

# Growing Gospel Culture in student ministry

## Walk in the Light

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. — 1 John 1:7

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

— James 5:16a

Christian community often drifts towards dishonesty, with individuals presenting themselves to be polished and impressive instead of truly known and honest. But the Bible teaches us that we have real sins and a real savior, and it calls us to confess sins to one another and to pray for one another. We are called to come out of the darkness of sin and dishonesty and “walk in the light, as He is in the light.” Walking in the Light time is a simple, repeatable rhythm of confession of sin and prayer within a small group.

### How do we share during Walking in the Light?

1. Scripture - Introduce the time by reading the passages above and explaining what we are about to do, confess sins to one another and pray for one another.
2. Get Small - Break up into small groups (3-6) or pairs.
3. Confession - The leader of the group should go first in confessing a sin. This could range from specific sins committed in the past or confessing idols or sinful dispositions.
4. Prayer - Immediately after the person shares, their partner or the person to their right will jump in and pray for them, asking for God's help for their fellow believer, for healing, for repentance, for felt forgiveness.
5. Repeat - The next person in the group has a chance to confess. And the next person prays for them.

### Ground Rules:

1. We don't joke or gossip about things shared during Walking in the Light.
2. Confession of sin is not forced. Feel free to simply pass when it's your turn.
3. This is not a time for offering each other advice or silver bullet answers (“Well what you really need to do to fix that is ...”).
4. This is not a time of commiserating with one another or downplaying another's sin (“I do that, too! It's not a big deal”).

### Note for Youth Leaders:

1. Leaders should not confess anything that glorifies sin or exposes young students to new sins. This doesn't mean a lack of honesty but rather more simplicity.
2. Leaders should communicate with parents if a student confesses something related to self-harm or potential abuse.
3. The deep significance of this time won't stick unless students see you lead the way in confessing real, specific ways you need Jesus and his Spirit's renewing power.

Above practices borrowed straight from series by Vince Greenwald, the student ministry director at Immanuel Church in Nashville, TN. and posted on <https://www.youthpastortheologian.com/resources/gospel-culture-walking-in-the-light>

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## Burden Bearing

**"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2**

One of the key ways that we are called to live out the gospel in the church is by bearing one another's burdens. This means both sharing the things that weigh on our hearts with each other and then carrying the burdens of our fellow believers. Burden-bearing Time is a regular opportunity for us to tangibly obey and live out this command from Galatians 6:2.

What is a burden? A burden could be many things: a broken relationship with a relative or friend, having been betrayed, sinned against, or wounded, anxiety related to school or a sport, a sin struggle that you are in that you can't seem to get out of, the loss of a loved one, pain from living in a broken, sinful world. All of these are burdens. And all of us carry them. And none of us who belong to Christ and his church have to carry them alone.

### How do we share in burden-bearing time?

1. Scripture: Introduce the time by reading Galatians 6:2 and explaining what we are about to do, share our burdens, pray for one another, and then carry our burdens together.
2. Sharing: A leader will go first and share with the group a heavy burden that is weighing them down. They're not going to use fancy language or lots of words, but just explain the burden as clearly and plainly as they can.
3. Prayer: Then at least one other person, but up to 3 or 4 people will come around them, and pray for them, for God to act and move in this situation. Anyone who feels led to pray for the person can just jump right in and ask for the Lord to help.
4. Carrying the Burden Together: In that sharing and praying, the burden goes from just being on one person's shoulders to being shared by all of us. Now we're living like Christians, carrying each other's burdens, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Repeat: After the leader goes, the person to their left is invited to go next.
6. Follow up: We're now bearing these burdens together. Let's keep bearing them through prayer and tangibly caring for one another and checking on one another.

### Is this different from Walking in the Light?

Walking in the Light is focused on confessing sins that we have committed. Burden-bearing Time is sharing heavy things in our life such as anxiety in school, a broken relationship, the death of a loved one, being sinned against, things that may not be caused by our sin but that weigh us down.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As your group members are sharing, leaders should write down the burdens being shared and pray for and, to the extent possible, tangibly help carry these burdens. If we don't follow up with our sister or brother who shares, we risk hypocrisy and students feeling like they are alone with the burden that they shared.

*Above practices borrowed straight from series by Vince Greenwald, the student ministry director at Immanuel Church in Nashville, TN. and posted on <https://www.youthpastortheologian.com/resources/gospel-culture-burden-bearing>*

# Growing Gospel Culture in student ministry

## Honor Time

**Outdo one another in showing honor.**

**- Romans 12:10b**

**Death and life are in the power of the tongue - Proverbs 18:21a**

Words can hurt. Our conversations during the week are often characterized by weather talk and insincerity, sarcasm and put-downs. But in the book of Romans, Christians are commanded to competitively honor one another, to “outdo one another in showing honor.” What if we carved out a space to honor our fellow believers, to intentionally tell them with our words how we see Christ in them? That’s what Honor Time is all about.

### How to do Honor Time:

1. Scripture - Introduce the time by reading the passages above and explaining what we are about to do, share how we see Christ in each other.
2. Context - Honor time can work in big groups or small groups. It can also be done in 5 minutes or could easily run an hour. Depending on group size, you may ask people to stand up when they share, raise their hand, etc. Make it work for your context.
3. Ground Rules - Honor time can easily devolve into flattery, empty compliments, or sucking up to the leaders or popular people in the room. Explain the ground rules. “Here’s what we’re not doing. This isn’t a time of flattery or empty compliments. Here’s what we are doing, recognizing the work of Christ in each other. A great honor starts with: “I see Christ in you in how you \_\_\_\_\_” or “When you \_\_\_\_\_, that was evidence of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in your life.”
4. Sharing - Leaders often kick off this time, but they don’t necessarily have to. Just launch into a time of people encouraging one another.

### Helpful Hints for Leaders:

When doing honor time with young people, it really helps to have a tactile object that keeps you on track. The way our groups practice this is by throwing a ball of yarn from person to person when honoring one another, and then everyone holds onto the cord as it goes around. We do this for two reasons.

1. This makes it more likely that everyone gets in on both honoring others and being honored.
2. This is also a lot of fun. It makes a big web of honor, and the students love it. We do this at the end of each semester and often to close out retreats and camps.

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**<https://www.youthpastortheologian.com/resources/gospel-culture-honor-time>**