

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying for admission into our long-term, Christian discipleship training program.

We are interested in providing help for you; however, you must understand that Teen Challenge is a Christ centered, residential program for individuals willing to help themselves. We are in no way interested in helping you evade incarceration; therefore, before completing an application you should be sure that you are “sick and tired of being sick and tired”, and that your sole purpose for applying for admission to Teen Challenge is to develop a complete change of lifestyle. If you are just looking for a way out of jail or prison, you are applying to the wrong place.

Over 30 years ago, a minister by the name of David Wilkerson, author of The Cross and the Switchblade, founded the Teen Challenge ministry. With a mission to evangelize persons experiencing life-controlling problems, he presented Jesus Christ as a solution to the problems that had led to their addictions to drugs and alcohol. Rather than a twelve-step approach, he preached a one-step, eternal solution. That step was, and still is, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That’s the Teen Challenge way, and as a result, we are one of the most successful programs available for helping persons escape the bondage of drug and alcohol addiction. Several independent studies have shown that 70 to 86 percent of those who have completed a Teen Challenge residential program are today drug and alcohol free. Why? Because Jesus has delivered them from bondage!

We do not pretend to follow the philosophies of other drug treatment programs, although a few may experience some success. We do not subscribe to the opinion that drug and alcohol abuse is a “disease”, neither do we treat it as such. People do drugs and alcohol because they are at “disease” with themselves. To follow the “disease” philosophy removes the responsibility from the addict and places the cause onto “a disease.”

To accept the truth that people make the decision to do drugs or alcohol as a means of dealing with hurts and disappointments gives hope that they can change. Of course, once a person has begun doing drugs or alcohol she becomes addicted and in most cases cannot quit on her own. She needs deliverance, instruction, and the accountability of others. That’s where Teen Challenge comes in.

At our Training Center in Athens, West Virginia, our trained staff provides serious Biblical training that aids “the inner person” in developing her new walk with Jesus. A loving but tough, disciplined, and vocational atmosphere provides the training and accountability needed to help “the outer person” learn to function normally in society.

Now that we have explained our philosophy, you are in a better position to determine whether this is the program for you. The fact is, we care about you, and we will not play games. If you are ready to take that “one step” and allow Jesus to set you free from your bondage to sin, you are willing to be taught how to function as a Christian in society, and you are ready to deal with your life-controlling problems, then you should apply for admission into Teen Challenge. However, if you would rather participate in a “once an addict, always an addict” program, Teen Challenge is not for you.

In closing, I leave the choice to you. When making your choice you should keep in mind that 70 to 86 percent of those who have selected a radical change through Jesus Christ and completed the Teen Challenge program are today drug and alcohol free.

If your choice is to apply to Teen Challenge then you should write a two-page (minimum) letter explaining why you are applying to Teen Challenge, and forward it to me. I will read it. If I am convinced that you are serious, I will send an application to you. In the event you are accepted into our program, it will be your responsibility to contact your attorney, parole board, or probation officer to clear any and all legal obstacles. I must tell you that we accept very few inmates because most only want to be released from incarceration. If you are permitted to participate in our program, we will expect your full cooperation. Failure to do so will most likely result in your dismissal and return to incarceration.

You make the choice, and if it's Teen Challenge, I will look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Christ,

Josh Lytle  
Director of Admissions