



## DETAILED MINISTRY DESCRIPTION

*Thrive Small Group Guide*

### **Thrive (Jr. High Ministry) Small Group Guide - St. John's Lutheran Church, Bloomington, IL**

#### **Purpose**

Thrive is completely and totally about building relationships with God and each other. One of the main purposes of Thrive is to partner with 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade students as they journey through their preteen and early teenage years. Thrive desires to help create a place where students can feel comfortable being and expressing themselves, where they can work through and overcome the problems they confront, where they can take advantage of exciting opportunities before them, and explore a rich spiritual life in scripture as well as in Luther's Small Catechism. The Thrive small group Guides (2 per group) meet with a group of five to ten preteens or teenagers (of the same gender/grade) to help them reach these goals. In small groups, students can gain a sense of belonging, deepen relationships with each other and their families, and grow spiritually through Bible study, discussion, prayer, service and fellowship. The Guide serves, guides, leads, and models the life of a vibrant and growing relationship with Jesus to members of the group.

**Responsible to:** Junior High Director, Thrive/DinnerTime Director and the Junior High Team

#### **Description of duties**

- Review materials provided by staff by going over both the Large Group outline(s) as well as the Small Group questions. By reading over these materials you will gain a better understanding of how to guide your group and anticipate questions/issues your particular group may have.
- Pray for the members of the small group and for your own (and your fellow Guide(s)) demeanor and attitude as you lead the group.
- Arrive at 6:35pm with your Bible, pick up (smiley face) Thrive binder, pick a small group table in the Parish Life Center, and engage in conversation with the youth as they arrive.
- During Large Group time, Guides should help their group to pay attention and Guides should learn from the presentation themselves (note taking is encouraged).
- During Small Group time, Guides should follow their Small Group Sheets including: Opening Prayer, Large Group Review, Opening Question, Bible Question, Practical Application, Lows and Highs, and Closing Prayer.
- Guides are responsible (along with the group's help) to arrange their small group room in a way that is conducive to great discussion and sharing. The group is responsible for cleaning up after itself and putting any items back that were moved.
- On the second Wednesdays, Guides will gather their group together by 6:50pm, provide safe transportation to offsite social/service locations (if applicable), help keep order and direction during the event, and participate fully themselves in the Servant, Fellowship or Team Building Events, return to St. John's by 8:30pm and close in prayer with your small group.
- Lead in a meaningful prayer time for group members and their requests (all three Thrive nights per month).
- Guides will not provide "bribes" to their group as an incentive for good behavior or the like. We should not be rewarding students for behavior that is already expected of them. If you are having problems within your group there are many more advantageous ways to help your group be productive and spiritually focused. Talk to a staff person on designing a plan specifically for your group's needs.

- Guides are responsible for taking attendance, filling out “miss you” cards, completing Fellowship Event and Creative Interruption forms (when applicable) and notifying staff of any concerns they have with their small group or individual members.
- Guides will have the following special items to accomplish with their groups:
  - 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade groups will put together Creative Interruptions for use during Large Group.
  - 7<sup>th</sup> grade groups will lead Large Group opening prayer and serve as worship leaders during Advent and Lenten Services.
- Maintain contact with group members outside of Thrive small group meetings to encourage them in their spiritual growth.
- Attend Guide Huddles as scheduled.
- Work with staff and other small group leaders to lead your small group members on at least one service project per year.

## **Time requirements**

A Thrive Guide will typically spend a half-hour each week preparing to lead the small group’s study and discussion; the small group itself meets 3x a month for 1 hour and 45 minutes; additional time is required for praying for, and for contacting group members outside the meeting times to express care and concern for their well-being as well as any small group information you need to pass on. Anticipate that these duties will add up to a commitment of approximately 30 minutes per week. Thrive Guides are expected to arrive between 6:30pm and 6:35pm (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays) and the Guide will be free to leave after 8:30pm. Guide Huddles (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays) will take place from 6:30pm to 7:30pm.

## **Term**

The Thrive Guide serves for three years. Our goal is for a Guide to start with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade small group and journey with them throughout their middle school/junior high career. Ideally when students finish 8<sup>th</sup> grade we expect Thrive Guides to help encourage their group into the Senior High ministry and helping be a Senior High leader whenever possible.

## **Training and resources**

- Attend Thrive Guide Huddles typically held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month.
- Resources and articles will also be available online at [stjohnsjrhigh.org](http://stjohnsjrhigh.org) (go to the “Guides, Leaders & Parents” section).
- Receive weekly email updates that provide help for the upcoming evening as well as other useful resources to help you lead your small group.
- Attend worship regularly and commit to participating in Bible studies or devotional readings.

## **Qualifications, skills, and gifts**

- A committed and growing relationship with Jesus.
- A firm belief and a passion for the powerful ministry that occurs when preteens and teenagers gather in small group settings.
- Willingness to prepare thoroughly for each Thrive night.
- Gifts of leadership, administration, hospitality, and encouragement.
- Interpersonal, organizational, and communication skills.
- Ability to listen carefully and keep confidences.

## **Benefits to the Volunteer**

Serving as a Thrive Guide is an opportunity to profoundly and positively influence students at a critical time in their lives. You’ll have the opportunity to develop your gifts of guiding and learning. You’ll personally learn more about God’s Word and how to apply it to everyday life, and have the satisfaction of bringing preteens and teenagers together for fellowship, service, support, and study of God’s Word. Certainly, you’ll know the satisfaction of contributing to the spiritual growth of middle school/junior high in the church.