

STUDENT JOURNEY

Dear Parents,

Thanks in advance for taking the time to look through our Student Journey Guidebook. We are honored to be present with your children as they **seek to live the best version of life possible through Jesus**. Our passion is to see your children follow Jesus with their lives. To this end we seek to be your guides, truth-tellers, dream releasers, and cheerleaders for the youth of our city.

We believe that your role, as parents, is paramount in the life of your child. Nothing that we do will ever carry the weight or importance that comes with your family relationships. Our goal is to partner with you in the spiritual development of your children. We hope to be an encouragement and resource to you and your family as you navigate this journey. As part of our student journey family, we hope you will experience the following to be true:

We care about your child

We have a passionate team of over twenty adults who love God and love teenagers. Their role in Student Journey is to walk alongside of your children. Our leaders are committed to making sure that your child understands their unique value and identity. Each of our leaders has been screened and trained to provide a safe and caring environment for your child.

We care about you

Some members of our team are parents themselves and they understand the incredible responsibility you face every day. We want to come along side you and help in any way we can. Ben has been working with students and their families for more than thirteen years, so he has dealt with many recurring youth issues. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need something. If we can help – we will!

We care about your family

Student Journey is committed to helping both your children and your family. Our goal is to help your entire family live the best version of life possible through Jesus.

The following pages will serve as a guide through our Student Journey area. On behalf of our staff and volunteers, thank you again for the privilege of serving your family.

Together,

The SJ Team

517.750.111 (x821)
517.914.8377 (ben's cell)
ben.redmond@westwinds.org
www.studentjourney.info
www.westwinds.org

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

We spend about three hours each week with your children. The other one hundred sixty eight they spend with you! You are and always will be the most important and influential person in your child's life. In light of our support role in the life of your family, we offer the following commitments to you:

WE WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU:

We place the highest priority on providing you with consistent and convenient communication options. We want to keep you informed in advance of activity connected to Student Journey. We also want you to know and understand our theological directions, as well as our strategy for helping your child engage Jesus. Here are some of the ways that you can stay connected:

The Kiosk: Physical copies of applications + drop box for payments.

Parent E-mail: Weekly SJ updates. www.ben.redmond@westwinds.org to join.

SJ TxT: txt 'SJ' + 'your name' to 517.914.8377 to join our text update list.

Facebook: Become a fan of SJ on facebook. www.facebook.com/studentjourney

Direct Communication: 517.914.8377 (Ben cell) + 517.750.1111 x21 (SJ office)

WE WILL PLAN OUR CALENDARS WITH YOU IN MIND:

We know that life is busier now than it has ever been. This generation of students constantly has to juggle school, sports, jobs, friends, and a variety of other extra curricular activities. We understand that most of your children must say no to something else in order to participate in what we are doing. While we understand that many scheduling conflicts are unavoidable when working with a large group, we will pay special attention to the following:

Seasons – Some times of year are naturally busy. We generally will not plan any major events for December (Holidays) or May (finals / end of school).

Cost – We will try to keep costs down by offering multi-student discounts as well as work scholarships. (Work in our office in exchange for discounts.) Also, parents can volunteer as chaperones and receive a discount on the event rate.

In advance – We will work hard to keep our calendars out well in advance. You can expect two calendars per year, a school year calendar (in August), and a summer calendar (in February). In addition, we will make small revisions available through our email list.

WE WILL WORK WITH YOU

We take our role in your family very seriously. However, we know that we are not the primary influence in your child's life...you are. With that in mind, we will work with you in the following ways:

We won't keep secrets – If your child is struggling with something that we deem to be destructive, we will strongly encourage them to talk to you. If your child is engaged in behavior that is dangerous to them, we will come to you. We will never promise your child that something can be kept confidential until we know what that "something" is.

We won't play "parent" – That's your job, not ours. We will establish healthy and appropriate boundaries in our relationships.

We won't play "best friend" – We are caring adults who desire to walk along side your child as they determine their role in God's unfolding story. We will not play the role of best friend in your child's life.

We will keep you aware of cultural trends – Keeping up with the ever-changing culture and trends that surround teenagers is not easy. We will do our best to provide you with information about the issues facing your children right now.

Environments

We believe that one of our primary responsibilities is **to create environments (things, conditions, or influences) that lead students towards the best version of life possible through Jesus.** We have five environments:

EVENTS/TRIPS

At SJ, **we love doing something.** We are adventure seekers who are always looking for new experiences that bring us closer to each other and to God. Because we believe that everything in life is spiritual, we find meaning in ski trips, road trips, or mission trips, much like we do in worship or service.

We believe that **experience enhances relationships.** We also believe that **relationships are a great path towards formation.** So it looks like this:

(fun!!!) (Jesus!!!)
Experiences=Relationships=Formation
(deeper!!!)

We don't provide events and experiences to be a babysitting experience, or so that we can be the coolest group in town. We create experiences because we believe they deepen relationships, which quite often leads to spiritual growth in our students.

STUDENT JOURNEY (SUNDAY NIGHT)

Sunday Nights @ Student Journey is our **large group environment.** We gather on Sundays to **learn** how to live the best version of life possible through Jesus. Sunday Night is experiential, image-driven, participatory, and fun! We're always changing Sunday nights, so it never looks exactly the same, but it is consistently a safe place for students to meet Jesus. This part of our Sunday night lasts from 6:15-7:15

Many students are nervous about attending for the first time. If you let us know your child is coming, we'll be ready to welcome them.

MERGE GROUPS

Merge groups @ Student Journey is our small group environment. We meet every week to allow students to be **known and heard.** Merge groups offer your children the opportunity to continue discussion around the topic of the night, while still creating space for relationship building. This part of our Sunday night lasts from 7:15-8:00. The groups are loosely aligned by grade and gender.

These groups are "co-lead" by two leaders who essentially serve as pastors to your children. These leaders are the primary adult connection, and their info can be found in our SJ directory.

THE ELEMENTS

The Elements @ Student Journey is our growth environment. The Elements provide your children with the opportunity to **take ownership for their own spiritual growth**. This, “self-directed” spiritual growth represents our ultimate desire for every student. The Elements is a series of options that will allow our students (with the help of a coach) to create a unique plan for spiritual growth. The options will be tasks, disciplines, habits or practices in four key areas:



SOUL: These options focus specifically on the **personal development** of a student’s spiritual life.



RELATIONSHIPS: These options focus specifically on the **relational development** of a student’s spiritual life.



CHURCH: These options focus specifically on the **church development** of a student’s spiritual life.



WORLD: These options focus specifically on the **global development** of a student’s spiritual life.

When your children sign up for the SJ Elements, they will be assigned a coach. Our coaches will be helping students by meeting with them, answering questions, and guiding them on through the process. Because our adults utilize the elements, there is great potential for spiritual conversation in your family surrounding the elements.

Ele^ATE

Elevate is our student leadership team. Made up of juniors and seniors, these students help us model the way of Jesus for others. This group is held to a high level of accountability, and they are actively learning about spirituality and leadership. The group is open to any junior or senior who is willing to live up to the expectations.



What is Student Journey?

Student Journey is the junior high + senior high + college community at Westwinds Community Church in Jackson MI. SJ is not an organization, but rather a movement seeking to lead students towards the best version of life possible in Jesus. Student Journey is the lives of many rising up as one. We are rising up for what matters and we're rising up together. We see ourselves as tour guides, dream releasers, truth tellers, and cheerleaders, for this generation.

We believe that each student has a role to play in the story of God as it unfolds, and that belief motivates us to seek caring, appropriate relationships with the youth of our city.

Our story can't be understood by reading our values and beliefs. Instead, those wishing to know more must simply join with us and experience what we hope to become.

To learn more about Westwinds, Student Journey, or Ben Redmond, please visit www.studentjourney.info