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Members' Handbook

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We welcome you to Shining Light! **Our organization is about Leadership, Discipleship, Community & Service.** We challenge our members in these areas, seeking to stretch and grow our members beyond what is expected of them in many places and even what they may expect. And, we have a great time doing that together! As a ministry team we have spent many years refining and developing this program and now can confidently state that we offer experiences like no other youth ministry in the United States. Some of the largest and most recognized facilities where we do ministry tell us we are the largest production ministry of our kind in the country. **We want our members to learn more about God, others, and themselves through the experiences we provide.** We seek and design experiences to challenge our members, preparing them to face the realities of our world, learn the possibilities of working as a team, and to support and hold each other accountable to live and thrive as Jesus followers both in Shining Light and outside. For many young people, participation has been an opportunity to grow and develop personally as a Jesus follower, make life-long friends, and better understand our world. We hope it is for you too. We and the young people in the group are very serious about our faith and the mission of Shining Light. While we find most people thrive in this environment, we want to be clear about what we are seeking to do, so we have created this manual to help us all have common goals and agree on how we will carry out our mission in Shining Light.

For **new members**, we know it can be a little overwhelming at first, so take a few weeks and even a program or two to see what Shining Light is like. It can take some time to see what this ministry is about and fit into our diverse community, so we are glad to work with you to discover Shining Light.

For **returning members**, you have experienced quite a bit in your time with Shining Light. Your growth opportunity will increasingly become how you can help others by being an encourager and an excellent example of a Jesus follower serving in this ministry. Please keep in mind that our goal is to help you grow and develop as a Jesus follower, so expectations will increase the longer you are with the group!

For **all members**, we know each person is a unique creation of God's! Each of us is on a journey to become more Christ-like, our unique expression of that. We have very different experiences, different personalities, etc. While we strive to keep some uniformity to participation, we are small enough to adjust as needed for individuals according to the best judgment we can offer. There may be slightly different variations of how the following guidelines are applied to each individual, balancing the best interests of the individuals and the organization.

Mission:

"Developing Christian leaders and sharing the message of Jesus" - Shining Light is an interdenominational youth ministry offering experiences that help young people better understand God, others, and themselves. We do this by using the performing arts as a connection to people in challenging situations and interacting with Christian leaders in the world. Through these unique experiences, small groups, teaching, and worship we promote self-leadership, discipleship and lifestyle accountability among all our members. We also seek to offer additional leadership opportunities for members demonstrating strength in this area.



What We Provide:

LEADERSHIP

- ◆ High quality team-building experiences
- ◆ Challenging situations that build confidence
- ◆ Perspective-stretching opportunities
- ◆ Interactions with respected community & ministry leaders

DISCIPLESHIP

- ◆ Community of peers serious about faith
- ◆ Relevant biblical teaching
- ◆ Small & large group discussions
- ◆ Accountability to live as a Jesus follower

COMMUNITY

- ◆ Unique, challenging experiences with peers who share common values, beliefs and goals
- ◆ Fun community-building activities & social events to help form lasting relationships
- ◆ Opportunities and encouragement to build relationships outside typical circle of friends
- ◆ Guidance in developing healthy conflict resolution skills

SERVICE

- ◆ 20 outreaches to over 3,000 people in challenging situations
- ◆ Participation in set-up team
- ◆ Fund raising opportunities & support

What We Expect:

LEADERSHIP

- ◆ Interest in personal growth
- ◆ Willingness to be a follower & team player
- ◆ Personal responsibility & mature conduct that exceeds common expectations of teenagers

DISCIPLESHIP

- ◆ Desire to be a Jesus follower
- ◆ Active and constructive contribution to a small group of peers
- ◆ Consistent effort to live a Christian lifestyle
- ◆ Attendance at a local church

COMMUNITY

- ◆ Attendance at all Shining Light & Nexus events
- ◆ Desire to expand circle of friends
- ◆ Respect for peer leaders and staff
- ◆ Cooperation with the overall culture & mission
- ◆ Willingness to practice healthy conflict resolution

SERVICE

- ◆ Desire to serve people in challenging situations
- ◆ Willingness to do whatever is needed to support our mission
- ◆ Fulfill your financial obligation



General Information

Joining/Age of members

New members are recruited each September. With approval of the director, people are welcome to join anytime through the year.

Age to join: 9th grade (and age 14) through age 23 (exceptions may be made).

Continued participation after age 23 will be considered individually.

Auditions

No auditions are required for chorus members.

Auditions are held for solos, drama parts, and lead dancers. People with solos, drama parts, feature dance roles, etc. are expected to be at all events, including tour. Please consider this before auditioning!

Working with Churches

Our goal is to provide ministry experiences, growth opportunities, and a strong Christian youth community that will prepare and equip young people to better serve in their home churches. Sometimes the Shining Light schedule will conflict with home church activities. While we are glad to work with these conflicts, especially when they are of a very important nature, in cases where there are many conflicts, we suggest that the Shining Light/Nexus season be viewed as a “mission” year and given priority .

Nexus

Nexus is our effort to share the Shining Light community with our members’ friends and peers and spend some time just having fun together. **Attendance at these events is required of SL members.** *Exceptions can be granted if there is an important conflict. We ask that parents of high school students contact us if there is a conflict. Older members should speak to Kelly or Jeff directly regarding missing one of these events.* We have hang out/ activity nights on 3 Sunday nights instead of a rehearsal (Oct, Nov, March) and have special events on New Year’s Eve and the Super Bowl. We encourage our members to bring friends to participate in a fun, safe, Christian community based on the Shining Light community. These events generally are from 5:30 - 8:30 except New Year’s Eve & the Super Bowl.

Parents’ Roles

The primary role of SL members’ parents is to *support your child* in doing this ministry!

1. **Encouragement** - Encourage your child when they get discouraged, overwhelmed, etc. (call Kelly or Jeff for assistance if helpful)
2. **Make Shining Light a Priority** - Help them make priority decisions to fulfill their role on our team, especially regarding attendance. (encourage them to think ahead with homework, work schedule, etc.)
3. **Support the Financial Commitment** - Help your child take care of the **financial commitment** to our team. The designated **parent(s) will be the contact for high school age participants** for financial matters. For **post-high school, the member** will be the primary contact, but we urge parents to be helpful and supportive as all participants raise their funds.
4. We primarily rely on designated, long-term staff for support of the group. We only need **parents assistance with snacks, some fund raising events, and occasional other roles.**

Overnight trips

Our overnight trips and summer tour are some of the most meaningful experiences of Shining Light. Most expenses are paid on these trips with the exception of an **occasional meal during free time and an occasional entertainment activity.**

An *air mattress* is suggested as we usually sleep on floors.

Flip flops are needed for public showers.

Dress (see dress Guidelines—page 10)

Shining Light shirts are provided for presentations and setup. 2-3 shirts are provided at no charge. Cost for additional shirts is \$10. Participants need to have **long khaki pants** (loose fitting) for all presentations. No low cut or skinny khakis. **No make-up or jewelry is allowed for any presentation.** Those on designated setup teams may wear jeans or black pants (no holes or low cut pants) and a solid black t-shirt (we will provide 2-3 shirts) for setup to avoid getting performance clothes dirty.

Shoes: close toe & closed heel shoes are required for all presentations. **Shoes must be supportive. No moccasins, slippers or similar shoes are permitted for travel, setup, or presentation unless approved for special dances, etc.**

ID & Safety

Every member **needs a State issued photo ID.** Instructions for obtaining these for people without a driver's license are available. We will go into adult rehab centers, youth and adult correctional facilities, and various parts of large cities. The safety of our group is of the utmost importance to us and to our hosts. We have done work in the over 50 correctional facilities, including some of the largest and most notorious in the US, and traveled in 21 states and Puerto Rico. As with any travel or visit to new places, there is always the possibility of problems. However, our extensive experience in preparing youth for these events and in doing this for 15 years enables us to offer a very safe experience. Our hosts put our safety as their primary concern. We have never had a safety problem in hundreds of experiences.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

Aside from brief, non-sensual greeting hugs, physical contact is generally not permitted. This includes sitting on each other's laps, backrubs, laying together, etc. between opposite and same sexes. Intimate displays of affection are not permitted at any SL/Nexus functions or activities.

Cell Phones/ipods

Cell phones are to be turned off during all rehearsals, programs, setups & teardowns, & services. Violations may result in the phone being taken until the event is over. Cell phones are not permitted in prisons. Cell phones and ipods may not be used during setup or teardown.

SL/Nexus Leaders (Small Group Leaders)

To the extent possible, behavior and other member issues will be overseen by **SL Peer Leaders** selected by **SL Directors** (Jeff & Kelly). Some of these SL Leaders are Small Group Leaders, others fill various other leadership roles. **Staff** are other adults who assist with specific responsibilities in SL and generally do not get involved in discipline issues. All SL members are asked to follow the direction of these SL Leaders. Any questions or insubordination will be resolved by Directors.

Communication

Weekly Announcement Sheets are our primary way of informing members and parents of upcoming events, activities, and changes. These are distributed at the end of every rehearsal and event. While we publish a detailed schedule in September, changes can and will occur. Our **website** www.shining-light.com is also useful for updates, directions to locations, forms, and general information.

Correspondence

At times we receive correspondence from our audiences at our office. If a letter is appropriately written and addressed, we may have someone on our Correspondence Team respond. Specific guidelines are provided for constructing responses. All responses are carefully reviewed and a copy is kept in on file in our office. These are mailed from our office to the facility. Last names, addresses, photos, etc. are not used. Letters we receive from our audience that are addressed to an individual, especially of the opposite sex, will generally be returned or filed with no response.

Our goal is to develop Christian leaders. One of the areas that we strive to help young people understand is how God's economy works and how they can and need to take responsibility for their part in that. God gives us many resources in this world and then gives us the choice of how to use them. Sometimes we have time to offer to God's work and other people have financial resources so we must learn how to be an effective part of connecting them.

Shining Light Provides:

- > **Over 20 Ministry Experiences in a wide variety of situations and places:**
 - > 2-3 overnight trips including:
 - > A weekend in New York City (Harlem, Queens, Manhattan)
 - > Possibly another overnight weekend
 - > Our Milton Hershey School weekend
 - > 9-10 day tour (destination TBA) (generally the tour is included in the cost, however, if additional cost is involved due to extraordinary expenses, we will provide 5-6 months advance notice)
 - > A typical season involves 3-4,000 miles of travel
- > **Opportunities to Meet Christians in A Wide Variety of Situations**
 - > Interactions with Christians working in facilities as wardens, correctional officers, chaplains, counselors, etc.
 - > Interactions with residents and staff in rehab facilities
 - > Testimonies and interactions with community leaders
- > **Production and Training to participate in a highly acclaimed performing arts production**
 - > Choreography, Vocal, Stage Preparation for Chorus (16-20 rehearsals)
 - > Opportunity to Audition for Special Roles in Drama, Music, Dance (additional Coaching and Preparation)
 - > Training and Experience in Production Setup
- > **Discipleship Training** (25-30 group sessions)
- > **Small Group Experiences** (led by carefully selected and trained peers with specially designed materials)
- > **5 special Nexus events for participants and their friends including:**
 - > New Years Eve Celebration
 - > Super Bowl Party
 - > 3 Sunday night events
- > **Support for these activities:**
 - > Approximately 50 meals provided
 - > Full time Production Director
 - > Full Time Executive Director
 - > Artistic & Technical Support



Benefits & Costs

Scholarship Provided*	\$ 1,442
Members' Responsibility	\$ 1,000
TOTAL COST PER MEMBER	\$2,442

Member's Responsibility

Regional Season	\$ 750 (\$550 each if <u>2 or more under 18 or full time students</u> from one family)
Tour	\$ 250 (depending upon destination)

Part of the leadership/discipleship training in Shining Light is learning how to achieve difficult goals. We have found that nearly anyone, regardless of financial situation can raise this amount. We provide fund raising opportunities; ideas for raising support through churches, friends, family, etc.; and members in the group who have overcome difficult financial hurdles to achieve their goal. However, in teaching responsibility and accountability, it is the member's responsibility to discover how they can achieve this, including asking for and obtaining our assistance if needed.

If you need assistance or ideas - please talk to Jeff!

How to handle your financial responsibility to Shining Light:

1. Seek Personal Financial Sponsors for Your Ministry

See our website for a suggested letter to seek support from friends, family, etc.
Request support from your church.

2. Fund raising

See the list of what we offer or do your own project.

3. Personal Contributions

Use any one or combination of the above ways to achieve your goal!

If you raise/contribute more than your personal responsibility, it will be placed in the general scholarship fund for that season.

Personal Statements will be available about 2 weeks prior to the Nov., Feb., & April due dates. Email jeff@shining-light.com if you need a statement at another time. These will list fund raising (fully paid amounts only!), sponsor money received, church contributions received, personal contributions, etc.



Fund Raising OPPORTUNITIES

<u>Month</u>	<u>Fund Raiser</u>	<u>Approximate Amount Credited to Your Account</u>
September	Yankee Candles	approximately 40% of the amount sold
October	Kaufman's Chicken BBQ sale	approximately \$1.80-\$1.90/chicken
Nov./Dec.	Patron Ads (under revision)	50% of patron ad
January	ASK Soup Sale -	approximately \$2.50-\$3/quart
March	Joe Corbi Pizza	approximately \$5.75/pizza sold
April	Kaufman's Chicken BBQ:	approximately \$1.80-\$1.90/chicken

High school students - parents will be our contact person regarding finances.

Post High School members - the member will be the financial contact person.

Payment Plans/Due Dates

	<u>Monthly Plan</u>	<u>Quarterly Plan</u>	
Oct 1	\$150		
Nov 1	\$150	\$300	This amount is required to be eligible to participate in events after 11/15.
Dec 1	\$100		
Jan 1	\$100		
Feb 1	\$100	\$300	This amount is required to participate in events after February 15.
March 1	\$ 75		
April 1	\$ 75	\$150	
	\$750	\$750	
May 1(Tour)	\$250	\$250	

Payments Plans (PER MEMBER) for families with 2 or more participants who are under 18 or full time students.

	<u>Monthly Plan</u>	<u>Quarterly Plan</u>	
Oct 1	\$100		
Nov 1	\$150	\$250	This amount is required to be eligible for the NYC trip.
Dec 1	\$ 50		
Jan 1	\$100		
Feb 1	\$100	\$250	This amount is required to participate in events after February 15.
March 1	\$ 50		
April 1	\$ 50	\$ 50	
	\$550	\$550	
May 1(Tour)	\$250	\$250	



Prison/Shelter/Rehabilitation Facilities Ministry Guidelines

Interaction

Interaction with any audience members before or after the presentation is under the direct guidelines of the facility. Without specific permission, do not talk to or engage with any residents/prisoners. When interacting rules have not been defined, ignore/do not engage with prisoners or residents. In any permitted interactions with the opposite sex, be polite and somewhat disengaging, with clear boundaries.

Do not give last names, addresses, pictures or any personal information under any circumstances.

Avoid eye contact with any specific person in the audience. Something as simple as one prisoner saying a girl noticed him (over everyone else) – just through a look, locking eyes, a special smile, etc. can cause problems later in the facility.

Please remember, some of the people in our audiences are some of the finest con artists. Even prison staff report that they are regularly conned, deceived, or emotionally manipulated by inmates.

Bibles, religious services, Bible study materials and follow up from our presentation are the responsibility of the prison or chaplain services there. Nearly all facilities have extensive ways in place to meet these needs. Any indication from residents of anything else should be considered an attempt to manipulate us or avoid the system and authorities in place, which is usually an area that needs correction.

Other Items

No jewelry may be worn at any time at any of these facilities.

Bring a photo ID for admittance into the prison. (high school IDs are fine if no drivers license is available)

Leave everything possible on the bus or outside the facility, including wallets, purses, etc.

No cell phones are permitted in any facility. Leave them on the bus or outside.

Never leave our designated area without permission of one of our directors (Jeff/Kelly/Barb) & the permission of the facility staff. This includes restroom visits.

Never go somewhere alone. Always have a staff person or other member with you.

If any type of emergency happens while we are at a facility, we will all gather ASAP on our stage or at a designated area. It is important to immediately join the group. This includes during programs, during setup or any other time.

Things To Avoid for Girls

Tight pants

Loose, unsupportive, unpadded bras


Open toe and heel shoes - any exposure of toes or feet

Sitting or any specific actions with legs apart

Licking your lips, or any actions drawing attention to lips

Any moves that can be interpreted as suggestive or sensual

Hair hanging in your face (All hair must be pulled back)



Dress Guidelines

SHINING LIGHT – Presentations and Other SL Activities

We are primarily concerned about who a person is becoming and about growing Christ-like character. Decisions about what we wear are in some ways a reflection of this. Going into prisons and shelters and appearing in front of youth of the opposite sex who we are trying to influence means we must avoid appearance being an obstacle to our message.

For ALL presentations:

Wear your Shining Light clothing from the time we meet (including all bus rides) until we return home unless informed otherwise.

SL attire - long khaki pants (no capris), SL blue shirt. (2-3 shirts will be provided by SL)

- ◆ people on designated setup jobs where they may get dirty may wear solid black shirts/SL black shirts & jeans or black pants
- ◆ SL attire must be loose fitting.
- ◆ No large belt buckles or any kinds of belts that may be noticeable.
- ◆ No low cut or “skinny” khakis.
- ◆ Shirts may not be tied up at any time.

SHOES: Close toe & heel shoes are required for all prison/rehab center/shelter programs.

Shoes must be supportive. No moccasins, slippers or similar shoes are permitted for travel, setup, or presentation unless approved for special dances, etc. No bright colored sneakers.

Long sleeve shirts worn under SL shirts must be the same color as SL shirts.

Other Shining Light or Nexus Events, Trips: (non-SL members are welcome “as they are”) (These guidelines also apply to street clothing and pajamas on overnight trips.)

Clothing should not be designed to draw undue attention to the wearer.

No spaghetti straps, tube tops, exposed midriffs or cleavage.

Undergarments may not be visible, including when working in setup.

Clothing with large holes or in shreds above the knee may not be worn.

Clothing which displays in words or pictures anything promoting alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, violence, etc. may not be worn.

No short shorts. Shorts or similar attire should be close to knee length when standing. At a minimum, they should be longer than fingertip length when the arms are extended at the sides.

Guys must wear a shirt at all times.

Makeup, Hair, Jewelry for ALL presentations—from the time we meet at, or to go to, the location

Makeup will be kept to a minimum – preferably **none**.

Hair must be pulled back out of the face for all presentations.

Jewelry – **no jewelry is permitted for any presentations. PLEASE keep this in mind when getting piercings. You will be required to remove all piercings**—regardless if holes close, items are “stuck”, etc. Plastic studs may be used in some cases. Talk to Kelly or Jeff about this option in advance of the event.

All of this is to avoid drawing attention to any individuals and for safety.

Our goal is to present an image of someone who reflects Christ-like values. **Peer Leaders are the first line of helping people understand clothing implications for the person or for others. We ask all**

One of the defining things about how Shining Light works is our reliance on SL Peer/Small Group Leaders from within the group. Selected at the beginning of the season or as required, these Leaders are members who have demonstrated strong, continuous desire to follow Jesus and an ongoing commitment to this ministry. They are also people who have stood out as influencers in the group, encouraging others through their example and in other ways to follow Jesus and to support and participate in Shining Light. In many ways, we are just giving an official title to those who are already leading in the direction we are going.

Our **Peer Leaders are also a primary connection between our members and the group**, assisting with helping to develop an inclusive community, encouraging members in their roles, group discipline, and other jobs required to make this ministry work well. Peer Leaders are given authority to make decisions and give direction to other members as needed to keep our team functioning to the best of its ability.

By far the most important part of our **Peer Leaders' role is the example they set, both in Shining Light and in the rest of their lives and activities.** We review a Lifestyle & Ministry Covenant with prospective Leaders to challenge them with our high expectations of them in their roles. Their full agreement with striving to live up to this Covenant is required to become a Peer Leader. However, they are going through the same challenges, questioning, etc. as other young people. Occasional mistakes will happen. We use these as growth opportunities for our leaders.

SL/NEXUS Peer Leaders Characteristics We Seek:

1. CHARACTER

- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Authenticity
- ◆ Emotional Stability
- ◆ Reliability
- ◆ Moral Authority (Christ-like lifestyle)

2. TEACHABILITY

- ◆ Humility
- ◆ Readiness to learn
- ◆ Willingness to follow

3. PEOPLE SKILLS

- ◆ Awareness of disconnected people
- ◆ Ability to engage disconnected people
- ◆ Sensitivity to thoughts and feelings of others

4. INITIATIVE

- ◆ Excitement/Energy
- ◆ Looking ahead to tasks that need to be done
- ◆ Courage to take action & move ahead
- ◆ Punctuality

5. INFLUENCE

- ◆ Naturally influence others (people follow your lead)