

## **Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry Policies**

With the large number of youth and adults attending a wide array of trips, retreats, and programs, Youth Ministry (YM) feels the need to articulate some overall policies that will help protect the ministry to our youth and create an atmosphere of Christian love and acceptance.

**Movies:** PG and PG-13 are the norms. We do not show R-rated movies.

**Transportation:** We seek always to provide adequate and safe vehicles for our trips. For most trips, we will utilize our church bus. Occasionally, however, advisers and parents may be asked to drive their own vehicles or we may have to rent a van, depending on the situation. Our policy is that NO youth will drive on ANY trip. There may be cases when the youth have to drive, but this will be determined on a case-to-case basis and with parent permission. Seatbelts are state law and are required to be used on any event that requires transportation. If wearing a seatbelt and remaining properly seated becomes a problem, a parent will first be notified as a warning for the incident. If it continues to be an issue, the parent will be re-notified, and it will be their responsibility to provide their child's transportation for the remainder of the trip.

Trash bags are provided on the bus, and all youth are expected to properly dispose of all trash.

**Medical and Permission Forms:** We must have a FIPC YM Medical/Permission form on file for every youth. This includes friends of any youth. Anytime we leave the church premises, our medical notebook travels with us. Please fill out the forms completely. These are blanket medical/permission forms that we use on all trips, retreats, and events of the current PYC calendar year, September to August. We do not need a new one for every event. However, it is the parents' responsibility to inform us of any changes or additions to the medical forms.

**Medicine:** At any event where medicine is needed, all medicine and an "FIPC YM Event/Trip Medication form" with any non-routine medications should be turned in to the chaperone prior to the event. All medicine will be held and administered by an adult for the safety of all youth. This includes all prescription and over-the-counter drugs. We will have a med/first aid bag on hand at all events. All medications turned in will be returned at the conclusion of the event.

**Finances:** We strive to provide events that are not cost-prohibitive for anyone. Our Youth Ministry and/or individuals in our church will provide confidential scholarships, for church members, if needed for any event. We do not want anyone to miss an event because of financial need!

**Visitors:** We are thrilled to have visitors at our youth ministry programs and encourage their regular participation at all of our activities. Just like our church members, we also expect the visitors and their parents to cooperate with our church and youth policies. Visitors to our program are invited on trips, retreats, etc.

**Chaperones:** FIPC Youth Ministry will plan for and help pay for a minimum of one adult chaperone for every five youth for Mid-highs and one adult for every eight youth for Senior Highs. It will be our policy to always provide one female and one male adviser for overnight events. For some events, it is advantageous for as many advisers to attend in order to build relationships with our youth, as well as have adequate supervision. In this case, Youth Ministry will also help pay for the chaperones. Any parents or other adults who want to attend events (other than to meet the required number of chaperones) may do so at their own expense. If the minimum chaperone number cannot be met, the trip will be canceled.

**Supervision:** With many youth participating in our youth events, it is very hard for the chaperones to supervise at all times. Because of this, Youth Ministry asks that no guy be in designated girl spaces and no girl be in any spaces designated only for guys. There will always be a designated area where everyone can congregate. This is necessary for relationships to be built in our youth group, as well as create unity on our trips.

**Dress and Attire:** While our bodies are a gift of God and expressive of our identity as children of God, our clothing is primarily a matter of personal choice and often reflective of one's social status, gender, ethnicity, the influence of advertising, and other factors. Our church and community is composed not only of youth and young adults, but of young children and older adults. We are representing not only ourselves, but God and our Church. As a worshipping community we discourage youth from wearing clothing that:

- Is too revealing (e.g. clothing that is too tight; halter tops, short shorts, strapless tops, or shirts/shorts that reveal a bare midriff; pants should be worn at the waist line);

- Advertises alcohol, tobacco products or other substances abusive to the body;
- Contains language or images that ridicule a person's gender, sexuality, or geographic origin;
- Additionally, undergarments should be worn but should not be visible;
- Swimwear, trunks for boys and one-piece for girls (no midriffs showing).

Anyone who chooses not to abide by the dress code will be given attire to wear and a parent will be notified.

**Advance Registration:** Our policy is that all registration must take place through FIPC Youth Ministry, where registration will be recorded for all events. If you want to register for an event you can drop your registration and/or check in the offering plate during worship or in the mail slot of the church office in the education building. In order to officially register for some events, a deposit may be required. Such spaces cannot be held without a deposit. Because the church could lose money on events because of unconfirmed registrations, all deposits are non-refundable, unless another person can fill your spot. If you back out of a trip, retreat, etc., you will be responsible for the entire cost of the trip unless your spot is filled. (Non-refundable deposits will be reimbursed if there is an emergency such as; major sickness of youth, death in the family, or a cancellation of the event in which the church is reimbursed.) For major activities (mission trips, beach trips, ski trips, etc.), Youth Ministry has the responsibility of gathering and presenting a complete detail of the event in a timely manner. This would enable a monthly payment plan to be initiated in order to prevent a financial burden to a family.

**Cell Phone/Electronics Policy:** Cell phones should not be used during Youth events as they are distracting to the leaders and other youth. FIPC Youth Ministry has implemented a "NO Phone Zone" (including electronics). During gatherings of PYC, we will do our best to live together as a family in Christian community; based on unconditional love, respect, trust, support and spending time together. Therefore the use of cell phones/electronics will be limited in order to maintain this relationship of family and community. Phones/electronics create distractions which remove us from being "present" in times of worship, devotion, large and small group discussions, organized activities, and in times designed to commune with God. In order to preserve the sanctity of the PYC environment, we require all youth to leave their cell phones and other personal electronics in a secure place, as provided by Youth Ministry for all events of PYC. Youth will never be denied

access to contact parents in an emergency and likewise, parents will be provided with contact names/numbers for any event of PYC so youth can be reached during an emergency. A youth advisor will have the right to take cell phones/electronics from youth if they are using them during inappropriate times or in a way that does not reflect the standards set forth in the Youth Ministry's policies. Phones that are taken up will be returned at the conclusion of an event. However, it is not the church's responsibility if any devices that are brought are lost, stolen, broken, etc.

**Behavior:** In order to encourage a Christian atmosphere and way of life, we expect all youth to present themselves in a Christian manner at all times. If anyone is acting inappropriately, including but not limited to: improper language, conversation, dress, attitude, intent, etc... a parent will be notified. If the behavior continues, a parent will have to be present during the remainder of the event.

**\*\* Youth Ministry Policies are a subset of the current Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church Safe Place Policy.\*\***