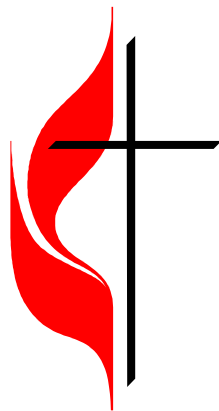


UNITED METHODIST
YOUTH
FELLOWSHIP
2006 HANDBOOK



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Our Welcome to You!

On behalf of Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church, we would like to extend a warm and faith-filled welcome to **YOU!**

This is your copy of the "Official Handbook for United Methodist **YOUth** Fellowship," Cannon's Camp Ground UMC style!

Please keep it handy so that **YOU** may refer to it to answer questions and also allow it to serve as reminder to **YOU** that being a United Methodist **YOUth** is **VERY SPECIAL!**

We are so happy that **YOU** have chosen to be a part of our **YOUth** ministry here at Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church. We hope that **YOU** will continue to seek **GOD'S GRACE** through **YOUth** ministry, and that **YOU** will call on us whenever **YOU** need something or someone! We are here to serve in ministry with **YOUth**, their parents, and their entire families!

Yours in Christ!

Rev. Traci Smith-Bennett & Mr. Nathan Gilmer
Youth Ministry

United Methodist Youth Fellowship

Vision & Mission Statements

Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church
Spartanburg, South Carolina

VISION STATEMENT: In our vision for the United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) of Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church, we hope to provide an open and loving environment for all **YOUTH** where they can be themselves. A comfortable atmosphere will allow for dialogue among the **YOUTH** concerning issues of faith and spirituality as well as daily living. We also hope to provide spiritual education for all **YOUTH**, enabling them to live Christian lives and share the gospel. We seek ways to be of service to the surrounding community as well as to areas outside of Cannon's Campground and Spartanburg in order to show God's love and restore people's faith in themselves and in others. Our goal for UMYF fosters a comfortable environment for spiritual growth. We explore how religion and social issues come together, looking for ways to stay true to our faith and to be inclusive of all people. Through UMYF, we desire to invite, receive, and introduce **YOUTH** to Christ, nurture them in discipleship while addressing their needs and hurts, and send them out as Christian disciples to invite others on their journey and to help relieve suffering in this community and the world. In order to fulfill this statement of vision, we must look at our overall mission:

MISSION STATEMENT: It is the mission of the **YOUTH** Ministry of Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church to:

- ☺ develop and implement programs in a Christian environment.
- ☺ reach out to the community and draw **YOUTH** to our programs.
- ☺ present opportunities for **YOUTH** to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.
- ☺ help disciple Christian **YOUTH** and to encourage them to grow in faith.
- ☺ create an atmosphere of fun, fellowship & safety for all **YOUTH**.
- ☺ promote strong family relationships.
- ☺ encourage participation into deeper programs as appropriate.

In order to fulfill the vision and mission of UMYF, we believe that we attend to give key areas of Christian formation:

WORSHIP

Worship
Praise music
Youth Choir
Youth Sunday
Greeters
Ushers

DISCIPLESHIP

Sunday School
Bible Study
Topical Lessons
Retreats(2)
Conference Events
District Events
Confirmation
Asbury Hills

OUTREACH

Salkehatchie Summer Service
Local Missions
Youth Service Fund
Sophie's Smiles
Nursery Workers
Assist with Children's Ministry
Vacation Bible School

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Meetings
Day Trips
Weekend Trips
Recreation

EVANGELISM

Inviting Friends
Community Events
Fundraisers
Fall Festival
Spring Revival

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Dear Parent(s),

We want every youth to be able to participate fully in the youth ministry at Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church.

We realize that many events require funding but we never want this to be an obstacle for any youth to participate. Fundraising is always available. Youth jobs can also be arranged through the church and some scholarships may be available for youth, especially those who have more than two children in a family or if a family is experiencing financial difficulty. Samples of youth jobs may include helping in the church office during the summer, assisting with special mailings, etc. All requests for financial help will be held in confidence. Youth who desire to go on special trips and retreats should contact Rev. Traci Bennett in order to arrange a youth job for a specific event.

EXPECTATIONS...PART 1

(What the church and Youth Ministry expects from its parents and youth)

PARENTS: Please be aware that in order to have a successful youth ministry at Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church (or any church), full parental support and involvement is needed with any function in which the youth are involved. This includes fundraisers, missions, service projects, fellowship meals, Sunday evening meetings (assisting the youth leaders), etc. We are very fortunate to have your continuous support and look forward to serving together with all the parents in the coming year.

YOUTH: When the **YOUth** (junior and senior high) are together as a large group or as individual groups, they need to remember that they are representing the following:

Their families Their Church Their Respective Groups Jesus Christ!

With these thoughts in mind, we must remind everyone that certain behaviors are to be practiced at all times as well as the avoidance of behaviors unbecoming to Christians! This information may be found on the following pages (**YOUTH MINISTRY GUIDELINES**.)

All **YOUth** are welcomed to be a part of the Youth Ministry at Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church. We are to instill and express Christian in all people and to all people, regardless of gender, race, socioeconomic status, age, etc. **In other words, we are committed to minister to all whom enter and to all whom we encounter.**

Together, we will encounter challenges, fully participate, learn together, grow in faith, love, and joy, and minister to one another.

ATTENDANCE: We encourage attendance to all meetings and other **YOUTH**-related events, Sunday School, and worship services. **YOUTH** should get into the regular habit of attending Sunday afternoon meetings in order to be fulfilled spiritually, emotionally, and physically. We strongly discourage **YOUTH** to attend only the "fun events" or recreational times, but encourage them to participate in the entire spectrum of **YOUTH** Ministry. In order to ensure fairness to all **YOUTH**, **YOUTH** need to attend at least 50% of the time (Sunday afternoon meetings) in order to go on day and overnight trips. We do encourage **YOUTH** to invite friends to the meetings and get their friends involved in all of **YOUTH** Ministry.

SERVICE & MISSIONS: In order for **YOUTH** and adults to become disciples, service is foundational. Through Youth Ministry, we do the work of Christ. We are called to be in ministry, *"to put feet to our faith."* With God's grace, we dare to respond to the challenge of Matthew 25:40 - *"Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."* Service is a natural, necessary expression of faith in Christ, of becoming a disciple. Being in service to others does not make us special or deserving of favors. This avenue of ministry is simply what we are called to do - from love, in love - as the people of God. Below are examples of ways the UMYF may experience servanthood ministry:

CHURCH PROGRAM & BUILDING SERVICE

Cleanup	Yard Work	Fix-up/Repair	Ushers
Office Work	Running Errands	Painting	Food Preparation
Phone Chain	Concession Stand workers	Prayer Chain	Greeters

CONGREGATIONAL SERVICE (FOR MEMBERS)

Housekeeping	Yard Work	Transportation	Friendship Calls
Secret Pals	Visiting shut-ins	Running Errands	Painting
Wash Pets	Helping with Children's Ministry	Walk Pets	Wash Cars
Nursery Workers	Vacation Bible School Workers	Food Preparation	Wash Windows

COMMUNITY SERVICE (SPARTANBURG)

Soup Kitchen	Visitation at Nursing Homes	Meals on Wheels	Bethlehem Center
Tutoring	Red Cross Activities	Children's Shelter	Gleaning
MS Walk	Downtown Rescue Mission	Community Cleanup	Food Collection

BEYOND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hunger Programs	Salkehatchie Summer Service	Youth Service Fund	Work Camps
Disaster Relief	Asbury Hills Service Projects	Sophie's Smiles	

CHAPERONES: We encourage all parents and other church members to consider chaperoning at least one **YOUTH** event per year. We treasure our chaperones and their gifts! We do have great expectations for any adult who chaperones **YOUTH**. We expect chaperones to display maturity and at the same time, the ability to laugh and cry with the **YOUTH**. We expect chaperones to be both a friend and a mentor to the **YOUTH** during their time together and at the same time be open-minded and accepting of all **YOUTH**. We expect chaperones to volunteer willingly and prayerfully, without having feelings of guilt and at the same time see the opportunity as one of spiritual nurture and growth. **YOUTH** need adults to guide them and ensure their safety. As part of our Safe Sanctuary concept, chaperones are not allowed to stay in the rooms with **YOUTH** unless they are related (typically, chaperones will share a room or have their own room.) The only exception this is at Garden City, where the rooms consist of single-gender dorms.) We make every attempt to cover room expenses for chaperones as well as expenses related to day trips. We also will attempt to help cover travel expenses if a parent has to drive his or her vehicle on long trips.

DRESS/ATTIRE: Youth need to remember that what they wear is a reflection of not only their families, but also the church and Jesus Christ. Therefore, youth should avoid wearing shirts/blouses that reveal the midriff or have inappropriate sayings or references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or any other offensive or inappropriately suggestive clothing. Boys' pants should not be baggy or show undergarments. Basically, if you cannot wear the clothing to school, you should not wear it to church. Otherwise, most UMYF programs are active programs where pants, shorts, and informal clothing are appropriate. **REMEMBER**, you should wear clothing that is appropriate for the **WORD** and the **WITNESS!**

PROMPTNESS: **YOUTH** are asked to be at scheduled events and meetings on time. Parents are asked to pick up **YOUTH** at the designated times. We are committed to beginning and ending activities on time. If a parent knows he or she will be late in picking up a **YOUTH**, please call the church at 579-0881 and let someone know.

DAMAGES: "You break it, you buy it!" Damage to the church or any church property is the responsibility of that person or group of persons. **YOUTH** are reminded to treat all property with respect, such as not kicking basketball, leaving trash out, jumping on furniture, etc.

TRANSPORTATION: We are very limited in transportation at the establishment of this handbook. Adults (Age 23 years and older) will be used as drivers for local trips. For long trips (more than 40 miles from Spartanburg), a van or vans will be rented with the cost divided among all participants as well as church funds.

PROFANITY AND OTHER INAPPROPRIATE USES OF LANGUAGE: Despite the fact that profanity and inappropriate references to human sexuality, including sexual harassment, appear to be acceptable in everyday life, its use by **YOUTH** and adult leaders is not acceptable.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, ILLEGAL DRUGS: No youth member, visitor, or adult shall possess, engage in buying or selling, or consume any illegal substance at the church or any church/youth-related activity. Smoking or use of any tobacco products (chewing tobacco or "dipping") by any youth or adults at church/youth events is prohibited.

BULLYING: Bullying has become sad part of many youth's lives, especially in school. Because we believe in Safe Sanctuary at this church, we will not tolerate bullying by any **YOUTH**. If a **YOUTH** is reported for bullying, a conference will be held with the **YOUTH** and his or her parents. The church is the one place in a youth's life where he or she is to feel safe and accepted. Bullying can take many forms, from verbal abuse to outright physical violence. A less subtle form of bullying can be seen in the unnecessary teasing of others because of differences. We ask that youth think prayerfully before negatively confronting another youth because of differences. **YOUTH** who experience any form of bullying or unnecessary teasing should go to one of the adult youth leaders. Remember the Golden Rule..."Do unto others as they do unto you!" In other words, bullying and teasing are not healthy and no one likes to be the recipient of this behavior!

PHYSICAL CONTACT: While we know that youth like to wrestle and play "slap games," these activities are considered unacceptable at any youth event. This includes the constant "picking" at someone by applying headlocks, punching, pressing pressure points, etc. Some youth find it very annoying and unacceptable as well. In a nutshell, we ask that you keep your hands to yourself. Should you have the desire to play punching games, we have some nice karate punching bags in the Family Life Center. In the event a **YOUTH** disregards warnings from adult leaders concerning unnecessary physical contact, a conference will be held with the youth and his or her parents.

YOUTH DRIVERS: Please see the "YOUTH DRIVING POLICY" for complete details.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENTS: There are pre-determined deadlines for most youth events outside of regular meetings. All deposits are non-refundable. If a **YOUTH** cancels after making full payment on an event, then he or she will receive a refund provided a replacement is found. The exceptions to this cancellation policy are cancellations due to acute illness or death in the family. **PLEASE NOTE:** Conference Events (Springmaid) and Weekend-type trips (Snow-tubing) are non-refundable due to the nature of the events. These type of events have a "NO REFUND" policy in effect.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION: Displays of affection by dating couples must be within appropriate boundaries. Also, when youth are away from the church on overnight trips, there shall be no boys in the girls' room and vice versa. In the event the **YOUTH** are on a weekend trip and wish to socialize in a room due to inclement weather, then one or more adults will and must be present at all times. At the Garden City Beach retreat, under no circumstances are members of the opposite gender to be in one another's room. There is a large meeting area at the facilities. Finally, during all church events, dating couples are to be in the presence of an adult at all times.

CELL PHONES: We ask that **YOUTH** not use their cell phones during UMYF (Sunday meetings) or during any other event where there is youth activity except in the case to notify a parent of pick-ups times or delays in returning to the church. This includes playing games on the cell phones during meetings. We feel that the two hours we spend together in our groups is "sacred time," and therefore should be treated as such.

EXPECTATIONS...PART 2

(What the parents and youth should expect from Youth Ministry)

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY: In order to ensure Safe Sanctuary (the safety of all **YOUth**), there are to be two adult leaders at every youth meeting, gathering, and event. In the event enough adults are not present, then a parent must stay for the meeting, gathering, or event. There shall also be one male and one female adult present for all meetings, gatherings, and events.

BIBLES: There are many translations available of God's Word. However, some of the versions are difficult for youth to follow. For Youth Ministry at Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church, the **YOUth** and their leaders shall use the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and The Message during regular youth meetings.

BIBLE STUDY & TOPICAL STUDY: Topics will be Christian-based and relevant to today's **YOUth**, and will be formulated to meet the needs of both Middle School (Junior High UMYF) and High School (Senior High UMYF.) Studies will incorporate various forms of media, including video/DVD, PowerPoint Presentations, and other visual and auditory aides. Studies will also be participatory, giving **YOUth** the opportunity to share openly. Special guest speakers will be used as well as other members of the church. **YOUth** will also be participating in a "True Love Waits" and/or "God's Gift of Human Sexuality" during the year (with parental permission.)

SALKEHATCHIE SUMMER SERVICE: Our church has always been active in Salkehatchie Summer Service. This mission opportunity is open to any **YOUth** who is 14 years of age or older at the time of camp. **YOUth** and adults travel to a camp in South Carolina (preferably a camp at least 40 miles from Spartanburg) in order to work on homes that are in need of repairs. The mindset behind Salkehatchie is that **YOUth** attend with the hopes of not only learning new skills, but also ministering to the homeowners and surrounding community. **YOUth** develop life-long friendships with other **YOUth** from all over the state. It must be understood that the work is not easy, but it is one of the most fulfilling missions available for **YOUth** and adults. Youth typically live at a church or a school, making use of showers at schools, armories, YMCA, fire departments, etc. The church, believing in this powerful ministry, supports the **YOUth** and adults by paying one-half of the camper's fee (\$100.00 for 2006) and supporting special dish-pan offerings for the camps attended.

CONFIRMATION: All **YOUth** who have completed at least half of their sixth grade school year and older are encouraged to participate in Confirmation in the Spring of each year. Taking place over a period of six Sundays, **YOUth** are exposed to many aspects of Christianity and Methodism. Each **YOUth** is expected to attend all six sessions. Each **YOUth** will be assigned a mentor during the classes. After completing the classes, **YOUth** may join the church as full members. This decision can only be made by the **YOUth** when he or she is ready and willing to enter into a full relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ. The

typical day for the Confirmation class to join the church is Easter Sunday. However, they may join any time they are ready!

YOUTH SUNDAY: In September, the **YOUth** share their talents with the congregation by leading the entire worship service. They serve as worship leaders, musicians, ushers, greeters, Scripture readers, etc. This is a special time in the lives of both **YOUth** and the congregation.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: During all regular UMYF meetings on Sunday afternoons, music will be an important part of **YOUth** Ministry. **YOUth** will also be singing in various worship services as well as Youth Sunday.

HOSPITALITY MINISTRY: In the event one of our **YOUth** members has an illness that requires hospitalization, experiences a death in his or her immediate family, or if a family becomes incapacitated due to other circumstances (job loss, unusual circumstances, etc.), we will make arrangements to provide a meal or meals for the family. These and other circumstances should be reported to the Youth Leaders (Rev. Traci Bennett and Nathan Gilmer) and the Hospitality Coordinator (Vicki Austin).

ASBURY HILLS: We are blessed to have access to one of the highest ranked United Methodist Church camps in the nation...Asbury Hills. Asbury Hills Camps and Retreat Center leads children and youth, ages 6 - 18, in a week of wonderful spiritual formation, fellowship, and more. **YOUth** are strongly encouraged to attend Asbury Hills one week during the summer. The church will pay \$100.00 towards the total camper fee. Once your **YOUth** has registered, please contact Rev. Traci Bennett and she will send the church's portion directly to Asbury Hills. It is highly recommended that **YOUth** register beginning in February. Registration can be done on-line. For more information, check out www.asburyhills.org.

FUNDRAISERS: Effective fundraisers are a staple of Youth Ministry. Through fundraisers, we attempt to raise money for spiritual life retreats, other events for spiritual formation/nurture, and missions. We will not host fundraisers for "fellowship trips" such as snow tubing, day trips, etc. Any monies left over following fundraisers remain in the Youth Fund to be used for extra expenses such as van rental, travel expenses (gas), scholarships, and other projects. Regular fundraisers shall include a church wide dinner at least every other month. Secondary fundraisers include serving as waiters and waitresses at church wide dinners (sponsored by other groups within the church), annual yard sale, and other fundraisers as needed. Youth will receive credit if they and/or a member of their family actively participate in the fundraiser.

COMMUNICATION: Perhaps one of the most crucial aspects of Youth Ministry is communication. We make every attempt to keep **YOUth** and Parents informed of all aspects of Youth Ministry through several sources. First, a monthly Youth Newsletter is sent out via snail mail and e-mail and contains all information pertaining to the present month and upcoming events. Second, reminders of special events, deadlines, etc. are either snail-mailed

or e-mailed. Third, reminders are given at each Sunday afternoon meeting. Fourth, reminders are announced as needed during the morning worship service. Open communication is also a crucial aspect of Youth Ministry. Leaders, parents, and **YOUTH** are encouraged to maintain an open mind and open heart in relation to communication.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION RETREATS: The **YOUTH** have the opportunity to attend two retreats. One takes place in the winter or fall at Springmaid Beach (Conference-sponsored event.) The second retreat takes place at Garden City Chapel and Retreat during the summer. The first retreat is meant to serve as a bonding experience, especially for rising 6th graders. The summer retreat is a reinforcement of spiritual formation and group bonding.

YOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: Youth Annual Conference, also known as YAC, is the comparative of the South Carolina Annual Conference for adults. Every year during July, hundreds of youth meet at Wofford College for a week of spiritual formation, fellowship, discipleship, and more. Each church is asked to send at least two representatives. All the youth who attend from the Spartanburg District help compose the Spartanburg District Youth Ministry (DCYM.) The district meet together to discuss youth ministry as a district. Technically, our church should send four representative (two from each small group.) Youth must have completed seventh grade before attending YAC. The church will pay \$100.00 for us to four individuals to attend. This assistance is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

GRADUATION SUNDAY: On the third Sunday in May, we recognize our high school graduates with a family breakfast, a special worship service, and graduation gifts. Graduating seniors wear their caps and gown during the worship service.

KIM ARTHUR SCHOLARSHIP: We are fortunate to have a scholarship available that was established by Shine and Joyce Arthur in memory of their daughter, Kim Arthur. This scholarship is presented to a deserving high school senior. Areas taken into scholarship consideration include active, year-round participation in UMYF, Church, and other areas, community service, academic excellence, etc. Any youth may apply for the scholarship, but preference is typically given to a youth who is a member of Cannon's Camp Ground United Methodist Church. **YOUTH** must have official transcripts and recommendations sent to the church once applications are available and completed. Deadlines for application will appear in the church bulletin.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School is an important part of Youth Ministry. We have classes for Junior high and Senior High Youth. **YOUTH** are encouraged to attend Sunday School as much as possible for additional spiritual formation.

FORMAT OF SUNDAY MEETINGS

We attempt to follow a basic format in the regular Sunday afternoon meetings. The first three Sundays of the month are typically dedicated to the heart of UMYF: small group gatherings featuring music, study, fellowship, and spiritual nurture. The fourth and fifth Sundays are designated "special meetings" which consists of day trips, "Meet to Eat," Mystery Trips, and more. In the event Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, or New Year's Eve fall on a Sunday, UMYF will not meet. Other "holiday" Sundays in which UMYF will not meet are:

Easter	Mother's Day	Father's Day
Sunday preceding 4 th of July	Labor Day Sunday	Sunday following Thanksgiving

There may be additional Sundays during the year when UMYF may not place. However, these dates will be pre-determined and announced in the church and youth newsletters.

The standard schedule of Sunday afternoon meetings (4:30 pm - 6:30 pm) is as follows:

- 4:30 pm - 4:40 pm Fellowship in gym
- 4:40 pm - 5:00 pm Large group gathering (business, reminders, music, intro. to small group sessions)
- 5:00 pm - 5:45 pm Small group gatherings (Junior High and Senior High) *Spiritual Formation and more!
- 5:45 pm - 6:30 pm Fellowship Meal and Fellowship

The fourth and fifth Sunday night meetings will typically take place 4:30 pm - 6:30 unless otherwise noted.

MYSTERY MEETINGS: Mystery meetings are meetings in which **YOUth** are transported to an unknown destination, where special activities will take place. These meetings can range from visits to cemeteries, prisons, bowling alleys, parks, funeral homes, and more! Once **YOUth** arrive at the destination, they will participate in special activities. There will be times **YOUth** need to bring five dollars for food (reminders will be announced/mailed/e-mailed.)

MEET TO EAT: **YOUth** will either meet at the church or a predetermined location for a fellowship meal outside the church.

WORKING WITH BUSY YOUTH

How do we address personal busyness, schedules of volunteers and participants, conflicting activities, academic schedules, rehearsals, practices, sports, clubs, and an attitude that we should try to do it all?

One obvious answer is to offer youth the one thing that no one else can: peace, stillness, and quiet. Youth ministries can offer opportunities for stillness without having to think through, explain, or account for their thoughts. Youth ministries can offer space, place, relationships, and acceptance. Youth ministry can be driven by a vision of Christ, who is more than willing to take out yoke of busyness and give us a lasting peace. What are some practical ways this can be done?

ACCEPT LIMITATIONS: There are limitations and realities in our present day and age. We cannot fight true busyness. Instead, we must learn to work with it. No matter what event or activity we might have, what meeting we intend to hold, someone is going to have a conflict. What do we do? Cancel? No, if only two show - don't cancel. Take the two and have the best time possible, "...for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18:20) For all intents and purposes, we will not cancel an event due to lack of participation unless it is an event that requires a minimum number of participants or has extenuating circumstances.

KNOW THE CALENDARS: While it is impossible to anticipate every conflict, we try to avoid major ones by looking at school, family, and church calendars far in advance. If you know your **YOUTH** has a major school event (such as the SAT, ACT, sports tournaments, etc.) pass this information along to the Youth leaders. While we cannot plan an event where all **YOUTH** can attend, we do our best to accommodate the majority. We intentionally plan events on Saturdays and Sundays since **YOUTH** are not typically involved in school practices on weekends. We will also plan for special events on Wednesday evenings.

Sometimes **YOUTH** have difficult choices to make when it comes to choosing between secular activities, school activities, and church activities. The choice should be made by the **YOUTH** with parental support, encouragement, and prayer. Of course, as Youth Leaders, we are partial to church activities, especially those that provide spiritual, physical, and emotional nurture! We also support **YOUTH** in their choices and continue to love and support them in all that they do.

YOUTH DRIVING POLICY

Access to automobiles by the youth of our church has become much more prevalent than in the past. This fact, coupled with an increase in planned youth activities off the church premises, require the establishment and implementation of a church policy regarding the use of automobiles by the youth of the church when attending church-sponsored functions:

1. The church assumes no responsibility for the safe transportation of youth to and from the church for the purpose of participating in any youth activity. If a youth needs to transportation to the church for any reason, he or she is responsible for contacting one of the youth leaders or arrange transportation. Should a youth leader need to pick up a youth, he or she will be picked up on the way to said event.
2. The church provides or coordinates transportation using the church van, rental van, or using adult drivers (parents) for church/youth activities off the church grounds. The church carries secondary insurance for this purpose.
3. Any adult who drives a group to and from any church/youth event must carry his or her own insurance (including liability.) The driver's insurance is primary insurance. The youth of the church are encouraged to use the transportation provided or coordinated by the church.
4. If a youth **arrives too late** to use the transportation arranged by the adult leaders, then the youth may, at his or own risk and with permission of his or her parent(s), provide his or her own transportation to said event. The church assumes no responsibility for the safe transport of the youth under these circumstances.
5. No youth will be authorized to ride with any youth driver unless prior parental permission is obtained (written permission.) The church assumes no responsibility for the safety of any person riding in a vehicle driven by a youth.
6. The church is not responsible for the safety or whereabouts of a youth (a) after the close of an activity conducted at the church, or (b) after arrival at the church following activities conducted off church premises.
7. All youth are to ride in church-provided transportation, not in their own vehicles.

"Christians believe in life and always choose life over death. Christians respect one another as persons. Christians are given the freedom to live in love. Christians are responsible for other's lives and property."

YOUTH COUNCIL

Why do we need a Youth Council? Having a Youth Council allows us to share and teach responsibility and to increase involvement and relevance. A Youth Council will lead to a ministry by and with youth, rather than a ministry for youth.

How does a Youth Council strengthen Youth Ministry? A Youth Council strengthens Youth Ministry by:

- ☺ Involving others.
- ☺ Partnering youth with adults.
- ☺ Keeping the entire Youth Ministry in focus: study, service, fellowship, the arts, worship, outreach, sports, administration, Sunday School, and more.
- ☺ Developing youth leadership.
- ☺ Giving youth a voice in decisions.
- ☺ Providing a forum for new ideas.

What does a Youth Council Do? A Youth Council's tasks are fluid, reflecting the times, needs, and understandings of the church. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ☺ Evaluation of the scope of Youth Ministry, making recommendations so that present and future needs of the youth are addressed.
- ☺ Coordinate and schedule all youth events.
- ☺ Keeps the other youth informed.
- ☺ Reports to the church council.
- ☺ Provides a forum for church wide information that youth need.
- ☺ Works with the congregation's Committee on Lay Leadership and SPRC (Staff-Parrish Relations Committee) to recommend youth members to other official groups. (Youth may serve on all boards and committees except as trustees.)

What are the roles of adults and youth on the Youth Council? The adults help provide leadership and guidance with and to the youth. Youth members should be allowed to carry out the bulk of the duties. Initially, this is not an easy thing to do. It takes time for youth to understand what is expected and to be able to fulfill the expectations. While they learn these things, adults support them in their successes and walk with them in their failures. In all cases, we ask ourselves this question with love: "What did you and I learn from this experience." Adults are to refrain from quickly rescuing youth from the consequences of their actions or non-actions. Why? Because little significant learning takes place. A Youth Council is an important way for youth to discover and to develop leadership abilities.

A well-functioning Youth Council takes extra time, greater attention to detail, advanced planning, and a commitment to follow through. In short, it takes organization. Youth and adults make decisions together after discussion and prayerful thought.

Who serves on the Youth Council? Membership on the Youth Council shall consists of no less than six adults and six youth, with no more than 20 members overall. The Minister of Youth and the Assistant Youth Director count as two of the adult members. The pastor of the church shall serve in ex-officio. Of the six youth, there shall be at least two representatives of the Junior High UMYF and the Senior UMYF and shall be composed of a member of each gender from each group. **The 2006 Youth Council Members are as follows:**

Adults:

Jim Gardiner	Sonya Gardiner	Angela Gilmer	George Sparks
Nathan Gilmer	Vicki Austin*	Susan Sparks **	Randy Henderson
Patricia Trent	Rev. Traci Bennett		

* Vicki Austin serves as the Hospitality Coordinator.

**Susan Sparks serves as the Fellowship Meal Coordinator.

Youth Members:

Junior UMYF Representatives

Jennifer Bennett
Jacqueline Alexander
Taylor Gardiner
Sawyer Vassey
Peter Pecci

Senior UMYF Representatives

Katie Sparks *
Rob Kennedy
Jacob Roberts
Jamey Lee Trent
Josh Turner

*Katie Sparks serves as the 2006 Youth Representative on the Church Council.

**Officers will be elected and will serve on the youth Council.

How often will the Youth Council meet? It is the goal of the Youth Council to meet no less than bi-monthly (typically every other month) unless special circumstances arise. In the late Fall of each year, a planning retreat will take place (prior to the Church Council planning session.)

To whom does the Youth Council report? The Youth Council will make most decisions regarding all areas of Youth Ministry. Any financial requests above and beyond the youth budget must be taken to the Church Council and/or the Trustees.

8 THINGS NOT TO SAY TO YOUTH!

Smart People learn what to say and what to swallow. A national survey of teens revealed what adult phrases turn the off. They shared over thirty conversation killers. From those thirty phrases, eight "big stranglers" appeared to be repeated by the majority of the teens. The statements in column one say more to the teenager than the statement itself. Instead of hearing a parent's actual words, a teen hears you saying in column two!

What a parent says

"When I was your age..."

"You just don't understand!"

"You only think you have problems."

"I don't have time to listen now."

"Do what I say, not what I do."

"Because I told you to!"

"Why can't you be more like..."

"You'll look back one someday..."

What the teen hears

Your problems aren't important because I had it much tougher when I was age.

You aren't capable of understanding, so there is no sense in explaining it.

Teenagers only have mini-problems.

I am too busy to be pestered by a teenager's little world.

You do what's right; I don't have to.

I don't want to bother with your attempts to negotiate.

I wish you were someone else.

Forget about today and concentrate on tomorrow.

Whether you use any of the above statements is not the ultimate question. Look beneath the surface of what you do say to your teen. Do you put across a negative, destructive meaning?

Think about what you say, especially the things you say over and over again. Your vocabulary and/or tone of voice might be a huge red light in your relationship with your teenager.

TOP 10 PLACES & TIMES TO TALK WITH TEENS

THE KITCHEN: Teens like to hang out where there are two exits. They enjoy talking if they can say, "Oh, I gotta run" and quickly get out of there if the conversation takes a bad turn.

A RESTAURANT: As long as it's a place where their friends do not hang out. (They don't want to be teased about being with a parent.) A parent should not use this occasion to correct, pump, or interrogate the teen. It should be an opportunity for relaxed, open conversation where the teen is the guide - talking about whatever he or she wishes.

RIDING IN THE CAR: Especially when it is just two of you. Most of us appreciate individual attention if we aren't going to be grilled. Bring up non-threatening subjects.

FAMILY ROOM FLOOR: Late at night often works best. Be willing to listen way past your bedtime. Again, best if it's just the two of you.

PURSUING A HOBBY: Teens will talk while doing something together with a parent, such as baking, working on a car, shopping, or sports, as long as the parent is not too dominating. (Nothing is accomplished if the parent dominates the conversation.)

MEAL TIME: This is one of the few times when the entire family gets together and has the chance for casual or in-depth conversation. (Try to maintain at least one meal together each day. With jobs, school, community involvement, and television viewing, the family is gradually losing this time slot.)

TAKING WALKS: With many of us becoming more concerned about getting enough exercise, a walk provides a natural get-together. When conditions are favorable, a parent may say, "I'm taking a walk, want to go along?" The response will likely be positive.

CELEBRATIONS: after a particular accomplishment, a family might have a cake or special snack to acknowledge the teen's success. It is a great time to share on a high note. (Not all conversations have to be deep and serious.)

BEDTIME: You don't read to them anymore, but a back rub can cut the tension and offer opportunity for a chat. Ask permission before entering their room.

SHOOTING HOOPS - OR OTHER TEEN TURF: It's easy to say, "What about those Gamecocks or Tigers this year?" or "What's your favorite new song/or group?"

SOME UNFAVORITE PLACES OR TIMES TO TALK TO TEENS

FAMILY CONFERENCES: These may not be popular, but if your family doesn't get together regularly or "naturally," you may need to call a family conference.

OFFICES AND DENS - OR OTHER PARENTAL TURF: Usually a summons to one of these places means heavy stuff is about to come down. Save it until there is no other choice.

IN FRONT OF FRIENDS: Chewing out a teen with friends around is unacceptable. And parents should not expect to develop serious conversation when their teen with friends.

OUTSIDE THE HOME: Front lawn confrontations might be necessary but try to avoid them. Never embarrass a teen if you can avoid it. Keep heated discussions inside except in total emergencies.

AT BREAKFAST: A teen's greatest concern in the morning is for space. It's an unproductive time for confrontation or serious debate.

Guiding Your Teen to Make Wise Decisions

Without a clear direction and purpose, it can be very easy for teenagers to make poor choices regarding their futures. During later adolescence, many teenagers will begin to wonder about their future. This can be a time of great fear and anxiety. Some teenagers will begin early to decide about education, dating, and a career. Others will wait until the last minute to make these major decisions. Many parents may be wondering if they can be helpful with these decisions. YES! As parents, although we cannot make the major decisions for our teenagers, we can teach them the "art" of making wise life-decisions. I believe that this process begins by asking a teenager two foundational questions:

1. What is your mission in life? Christ has commanded us in Matthew 22:37-38 to, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Then he added the second greatest commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore, the question becomes "What specifically can I do to serve God and others? The "what" question determines our mission in life. There are literally thousands of "what" things to do for Christ and others. My mission is to help people resolve conflicts within their most important relationships (e.g., spiritual, family, marital, business). By choosing their own "what" with the purpose of serving others, teens will find a higher degree of motivation in life, and a greater desire to find a school or training institute to start learning the knowledge necessary to serve others skillfully. When a teen's motivation to study in school is low, usually it's because the teen has little or no idea of what he wants to do later in life. Help him choose the serving question (what), and watch him get excited. You'll see a more intense and motivated son or daughter. The "what" question is not the "how" question. It's very important to choose these two areas separately and in order. The "what" or mission is an over-all theme or broad area like "helping people who are sick." The "How" includes any one of hundreds of ways to get our mission accomplished. If our mission in life is to help people who are sick, the next question will help in choosing the method or specific way of getting our mission accomplished.

2. What method will you use to accomplish your mission? Here is where we get much more specific. Here is also where we choose the type of schooling or specific training we need to accomplish our mission. For example, if our mission is to help people who are suffering physically, we may like to choose any one of many vocations: doctor, dentist, nurse, physical therapist, hospital administrator, pharmacist, or relief worker. The list can be a mile long. But with a clear mission in our minds, our motivation to find the best place to learn how to get our mission done greatly increases. Our ability to listen and learn increases. Our intensity, our creativity, and our enthusiasm for whatever it takes to succeed increases. The joy of serving comes alive with a clear mission and method to accomplish our mission.

Examples of Life-Missions

- ☺ Helping others with their physical pain ...
- ☺ Helping people find shelter, such as a house, that they will enjoy ...
- ☺ Selling products that protect people's eyes, ears, etc ...
- ☺ Protecting others from world enemies ...
- ☺ Building places for people to live or work, such as homes or offices ...
- ☺ Making products that ease others' load in some way ...
- ☺ Planting food to feed people or selling food ...
- ☺ Designing or creating products that get others where they want to go ...
- ☺ Selling products to maintain a person's house or business ...
- ☺ Bringing others enjoyment and encouragement, like being an actor or speaker ...
- ☺ Helping people figure out how to love and honor each other more.

YOUR TEENS NEED YOU TO NOTICE THEM

Too often we barely focus on the person standing in front of us, much less on a teenager who hides in her/his room or one whose busy schedule keeps him/her out of the house. How do teens get attention? Hair and clothing choices may be one way. Loud music says I'm here! Angry words, slamming doors, even the dreaded silent treatment all scream for attention. When teens' needs for notice are not met, they will - by behavior or attitude - get your attention - often negatively rather than positively. What parents can - and should - do is to give them the positive attention they need in order to elicit positive behaviors and attitudes in their children.

WHAT TEENAGERS NEED...

Focused attention: Pay attention when your teen is talking. Turn off the TV and give them your undivided attention. Watch body language and facial expressions for clues about your teen's feelings. In a discussion, if the situation is not life-threatening, agree to disagree. Remember, your teen may be trying out different beliefs and attitudes to see what fits, how others react, and how the words sound coming from her/his mouth. Say "I'm available," then be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If it's not convenient to talk, give your teen a time frame (I'll be through in 10 minutes. I want to talk to you.) One dad told his secretary to interrupt any meeting when his teen called.

Look at events from the teen's point of view: Go to school-sponsored events. Chaperone a church youth trip (with your teen's permission). Offer to bring food to a fellowship. Take a group of younger teens out for pizza and let them sit at another table. Listen to their conversation while you are driving. Watch the TV programs and movies your teen watches and discuss these. Listen to and discuss the songs your teen prefers. Don't condemn the music. Try to understand why he/she likes the song. Ask your teen how it makes her/him feel or what message she/he hears. Work on homework together. Show your teen study shortcuts you learned. Get her/him to explain the subject to you so you can help.

Do something special with your teenager: Spend time alone with each teen in your family. Plan a regular (weekly, monthly, bimonthly) date if possible. Brainstorm a list of activities to do with your teen. Together select several and write these on the family calendar. Let your teen teach you something (how to use the computer, how to play chess, how to program the VCR). Explore new places with your teen (a used clothing store, a bike trail).

Also remember to: Indicate that you think about your teenager during the day. "I thought about what you said..." "I saw something today that reminded me of you..." "A friend at work expressed the same opinion you had about..." Occasionally invite the teen into your world (for lunch or on an interesting business trip). Eat dinner as a family. At least three days a week make it a priority to sit down together for food and conversation. Always greet your teen in the morning, when returning home, or when the teenager walks into a room.

THE UMYF BENEDICTION

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon
you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift us his countenance upon
you, and give you peace. Amen.

(Numbers 6:24-26)