christ/USA, Inc. Statement of Faith

All YFC/USA staff, volunteers and board members must affirm our Statement of Faith and exclusive claims of allegiance that Jesus Christ makes upon everyone who would follow him as Christians. With that understanding, I agree with and will adhere to the following Statement of Faith as one of Youth for Christ's leaders, entrusted to advance the YFC mission.

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.

Endnotes

ⁱ Same-sex attraction falls into the category of a temptation like other sexual temptations, and is not in and of itself a sin. We recognize that because we live in a fallen world, our desires do not always align with God's design, (James 1:12-15) but give rise to temptation, and leaders are responsible for their actions when facing temptation.

ⁱⁱ Once a leader or his/her spouse, becomes involved in legal separation or divorce procedures, the leader should notify their director/supervisor and discuss the reasons for the action. There may be a mandatory leave of absence, or a reassignment to a different role, the timing and duration of which will be determined by the supervisor and the Director/Human Resources in conversation with the leader. This leave is not intended to be punitive, but designed to provide time to focus on the circumstances for the separation or divorce. This would include whether those circumstances are consistent with Biblical principles, and whether there is potential for healing in the marriage so that divorce can be avoided.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reporting: When these standards of conduct are not being followed, local leaders should directly contact their local YFC leadership (James 5:19-20, Matthew 18:15-17). In some cases it may be appropriate to contact the YFC/USA Human Resources Department at (303) 843-9000. You are also encouraged to use the anonymous reporting process provided by YFC/USA by calling 1-866-607-SAFE.