

ACT FIVE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025



FIVE



Welcome to Act Five 2024-2025

Greetings from Hamilton!

As the Act Five staff team, it is such a pleasure to be able to invite you to join us for a year of living in community, learning about the Way of Jesus in and beyond Hamilton and journeying with us through a year of incredible opportunities that we believe will help launch you into whatever lies beyond this year. We are eager to get to know you over the course of our 8 months together.

This document is designed to help prepare you for Act Five this upcoming September – where you will...

...live with ~20 others in downtown Hamilton;

...travel to new places and experience new challenges;

...explore in community and with mentors who you are, the Story to which you belong and what your next steps look like;

...grow in your relationship with God as a follower of Jesus.

Please read through this document carefully as we want to set you up as best as possible for an amazing year. Living in community, travelling together, getting to know a new city and all that this year entails – it is going to shape you in significant ways, and we want to prepare you for this as best as we can.

Know that we are praying for each of you.

We cannot wait to see what God has in store for Act Five this year.

See you in September!

The Act Five Team

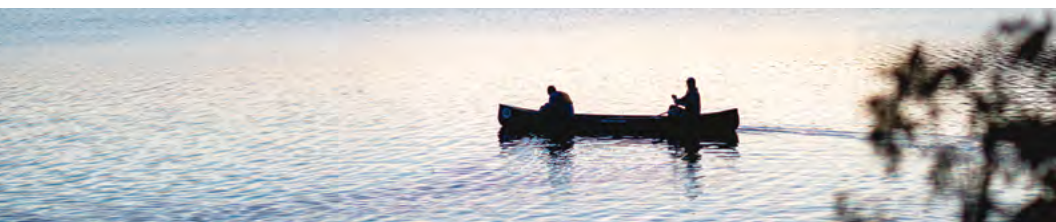


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Mission & Goals

All of what you find in this handbook is related to the following mission and goals of Act Five:

Act Five's Mission is to offer young adults (that's you!) a year of transformative experiences that shape their faith, learning, character and future pathways.

Within this, participants will...

- *Reflect on their story and grow deeper in their Christian faith*
- *Imagine the world around them with fresh eyes*
- *Practice getting to know & love their neighbours*
- *Prepare for what lies ahead*

As you journey through Act Five, our hopes for you can be summed up in the following **goals**:

- *That you know, experience, and grow practices toward a life with God*
- *That you grow as citizens of God's Kingdom while engaging as citizens in our places*
- *That you grow in character and prepare for future pathways*





Act Five Contacts

The Act Five Home

75 Blake St.
Hamilton, ON L8M 2S7
289-309-1016

If you need to receive select mail during the year, you may use this address; however, we encourage you to keep your home address the same wherever possible.

Staff Team

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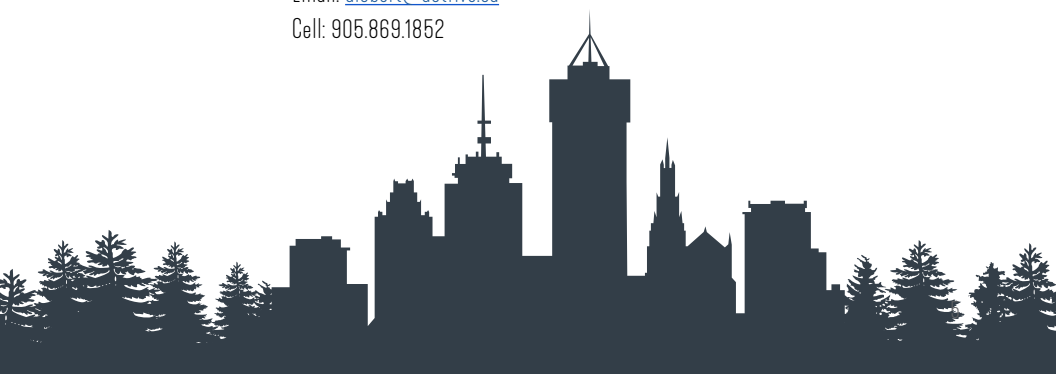
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Program Expectations - Community Life & Policies

Remembering the mission and goals of Act Five and flowing out of our commitment as followers of Christ to

- ▶ *love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and*
- ▶ *love our neighbours as ourselves,*

we have laid out the following expectations:

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

You will participate in 4 university-level courses over the 8 months of Act Five and will receive syllabi with detailed information on these when you arrive for each term. Brief course descriptions are available at www.actfive.ca/program/courses/.

Full participation is expected of all students, including all class activities, readings, and assignments. We seek to be highly experiential, discussion- and story-based, and creative in our approach to learning with our goals being toward transformation and not just head knowledge.

For students who may consider university after Act Five and want to make it more appealing for certain institutions to count Act Five courses for transfer credits, students can choose to receive graded evaluations in their courses. Redeemer University has an agreement with us and other institutions may also receive Act Five courses for credit on a case by case basis.

MENTORSHIP

Resident Leaders: Students will meet weekly in a small group or “POD” with their roommate(s) and a Resident Leader throughout the Act Five program. These will be spaces to check in with each other, receive support as needed, pray for one another, study scripture together, and more.



Home Mentor: Before coming to Act Five, you will receive information on setting up a relationship with a mentor from your home community. You will meet with this person once a month to help you process all you are learning during and after Act Five.

ACT FIVE COMMITTEES

At the start of the program, students will each be placed on a committee that gives leadership to an important aspect of life in the Act Five community for the year. The committees are as follows:

- ▶ Hospitality
- ▶ Worship and Arts
- ▶ Social and Events
- ▶ Communications (including photo and video)

WORSHIP

As a community, we commit to regular times of prayer, worship and both personal and group devotions. On Sunday evenings, Act Five has its own evening service at Blake St called *Evensong*.

Church: There will be Sundays where we are away on a trip or choose to visit specific church communities together and other Sundays where we encourage students to check out selected local churches.

By the second term, we would like to see every student select a church to which they want to commit. Act Five staff will work with each student to build connections within this church to help them engage meaningfully throughout their time there.

If students prefer to and are able to continue their in-person involvement in their home church communities, they are welcome to do so.

HOUSE RULES & EXPECTATIONS

As part of setting expectations for Act Five, students and staff will all take part in forming a Community Covenant together near the beginning of the program. This will involve commitments to how the Act Five community will seek to live and serve together well.

Cooking, Cleaning, & Being Good Neighbours

As a community, we are committed to caring for the Act Five home. This includes making meals together, cleaning and maintaining the home and living as good neighbours on and around Blake St. Students are expected to do their assigned chores daily to the best of their ability and cook meals for the community with their cooking partner on their assigned cooking day.

Curfew

Good rhythms of sleep and rest are important for our own personal wellness and for the health of the Act Five community. Therefore, students are required to be, apart from special events or circumstances, back in the home by 10PM. The house will be quiet by 11pm, and by midnight students are expected to be in their own residence spaces.

Guests & Going Home

Given the unique discipleship opportunity that comes with living in community during your 8 months with Act Five, here are some guidelines for having guests over and visiting home:

Throughout the program, there are set times where students are encouraged to head home (see program schedule on pages 12-13). If a student's home is far away from Hamilton, they can make arrangements to go with another student for the weekend.

Apart from these set times, students are expected to remain with the Act Five program with exceptions made only for unique circumstances (e.g. wedding, graduation), in communication with Act Five staff.

That being said, Act Five loves having guests visit! There are times in the schedule where having guests works best. The main times for this are Wednesday evenings, including Spaghetti Wednesday meals, and weekends.

TECHNOLOGY – A special note on technology & personal devices

While we are grateful for the advances of modern technology, we believe that Act Five's goals are more impactful by carefully choosing how and when we use our personal devices and other technologies.

Specifically, we believe our decisions around technology use impact our ability to

- ▶ form deep relationships
- ▶ learn to communicate and listen well to others
- ▶ learn to rest, be creative and listen to God's voice in our life.

For the 2024-2025 program, we commit to the following specifics:

- ▶ Two-and-a-half weeks in September will be **tech-free**, when we head out on our canoe trip with [Coldwater Canada](#): all students and Resident Leaders will put away phones and devices. Act Five staff & Coldwater Canada will keep families updated as needed.
- ▶ From October through April, the Act Five community will practice Tech-Free Wednesdays, and other set times (meal times, classes, all trips) will remain tech free.
- ▶ Internet in the home will be turned off from 11pm to 6am each night. Personal devices are expected to be kept off and out of bedrooms between these hours. Students are asked to bring alarm clocks for waking up in the morning.

* **"Tech"** in Act Five refers to all electronic devices with screens (i.e. cell phones, apple watches, laptops, tablets, tv, video games, etc.) and does not include technology that does not have a screen (mp3 players, walkman, home phone, walkie talkie, toasters, bicycles, etc.)

** On Move-In Day, students shall indicate which devices (computers, phones, gaming consoles, etc.) they are bringing into the home, so that Act Five staff can walk with students in honesty and accountability on tech-free Wednesdays.

RELATIONSHIPS

Living in a close community, it is possible to form attachments during a student's time at Act Five. However, Act Five strongly discourages the formation of romantic relationships during the gap year program. Maintaining platonic relationships allows the entire community to enjoy shared spaces, celebrate the beauty of deep friendships and shared life where each community member is included and celebrated.

It is important for students to be honest with Resident Leaders where relationships do begin to form. If Act Five staff notice that a relationship may be forming, they will approach the students involved to discuss a plan for moving forward.

If a student has a preexisting romantic relationship outside of Act Five, an Act Five staff member will initiate a conversation with the student around their expectations and hopes, to ensure that the student can be as integrated as possible into the Act Five community while maintaining this relationship. All guests are expected to abide by the same guests and visiting rules, as listed on page 8 of the Act Five Student Handbook.

Romantic relationships between students and residents, or students and staff are prohibited under all circumstances.

Sexual activity is not permitted during the Act Five program.

DRESS CODE

At Act Five, we place a high value on hospitality. As part of this, we ask students to enter into other spaces respectfully. Students are expected to dress appropriately according to the scenario within which they are present. Act Five staff are available to help students learn how to do this and will communicate dress code expectations clearly prior to certain activities if they are different from the norm of the community.

In all things, staff and students' dress represents our organizational posture of respect for others.

FREE TIME

Each week, there will be times set aside from programmed activities. Students will be encouraged to enjoy each other, be creative and active, explore in and around Hamilton and take part in activities that offer good rest and recreation. There will often be optional activities on evenings and weekends and there will be time to connect with family and friends.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

All residential and leadership staff at Act Five are equipped to respond to mental health challenges as they arise. Act Five takes mental health seriously, and through our staff training facilitated by a mental health expert, ongoing partnership with Shalem Mental Health Network, and our access to appropriate resources, have the knowledge and skills to respond to students experiencing various challenges.

While Act Five is committed to supporting students, it is not unusual for young adults to benefit from further professional support along the way. Act Five will cover the cost of up to 4 sessions of anonymous, confidential and professional counseling services (either in-person or virtual) through Shalem Mental Health Network.

A collection of health resources is accessible to all in the Act Five home. Students will be informed of these resources upon move-in.

Shalem Mental Health Network.

To set up counselling appointments in Hamilton, contact [Shalem](#):

- ▶ By phone at 905.528.0353 or 1.866.347.0041
- ▶ By email at office@shalemnetwork.org
- ▶ By text (to initiate the process) at 289.335.3543

SUBSTANCE USE

The Act Five home and all program events, including free time and weekends, will be free of all illicit drugs and alcohol. Off-use prescription drugs are also unacceptable. Smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis is prohibited during the entirety of the Act Five program. This includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, electronic cigarettes, and any other smoking or vaping devices.

During breaks in the program, students continue to be Act Five students and are expected to consider their conduct within this context.

Note: Act Five does not treat substance use or addiction as a moral issue, and does not expect perfection. Students using any of the aforementioned substances should let a staff member know prior to move-in day. This allows Resident Leaders and staff members to walk alongside individuals throughout the year offering guidance and resources, encouraging them towards wholeness.

DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

In the spirit of respect and care for each individual, discrimination and harassment of any form are not tolerated. A student who feels they may have experienced discrimination or harassment is encouraged to speak with any member of the Act Five staff team so that appropriate actions may be taken.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILING TO ADHERE TO EXPECTATIONS

Act Five is a restorative community. Our staff respond as a team when a student fails to adhere to program expectations using a Restorative Practice-based approach. We see conflict as an opportunity for transformation, and thus operate under a progressive discipline model with restoration as our ultimate goal, whereby we:

- ▶ Clearly articulate the expectations and identify the breach
- ▶ Work together with the student using key restorative practice questions and conversation to reconcile relationships
- ▶ If necessary, propose a day, weekend, or week away from the program to consider their commitment to the program's goals
- ▶ Schedule regular follow up check-ins and/or plans for moving forward as is deemed necessary

In the event that an issue persists, and in certain circumstances where it is no longer in the best interest of a student or the community to remain in Act Five, a student may be dismissed from the Act Five program.

Act Five staff are trained in a Restorative Practice approach to conflict transformation through the [Shalem Mental Health Network](#).



Prepare for Act Five

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

FIRST TERM

**Sept 2, 2024
(Labour Day)**

Move-In Day & Welcome
Details for move-in day will be provided in August.

Sept 3-5

Orientation, introductions, and settling into Hamilton

Sept 6-8

Lessons at [Russet House Farm](#)

Sept 8-21

Wilderness trip up north with [Coldwater Canada](#),
including 9-night canoe trip through Temagami

Oct → Dec

*Life in Hamilton, exploring the Biblical Story, learning
from Indigenous communities, and preparing for Field
Placements and Cross Culture Service Trip*

Oct 10-14

Weekend Home - Thanksgiving/Reading Break

Oct 31-Nov 2

Trip to Ohio: Lessons at [Lamppost Farm](#)

Nov 15-17

Weekend Home (subject to shift)

Nov 18-23

Trip to Manitoulin Island with [DayStar Ministries](#)
(exact dates TBC)

Dec 2-6

Amazing Race & End-of-Term Retreat

Dec 13

Head home for Christmas

**Dec 13, 2024-
Jan 5, 2025**

Christmas Break

| SECOND TERM | |
|---------------------|--|
| Jan 5, 2025 | Move back to 75 Blake St. |
| Jan 10-31 | Cross Culture Service Learning Trip: (a) Midwestern or Southern US with World Renew Disaster Response Services . OR (b) El Salvador with Resonate Global Mission |
| Feb 7-9 | 48-Hour Prayer Weekend |
| Feb 14-17 | Weekend Home - Family Day |
| Feb 6-Apr 3 | <i>Field Placements & Storytelling: Students will be working these weeks in their Field Placements. These will be determined in the fall term</i> |
| Feb 26-Mar 1 | Coldwater Canada Winter Camping Trip |
| Mar 14-16 | Weekend Home |
| Apr 4-6 | Weekend Home |
| Apr 7-12 | Coldwater Canada Backpacking Trip in Virginia |
| Apr 17-20 | Easter @ Act Five |
| Apr 21-24 | Final Projects & Goodbyes |
| Apr 25 | Act Five Graduation & Move Out Day |

WEEKLY SCHEDULES AT A GLANCE

These schedules give a sense of what to expect during Act Five's times at Blake St, though details week-to-week are subject to slight changes.

TERM ONE

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|--|--|--|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| Morning: Prayer & Quiet Time MORNING COFFEE: Info to Start the Week | Morning: Morning Walk, Prayer, & Quiet Time | TECH-FREE Morning Sleep in | Morning: Morning Walk, Prayer, & Quiet Time | Morning: Morning Walk, Prayer, & Quiet Time | | Morning: House Breakfast & Church |
| Morning: Class Time: Six Acts | Morning: Class Time: Place, Home, & Land | Morning: Soul Care | Morning: Experiential Learning: Place, Home, & Land | FLEX FRIDAYS: Field Trips, Workshops, Trip Prep, and Fun | Optional Fun, Trips & Events | Sabbath Rest |
| Afternoon: Study Hall, Grocery Shopping, Chores, & Free Time | Afternoon: Study Hall, Chores, & Free Time | Afternoon: Committee Meetings, Chores, & Community Fun | Afternoon: Study Hall, Grocery Shopping, Chores, & Free Time | | | |
| Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | | |
| Dinner | Dinner | Spaghetti Wednesday OR Dinner with Neighbouring Community Homes | Community Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner |
| Evening: Play & Pray Night | Evening: House Meeting | Evening: Free Evening | Evening: Evening with Storytellers | Evening: Free Evening/ Events in the City | | Evening: Evensong |

TERM TWO

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|--|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| Morning: Prayer & Quiet Time MORNING COFFEE: Info to Start the Week | Morning: Morning Walk, Prayer, & Quiet Time | TECH-FREE Morning Sleep in | Morning: Morning Walk, Prayer, & Quiet Time | Morning: Class Time: Vocation & Praxis | | Morning: House Breakfast & Church |
| Morning: Class Time: Six Acts | Field Placements | Morning: Soul Care | Field Placements | FLEX FRIDAYS: Field Trips, Workshops, and Fun | Optional Fun, Trips & Events | Sabbath Rest |
| Afternoon: Study Hall, Grocery Shopping, Chores, & Free Time | | Afternoon: Committee Meetings, Chores, & Community Fun | | | | |
| Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | Body Care | | |
| Dinner | Dinner | Spaghetti Wednesday OR Dinner with Neighbouring Community Homes | Community Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner |
| Evening: Play & Pray Night | Evening: House Meeting | Evening: Free Evening | Evening: Evening with Storytellers | Evening: Free Evening/ Events in the City | | Evening: Evensong |

Soul Care = Weekly Spiritual Formation Sessions led by Lena Scholman

Body Care = Exercise, Sports & Physical Activity

Spaghetti Wednesdays = Biweekly meal open to all family, friends, neighbours, and other guests

75 BLAKE ST - DETAILS FOR THE HOME

Please consider packing light for life at the Blake Street home. There is limited closet space, so we encourage you to only bring clothing and belongings that are necessary, considering when you will have your breaks at home to replace seasonal clothing.

Notes about Use of Space

1. **Physical space** – Considering students will live in the home for less than 8 months, the hope is that each cohort of students will leave the Act Five home in better shape than when arriving.

As part of the program deposit, students pay a damage deposit of \$150. Should rooms or common spaces be damaged or unclean upon move out, part or all of this deposit will be withheld.

2. **Personal space** – With ~20 people living in one home, we will be committed to seeking out and protecting times for students and staff to have their own personal space. This will be established through scheduling and setting up distinct rooms for quiet.

Several local friends and Act Five staff have quiet homes for students who need a day or night away, and regular times of quiet retreat outside of the city are incorporated into the program.

3. **Male/Female Accommodations** – Male and female students reside on different floors of the Act Five home, and under no circumstances are students permitted to enter the residence space of the opposite gender.



What is already in the home for us?

The home will be fully furnished with beds, desks, dressers, closet space, tables, chairs, couches, coffee tables, bookshelves, kitchenware, and cleaning supplies.

What should I bring & what should I not bring?

| Please Bring | Possibly Bring | Please do not Bring |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Bedding (extra-long twin sheets), blankets, comforter, pillow | Bike and bike lock | Additional furniture (couches, chairs, mattresses) |
| Bike helmet | Desk lamp and other lamps | Air conditioners |
| Camping/outdoor chair | Laptop or tablet | Candles/incense |
| Clothing for warm/cold weather | Music speakers / stereo | Firearms / weapons of any kind |
| Desk supplies | Musical instruments | Mini-fridges |
| Digital alarm clock (alternative to cell phone alarm) | Plants | Pets |
| Lock for desk or otherwise | Room decor | |
| Towels and toiletries | Sports equipment | |

**This list does not include specific items for Coldwater Canada and Cross Culture Service Trip*

Decorating Your Room

It is important to make your room feel like home! Please personalize your room while keeping in mind that your room should be in the same condition (or better) when you leave as when you arrived. Please be considerate of your roommate(s) in decorating, and refrain from displaying décor that is offensive or inappropriate.

You may not nail or drill holes in the wall, add room accessories with permanent hardware or stick anything to your outside door.

Please do not write on the interior or exterior walls of the home.

You may not change any permanent features of the home unless given consent from the Act Five Residence Manager.

Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers your personal belongings in the event that they are stolen or damaged (each policy will state how and what they will cover). Act Five does not have insurance that covers the property of students. Talk to your parents' insurance broker in order to obtain information on out-of-home coverage. Most policies include this as a standard clause. However, for some it is an added feature. Coverage can often be obtained through a "rider" on your family's tenant or home owner's insurance policy, which should include liability coverage for injury or damage.

TRIP INFORMATION

Coldwater Packing List - Find online at www.coldwatercanada.org/canoeingpackinglist
Act Five will distribute an Act Five-specific packing list prior to each Wilderness Trip.

Travel preparation - The following items must be prepared prior to moving into the Act Five Residence:

Passport - All students must have a valid passport before beginning at Act Five. You will be asked to provide a photocopy of your passport on Move-in Day.

Insurance - All students will be asked to show proof of medical and travel insurance before beginning at Act Five.

Minors - If under 18 at the time of travel, students will be required to produce a notarized letter of consent. We can assist you with this if needed.

Further Travel requirements - If international travel requires Covid-19 or other vaccinations, all Act Five participants will be asked to be fully vaccinated.

There will be required waivers and forms for various program trips that will be shared as needed and available.



Other Info

TRANSPORTATION & PARKING

Personal Vehicles – Act Five covers all program-related transportation needs for the duration of the 8-month gap year. Subsequently, Act Five discourages students from bringing their own vehicle to Act Five. If you wish to bring your own vehicle, you must inform Act Five staff ahead of time.

Bus & Bike Share – Act Five provides students with [PRESTO](#) cards (bus passes) for use in the city. Students will also have access to Act Five's bike share account and can freely use the [SoBi](#) network across Hamilton's urban centre. Information for this will be provided upon move-in.

LIBRARY & GYM USE

Hamilton has a large number of [Public Libraries](#) and [Community Centres](#) that offer a variety of services including gym use, public swimming, fitness centres, music recording studios, printing services, study space, book lending, and a substantial amount of weekly programming. Act Five will support students in obtaining a Hamilton Public Library card and in becoming familiar with services during their time in the program. Students can choose to obtain a Community Centre or [YMCA](#) membership if they wish.

LAUNDRY

There will be easy access to coin-operated laundry machines and local laundromats throughout the program.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Payment Schedule

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| June 1, 2024 | Deposit of \$500 due, including \$350 toward first-term tuition and \$150 as a Damage Deposit to be held for the duration of the program. |
| August 1, 2024 | \$4300 for Remaining First Term Tuition & Fees plus \$4600 for Room & Board |
| December 1, 2024 | \$4650 for Second Term Tuition & Fees plus \$4600 for Room & Board |

Payments can be made to *Act Five Initiatives* with online banking, Pre-Authorized Direct Debit (PAD), debit, or cheque. Questions regarding this payment schedule can be directed to finance@actfive.ca.

Payment for the Cross Cultural Service Trip will be processed separately and fundraised for during the program.



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