

Fathers and Sons Together

How to Start a FAST Ministry or a Grade-Level FAST Group in Your Church



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Introduction

Dads, this handbook is designed to help you: 1) start and lead a FAST ministry and/or 2) start and lead a grade-level FAST group in your church. This follow-up to *Fathers and Sons Together: Becoming Real Men* by John Kain is based on over a decade of our FAST ministry experience at Voyagers Bible Church in Irvine, California (FAST's founding place), where hundreds of fathers and sons have enjoyed FAST. It is designed to be a practical, step-by-step, how-to guide filled with lessons learned along the way.

After you've read the "What Is FAST?" section, head straight to either the "Ministry Launch" or "Group Launch" sections for the tool, steps, and details you need to get started. All you have to do is add prayer! We've also enclosed a CD that has many sample forms, letters, and e-mails for you to use, because there is no need for you to reinvent the wheel. For more free resources, visit our website at: www.fathersons.org.

May God bless you on your journey. Feel free to contact us if we can be of help to you.

John Kain and Mark Humphreys
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What Is FAST?

FAST stands for **F**athers **A**nd **S**ons **T**ogether. It is a ministry that gives boys and young men the opportunity to learn what it means to be a real man in this world as they—with their dads—study God's Word, worship, pray, play, and serve the Lord. We know that sons need their fathers—and boys without fathers around need surrogate dads—to actively influence their spiritual growth. Fathers can be more effective in this crucial role when they join together regularly with other fathers for support, encouragement, advice, and prayer.

FAST defines a real man this way:

1. Does not go along with the world (Psalm 1:1-2; 1 Peter 2:11-12).
2. Does what God wants him to do (Philippians 4:6-8; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Peter 2:9).
3. Leads with a servant's heart (Ephesians 5:25-32, 6:4; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Timothy 5:8).
4. Builds relationships (Colossians 3:12-14; James 5:16; 1 Peter 4:7-11).
5. Looks beyond this life (1 Peter 1:3-7; James 5:7-8; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 12:1-2).

- **Some Basics**

This section covers the highlights of FAST. For more detail on starting a FAST Ministry or grade-level Group, see the “Ministry Launch” and “Group Launch” sections.

FAST groups are divided by grade level; one group for each grade, 5th grade through 12th.

Paralleling the school year, FAST starts in September and ends in June, with a brief break during the Christmas season. Typically, FAST meetings are held once every two weeks (5th - 8th grades) or once every three to four weeks (9th - 12th grades).

Every fourth meeting is an activity for dads and sons to have fun together; no lesson is taught.

Formal ceremonies are held at key life transition points like graduation from 6th grade and from high school.

- **Expectations for Fathers and Sons**

- Before joining a FAST group, we ask the dad, son, and mom to read some material about FAST, pray together, and then make the commitment (dad and son) to attend all of the FAST meetings and activities that year. FAST is not a drop-in ministry, one that people attend occasionally or only when they feel like it.
- We believe it is important for fathers and sons to learn to pray out loud in a group setting, so we ask them to do so at each meeting.
- In order to affirm respect for one another, we ask boys and men to greet each other with eye contact, a handshake, and (for the boys), “Hello, Mr. _____.”

- **What a FAST Meeting Looks Like**

A typical meeting lasts an hour and a half. During the first 30 minutes, the sons play basketball or another sport/activity while the fathers discuss the lesson. During the next 40 minutes, a dad or guest speaker leads a lesson. After that, everyone prays together for 10 minutes. The final 10 minutes are snack/dessert time.

- **Why FAST “Works”**

- Fathers participating in small groups with their sons are encouraged and equipped by one another and by the group leader to prepare their sons for adult life.
- Sons hear different growing-up experiences as well as the same truth from several fathers, bringing depth and balance to the discussion. The dads’ input, wisdom, and guidance are credible and well received because of the context.
- Once the sons understand that the group is a safe place for them to share, they are generally willing to speak openly and ask questions about masculinity, spiritual growth, and any other issues they’re dealing with.

Ministry Launch

Now that you've read the "Introduction" and "What Is FAST?" sections, you may believe that God is leading you to start and lead a FAST ministry in your church. That's GREAT! We are convinced that God will honor your desire to grow and mature with the fathers and sons in your group. It will take a few years, though, to build a successful ministry, so prepare for a marathon, not a sprint as you begin your leadership role.

1. PRAY. First, start or continue praying about this adventure you are about to begin. Ask God for wisdom, discernment, and grade-level group leaders. Also ask people around you to be praying regularly for you. The enemy will not like what you are doing, so this spiritual protection is absolutely crucial.

2. SEEK SUPPORT. Next, seek permission to start the ministry and the support of your church leaders (i.e., pastors, elders, deacons). Make an appointment with those leaders who would potentially oversee a FAST ministry and share with them the information from the "What Is FAST?" section above and your desire to lead. You could give them a copy of *Fathers and Sons Together: Becoming Real Man*, show them the "FAST Ministry Leader Position Description" (#1 in the appendix), and/or send them to www.fathersons.org. FAST will probably be a new concept for them, so they will likely want to think and pray about this potential avenue of ministry for a while.

If your church leaders give you the green light, thank them. Then schedule a meeting with your overseeing pastor, elder, and/or deacon to talk about organizing the ministry. You will probably want to talk about:

- Preparing a written description of your leadership responsibilities (i.e., mentoring grade-level leaders and starting up a 6th-grade group each year)
- How FAST will be promoted within the church (i.e., Father's Day worship service and in the weekly church bulletin)
- If there will be a budget for things like taking your grade-level leaders out to dinner twice yearly and purchasing FAST-related materials

Remember to keep praying! If your church has a prayer ministry, get yourself and the FAST ministry on that list.

3. ORGANIZE. Next comes some basic organizational work. Once you have your position description complete, decide how many grade-level FAST groups your church should start with. Your long-term goal should be to have seven groups meeting regularly, one for each grade level from 5th grade through 12th. We would suggest starting small, though, with just one or two groups; 5th and/or 6th grade is a good starting point. We have found that after 6th grade, it may be too late to capture the boys' interest in FAST. When they

get started in FAST before 6th grade, though, they rarely want to quit.

Each subsequent year of the ministry, focus on launching and mentoring a new 5th- or 6th-grade group. Doing so will build the ministry from the bottom up, and in a few years it will include all grades (5th through 12th). If you want to start your FAST group(s) when the school year begins in September, start organizing in June.

4. RECRUIT. This means either finding a dad with a son in 4th grade to lead next year's 5th-grade group and/or a dad with a son in 5th grade to lead next year's 6th-grade group. Finding these dads may be difficult because you may not know many 4th- or 5th-grade dads in your church—but God knows all of them! Ask Him to direct you to them. Also, ask your church staff and the 4th- and 5th-grade Sunday school teachers at your church if they know of any dads who are potential FAST group leaders. Call those men, meet with them to explain FAST, and once they have committed to leading, create a roster with all of their contact information on it (see “Group Leader Roster,” #2 in the Appendix) and then meet with them again to talk about the “Group Launch” section. It will guide them step-by-step through the process of getting their groups established. Your job is to help them through that process, to train, mentor, encourage, and pray for them as they start this new adventure.

5. COMMUNICATE. Second only to prayer, the most important thing for your church's FAST ministry is regular and effective communication. It is very important that you communicate regularly with each of your grade-level leaders. Call them at least once a month to see how they and their groups are doing. Ask how you can pray for each of them. You can also send an encouraging group e-mail to all the grade level group leaders every few months (see “Group Leader Encouragement E-mails,” #3 in the appendix).

It is also important that all the grade-level group leaders communicate with one another. We all learn lessons that should not be wasted, but should be passed on to those who follow us. We recommend that you ask each grade-level group leader to commit to mentoring the group leader in the grade level below him, using phone calls or e-mails at least a couple of times a year, to share things like: what FAST topics worked (or didn't) and what guest speakers were (or weren't) good.

It is also important for you to meet a couple of times a year with all of your grade-level group leaders. We meet with ours in August, just before the FAST year begins, to make sure everyone is ready to start and in January (mid-year). The meetings are held in a restaurant (the church buys the dinners) or the FAST Ministry Leader's home, and the goals are mutual encouragement and the sharing of FAST lessons learned. This group interchange is very important in helping the group leaders know that they are not out there alone, that other leaders are teaming with them in this ministry.

Remember to keep your church leadership in the communication loop. If a pastor, elder, or deacon oversees your ministry, make sure that he is on your grade-level group leader e-mail list and that he is invited to your twice yearly group leader meetings. It is important for him to know what is going on in the ministry.

Speaking of church, in ours we have found it very powerful to take a few minutes during the Father's Day worship service to show a brief FAST video, invite all those who have been or are currently in FAST groups on to the stage, and have one father-and-son pair share a brief testimonial about what FAST has meant to them. It is a great opportunity to tell the congregation about the ministry and to invite fathers and sons to join next year's new 5th- or 6th-grade group.

To help facilitate effective communication, our church has developed a website that describes FAST, lists the current grade-level leaders and their contact information, and provides downloadable resources (like FAST lesson plans). This tool is also a useful resource for families who want to learn more before they sign on. You may want to find a father in one of your groups who is willing to develop and maintain a similar website for your church.

6. PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. One other thing to be thinking and praying about is your successor. You won't be leading the FAST ministry in your church forever, so it is a good idea to ask God to direct you to a man, preferably a FAST grade-level leader, who can work beside you for at least a year or so, whom you can train to eventually replace you.

May God bless you in this endeavor. Please contact us at www.fathersons.org if we can be of further help to you.

Group Launch

Now that you've read the "Introduction" and "What Is FAST?" sections, you're ready to start leading your own grade-level FAST group. That's GREAT! We are convinced that God will honor your desire to grow and mature alongside the fathers and sons in your new group. We need to remind you—as we said earlier—that this FAST experience will not be a sprint; it will be a marathon. Plan to see it all the way through your son's 12th-grade year.

1. **PRAY.** The first thing to do is to start praying about this new adventure. Ask people around you to be praying regularly for you too. The enemy will not like what you are doing, so you need this spiritual protection.

2. **GATHER A GROUP.** Next, figure out who is going to be in your group. We have found that 5th or no later than 6th grade is the best time to start a FAST group. After that, it may be too late to capture your son's interest. Once he is part of a FAST group, though, it is unlikely that he will want to leave.

If you plan to begin meeting when the school year starts in September, start organizing the FAST year in June. If you are starting a 5th-grade group—and we'll use that model for the rest of this section—look around your church for boys who are currently in 4th grade. If your church has a Sunday school ministry, ask the 4th-grade leader for a roster of attendees. Also ask friends in your church if they know of any 4th-grade boys who might be interested in being in the group next year.

Now the hard part: cold calling. This step requires some courage because you will be taking that list of people and calling the boys' parents, whom you may or may not know. Call and explain to Dad and/or Mom that you want to start a new grade-level FAST group next year and would like to invite the dad (no sons this time) to a 40-minute informational meeting to explain what FAST is all about. Be sure to get their e-mail address so that you can send them a meeting reminder flyer (see the sample "Informational Meeting Flyer," #4 in the appendix). Surprisingly, when we do this cold calling, we've often found that the moms are more interested in getting their sons into FAST than the dads are, so don't be shy about telling the moms all about FAST. They may be your best advocates. One more thing. Be sure to ask your church if you can put the meeting announcement or a flyer in the Sunday worship bulletin.

3. **INITIAL MEETING** Then hold the meeting (see the sample "Informational Meeting Agenda," #5 in the appendix). Pick a time that will work well for the dads. (We usually hold our meeting on a Sunday at church, right after the last worship service, and serve some pizza.) Your goals for this meeting are:

- * Describe FAST
- * Explain why dads and sons should join FAST
- * Identify potential group leaders (more about this later)

Invite your church's FAST Ministry Leader to come and, if FAST is already

established at your church, ask your junior-high pastor to come share what he or she thinks about the FAST ministry (hopefully the pastor will have good things to say!). This informational meeting allows the dads to meet the pastor who will be ministering to their sons in a couple of years. The pastor's presence also adds some church support/credibility to the meeting.

Don't be discouraged if only two or three dads show up. As we said earlier, you will encounter plenty of spiritual opposition to FAST. When we were trying to start one of our FAST groups, only one dad came to the informational meeting. We held another informational meeting a month later, and only two dads came. We firmly believed that God wanted this group to start, so a month later we announced we were starting it. When we held our first meeting, 8 dads and 8 sons showed up, and today that 11th-grade group has 16 dads and 17 sons (a pair of twins) in it. Remember, though, that numbers are not important. In fact, it only takes 3 families to start a successful FAST group.

At the end of the informational meeting, we give each dad: 1) a 4- minute FAST DVD (there is a copy in the back of this manual) and *John Kain's book "Fathers and Sons Together: Becoming Real Men*, which describes the principles on which FAST is based. We ask each dad to watch the DVD with his wife and son, read the book (it's a quick read), and pray about whether they want to get involved in the new FAST group. We then get their contact information and commit to calling them back within two weeks to find out if they are in or out. We also emphasize that if they decide to join FAST, they need to make the commitment to attend all FAST meetings and activities that year. FAST is not a drop-in ministry, one that people attend occasionally or only when they feel like it.

During that week- to two-week waiting period, pray for each of those families. Present them to God and ask that He give them wisdom. Also pray for potential FAST leaders to step forth from among those dads. We have learned—and it is VERY important to recognize—that if a new FAST group is going to be successful, you will need help leading it, especially if you are going to see it through to 12th grade. Each of our FAST groups has one overall leader and 2 others on the leadership team with him. (We'll talk more about developing that leadership team in the next steps.)

Follow-Up

After a week or so goes by, give each of those dads a call to see if they want to join the new group. If so, thank them, verify their contact information so you can develop a group roster (see "Group Roster," #6 in the appendix), and tell them you will be getting back to them soon with more information. If they have decided not to join, still thank them and let them know that the door to your FAST group is always open for them.

God may also have indicated to you which 2 of those men might be on your leadership team. If so, ask them to pray with their wives about whether they

would be willing to serve with you for one year. Below are the position descriptions of our typical grade-level FAST leadership team members that you may wish to follow:

Team Leader

- Has overall responsibility for his group leadership team of 3 men and for the grade-level group itself.
- On the Sunday before the meeting, contacts the “Reminder Caller” to remind her to call the other moms
- Contacts the dad who will be the lesson leader at the next meeting to find out how his preparation is going and offer his help and support
- Gives Leadership Team prayer requests to the Prayer Team Leader
- Sends a follow-up e-mail to all the FAST families after the meeting

Communications Coordinator

- Sends reminder e-mails to volunteers serving at the next meeting: lesson leader, sports supervisor, two moms for dessert setup, and two dads for dessert cleanup (see “E-Mails to Meeting Volunteers,” #7 in the appendix).
- Sends reminder e-mails to all FAST moms and dads one week before each meeting
- Sends e-mails to the church office, as needed, requesting bulletin announcements of FAST meetings and events (see “E-Mails to Church Office,” #8 in the appendix)

Events Coordinator

- Plans, schedules, and oversees all social events (i.e., reserves lanes for a bowling event and collects money from dads)

Leadership Team Meeting

Now it is time for your leadership team to meet. You should do this in June, and the agenda will include discussion of and decisions made about the following:

- 1) What each person’s responsibilities will be
- 2) When and where you will be holding your FAST meetings
- 3) What the meeting topics will be
- 4) What activities you will be doing

Let’s explore each of these a little more:

1) **Responsibilities** – The Leadership Team positions—Team Leader, Communications Coordinator, and Events Coordinator—are described above. One other regular, non-leadership, volunteer position that has surprised us by proving to be critical to the success of our FAST groups is that of the “Reminder Caller.” We have learned that, at least in our church, the family calendar is maintained by the mom. Dads don’t seem to be too good at remembering dates and appointments (especially for some church-related activities), so we have one of our FAST moms telephone all the other FAST

moms the Monday before the weekend FAST meeting to make sure it is on the family calendar. Whenever the Reminder Caller calls all the moms, we have great meeting attendance. When she doesn't, our attendance drops off considerably.

Depending on the size of your group, consider these other non-leadership volunteer positions in your group that should be rotated among different moms and dads at each meeting:

a) Lesson Leader – Not every dad is capable of being an effective lesson leader, but about a third of the dads in your group probably will be. It is best to rotate this responsibility among the dads, so that no one person gets burned out and so that the sons get to have different dads lead them. After you've picked all of the lesson topics (step 3 below), ask your dads to volunteer to lead half of the lessons; bring in outside speakers for the other half. We've found that having half our lessons each year led by dads in the group and the other half led by outside speakers is the best balance.

We have brought in a police officer (a member of our church) to talk about drugs and alcohol, a couple of college girls (also members of our church) to share their perspective on dating (very powerful for our high-schoolers), one of our pastors to talk about prayer, etc. If you have older grade-level FAST groups already meeting in your church, ask those FAST group leaders who have been good outside speakers for their group and invite those speakers to your group. By the way, be sure to send ALL of your lesson leaders a handwritten thank-you card after the meeting. They usually spend a lot of time preparing and deserve at the very least that small token of appreciation.

Also, don't forget to consider your sons as potential lesson leaders. When they get to 11th or 12th grade, some of them will be very capable of leading a lesson or two during the year. They can be very effective, more than dads in some cases, in discussing certain topics with their peers.

b) Sports Supervisor – For the first thirty minutes of each meeting, the sons usually play a sport like basketball while the dads discuss the lesson. It is important to have an adult supervise the sport to make sure everyone stays safe and on task. This duty should be rotated among all of the dads throughout the year (see "Sports Supervisor Duties", #14 in the appendix).

c) Dessert Setup – If your meeting is held somewhere other than a home, someone will need to set up the dessert or snack. When we meet in a church, we usually have two FAST moms come in about 30 minutes before the end of the meeting, and they set up snack in another part of the building (see "Dessert Setup Duties", #15 in the appendix).

d) Dessert Cleanup – We assign two FAST dads to do this after each meeting, and we rotate the responsibility among all of the dads throughout the year building (see "Dessert Cleanup Duties", #16 in the appendix)

e) Prayer Team - Doing God's work invites spiritual attack, so we need to call on the Lord for protection. It is absolutely crucial that a prayer team of moms and dads whose sons are in your group pray regularly for your leadership team and for the ministry itself. This regular, committed prayer will be the strong foundation for a successful FAST Ministry.

Once people have stepped forward to be members of this prayer team, ask one of them to serve as the Prayer Team Leader. You collect prayer requests from your FAST Leadership Team members after each FAST meeting, then e-mail them to the Prayer Team Leader. That person then e-mails those specific prayer requests to the FAST prayer team. We can not overemphasize the importance of the prayer team. You should consider it a high priority as you organize your group.

2) The When and Where of FAST Meetings – First, the *when*. The best thing to do is, before this meeting, to ask all of the families in your group what day of the week would be best for them. We have found that Friday nights, after dinner, seems to work best for 5th- through 8th-grade FAST groups. Once the boys enter high school, though, Friday nights typically don't work because they conflict with their many extracurricular activities, especially sports. The best meeting day and time for our high-schoolers has been Sunday between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. This time usually doesn't interfere with any church-sponsored activities, and it doesn't cut in to family dinner times.

After you've chosen the day you are going to meet, your leadership team will have to decide *how often* you will be meeting. Our experience has shown that meeting once every 2 weeks seems to work best for 5th- through 8th-grade FAST groups. At those ages, the continuity of regular meetings is important to establish the FAST concept and to help bond the group. High school is a different story. Our sons become much busier with homework and extracurricular activities then, so their free time is very limited. Most of our high-school FAST groups meet once every 3 or 4 weeks.

Now the *where*. The size of your FAST group will probably determine whether you will meet in homes or at your church. Our best experiences have been in homes because they offer a comfortable environment that is more conducive to sharing. If your group meets in homes, rotate that responsibility and have a meeting in every family's home at some point in the year, so that one family doesn't carry the burden of hosting all of the time. Here are the pros and cons of the Home vs. Church options:

- Home Meetings (typically 20 or fewer people)

Pros

Meetings tend to be cozier and more intimate.

Kid control is easier than at a church campus.

Logistics are simpler: there are probably fewer doors to unlock and lock.

The host provides the dessert/snack, so the group isn't asking two moms to set up dessert.

Cons

The hosting family has to prepare their home that day and clean up afterward.

Appropriate sports for the boys, during the dads' pre-meeting time, may not be readily available.

Parking may be limited.

- Church Meetings (typically more than 20 people)

Pros

Families do not have to prepare their homes or clean up afterward.

Space and/or facilities are usually available for the boys' sports during the dads' pre-meeting time.

Parking may be easier.

Cons

Meetings are not as cozy and intimate as in a home.

Kid control on the church campus may be difficult.

Logistics are sometimes complex.

Volunteers are needed to set up and clean up dessert.

Church facilities may not be readily available due to other church activities.

3) **The What: FAST Topics** – This step may seem somewhat daunting at first, but rest easy. Many FAST groups have gone ahead of you and have tried various topics. We are going to share with you what we have found works best.

We recommend that you spend most of your first FAST year, **5th grade**, getting grounded in the FAST definition of a real man:

- 1) Does not go along with the world
- 2) Does what God wants him to do
- 3) Leads with a servant's heart
- 4) Builds relationships
- 5) Looks beyond this life.

Here is the good part, you don't have to develop the lesson plans to teach these lessons. We've developed many of them that you can choose from and download at www.fathersons.org under (you guessed it) "Lesson Plans."

By the way, developing lesson plans seems to be one of the biggest areas of concern for our FAST dads who are going to lead lessons. That's why we have collected many of our 6th- through 12th-grade lessons plans and posted those on the Website for you to use. You will notice that many topics are repeated from year to year. That is because the parents and/or sons felt they needed reinforcement. Although the topics are repeated, they are approached differently at each grade level as the boys mature into young men.

Appendix A of John Kain's "Fathers and Sons Together: Becoming Real Men" contains a suggested curriculum for Grades 6 to 9. The lesson plans and "biblical portraits" referenced there are available as .pdf download files on the FAST website (www.fathersons.org). The fathers and sons can discuss the lessons ahead of the meeting, or read the relevant chapters from John's book together at home (out loud) the week before the FAST meeting (this exercise is very effective for father/son bonding). Then the leader teaches the lesson in his own words, based upon each lesson plan or biblical portrait. Another option is to survey the parents in your group (see "Family Survey," #9 in the appendix) and ask what topics they would like to cover this year. Leave the survey questions open ended and see what results come in. Be sure to share that input with the parents (see "Family Survey Results," #10 in the appendix).

It is a good idea to reserve one of the last meetings of the 6th-grade year to invite a couple of mature boys in your church (from the 7th-grade FAST group if you have one) to come in and talk about what junior high school will be like. We have found this to be very helpful for many of our sons who are uneasy about junior high school, yet in the FAST environment feel comfortable asking the 7th-grade boys questions like "Am I going to have to undress in the locker room next year?"

The last meeting of the 6th-grade year is saved for a special ceremony that recognizes the boys' graduation from elementary school and their advancement to junior high school. Fathers, sons, and families attend. Each father presents his son(s) with a sword (yes, a real one), a life verse from the Bible, and a blessing (see "6th-Grade Commencement Ceremony," #11 in the appendix).

The **7th-Grade** year typically holds major life changes for our sons, not only in the transition to junior high school, but also with puberty. James Dobson has written *Preparing for Adolescence*, a great book that addresses the physical and emotional changes that occur in puberty. Every one of our FAST groups studies this book during the 7th-grade year. By the way, a very good group guide, broken into 10 sessions, has helped all of our leaders prepare the lessons. (They really like the ready-made lesson plans!)

The **8th-Grade** year is one for which you can survey the parents and sons to find out what they would like to study. Again, we've included a sample survey (see "Family Survey," #9 in the appendix). At the end of this year, the sons will typically be making a transition to high school next year, so it is a good idea to reserve one of the last lessons of this year to invite a couple of mature boys in your church (boys from the 9th-grade FAST group if you have one) to come and talk about what high school will be like.

During their **9th- through 12th-Grade** years, the sons will be challenged in many ways and on many different fronts. They will face many new opportunities and temptations. It is especially important that the topics discussed at FAST groups during these years are relevant to the sons and

are taught in a frank and upfront way. For example, you may have discussed sex in your 6th-grade FAST group, but the high-school years are the time to really hit it hard (purity, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.). One of our groups brought in a doctor and a high-school nurse (both members of our church) to talk about this. They shared some very powerful real-life stories.

At the end of 12th grade, the sons will typically be making a transition to college, the military, a trade school, etc. It is a good idea to reserve one of the last lessons of this year to invite a couple of mature young men, who are a few years older, to share what those transitions are like.

The last meeting of the 12th-grade year is saved for a special ceremony that recognizes our son's graduation from high school and from FAST itself. Fathers, sons, and families attend. This is much like the 6th-grade ceremony, minus the swords (see "6th-Grade Commencement Ceremony," #11 in the appendix).

4) What Activities You Will Be Doing – FAST isn't just about meetings and lessons. We try to build group unity by having fun together every 4th meeting. It is the Events Coordinator's job to plan and schedule these age-appropriate activities that that fathers and sons can do and enjoy together. Some examples are: bowling, dodge ball, go-carting, hiking, laser tag, paintball, & rock climbing. At these events, be sure that the dads are paired with their sons (i.e., a father and his son team up to bowl against another father and his son, or a father holds the rope for his son while his son climbs the rock. You get the idea.) You don't want is to team up all the dads against all the sons because the purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for each father to bond with his son.

This overview should cover all the things you need to talk about at your Leadership Team Meeting. Be sure to thank the men on your team and pray with them before you end.

Leadership Team Meeting Follow-Up

After the meeting is over, you have quite a bit of work to do to get the ministry organized. This may seem like a lot of detail (it is), but is very important.

- √ In an e-mail to all the parents in your grade-level group, request volunteers for the Prayer Team and then ask for a Team Leader from among those who volunteer.
- √ E-mail to your Leadership Team a summary of your notes from the meeting. Send this e-mail to any church leaders who oversee the FAST ministry (i.e. deacon, elder, or pastor), so that everyone has the same understanding of where your group is going.
- √ Choose dates for your FAST meetings for the entire year; be sure to include all activities. By the way, the very first meeting should be a get-

together of all the grade-level FAST families (see “Preparing for Your First FAST Meeting” below). The next meeting, of fathers and sons only, will not need a lesson leader. It will basically be an introduction to FAST. Lessons will start at the third meeting.

- ✓ Coordinate the FAST calendar with your church’s grade-level leader (i.e. Sunday School teacher, children’s pastor, junior high pastor, or senior high pastor) to make sure that none of your proposed dates conflict with any planned church events like camps. Also make sure that none of the proposed dates conflict with holidays or events like Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, or (yes, really) the Super Bowl (no men will come to a FAST meeting on that day).
- ✓ Once you’ve selected the dates for meetings and activities, ask your Events Coordinator to fill in the event date with actual activities.
- ✓ Contact the dads in your group, tell them what topics will be covered during the year, and ask for volunteers to lead the lessons. If you are bringing in outside speakers, give them open meeting dates and ask about their availability. Scheduling the speakers for the year is a complicated task that will probably take a few weeks or even longer to complete.
- ✓ Fill in the group’s calendar: Date, Time, Location, Topic, Lesson Leader, and Prayer Team members. Randomly assign FAST members for these responsibilities: Sports Supervision, Snack/Dessert Preparation, and Dessert Cleanup (see “Group Meeting Calendar,” #12 in the appendix).
 - ✓ Make sure your FAST group e-mail list is correct. It should have all the FAST families in your group (dads and moms) as well as any church leaders who oversee the FAST ministry and your church’s grade-level leader (i.e., the junior high pastor if you have a 7th- or 8th-grade group). It is important for these church leaders to receive copies of your FAST correspondence so that they know what is going on.
- ✓ E-mail a letter to all the families in your group welcoming them to FAST (see “Family Welcome Letter,” #13 in the appendix). Attach your group’s roster and calendar.
- ✓ E-mail the group calendar to every outside leader who will be coming in. Thank them in advance for volunteering to teach.
- ✓ Advise your church office staff of all the meeting and event dates so that they can put those dates on the church calendar and in the Sunday bulletins.
- ✓ Organize the Prayer Team and ask them to be praying for your first meeting as well as for the FAST Leadership Team member’s needs.

See why planning a FAST year starts in June? Usually the most time-consuming, if not hardest, part is getting all the leaders on the schedule. It is very important, though, that you plan and schedule the whole year at once. We've seen some groups that tried to plan month to month end up failing to meet at all. This is a lot of work to do now, but a smoothly running year is a great payoff.

Preparing for Your First FAST Meeting

One thing that has constantly surprised and pleased us has been the moms' high level of support and enthusiasm for the FAST ministry. They seem to intuitively understand the benefits of FAST well before the fathers and sons do. In fact, we often get calls from moms saying how they have seen significant positive changes in their husband's relationship with their son as a result of their participation in FAST (praise God!). We've even had some moms ask to attend a FAST meeting to see what happens—and we have politely said no.

In order to fulfill the moms' need to know “who all these FAST guys are”—and to have some fun together—we make the first and the last meeting of each year a social event like a potluck picnic or BBQ where dads, moms, and siblings are invited. It is very informal. There is no lesson, but we do all stand in a circle before the food is served to talk briefly about the FAST Ministry, introduce the FAST leadership team, and pray. This has been a really nice practice that everyone, especially the moms, seem to enjoy. If you choose to do this, don't forget to bring some adhesive name badges, so that people can get to know one another's names easily.

O.K., now it's time for the first real FAST meeting with fathers and sons only. The week beforehand, send reminder e-mails to the people who will be serving (i.e., sports supervisor, dessert setup, and dessert cleanup).

The Communications Coordinator should send a reminder e-mail to all the FAST moms and dads in your group one week before each meeting. On the Sunday before the meeting, contact the “Reminder Caller” mom to remind her to call the other moms that week. This may seem like overkill to both send e-mails and make phone calls, but—trust us—it isn't.

Your First FAST Meeting

Ideally, you and your Prayer Team have bathed this meeting in prayer for the weeks. Remember that there will be spiritual opposition to this good thing that you are trying to do, but don't be anxious. You will be pleased and surprised to see how God answers your prayers.

The main purpose of this meeting will be to help everyone understand what FAST is all about and to start getting to know one another. At this meeting—and every other meeting—give each of your volunteers an outline of their

duties (see “Sport Supervisor Duties,” “Dessert Setup Duties,” and “Dessert Cleanup Duties,” #14, #15, #16 in the appendix). Be sure to bring adhesive name badges with you, and here is an agenda you can try:

30 minutes - Boys play basketball or a similar group sport while you talk with the dads about: meeting format, purpose of FAST, definition of Christian manhood, and this year’s schedule. Also, use this time to verify the roster information.

30 minutes – Boys come in and sit next to their fathers (we do this through 12th grade). Make personal introductions. Discuss the purpose of FAST, expectations (bring Bible, sit with Dad, shake hands, make eye contact, say, “Hello, Mr.____,” and pray aloud), the definition of a real man, and this year’s schedule. If your church already has a FAST ministry, you may want to invite one of the FAST boys a year ahead of your group to come talk about what FAST has meant to them.

10 minutes – Break into groups of four and ask each person to pray out loud. This may be the first time some boys and even some dads have done this, so tell them they can keep it simple and short like “Thanks, God, for bringing me to this meeting.”

5 minutes – Have the group form a large circle and you close with prayer.

15 minutes – Dessert and fellowship.

This may be a good time in the handbook to talk about the role of dessert in FAST meetings. A great dessert is key to the boys’ enjoyment of the meetings—and a good note to end on! A complete ice-cream sundae bar has been much preferred over store-bought cookies and drinks. The ice cream option requires extra work and money, but it’s worth it. When our groups regularly meet at church, we keep ice cream in the church freezer and sundae fixings in the church refrigerator (labeled “__th-Grade FAST”) throughout the year.

Speaking of money, if you are meeting at your church and stocking the refrigerator and freezer, you may want to collect one lump sum from every dad at the first meeting to cover dessert expenses for the entire year.

Subsequent FAST Meetings

- The preparation for subsequent FAST meetings is the same as for the first meeting (send reminder e-mails to all volunteers and call the “Reminder Caller”; the Communications Coordinator sends a reminder e-mail to all the FAST moms and dads the week before) with one addition: two weeks beforehand you should call or e-mail the lesson leader, see how he is doing with his preparation, encourage him, and let him know that the FAST prayer team is praying for him. Also share

some specifics about the meeting time, the location, and the timeframe for his teaching (see “E-Mails to Meeting Volunteers,” #7 in the appendix).

The Day of - If you are meeting at your church, you should arrive fifteen minutes early to set up the meeting room, lay out preprinted adhesive name badges (these are an important way of helping everyone get to know one another if your group is large), and provide printed instructions for that night’s volunteers (see “Sport Supervisor Duties,” “Dessert Setup Duties,” and “Dessert Cleanup Duties,” #14, #15, #16 in the appendix).

30 minutes - Sons play basketball or some other group sport (one dad supervises) while the other fathers meet to discuss the night’s lesson. The FAST Group Leader opens with prayer. Then that night’s lesson leader offers an overview of the topic and lists his key points. He encourages dads to remember their own experiences that are relevant to the lesson. At this time dads can also confidentially share issues their sons are dealing with so that a different father can address them based on his own experience. This kind of sharing allows boys to hear their own dad’s wisdom from another man’s mouth. For instance, one dad shares, “My son was bullied on the playground this week.” Another dad says, “I remember when that happened to me when I was his age. When the lesson leader addresses the importance of being kind to people, I’ll bring up the fact that kids aren’t always kind on the playground, how hard that is, and how God helped me handle it.”

40 minutes - The sons join the fathers for the lesson, led by one of the dads or an outside speaker. Styles can vary, and it’s great when they do. Some dads use object lessons, others use PowerPoint presentations, and many have handouts. The FAST Team Leader serves as a timekeeper and silently signals the teacher when five minutes remain.

10 minutes - Fathers and sons pray together. Just as they did at the previous meeting, they stand in groups of 4 with fathers next to their sons. Every man and boy is expected to pray out loud. The whole group then forms a circle, and you offer a closing prayer, thank the lesson leader, encourage the boys to thank the moms who set up and/or provided dessert, and share a brief preview about the next meeting as well as any important reminders about other FAST activities that are coming up.

10 minutes - Dessert is served.

Regular FAST Meeting Follow-Up

After a FAST meeting:

- 1) Collect prayer requests from your FAST group Leadership Team Members at the meeting and e-mail them to your Prayer Team Leader for distribution to the prayer team.

- 2) Send a thank-you note to the lesson leader.
- 3) Send an e-mail to all the FAST families telling them how the meeting went (for those who were absent) and reminding them of the date and time of the next meeting (see “E-Mail Meeting Follow-up,” #17 in the appendix).

The FAST year will probably go smoothly if you have all the events, dates, leaders, and volunteers on your calendar before the first meeting and if you continue to pray regularly for your group.

Adding New FAST Families

Be aware that fathers and sons and even moms, both inside and outside, your church will ask to join your group midyear or in following years. Our church made a FAST ministry decision early on that we would be open to including anyone, including fathers and sons from outside our church. As a result some of our FAST groups have members (including pastors) from four or five different churches in our community. We had hoped that, when the “outside church” people joined us, they would attend the group for a year, learn what they needed to learn, take this handbook, and return to their home churches to start their own FAST ministry there. Unfortunately, that hasn’t always happened, but, interestingly, some of the “outside church” members of our FAST groups have been their strongest and most committed supporters.

Whether from inside or outside of your church, potential FAST members should have the same understanding of, and commitment to, FAST as those fathers and sons who started with your group. In order to maintain this continuity and solidarity, you as grade-level leader should meet with the potential FAST family and follow a process very similar to what you used at the earlier Informational Meeting:

- 1) Explain what FAST is
- 2) Give the family a 4-minute FAST DVD and John Kain’s “Fathers and Sons Together: Becoming a Real Man (both are in the back of this binder).
- 3) Ask each dad to watch the DVD with his wife and son, read the book, and pray about whether they want to get involved in the new FAST group.
- 4) Get contact information and commit to calling the dad in a week or so to find out if he and his son want to join. As you did at the Informational Meeting, emphasize that if they decide to join FAST, they need to make a commitment to attending all of the FAST meetings and activities that year.

During that one-week waiting period, your job is to pray for each of those families. Present them to God and ask that He would give them wisdom. If they decide to join, add them to the roster, and send an e-mail to the other FAST families so they can welcome the new family to the group. In the e-mail advise everyone of the process the new family went through to make that decision. Your e-mail will give the current FAST families a good feeling about the new family joining.

Year-End FAST Activities

If you are leading a 6th- or 12th-grade group, your last meeting of the year will be a special ceremony recognizing the son's graduation (see "6th-Grade Graduation Ceremony," #11 in the appendix, for a guide on how to plan this event). For all other grade levels, the last event of the year should be a potluck picnic or BBQ that includes moms and siblings (remember the one at the beginning of the year?). No lesson is taught at this event, but everyone can stand in a circle before the food is served to hear briefly from you about the blessings of the FAST Ministry that year, to hear you thank the FAST leadership team, and to pray. Don't forget to bring the blank name badge stickers, so that everyone can know names.

As a follow-up to the year-end FAST event, send a thank-you e-mail out to all the families along with a survey (see "Family Survey," #9 in the appendix). Ask if they want to commit to continuing in FAST next year and, if so, what topics they might want to learn about. We have been pleased to see that almost everyone, especially the sons, want to keep attending FAST year after year.

Remember to thank the members of your leadership team for their service over the past year. You may wish to do this by inviting them and their wives to your home for a thank-you dinner. At that time, you could them if they want to commit to serving again the following year.

Once you compile the survey results, gather your leadership team together and follow the same process you did last year to plan for the coming year (go back a few pages to "Leadership Team Meeting").

Miscellaneous

Here are a few other important lessons we have learned and want to share with you:

1) Some boys have lost their dads through death or divorce. These boys need to see real Christian men as much or even more than your son does. If you know of boys like these, we encourage you to pray for them. Also pray that God would direct you to a dad, already in your group, who might be willing to act as that boy's FAST sponsor for as long as the boy is in the group. This dad picks up the boy, takes him to the FAST meetings and events, sits next to him there (along with his own son), and takes him home from the FAST meeting.

It takes a very special man to fill this sponsor role. Don't just ask for a volunteer in your group; be sure that God has directed you to that man. When that sponsor dad has prayed and said yes, meet with the boy and his mother to go through the same process with them that you did with the other families who considered joining your group (explain FAST, watch the video, read the

book, pray, etc.).

2) Sometimes dads are ill or out of town on business. Their sons should go to the FAST meetings, so ALL the dads agree at the first FAST meeting to call any of the other dads to get a ride for their son when necessary *and* to give a ride if called.

3) Several years ago one topic for a 6th-grade FAST group was “Christian Service.” When the lesson was over, the dads wanted to put the lesson into practice, so they asked a nearby Christian campground if they could stay there over Memorial Day weekend to serve the camp. The camp accepted the offer and provided free lodging and food. For three days the fathers and sons worked side-by-side cleaning cabins, painting buildings, trimming brush, etc. Some of the dads said they were surprised to find out how hard their sons could work! This opportunity to serve turned into a yearly tradition and was always one of the highlights of the year for that FAST group. The camp loves having the fathers and sons do all that work because it frees up their staff to do other ministry projects. It is a great learning experience—on several fronts—for the boys and their dads. Evenings at camp are spent relaxing, singing, and having the sons review topics from that year’s FAST meetings.

4) The most important thing you can do for your grade-level FAST group is to be on its Prayer Team. Some of our FAST group leaders pray every day by name for every father and son in their group. They also call each son at the beginning of every school year and let them know that they will be praying regularly for them, praying that they will experience a deepening relationship with Christ and success in school. These phone calls are a very powerful witness and example to the sons. Consider doing the same for the sons in your group.

May God bless you in this endeavor. Please contact us at www.fathersons.org if we can be of help to you.

Appendix

Tools to Help You

The purpose of this appendix is to provide sample forms, letters, and e-mails that you may modify or use as is for your FAST ministry. An electronic version of each document is provided on the accompanying CD.

1. FAST Ministry Leader Position Description, ref. page 5
2. Group Leader Roster, ref. page 6
3. Group Leader Encouragement E-Mails, ref. page 6
4. Informational Meeting Flyer, ref. page 8
5. Informational Meeting Agenda, ref. page 8
6. Group Roster, ref. page 9
7. E-Mails to Meeting Volunteers, ref. pages 10 & 19
8. E-Mail to Church Office, ref. page 10
9. Family Survey, ref. pages 9 & 21
10. Family Survey Results, ref. page 14
11. 6th-Grade Commencement Ceremony, ref page 14
12. Group Meeting Calendar, ref. page 16
13. Family Welcome Letter, ref. page 16
14. Sport Supervisor Duties, ref. page 11
15. Dessert Setup Duties, ref. page 11
16. Dessert Cleanup Duties, ref. page 11
17. E-Mail Meeting Follow-Up, ref. page 20

FAST Ministry Leader Position Description

I. Position Description:

Oversee the FAST ministry

II. Responsibilities:

- A. **SPRITUAL LEADERSHIP:** Pray for each leader and each grade-level group regularly.
- B. **LEADERSHIP:** Meet with and support the grade-level group leaders
- C. **ENCOURAGEMENT:**
 - 1. Regularly contact each leader of a grade-level group.
 - 2. Twice yearly (in early August and in January) get all the FAST grade-level leaders together.
- D. **GROWTH:** Help establish new FAST groups. Nurture leadership.
 - 1. Be on the lookout for dads in each grade who have leadership gifts.
 - 2. Each year get the church roster, mailing labels, etc. from the grades that do not have groups.
 - 3. Have an organizational meeting for sharing the vision of FAST and share information about how to start a group.
- E. **TOP PRIORITY:** Every year, focus on developing a 6th-grade FAST group.
- F. **COMMUNICATE:** Foster communication to the church body.
 - 1. Each grade-level group leader puts you on his FAST e-mail distribution list.
 - 2. Each grade-level group gives calendar items to church office staff to add to all-church master calendar.
 - 3. Each grade-level group leader gives the church office staff any bulletin announcement request(s).
- G. **UPDATE and MAINTAIN** the FAST leadership list.
- H. **BUDGET:** Develop and manage the FAST budget.

Fathers and Sons Together (FAST) 20__-20__ Leadership

Position	Name	E-Mail	Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone
Executive Pastor	James Waltman	James Waltman@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
Elder	Bob Amos	Bob Amos@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
Deacon	Steve Oran	Steve Oran@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
12 th grade Leader	Simon Victor	Simon Victor@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
11 th grade Leader	Roy Holmes	Roy Holmes@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
10 th grade Leader	Alan Jones	Alan Jones@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
9 th grade Leader	David Tsu	David Tsu@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
8 th grade Leader	Mike Smith	Mike Smith@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
7 th grade Leader	Roy Stephens	Roy Stephens@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212
6 th grade Leader	Dave Johnson	Dave Johnson@churchmail.org	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212	(888) 555-1212

3. Group Leader Encouragement E-Mails, ref. page 6

Late August

FAST Leaders:

The new school year is just a few weeks away, so I'd like to encourage you in a couple of areas:

- 1) This is a good time to finalize this year's FAST meeting calendar, if you haven't already, and distribute it to your FAST families.
- 2) This is also a good time to invite new fathers and sons to join your group. Ask current members if they know of anyone who might be interested. You could also contact your son's Sunday school teacher to see if he/she knows of anyone in that grade level who may be interested. You can then direct the interested folks to our website to watch the FAST video.

Thank you for your leadership in FAST. I look forward to serving with you this year.

December

Shalom, FAST Leader!

I am so pleased about all the good things that are happening in the FAST ministry, and I'm proud to be leading this ministry with you.

One of the key reasons for FAST's ongoing success is good communication among its leaders. That being the case, I would like to invite you a dinner for just the (number) of us on (date) at (place). The purpose of this dinner is to spend some time evaluating the first half of the FAST year (Sept-Dec.) and to discuss the second half (Jan.-June). This will be an opportunity to share our successes and to encourage one another.

Will you please reply to me soon and let me know if you are available that evening? By the way, the church will be picking up the tab for dinner.

Grateful for you,

January

Dear FAST Leaders:

Thank you so much for coming to our FAST leadership meeting last night. As always, it was a great time of sharing and encouragement. I think we all picked up some ideas that will help each of our groups. One of the things I took away was the need to promote FAST in a worship service in early September. I plan to do that.

As I said last night, you guys are doing awesome and important work in your FAST groups. I want to cheer you on. GREAT JOB! Please call me if I can be of help to you at any time.

May

Dear FAST Leader:

As the school year comes to a close and you approach your final FAST meeting of the year, I'd like to thank you for your service to this ministry. You have all done a great job, and you are making a significant difference in the lives of dads and sons!

At this point, I'd like to encourage you to consider a couple of things:

- You may want to invite moms and siblings to attend your group's year-end party. Moms would love this opportunity to get time to know one another.
- If you have a leadership team serving your group, you may want to invite them to your home for a "thank you" dinner or at least give them a handwritten note thanking them for their service.
- I encourage you to e-mail a survey to every FAST group dad asking if they want to meet again next year and, if so, what topics they want to cover.

These are just a few ideas to help close the school year. As you prepare for next year's FAST group, I also encourage you to talk with the grade-level leader ahead of you and see what he learned this year about choice of lesson topics, lesson leaders, and events, so that you can apply them to your group next year.

Grateful for you,

PS. Our church will be recognizing the FAST ministry during both worship services on Father's Day, (date). We plan to show a brief FAST video and ask all the fathers and sons who are currently involved and those who have been involved in the FAST ministry in the past to come to the front of the church during the video for a brief recognition when the video ends. Please let your FAST group know so that they are prepared to come to the front. Thanks!

July

Dear FAST Leader:

Summer is passing quickly! It's hard to believe that school will be starting soon. If you haven't already begun, this is a good time to organize your FAST group—to set dates, choose topics, schedule speakers, etc.

I also encourage you to consider phoning the sons in your group just before school starts. Let them know that throughout the year you will be praying for them, praying that they will experience a deeper walk with Christ and know success in school. One of our leaders did this last year and found it to be very powerful for the sons.

Thank you for leading and serving in the FAST Ministry. You are making a significant difference in the life of your son and the lives of many other young men.

Fathers of 6th-Grade Boys...



A group of dads is forming a 6th-grade Fathers and Sons Together (FAST) group that will meet twice monthly from Sept. 20__ to June 20__. We want to invite you to an informational meeting to learn more about FAST. Steve Smith, a FAST leader, will describe the purpose of FAST and answer your questions.

Friday, November 19th, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at _____

in the upstairs Adult Education Classroom.

DADS ONLY (no boys this time, please)

For more information contact:

Steve Smith (888) 555-1212, Randy Jones (888) 555-1212, or James Andrews (888) 555-1212

FAST Informational Meeting Agenda

12:30 p.m. Open with prayer

12:32 p.m. Hand out pizza

12:35 p.m. Circulate attendance sign-in sheet

12:37 p.m. Identify meeting goals:

- 1) Describe FAST
- 2) Explain why dads should join FAST
- 3) Identify potential group leaders

12:40 p.m. Show FAST DVD

12:45 p.m. *Pastor*: Explain why dads should join FAST

12:50 p.m. *FAST Ministry Leader*: Explain why dads should join FAST

12:55 p.m. Identify potential group leaders then:

- 1) Define the concept of a leadership team
- 2) Explain the value of being mentored by leaders of older groups
- 3) Introduce “how to” manual and FAST website resources

1:00 p.m. Answer any questions

1:05 p.m. Pass out books and CDs

Call the dads in a week or so for their decisions

1:10 p.m. Close in prayer

7. E-Mails to Meeting Volunteers, ref. pages 10 & 19

E-MAIL TO NEXT MEETING'S LESSON LEADER (Sent by the FAST Team Communications Coordinator two weeks before the next meeting)

Dear _____:

This is just a reminder that you volunteered to lead our (date) __th-grade FAST lesson on (topic). Thank you for being willing to give us your time. You will have the 40 minutes from 3:50 to 4:30. As you know, the best lessons are interactive, with the leader asking sons questions and getting them involved in discussion.

If you prepare any handouts or media, will you please e-mail it to me in advance? I will put it on our church website for future FAST groups to use and, after our meeting, share it with FAST parents via e-mail.

Our FAST prayer team, consisting of 8 moms and dads, are praying for you now as you prepare for the (date).

Please e-mail or call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks.

E-MAIL TO NEXT MEETING'S SPORTS SUPERVISOR (Sent by the FAST Team Communications Coordinator two weeks before the next meeting)

Dear _____:

Thanks for being willing to be the basketball supervisor from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. at our (date) FAST meeting. Here are your duties:

1) Keep your eyes on the boys all the time. Have them stay on the basketball court at the side of the building only. You can't see what they're doing if they're on the other side of the building. Also, in the past some boys have entered the church from the opposite side of the building and then run through rooms and offices both upstairs and downstairs. They shouldn't be going into the church.

2) Keep the boys outside of our meeting room until 7:30 p.m. because that half-hour period is important preparation time for the fathers. They are learning about the night's lesson, talking about their sons, and praying for them. Thank you for serving!

See you then!

E-MAIL TO NEXT MEETING'S DESSERT SETUP VOLUNTEERS (Sent by the FAST Team Communications Coordinator two weeks before the next meeting)

Dear _____:

Thank you for volunteering to set up the dessert for our (date) FAST meeting. Here are the tasks for dessert prep:

1. Refrigerated toppings (syrops and whipped cream) are in the kitchen refrigerator labeled "7th-Grade FAST."
2. All other ice cream toppings are in the cupboard above the phone in plastic containers labeled "7th-Grade FAST." You might need to crumble more cookies.
3. Use large clear plastic bowls for serving toppings. (Bowls are located in the cupboard to the left of the sink.)
4. Styrofoam bowls and napkins are located in the pantry.
5. Plastic spoons are kept in the drawer to the left of the pantry.
6. The ice cream is in the freezer labeled "7th-Grade FAST."
7. Place ice cream, toppings, and serving dishes on a table in the center of the kitchen.
8. Have everything set up and ready to go by 8:10 p.m.

Thanks again!

E-MAIL TO NEXT MEETING'S DESSERT CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS (Sent by the FAST Team Communications Coordinator two weeks before the next meeting)

Dear _____:

Thank you for volunteering to clean up after the dessert for our (date) FAST meeting. Here are the tasks for dessert cleanup:

1. Put all ice cream toppings in sealable plastic bags, label them "7th-Grade FAST," and put them in the designated containers in the appropriately labeled cabinet. Put perishable toppings—also clearly labeled "7th-grade FAST"—in the refrigerator.

2. Wipe off the table.

3. Clean up any floor spills.

4. Wipe the kitchen counters.

5. Remove all trash and put it in the kitchen trashcan. Take the trash bag out of the can and put it in the dumpster outside.

6. Walk around the outside of the church and be sure that all the doors are closed and locked.

Thanks again!

8. E-mail to Church Office, ref. page 10

E-MAIL SUNDAY BULLETIN REQUEST (sent by the FAST Team Communications Coordinator to responsible church person as needed so that the next meeting will be mentioned in the church bulletin on the Sunday before the FAST meeting)

Dear _____:

Will you please put the following in the calendar section of the Sunday, (date), church bulletin?

Friday, (date) 7th-Grade FAST 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Jr. High Room

Thank you!

9. Family Survey, ref. pages 9 & 21

E-MAIL FAMILY SURVEY (Sent by the FAST Group Leader to all parents at the end of the year (June).

Dear ___th-Grade FAST Families:

Thanks for a GREAT year together!

Our FAST leadership team will be meeting on (date) to start planning for next year. Would you please help us by taking a few minutes to read through the questions below, discuss it with your son (his input is crucial!), complete the survey, and return it to me by (date)? Thank you.

1. Do you plan to participate in the ___th-grade FAST group from Sept. 20__ to June 20__?
2. How often should the ___th-grade group meet?
3. What day of week/time?
4. What topics do you think would be appropriate for your son(s) next year? Please ask your son for his input.
5. What, if anything, would you like done differently in FAST next year?

th-Grade-FAST Family Survey Results – (date)

1. Do you plan to participate in the th-grade FAST group from Sept. 20__ to June 20__?

YES	NO	Not Sure
14	2	1

2. How often should the th-grade group meet?

Every 2 weeks	Every 3 weeks	Every 4 weeks	No Answer
0	12	2	4

3. What day of week/time?

SUN 3:30-5:00	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	No Answer
12	1				1		4

4. What lesson topics do you think would be appropriate for your son(s) next year?
(please ask him for his input too)

Families	Topic
6	dating
5	drugs & alcohol
4	Money, including credit cards
4	Sex
2	Making post-high school decisions (e.g., what college, no college)
2	Responsibility of driving
2	Work
1	Choosing the right friends
1	Defending your faith
1	Evolution
1	Exposure to church leadership (pastors/elders)
1	Going beyond ourselves, giving to the community, establishing a serve-the-community mentality
1	How to live a life that is bold for Christ
1	How to study and use the Bible
1	Maintaining a purity of heart and spirit and moving closer to walking in harmony with Christ

5. What, if anything, would you like done differently in FAST next year?

Families	
7	Nothing
3	Have sons lead some lessons; some with fathers
1	Have a short time for sons and fathers to share what God has done for them since the previous meeting, answered prayer, helped at school/work etc.

11. 6th-Grade Commencement Ceremony, ref page 14

- Ceremonies are a way to recognize the completion of one phase of life and to mark the passage into a new phase of life with its increased responsibilities and privileges.
- At the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:22), his Heavenly Father issued a public statement.
- This divine blessing included 3 components: “You Are My Son”; “I Love You”; and “I Am Well Pleased with You”—very significant words indeed.
- At the 6th-grade FAST advancement ceremony, the boys recite **definition of manhood** they have memorized. In addition, each dad gives his son a “Father’s Blessing” which includes a life Bible verse the father has picked for him.

Here is an example of such a blessing:

(Son’s Name), I love you, and I am encouraged to see you growing God’s way.

You have many special qualities, and I want to mention a few of them.

- 1. You have a good attitude about learning new things.***
- 2. You have demonstrated a desire to spend time with friends who have a godly influence in your life.***
- 3. You persevere in hard circumstances.***
- 4. You have a sincere faith.***
- 5. You are sensitive.***
- 6. You are quick to say you’re sorry***
- 7. You are coordinated, strong, fast, adventurous, and enthusiastic.***
- 8. You communicate energetically.***

This is a Bible verse that I believe applies to your life _____.

(Son’s Name), God bless you on your journey into manhood.

Jesus will be with you each step of the way.

Your mother and I will also help you as much as we can.

6th-Grade Commencement Ceremony Agenda

- 6:15 Food arrives from caterer or families
- 6:35 Welcome and Opening Prayer (led by church youth pastor)
- 6:35-7:00 Eat dinner.
- 7:00-7:05 Each son gives a rose to his mother.
- 7:05-7:10 FAST group leader talks about FAST.
- 7:10-8:15 Individual fathers and sons go onstage, two at a time, for the sharing of life verses and blessings (not more than 5 minutes each).
- 8:15-8:25 Sword Presentation led by church youth pastor and involving all fathers and sons
- 8:30 Closing Prayer (FAST group leader)
- 8:30-9:00 Cleanup (All available people)

12. Group Meeting Calendar, ref. page 16



_____ Church - Fall _____ through Spring _____
Seventh-Grade FAST Calendar



Revised XX/XX/XXXX

Date	Time	Location	Topic	Preparation	Lesson Leader	Sports Supervisor	Dessert Preparation	Dessert Cleanup
Sept. 9	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Welcome & Intro. to FAST	none	Smith	J. Loman	K. Loman / G. Smith	Hanley / Loman
Sep. 23	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Feeling Inferior Part 1	PfA pp. 13-26	Jones	H. Brown	C. Lincoln / T. Everson	Cooper / Gordon
Oct. 7	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Feeling Inferior Part 2	PfA pp. 13-26	Jones	C. Turner	F. Girard / J. Ranes	S. Franklin / Albert
Oct. 21	6:45 pm	Bowl-O-Rama	Social Event - Bowling	none	none	none	none	none
Nov. 4	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	The World's vs. God's Standards	PfA pp. 26-33	Albert	English	K. Turner / L. Stevens	D. Davis / M. Kendall
Nov. 18	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Dealing with Inferiority	PfA pp. 33-39	Arthur	Gordon	M. Jones / S. Smith	S. Rice / S. Stevens
Dec. 2	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Resisting Pressure to Conform	PfA pp. 41-61	Smith	Cooper	C. Hanley / M. Rice	Martin / D. Layton
Dec. 16	6:45 pm	Bowl-O-Rama	Social Event - Bowling	none	none	none	none	none
Jan. 13	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Sexual Development	PfA pp. 63-86	English	S. Franklin	J. Ranes / C. Hanley	S. Ranes / Stone
Jan. 27	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Love vs. Infatuation	PfA pp. 87-100	Stone	M. Kendall	F. Brown / D. Albert	English / C. Turner
Feb. 10	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	What Is Godly Marriage?	PfA pp. 101-118	Cooper	Stanley	K. Turner / S. Jacobs	J. Loman / D. Layton
Feb. 24	6:30 pm	Parking Lot	Laser Tag	none	Stone	none	none	none
Mar. 10	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Handling Emotions	PfA pp. 119-132	Forest	D. Davis	C. Lincoln / L. Stevens	S. Ranes / S. Rice
Mar. 24	7:00 pm	Jr. Hi. Rm.	Independence and Freedom	PfA pp. 132-135	Martin	Jones	G. Smith / S. Smith	Stanley / Forest

13. Family Welcome Letter, ref. page 16

Welcome to the ___-grade **Fathers And Sons Together (FAST)** group. FAST is a ministry of _____ Church, and _____, _____, and _____ serve on this group's leadership team.

Fundamental FAST Principles

God calls fathers to be spiritual guides to their sons. Fathers can be more effective in this role when they meet together for fellowship and teaching designed for their son's specific age.

The significance of the father-son relationship is not limited to family life. This relationship can be integrated and reinforced in the church community by focused activities that involve fathers with their sons as well as surrogate dads for boys without fathers.

History

Grade-level FAST groups have been meeting at _____ for ___ years. This ___-grade group that you are joining started meeting in _____. The group has met every ___ weeks and studied subjects such as the definition of a real man, handling temptation, and making the transition to middle school. Every fourth meeting the group has a social activity such as bowling. Every May we take a three-day service trip to Catalina Island and help prepare a Christian camp for summertime visitors. In June, we have a commencement ceremony or end-of-the-year party that fathers, sons, and families attend.

During the 6th-grade commencement ceremony, each father stood in front of the group and gave his son a verbal blessing as well as a life Bible verse picked just for him. The sons also recited the definition of true Christian manhood:

A real man does not always do what other people want him to do. A real man does what God wants him to do. A real man serves his family by leading them and providing for them. A real man looks forward to the long-term reward at the end of life.

The evening ended with the fathers presenting their sons with real swords that represented the sword of the Lord, God's Word, and their passage from boyhood to manhood.

Schedule and Roster

This year we are meeting from September _____ to June _____. Please see the attached calendar/roster. Please advise _____ (team leader) if any corrections need to be made to the roster.

Meetings

This year we are studying _____.

A typical meeting looks like this:

7:00 – 7:30 Sons play a sports activity while fathers meet separately to discuss the night's lesson.

7:30 – 8:00 Fathers and sons meet together. The lesson is taught by a father who has volunteered to lead, and this teaching responsibility is shared among interested dads as well as guest speakers.

8:00 – 8:15 Fathers and sons pray out loud together.

8:15 – 8:30 Dessert is served.

Expectations

- 1) Fathers and sons will faithfully attend FAST meetings.
- 2) During closing prayer time of each FAST meeting, every boy and every man will pray out loud.
- 3) Boys and men will shake hands and make eye contact when they greet one another.
- 4) Boys will address each man as "Mr. _____."

Cost

Please pay \$XX to _____; \$XX is for the book and \$30 covers for the snacks for you and your son for the entire year. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any member of the leadership team.

SPORTS SUPERVISOR DUTIES

1) Keep your eyes on the boys all the time. Have them stay on the basketball court at the side of the building only. You can't see what they're doing if they're on the other side of the building. Also, in the past some boys have entered the church from the opposite side of the building and then run through rooms and offices both upstairs and downstairs. They shouldn't be going into the church.

2) Keep the boys outside of our meeting room until 7:30 p.m. because that half-hour period is important preparation time for the fathers. They are learning about the night's lesson, talking about their sons, and praying for them. Thank you for serving today!

15. Dessert Setup Duties, ref. page 11

DESSERT SETUP DUTIES

1. Refrigerated toppings (syrops and whipped cream) are in the kitchen refrigerator labeled "7th-Grade FAST."
2. All other ice cream toppings are in the cupboard above the phone in plastic containers labeled "7th-Grade FAST." You might need to crumble more cookies.
3. Use large clear plastic bowls for serving toppings. (Bowls are located in the cupboard to the left of the sink.)
4. Styrofoam bowls and napkins are located in the pantry.
5. Plastic spoons are located in the drawer to the left of the pantry.
6. The ice cream, labeled "7th-Grade FAST," is in the freezer
7. Place ice cream, toppings, and serving dishes on a table in the center of the kitchen.
8. Have everything set up and ready to go by 8:10 p.m.

16. Dessert Cleanup Duties, ref. page 11

DESSERT CLEANUP DUTIES

1. Put all ice-cream toppings in sealable plastic bags, label them “7th-Grade FAST,” and put them in the designated containers in the appropriately labeled cabinet. Put perishable toppings—also clearly labeled “7th-grade FAST”—in the refrigerator.
2. Wipe off the table.
3. Clean up any floor spills.
4. Wipe the kitchen counters.
5. Remove all trash and put it in the kitchen trashcan. Take the trash bag out of the can and put it in the dumpster outside.
6. Walk around the outside of the church and be sure that all the doors are closed and locked.

17. E-mail Meeting Follow-up, ref. page 20

E-MAIL TO ALL FAST DADS AND MOMS POST-MEETING (sent by FAST Group Leader)

Dear FAST Families:

We had another great FAST meeting tonight! The topic was "Handling Emotions." Thank you to: Lesson Leader – Bob Forest; Sports Supervisor – Dan Davis; Dessert Preparation – Cindy Lincoln and Lisa Stevens; and Dessert Cleanup – Scott Ranes and Steve Rice. We missed you, Alberts, Browns, and Garzas!

Our next FAST meeting will be Friday, (date) ____, at _____ Church. The topic will be "Independence and Freedom." Please read—WITH your sons—pages 132-135 of *Preparing for Adolescence* before coming.

Volunteers for our upcoming (date) ___ meeting (thank you in advance!) are:

Lesson Leader – Greg Martin

Sports Supervisor – Steve Jones

Dessert Preparation – Gail Smith and Stacey Forest

Dessert Cleanup – Doug Stanley and Joe Lincoln

If you can't do your volunteer work that night, *please* find a person on the attached calendar/roster to trade with and let me know who it is. Thanks.
