

Ministry Safety Protocols

Safety and order are two primary guiding principles in how leaders minister to students at *The Pursuit Camp* and *Pursuit Winter Retreat*. These events are designed to be safe places for students to learn how to pursue Jesus without hindrance and distraction. Paul sums up his discourse on the use of spiritual gifts in the corporate gathering place in this way: “let all things be done *decently* and *in order* (1 Cor. 14:40).” This also sums up our approach as well and the following ministry protocols are in place to keep our students safe.

Before we cover what this requires of you as a leader, we will cover a few basics about who The Pursuit Camp is and how it operates.

THE PURSUIT CAMP

1. The Pursuit Camp is a youth summer camp and winter retreat created and directed by a collection of churches under the supervision of a pastoral council. The execution of these events is carried out by youth pastors, lay leaders, and other church volunteers.
2. We believe God has appointed pastors and leaders in the church to be responsible for the ongoing pastoring and shepherding of its flock. The Pursuit Camp exists to support them in that divine responsibility. (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Titus 1:5)
3. We believe that God calls parents to disciple their children in the context of Christian community. To the degree it is possible, churches are called to partner with parents in their God-given responsibility. (Deut 6:4-9, Eph 6:1-3)
4. We believe in the wisdom of having men exclusively minister to men and women minister exclusively to women at The Pursuit Camp. (1 Tim 3:2; 6:11-14, Titus 1:6-7, 1 Peter 5:8, Acts 25:7)
5. We believe that freedom in Christ is our inheritance in Christ; it is received in a moment but walking in freedom is the process of a lifetime that is carried out in the context of Christian community. (Gal. 5:1, Heb. 12:1, Jas. 1:25, Eccl. 4:9-10)
6. We believe that all ministry is to be done with oversight and equipping; all leaders must be qualified for their positions of leadership. (1 Tim 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9)

HOW TO SUBMIT A CORPORATE, PROPHETIC WORD:

Paul told the church at Corinth to burn for spiritual gifts, especially that they may prophesy. This instruction was a guiding principle for Paul as he sought to address arising issues in the weekly, corporate gathering of the saints in Corinth. At The Pursuit Camp, we want to model this approach and create a culture where leaders and students are zealous to share prophetic words.

What do we mean by sharing a corporate, prophetic word? A *prophetic* word is when the Holy Spirit gives a follower of Jesus a message to share with others, a message that builds up, stirs up, or comforts (1 Cor. 14:3). By *corporate* we mean that it is a word for the community of believers gathering, not just a single, specific person.

If someone senses they are carrying a corporate, prophetic word, here are some next steps:

1. Two questions to consider about what you are hearing from The Holy Spirit:
 - Is this a word for me?
 - Is this a word for now?
2. If the answer to both of those questions is yes, find your youth pastor or minister and share the word to them for consideration. If they are unavailable or inaccessible, you can share it with the camp pastor.
 - Remember, part of being filled with the Spirit means “submitting to one another in the fear of God (Eph. 5:17-21).” This means we are submitting our prophetic word to leaders to help discern whether or not this prophetic word is for now.
3. If given clearance to share the corporate, prophetic word:
 - Pray for clarity before delivering the word
 - Keep the word brief

HOW TO RESPOND TO A STUDENT OVERTAKEN BY SIN:

In Galatians 6:1, Paul says, “if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Paul calls on the community of God to step in and help any brother or sister in Christ who has been overtaken and overcome by sin. This could be the result of their own sinful choices or the effects of the sinful choices of others. The following guidelines will assist you when you encounter a student, ensnared by sin. Examples of a student ensnared in sin would include: engaging with (or exposure to) pornographic content, indulging suicidal thoughts, entertaining same-sex attraction, any form of abuse, etc. Should a student share anything of that nature with you at any time, here are the steps to take in response.

1. Affirm

- Encourage the student that conviction of sin comes directly from the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). If they are hearing God however difficult the confession is, it is for their good (Acts 3:19). God is setting them free from chains that have bound them.
- Let them know that you are on their team and that you will do your part as well as seek out partnerships to help them walk in freedom and victory. Let them know that you will partner with their youth pastor and others to help them walk in victory.

2. Assess

- Assume nothing and ask lots of questions. The goal is to accurately understand the situation as best as possible.
- Let students know that you have several questions about their confession and it is in no way to bring any accusation—it is just to understand what was said.
 - If we aren't clear concerning the extent of the sin pattern or exposure, our plan for freedom won't properly or fully address the issue at hand.
- **EXAMPLE 1:** a student says they, “...are addicted to pornography,” here is a *MINIMUM* set of questions that need to be answered before we put together a response plan.
 - *What do you mean by “addicted”?*
 - How long has this been going on?
 - What is the history of this “addiction”?
 - *How often are you accessing it?*
 - How many times in a day or a week or a month?
 - How many minutes or hours at those times?
 - Are you masturbating?

- How often?
 - *How are you accessing it?*
 - Instagram? Youtube? Internet browser? Online gaming?
 - What devices? TV? iPad? iPhone?
 - Where are you accessing it? Room? Bonus room? School?
 - Is anyone else around when you access it? Siblings or others?
 - *What do you mean by “pornography”?*
 - Is it people in swimsuits or full nudity?
 - Is it videos, pictures, books, audio books, magazines, etc.?
- **EXAMPLE 2:** a student says they, “...are dealing with suicidal thoughts” here is a **MINIMUM** set of questions that need to be answered before we put together a response plan.
 - *What do you mean by “dealing”?*
 - How long has this been going on?
 - How have you been dealing with it?
 - Who else knows?
 - Has there been bullying?
 - What specifically has been said?
 - Where has this been happening?
 - How often is this happening?
 - Who has been bullying you?
 - *How often are these thoughts in your head?*
 - How many times in a day or a week or a month?
 - Where are you when these thoughts happen?
 - What have you been doing/listening to/thinking about when the thoughts come?
 - *What do you mean by “suicidal thoughts”?*
 - **CAUTION:** tread carefully—we aren’t trying to give them any ideas
 - Can you share an example of one of the thoughts?
 - Did you ever plan to carry out the thought? What happened and who else knows (parent, counselor, etc)?
- **EXAMPLE 3:** a student says they, “...are dealing with same-sex attraction” here is a **MINIMUM** set of questions that need to be answered before we put together a response plan.
 - *What do you mean by “dealing”?*
 - How long has this been going on?
 - How have you handled it thus far?
 - *Who knows?*
 - Get as much or a list of this as you can—friends, teachers, parents, leaders, pastors—know everyone who knows.

- What do you mean by “*same-sex attraction*”?
 - Who are we talking about? Be specific.
- If/how is this attraction getting fueled?
 - Social Media? Music? Movies? Pornography?

3. Address

- Fight with light (1 John 1:5-10; Ps. 119:105). Sin likes to isolate people in darkness which means we must do the opposite: bring people into Christian community and shine light of Christ’s word on the situation.
- Two ways we do this:
 - Partnership
 - Inform the student about partnering with their youth pastor and parents in helping them walk through a process of freedom.
 - It is your responsibility to inform your youth pastor of what was shared with you. Then after camp, your church community can follow-up with the student how they see fit.
 - *Note*: regarding abuse (or any risk of physical or emotional harm), there are certain legally required actions we must take. Speak to your youth pastor about next steps in these situations.
 - If this student was from another youth group, you must inform their student pastor.
 - A few recommendations:
 - We recommend that the student have the opportunity to be the first to inform their parents of what was shared.
 - Make yourself available to be a part of that conversation with parents as a support system to the student.
 - Do not make promises to students about confidentiality
 - Prayer
 - Unsheathe “...the sword of the Spirit, that is *the word of God* (Eph. 6:17).” and go to war with them in prayer (Jas. 5:16). We must also shine the light of God’s word on the situation to expose the schemes of the enemy.
 - *Note*: The Pursuit Camp does not hire licensed counselors or therapists or offer such services in any official capacity; such services would be at the discretion of parents/guardians.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A STUDENT CAUSING A DISTRACTION:

If a student is being disruptive, there are a few practical steps we recommend to take in response.

1. Make your presence known to the student causing the distraction. Oftentimes, simply the presence of an authority will stop a distraction in its tracks.
2. If your presence doesn't stop the distraction, verbally correct the situation. Remember, the fruit of the Spirit of gentleness is about strength under restraint; use only as much strength as necessary.
3. If the distraction continues, call them away from the group in a calm, low-key way. Separation can do a lot to mitigate a distraction.
4. If the student refuses, either go find or send for that student's youth pastor. The youth pastor can determine whether or not to involve a safety team member in the situation.