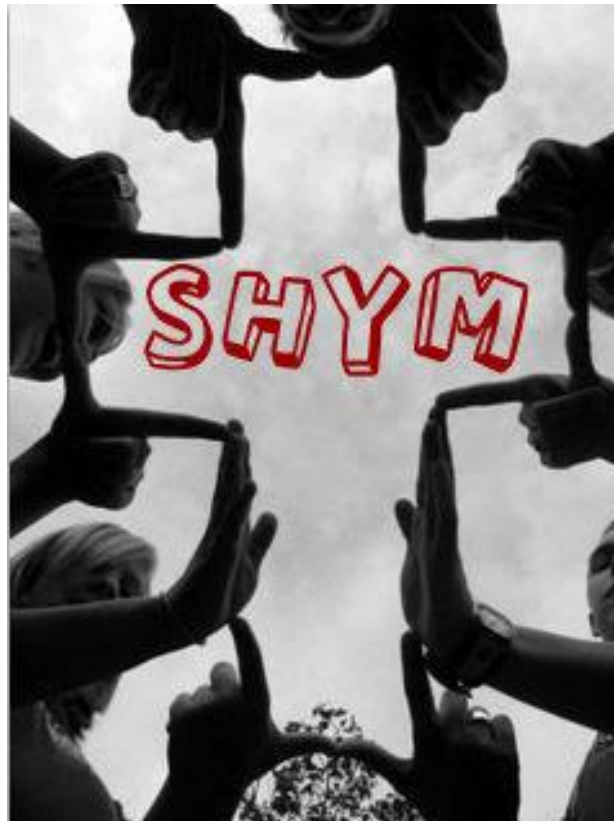


ST. HENRY YOUTH MINISTRY

HANDBOOK



“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

**St. Henry Catholic Church
6696 Springboro Pike
Dayton, Ohio 45449
937-434-9231**



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Welcome Letter

The St. Henry Parish community highly values the total development of the youth of our parish and the wider community. Youth are not just the “faithful leaders of tomorrow,” but are the living Church of Christ here and now. In response to Christ’s call to “go and make disciples of all nations,” St. Henry’s strives to minister to young people and foster a life-long commitment to the faith.

This handbook contains the policies that will guide the parish Youth Ministry Team in providing a comprehensive program of youth ministry, grounded in the US Bishops’ document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. We recognize the old proverb that “it takes a village to raise a child,” and that it takes an entire parish community to raise faith-filled youth. We ask that all members of the community follow these policies when inviting young people into your ministry.

We encourage all members of the parish to prayerfully consider how you might share your gifts and talents with our young people. Likewise, we invite all the youth of the parish to prayerfully consider how you will get involved in the life of the Church and share you valuable gifts with the parish and the world!

We welcome your feedback, questions, comments, or concerns regarding any of our youth programming. Please contact Mike Sievers, our Coordinator of Youth Ministry, at 937-434-9231 or by email at msievers@sthenryparish.com.

In Prayer,

Fr. Tom Shearer
Pastor

Michael Sievers
Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Effective on 7/ 1/2011

Catholic Youth Ministry is Comprehensive Youth Ministry

The 1997 U.S. bishops' document *Renewing the Vision – A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* is the master blueprint for youth ministry here at St. Henry Parish and in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

What Youth Ministry is Not

Although some use the terms interchangeably, youth ministry is not equivalent to *youth group*. A youth group is just one kind of youth ministry program, so to reduce youth ministry to youth group narrows and limits our vision for ministry with adolescents.

The Goals, Components and Themes of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

Renewing the Vision identifies three primary goals for our ministry with young people:

1. **Discipleship**: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
2. **Participation in Church**: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community.
3. **Growth**: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Renewing the Vision also identifies eight components of youth ministry, as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Advocacy | 5. Justice & Service |
| 2. Catechesis | 6. Leadership Development |
| 3. Community Life | 7. Pastoral Care |
| 4. Evangelization | 8. Prayer & Worship |

In addition to the goals and components, *Renewing the Vision* describes "themes" that underlie and guide youth ministry efforts, as follows:

- Developmentally appropriate
- Family Friendly
- Intergenerational
- Multicultural
- Community-wide Collaboration
- Leadership
- Flexible and Adaptable Programming

General Policies

Participation

St. Henry Youth Ministry (SHYM) currently provides programming for all high school students in grades 9 through 12.

Graduating seniors may continue to participate for the summer immediately following graduation.

Eighth grade students are invited to participate after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation in the spring.

Communication to Youth, Parents, and Parish

The Youth Ministry Team will communicate announcements, events, etc through:

- Youth Ministry page on the parish website www.sthenryparish.com
- Youth Ministry Email List – email Mike to be added to the list at msievers@sthenryparish.com
- Facebook Page: “SHYM: St. Henry Youth Ministry”
- Youth Ministry column of the parish bulletin
- End of mass announcements
- Youth Ministry bulletin board at the back of Church
- Occasional mailings

Youth Ministry Programming

- SHYM Meetings: SHYM meets every two weeks on Sundays from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. At the meetings we build community, grow in our faith, pray together as a community, and have fun! Food is always provided.
- Mass & Social: On the first of each month SHYM attends 12:30 mass together followed by a brief social.
- Service Opportunities: Various group and service opportunities are done throughout the year. A running list of service opportunities are posted on the website and the bulletin board.
- Teen Bible Study: teens gather in small community to explore how Scripture relates to our everyday lives.
- Social Activities: various social activities and outings are scheduled throughout the year
- Retreats: SHYM offers day-long, overnight, and weekend-long retreats each season. There will frequently be youth leadership opportunities in the planning of retreats throughout the year.

****see the parish bulletin and website for up-to-date listings of all SHYM programming with dates, times, and locations****

We are always open to new ways to engage our youth. If you have any suggestions, please share them with the Youth Ministry Team!

Effective on 7/1/2011

Event Policies

Activity Permission/Release Forms

In accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines, all parents/guardians are **REQUIRED** to complete a Permission/Medical Release form for their child in order to participate in **ANY** youth ministry program. These one-time release forms must be completed *every year* (July-June).

In accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines, all off-site or one-time events require an *additional* Permission/Release form signed by a parent/guardian in order to participate in the event.

All Permission/Release Forms are available on the Youth Ministry page of the parish website and will also be available at events held prior to the off-site or one-time event.

Full Participation

Participants are expected to arrive to events on-time and remain at the site of the event until the scheduled ending time, except due to illness or an emergency.

Any participant required to leave an event early **MUST** have *written parental permission* in order to leave and must communicate the need to leave early with an adult in charge.

Participants will be expected to follow the *St. Henry Youth Ministry Code of Conduct* (Appendix).

Cell Phones

The Youth Ministry Team recognizes that cell phones have become an intricate part of the life of the average teenager; however they are often a disruption to ministry programming, especially during extended events. Youth are asked to be *fully present* during all programming sessions, and refrain from cell phone use. Appropriate times to use cell phones will be communicated to all participants by event leaders.

Parents are asked to fully support the policy on cell phone use. Emergency contact numbers are provided to parents should they need to reach their child during a program. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis, such as medical needs.

Transportation & Youth Drivers

Participants must arrange for their own transportation to and from the meeting location for all SHYM events ahead of time. Youth must not wait until the end of an event to find a ride.

Youth drivers are reminded that driving to SHYM events is a privilege and can be revoked by parents at any time.

When traveling as a group to an off-site activity, adult volunteers (21 and older) MUST drive, following Archdiocesan recommendations. All adult drivers must provide a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.

Any exception must receive prior approval from the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Fees

Fees for all youth ministry programs are based on each individual event, and will be advertised with the event details. All payments are due the day of the event. All checks must be made out to "St. Henry Parish," unless otherwise indicated.

No youth should be denied participation due to inability to pay for an event. Scholarships are available for those with financial needs. Contact the Coordinator of Youth Ministry to discuss your situation. All conversations will be kept confidential.

Medications

Participants requiring any prescription OR over-the-counter medication must have *written parental permission* for any SHYM event. All medications will be stored and distributed by the adult in charge of the event, unless an exception has been made in advance with the Coordinator of Youth Ministry. All medications must be in their original container.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, & Weapons

No participant or volunteer shall be in possession of or use tobacco products including chewing tobacco and cigarettes at any SHYM event, regardless of age.

No participant or volunteer shall be in possession or under the influence of any alcohol or drugs at any SHYM event.

No participant or volunteer is permitted to bring any weapon or other materials that might endanger others. Participants must tell an adult if they are aware of someone else who is in possession of any dangerous item.

Search and Seizure

If a participant is suspected of having weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages or illegal articles in his/her possession, including but not limited to bags, purses, wallets, cell phones, and vehicles on St. Henry property or at a St. Henry sponsored event off-site, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry or the program director reserves the right to search and/or contact the appropriate legal authorities. When the Coordinator of Youth Ministry or program director believes the participant is concealing evidence of a crime, the police may be asked to conduct the search. An adult volunteer or staff member will witness the search in the presence of the youth. The decision to search will involve reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing on the participant's part. Refusal to be searched or impeding a search may result in calling the parent and/or police to assist in the search.

Effective on 7/1/2011

Additional Policies

Discipline

Any Illegal activity, including but not limited to alcohol, drug, or weapon procession, or violence towards another, will result in a phone call to appropriate legal authorities, a phone call to parents, and removal of the youth from the activity no matter the time or place of the activity/incident, at the parents' expense. The Youth Ministry Team and Coordinator of Youth Ministry, along with parents, will decide on any further disciplinary action and suspension from SHYM programming.

Disruptive behaviors, including foul language, disrespect of others or property, excessive talking or other disruptive actions, will first result in a verbal warning. With continued disruptive behavior, a private meeting will be requested with the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, the youth involved, and his/her parents. Suspension from one or all SHYM events is at the discretion of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, with input from the parents and pastor.

Social Media Policy (Facebook, website, etc)

SHYM utilizes today's technology to reach out to the youth of the parish, including Facebook and a website. All postings on any SHYM sponsored site or page are subject to the discretion of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and the pastor. All communications with any youth through social media programs by anyone representing the parish are considered public information and will be made available to any parent upon request. Any participant or volunteer is to remember that they are representing the parish when posting about SHYM related events, and therefore must be appropriate. Any form of cyber-bullying or harassment of any kind will NOT be tolerated and will be addressed immediately. SHYM will not tolerate posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, or defamatory, comments links and/or images.

Adult Volunteers

All adults of the parish (21 and older) are encouraged to prayerfully consider assisting with youth programming. According to Archdiocesan policy, all regular volunteers (as defined by the *Decree on Child Protection* (revision effective July 1, 2008)) who work with youth are required to complete the Orientation to the *Decree on Child Protection* and complete a criminal background check through fingerprinting. An adult will not be permitted to be a regular volunteer with the youth until both steps have been completed and processed.

Any adult interested in being involved in SHYM programming should contact the Coordinator of Youth Ministry to set up an informal interview to explore how the volunteer's gifts and talents can best be utilized by SHYM. The Coordinator of Youth Ministry reserves the right to determine the areas that each volunteer participates in. The Coordinator of Youth Ministry also reserves the right to refuse the help of any adult volunteer based on concerns for youth safety and wellbeing (See the B.3 Policy of the *Decree on Child Protection*.)

Effective on 7/1/2011

Appendix A: Code of Conduct

St. Henry Youth Ministry

St. Henry Youth Ministry (SHYM) strives to create a welcoming community of faith for all involved. Participants, volunteers, and staff members are expected to promote our welcoming community atmosphere, especially through the following policies:

Participants are...

- ❖ to arrive at events on time, stay for the entire event, and make arrangements to be picked-up at the scheduled ending time of an event.
- ❖ to have an open mind to those with different backgrounds or ideas than you.
- ❖ to be willing to participate to the best of your availability.
- ❖ to respect the property and feelings of all participants, volunteers, and staff members.
- ❖ to respect and care for the property of St. Henry Parish and all other organizations.
- ❖ to avoid the use of profanity, offensive language, and making fun of others. Bullying will NOT be tolerated.
- ❖ to wear appropriate clothing to all events (appropriate length, language, pictures, etc).
- ❖ to turn off cell phones when asked to by the event leaders until the end of the event or given permission to use them.
- ❖ to avoid public displays of affection or inappropriate contact with others.
- ❖ not to be in possession of or under the influence of any alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- ❖ not permitted to bring any weapon or other materials that might endanger others.

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in a range of consequences from warning, parental notification, or suspension from youth ministry events without refund, at the discretion of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

SHYM Community Standards

Be respectful

No Judging

Sharing is Caring

Watch Your Mouth

No Physical Violence

Appropriate Contact Only

Don't Gossip

Take Things Seriously

Don't Leave Anyone Out

Have FUN!

Developed by teens at the SHYM Meeting on February 13, 2011.