

VALUES & GUIDELINES

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF ROCKWALL YOUTH MINISTRY

- **All are accepted and all matter.** We don't always have to agree or look alike to accept or love one another. God's love is big enough for all of us.
- **Effective youth ministry takes a dedicated community of adults, youth & parents.** To be authentic, our church must walk beside youth and parents with tangible expressions of God's love.
- **Youth bring value just as they are.** Every experience of our youth matter to us – both those inside and outside of the church. By giving space to see and express this value, we are present to what youth have to offer.
- **We know that God will show up.** Our youth program seeks to give space for God to lead and infuse our faith as it relates to our everyday real life. Because real life is messy, God walks alongside us no matter what.
- **We exist to give youth opportunities to serve.** Serving others allows us to discover our gifts and who we are in God's eyes. This work is right here at home as well as in new uncomfortable places.
- **God's Spirit is the one who transforms hearts and lives.** All of us are a work in progress. Our part is creating open dialogue and space, even for difficult questions and tough situations, to let God work.

Because of the above values, our goal is to create a caring, inclusive environment for all youth and adults. The guidelines below are for all youth and adults who participate in the youth ministry of FUMC.

- ◆ All youth are welcome to be a part of the youth ministry at FUMC. Our goal is to manifest love to everyone – no matter who, no matter what, no matter when, no matter where! We seek to create an atmosphere where all can experience this love without belonging to any particular clique, group, or social status.
- ◆ Each program and event is planned to facilitate a growing experience. Together we will participate. Together we will learn. Together we will be challenged. Together we will minister.
- ◆ **DAMAGE:** Willful and accidental damage to the church or other property is the responsibility of the person (group of persons) and parents. "You break it-You buy it."
- ◆ **PROMPTNESS:** Deadlines for registration fees will be published in print and online. Deposits are generally non-refundable (unless the space can be filled by a new participant).
- ◆ **TRANSPORTATION:** All users of church and rental vans and buses are expected to maintain their good condition. When vans or busses are full, adults may be asked to assist with

transportation. Youth are not allowed to drive themselves or ride with youth on any youth events unless all parents of each youth have arranged such transportation with the Youth Minister and received permission. Outside of transportation for Youth events, youth staff cannot provide transportation for youth without prior arrangements made with the youth's parents.

- ◆ **LODGING:** Some trips require room assignments. These are for the duration of the trip unless the Youth Minister feels a change is necessary. Females only allowed in female rooms and males only in male rooms.
- ◆ **ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS:** FUMC prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances at activities or trips sponsored by FUMC. Adult leaders should support the attitude that young adults are better off without tobacco and **may not allow the use of tobacco products, including even vaping with or without tobacco, at any FUMC activity involving youth participants. Any adult giving tobacco, alcohol products or any other illegal substances to youth will be removed.**
- ◆ **DISCIPLINE:** Upon violation of standards of behavior, students will receive a warning and then be subject to disciplinary action. Some larger group events will require a group covenant or code of conduct that must be signed in order to participate. Signing of these agreements will serve as the warning for behavior. Especially incidents involving drugs, potential sexual misconduct, or blatant disregard of rules will result in a student's immediate return home at the parent's expense.
- ◆ **PROFANITY:** Although profanity is becoming part of everyday life, youth and adults are encouraged not to use it or offensive gestures.
- ◆ **ELECTRONICS:** To assist the group building process, laptops, tablets or gaming systems are not allowed at most events. Unless otherwise noted, cell phones are allowed as long as they do not distract or provoke youth away from the general program. When appropriate during downtime, cell phones may be used sparingly to contact family members. If they are a problem, they will be taken up and returned to a parent at the end of the event. During normal program activities, there is no need to have cell phones out or in use. Cell phone internet function should not be in use during our activities, unless prompted for by adults in charge – more so, inappropriate or sexual explicit content will result in automatic disciplinary actions.
- ◆ **ATTIRE:** Most youth events are active programs where informal clothing is appropriate. Clothing that advertises alcohol or tobacco products is not allowed. This guideline applies to clothing that promotes violence, hate or sexism. Appropriate modest swimming attire is encouraged for water events.
- ◆ **DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION:** Dating couples should maintain appropriate boundaries – realizing events are for the group.
- ◆ **DISRESPECT TOWARD YOUTH OR ADULTS:** Practical jokes at the expense of others are not allowed. Communications between all persons in youth ministry should be in the spirit of love.
- ◆ **ADULT INVOLVEMENT:** Adults are expected to hold to the above guidelines and are encouraged to maintain a positive and flexible attitude. While adult participation and support is rarely discouraged, we want all adult participants to remember that the ministry exists for the youth and puts their experience over their own.