

Codes of Conduct for Student Ministry

First Presbyterian Church Bradenton, FL

Revised: October 3rd, 2009

Purpose

The student ministries of First Presbyterian Church exist to partner with parents and families in raising children who love Jesus and love others. We are building a healthy spiritual community of young people, where the Holy Spirit is free to work in our hearts and lives. Before our group is able to meet the spiritual needs of students, we recognize that we must first address their need for physical and emotional safety. Because we love our students and want the best for them, we present the following *Codes of Conduct* for all who participate in the student ministries of First Presbyterian Church.

Codes of Conduct

1) Listen when someone else is talking ~

Youth group should be a place where everyone can hear and be heard. In order to show respect to each person, please listen and do not talk when someone else is talking.

2) Build others up ~

We believe that there are already too many places where people use put-downs and say hurtful things. The Bible calls upon believers to encourage one another. Ephesians 4:29 says, "*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*" Insults and comments that make fun of students or adults are not permitted.

3) Avoid crude jokes and bad language ~

Youth group exists to help everyone grow closer to Christ and become more like Him. We want our language to honor Christ too. Ephesians 5:4 warns us that there should not be, "*obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*" In addition to swearing, comments of a distasteful or overtly sexual nature are not permissible.

4) Don't be a distraction ~

Worship, lesson & prayer times are special moments where we fix our attention on God and His Word. If you are being disruptive or talkative during these times, we'll ask you to step out for a few moments, until you are ready to join us again. Continual disruptions may require parental involvement.

We applaud the convenience and safety that cellphones offer for families of teenagers. However, we also recognize that cellphones are capable of being a distraction and can contribute to social isolation. Therefore, we require that students not use their phones during group meetings or activities, except in cases of emergency. Furthermore, there may be times where we require students to temporarily surrender their phone to an adult leader with the understanding that it will be safely returned at the end of the event.

We strongly encourage students to not bring iPods or portable gaming devices, as they are capable of the same problems, without offering any benefit to the youth group. We again reserve the right to require students to surrender their iPods or portable gaming devices. First Presbyterian Church cannot be responsible for loss or theft of cellphones or other electronic devices.

CONTINUES ON REVERSE SIDE

5) No illegal substances, weapons or forms of pornography ~

Drugs, tobacco, alcohol and pornography are vices that corrupt the body both physically and spiritually. Because of the law of God and of man, possession of these items will result in dismissal from any youth function. At youth group, we observe the same rules regarding weapons as exist at school: zero tolerance. For the safety of everyone, please do not bring any type of weapon to any youth event.

6) Stay on church grounds during youth group ~

Youth group depends on a special trust relationship between adults, students and parents. Therefore, students are expected to remain on the church grounds during youth group, unless specifically authorized by an adult. Because we care about your safety, anyone arriving late or leaving early must check in and out with at least one adult leader. Youth are not permitted to “walk home” or leave with someone else without parental permission.

7) Respect each other and keep proper boundaries ~

Youth group is not an appropriate place for romantic engagement. For the comfort and safety of everyone in the group, we require that students refrain from all physical displays of affection during youth activities. In addition, sexual contact or harassment in any form is prohibited.

8) Care for others and their property ~

Because safety is our primary concern, any behavior that could or does cause harm to anyone is strictly prohibited.

We require that everyone be respectful of the property of others and of the church. Abuse or theft is not permitted. If warranted by the leadership, any damages incurred will be reimbursable to the church or the property owner by the person(s) involved.

Participation in the student ministries at FPC is a privilege. Defiance of the youth group rules and/or adult leadership directions could result in suspension or permanent dismissal. If we are away from the church on a youth trip, parents or legal guardians are responsible for transportation costs home.

After careful review of this page by both parents and children, please sign and return one copy to First Presbyterian.

- I will follow the above codes.
- I understand there are consequences if I do not follow them.
- I have been provided two copies of this covenant; one will be signed and returned to the youth department and the other is for my personal records.

Student signature

Date

Parent signature

Date