

A Houseparent's Guide
to the
Experiencing God Ministry

September 2005



BOYS HOME
OF THE SOUTH

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared by the Experiencing God team for the house-parents of the Boys Home of the South. Since the start of this ministry in 2003, we have grown to tremendously appreciate the sacrifice you offer in serving the boys and young men at the Boys Home. Our hearts are to support you in your service, and to encourage you in any way we can. We hope this booklet is helpful for you to see the background and continued unfolding of this ministry.



Following is a mission statement developed for this ministry by the management of the Boys Home and the Experiencing God team:

To provide outside support to the BHOTS in ensuring each boy realizes he is dearly loved by God.

We believe true love focuses on the acceptance and identity of each boy. We realize all of the boys come from backgrounds that include some level of rejection; and out of the rejection comes subtle messages that they are not lovable.



We believe the greatest love is to show people how really lovable they are...to show them who God says He created them to be. We call this the amazing grace of God.

To stay focused on this mission statement, everything we do will always be to:

*Model God's grace through relationships with each boy,
Minister God's grace through individual and group Bible studies for the boys, and
Mentor each boy to grow in grace with opportunities to publicly express their hearts.*



Although this is a Christian ministry, we do not seek to convert any of the boys to a Christian religion. Each member of the Experiencing God team is a Christian who has come to receive God's love through Jesus Christ, and we simply want to share this love to any boy who chooses to participate in this ministry.

We don't share this love by making the boys believe certain ways, we share this love by truly getting to know the boys the best we can, and then being available to hear their hurts and their hopes. We realize that the boys are not required to participate in this ministry, and we honor that. We want each boy to be free to receive love from this ministry in his own precious way and timing.

God bless you as you read this booklet!

EXPERIENCING GOD MINISTRY TEAM HISTORY

March 2003 -- Ministry Founded. Glynda Cadell and Wes Ballard invited a small group of volunteers to meet for discussing the need for an outside ministry of encouragement for the boys. This initial group were: Florence Colby, Gregg Gibbons, Bill Sharp, Ken Knight and his teenage sons Joel and Abel, and Jim Lowry.

Glynda and Wes presented to this group a vision for this ministry: *To be an outside support to the Boys Home staff in ensuring each boy realizes he is dearly loved by God before leaving the Boys Home.*



Boys receive all types of messages.



Boys are striving for identity.



Boys need messages of love and identity.

We decided meeting with the boys every Tuesday evening was the most convenient schedule for this team and the boys. Wes suggested we use the *Experiencing God* curriculum for the boys to study.

HIPPA policy is discussed, background checks are made, and forms completed for any person who comes to serve on this ministry team.

April 2003 -- Ministry start. We started meeting with the boys in the gym. Glynda and Wes came to observe for the first two Tuesday ministry times in the gym.

We soon determined that a structured study of the *Experiencing God* curriculum would not be effective in this group setting of boys with a wide range of ages and after a full day in school. We decided to drop the formal curriculum and to focus on modeling to the boys the truths of the *Experiencing God* curriculum.

The key truth of this curriculum is John 15:5, where Jesus says, “I am the vine (the life of the tree), you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in Him will bear much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.” So, each week, this team began to trust God to be the life of this ministry, and we realized we were branches, or instruments, for His life and love to bear lasting fruit in the hearts of the boys!

Hence, we became known as *The Experiencing God team*.

September 2003 -- Ministry location move. The gym was a great place to have fun group activities for the boys that related to biblical truths we shared in a short devotional time. However, the gym is not conducive to hearing well or singing songs. We experienced God lead us to the chapel that had not been used for years. After chapel time, we continued to walk back to the gym or picnic shelter for a fellowship time, with snacks and activities.

September 2005 -- Ministry continues. We continue to trust God as He is unfolding this ministry. The team has never had to cancel a single Tuesday evening ministry time due to lack of team members; we have been able to fill in for each other when any one of us cannot be present due to work, health, or vacation reasons. We did cancel two Tuesday evenings due to high rains and stormy conditions that would have put the boys’ health and safety at risk.

SOME EG TEAM MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



- ❑ Nearly 100 boys who participated in the ministry have left the Boys Home since 2003. Our hope is that they left with the love of God firmly planted in their hearts.
- ❑ The EG team received an email note from Jim “Gomer Pyle” Nabors in October 2004 sending the boys his blessings. Mr. Pyle donated the money for the chapel 30 years ago.
- ❑ Current catcher for the Minnesota Twins (Matthew Lecroy) was guest speaker in 2005.
- ❑ A local musician (Joey Werner) played the guitar and sang for the boys in 2005.
- ❑ Former linebacker for the Philadelphia Eagles (John LeHeup) was a guest speaker in 2004.
- ❑ Houseparent Adrian invited a friend to share his testimony of time in prison 2005.
- ❑ A teacher from West Greenville Alternative School and pastor (Willie Choice) gave his testimony.
- ❑ EG team coordinated about 30 of the boys to attend a week-long youth vacation Bible school in Simpsonville in summers of 2003 and 2004.
- ❑ New HVAC system was added to the chapel in 2004 as a gift. We used a kerosene heater in 2003.
- ❑ Chapel yard was cleaned and a creek foot bridge was installed by Duke Power June 2005.
- ❑ Chapel time was held around a bonfire October 2003.
- ❑ Richard and Bruce helped paint the inside of the cottages in 2003.
- ❑ Florence normally takes 3 boys to church Sundays...20 boys have attended church through Flo.
- ❑ Carol and her husband Robert have hosted two boys for several Sunday afternoons at their home.
- ❑ Dawn and a friend chaperoned three boys to the Roper Mountain Science Center in 2003.
- ❑ Dawn coordinated a workshop to the boys for job interview training in 2004.
- ❑ A 13-year old boy was the first to preach a sermon of hope from the chapel pulpit in July 2005...several others are now following his example.
- ❑ For accountability and encouragement, we periodically email Glynda results of the chapel times.
- ❑ Florence confidentially emails the boys’ prayer requests to each EG team member each week.
- ❑ Florence donates gift boxes to each boy who will be leaving soon. Each box contains a plaque with the boy’s name on it, a New Testament Bible and encouraging notes and Scripture cards.
- ❑ Florence and Gregg sponsored tables at the Boys Home Spring Soiree 2005 fund raiser.
- ❑ Florence volunteers at the golf tournament fund raiser each September.
- ❑ Participated in groundbreaking ceremonies and opened with prayer for the new dormitory June 2005.

SOME MINISTRY VISION AND PLANS

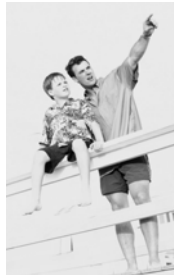
- ❑ Routinely invite youth groups to lead the chapel service. We believe the boys need to interact with boys and girls their age in the positive environment of the chapel.
- ❑ Continue to seek outside speakers with whom the boys can well relate.
- ❑ Advertise our chapel service plans more to the cottages.
- ❑ Meet more regularly with Glynda and house-parents, and to receive more feedback.
- ❑ Continue to grow in our understanding and appreciation of how the boys inter-relate with their case worker, house-parents, and treatment coordinators.
- ❑ Further equip, train, and nurture boys to lead the devotion time at chapel.
- ❑ Plan on a special chapel service on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday evening that will invite the public to encourage the boys and be encouraged.
- ❑ Provide more focused discipleship training to the boys who express an interest.
- ❑ Encourage people to minister to the boys through mailed correspondence.
- ❑ Seek opportunities for boys to grow to speak their hearts and hopes publicly outside of BHOTS.



Our vision is to look in the eyes and heart of each boy, with one goal in mind,...



...to nurture each boy to joyfully see the hope we see for them, and...



... to always point each boy toward truth, hope, and love!

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11)

TYPICAL CHAPEL TIME (every Tuesday evening)

TIMES	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
6:45 to 7:07	Greetings	The EG team arrives before 7:00 to greet the boys and house-parents. We strive to learn the names of the boys and house-parents. We believe calling the boys by their first names let's them know how special they are. We keep confidential photos with names of boys secured posted in the chapel.
7:07 to 7:15	Songs	Glynda suggests we start at the same time each week. We start with Beverly leading the boys to sing along with the piano. We select music that we hope is enjoyable to the boys, and that has a spiritual message to touch the hearts of the boys. We invite the boys to help lead the singing.
7:15 to 7:20	Recognitions	We recognize new boys and house-parents, recognize birthdays, and recognize any boy who has left or has plans to leave the Boys Home.
7:20 to 7:25	Prayer requests	We obtain prayer requests from the boys and encourage the entire group to hear each request. Each boy has our undivided attention to ask whatever is on his heart. Some requests are unspoken. Prayer requests may also be written on slips of paper and put into our prayer box. Each EG team member receives a copy of the requests to pray for the boys during the week. We keep the prayers confidential.
7:25	Opening prayer	We always have 1 to 3 boys to volunteer to open with prayer in front of their peers. This is an amazing...when we first started chapel in 2003, the boys were not open to this. As they have come to trust us, they are opening up in special ways.
7:25 to 7:40	Devotion	One of the EG team members leads a devotion time based on Scriptures. We also periodically invite special guests to lead devotion time. We always seek to actively involve the boys in the devotion time through fun skits and by responding to questions. Also, we help train any boy to lead the devotion time...we believe this strongly nurtures the boys to express their hearts and hopes to others.
7:40 to 7:45	Closing prayer	There are always boys to volunteer to close in prayer. Periodically, a boy or house-parent will ask the entire group to lock arms/hold hands as we pray.
7:45 to 8:00	Fellowship	Weather permitting, we seek to have fellowship with the boys after chapel under the picnic shelter, and sometimes in the gym. This time allows any boy one-on-one time with any EG team member to talk and pray about whatever is on his heart. We realize the boys need to return to their cottages as soon as possible on school nights, so we try to speak to each individual boy during this short fellowship time.

CURRENT EG TEAM MEMBERS

EG Team members come from different directions and different churches within a 20 mile radius of the Boys Home. We did not assemble ourselves to plan this ministry before coming to the Boys Home in March 2003...each of us experiences the hand of God as He brings us together at the Boys Home.

Name	Start Date
Gregg Gibbons (chaplain)	March 2003
Florence Colby	March 2003
Chris Leach (Uncle Charles)	March 2003
Bill Sharp	March 2003
Dawn McClendon	August 2003
Beverly Manwaring	September 2003
Bruce Colby	January 2004
Phyllis Jones	January 2004
Richard Jones	January 2004
Carol Booker	November 2004
Cathy Abshier	April 2005
Michael Butler (in training)	August 2005



Our hearts are to join together with you in lifting each boy up during his window of time here!