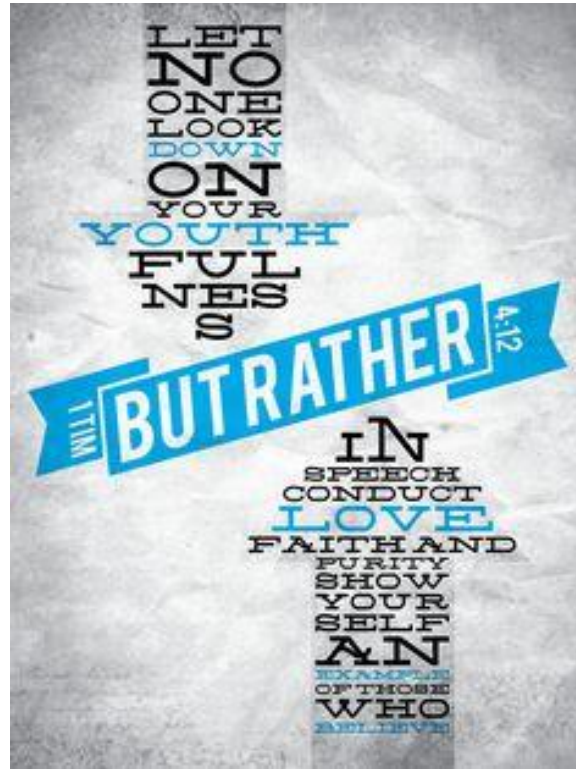


**HOLY TRINITY YOUTH MINISTRY
PARENT / YOUTH
HANDBOOK
2016-2017**



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Youth Ministry
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Parent Letter

Dear Holy Trinity Parents,

Welcome to the Holy Trinity's Youth Ministry. Thank you for allowing us to support you and your teenagers during this important time in their lives. Holy Trinity provides many opportunities for families to participate in our Youth Ministry. I invite you to read through this handbook with your teen(s) and discover which ways they can be involved.

As there are many opportunities for our teens to be involved, there are many parent roles to be filled, too. Parents, we invite you to...

- **VOLUNTEER** in our youth ministry. There are MANY opportunities, times, tasks: volunteering as a small group leader, help with fundraisers, be a chaperone for one of the social events, help w/session set-up/clean-up, be tech help with audio-visual & multi-media presentations, help video sessions/events and lots more!
- **PRAY...** Pray *for* your teen. Pray *with* your teen. Pray for all the adult leaders and staff who teach, lead and spend time sharing the Word of God with our young people.
- **PARTICIPATE IN THE worship LIFE** of our church. Go to worship regularly. Be an active member of Holy Trinity. Get involved!
- **SHARE YOUR OWN FAITH STORIES** with your teen. Share why your faith is important to you. Talk about the joys as well as your struggles and doubts in your efforts to live out your Christian faith. Can they see in your life the joy and freedom that your faith gives you?
- **ENCOURAGE YOUR TEEN** to honestly examine their faith, to seek and listen for God's will in all areas of their life through regular prayer, reflection and time with Scripture.

Let us pray together for this wonderful ministry in our church and in particular for the young people in our community.

Serving Christ with you,

Deaconess Andrea Delaney
Youth Director

Adult Interest Form

It takes a lot of people to meet the needs of our young people. Are you willing to help in any of the following areas?

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone #'s: _____

Most Available:

SEASON: Fall Winter Spring Summer

TIME: Day Evening

_____ I would like to be a part of the leadership team responsible for overall **coordination** of youth ministry program development.

_____ I would like to help with **planning** specific programs or activities. (Service – Social – Retreats - Other)

_____ I would like to **help** at specific programs or activities (Please check area of interest below)

_____ I would like to help with **support** and/or office tasks (i.e. Mailings, facility set-up, telephone calls, shopping)

_____ I can help w/driving when available. _____ car _____ van _____ truck _____ van/wagon/SUV
I can transport _____ people with seatbelts.

AREAS OF INTEREST

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving Talks
(topic _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Week long Mission Trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retreats | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lock-Ins | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation | <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing Snacks or Food | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Events (Skiing,
amusement parks, etc) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Development | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Worship | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperoning an event | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | | |

RESOURCES AND PERSONAL SKILLS I CAN OFFER YOUTH MINISTRY

RESOURCES: discounts for purchases, novelty items for prizes, , business connections, access to facilities, scholarships for retreats/special trips, etc.

SKILLS, INTERESTS AND HOBBIES: outdoor activities, coaching, woodworking, cooking, baking, sewing, computers, craft making, art, etc.

PLEASE LIST RESOURCES AND SKILLS, INTERESTS, HOBBIES HERE:

YOUTH MINISTRY

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Youth Ministry Mission Statement

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is committed to the reality that young people are an important and integral part of our church community. The youth program seeks to foster maturing in faith of the youth of our church and the surrounding community.

We affirm the gifts of our youth and we foster opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community. The spiritual and social needs of the youth are to be met with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our adults. The adults and youth of our church are therefore provided with the opportunity to grow together in Christian faith.

Through a variety of programs, events and outreach, we seek to draw young people into responsible participation in the life, work and mission of the church community, to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of all the youth. We believe this ministry is to, with, by, and for young people and is a blessing for the entire community.

Goals of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

Total youth ministry at Holy Trinity, in light of these missions, calls the community to respond to the needs of our young people, and encourages the sharing of the unique gifts of our youth with the larger community. The goals of youth ministry are:

- 1) To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.**
- 2) To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of Holy Trinity.**
- 3) To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.**

These goals are brought to reality for our church through the above support and utilization of the following components of comprehensive ministry of the church.

ADVOCACY – engages the church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and work of Holy Trinity.

CONFIRMATION – helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community, and increase their knowledge of the core content of the Lutheran faith; helps young people enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and their application of life today, and live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives, especially through a life of prayer, justice, and loving service.

COMMUNITY LIFE – builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Christian principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures their faith. The ministry of community life is not only what we do (activity), but who we are (identity) and how we interact (relationships).

EVANGELIZATION – shares the good news of the reign of God and invites young people to hear about the Word Made Flesh. It enables young people to uncover and name the experience of a God already active and present in their lives.

JUSTICE & SERVICE – nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Christian social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities for comprehensive ministry with adolescents.

PASTORAL CARE – is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus' care of people, especially those who were hurting and in need. It involves promoting positive adolescent and family development, caring for youth and families in crisis, and providing guidance in making life decisions and moral choices.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP – celebrates and deepens young people's relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the spirit at work in their lives; it incorporates young people more fully in the worship life of the Church; it nurtures their personal prayer life; and it fosters family rituals and prayer.

COMMUNICATION TO YOUTH, PARENTS, and CHURCH

Information on youth ministry programs and events are distributed and available through:

- Youth Ministry pages on parish web site: holytrinityelgin.com (under youth tab)
- Youth Ministry Email updates. email: deaconessandrea@holytrinityelgin.com
- Flyers handed out at church
- The weekly bulletin
- Flyers available at church doors, youth group room
- Postcards mailings
- Text messages

YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Youth Group is open to 6th-12th grade youth and friends. Volunteers are needed to help lead this group.

Objectives:

- to create a welcoming environment for middle & high school aged children to foster a personal relationship with Christ
- to channel the kids' youthful energy and creativity to intensify church life for the entire family
- to encourage a spirit of responsibility and initiative amongst the kids, showing them that their love for Christ can make a difference in the world

We strive to offer a welcoming and accepting environment rooted in our Christian heritage; accepting of their world, expressions, questions, feelings, and insights.

We meet some Sundays after worship. Check schedule details on the website. Topics cover issues important to the life-faith experiences of teens. Christian community is formed through in-depth faith sharing, creative prayer, active learning experiences, and peer ministry.

A variety of other events are held during the year as well. These include guest speakers, games, and outings such as lock-ins, mission trips, retreats, service projects, inter-church activities, national conferences and more.

YOUTH RETREATS/LOCK-INS/MISSION TRIPS

The Holy Trinity's Youth Ministry offers several annual events for youth. The purposes of these retreats include:

- To evangelize the youth of our community.
- To build and deepen community in our church and youth ministries.
- To deepen a sense of identity and involvement of young people at Holy Trinity.
- To teach about integration of faith in everyday living.
- To foster a personal relationship with Jesus and an ownership of one's faith.

Parents are encouraged to support the participation of their children in these experiences.

WORSHIP MINISTERS

Youth are encouraged to take an active role in witnessing their faith and serving their church community. Youth are welcome to serve at Holy Trinity's worship services as lectors, ushers, greeters, Altar Servers, and in the Music Ministries.

YOUTH MINISTRY FUNDRAISERS

There are opportunities to fundraise so that teens can afford some of our activities. Examples include:

Spaghetti Dinner

Fundraising Meals

And other opportunities throughout the year

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The life and teachings of Jesus call us to reach out and serve those in need. Holy Trinity total youth ministry is active in the educating and challenging our young people to live out this call within the church and broader community.

National Youth Gathering

Every three years we participate in the National Youth Gathering. This event is the largest gathering in the nation of ELCA high school youth. Youth gather with other teens to celebrate their Christian identity, serve in a variety of projects in the community, are moved by inspiring and motivating nationally respected speakers, musicians and comedians, experience an awesome celebration of the Worship with fellow young Lutherans.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

There are multiple opportunities for youth to get involved in leadership within Holy Trinity's youth ministry.

- Planning Youth Group Events
- Attending Leadership Lab
- Planning and leading service events
- Leading events for children at Holy Trinity

EVENT GUIDELINES

ACTIVITY PERMISSION / RELEASE FORMS

All parents/guardians are **REQUIRED** to complete a Permission/Release Form for their child to be kept on file with the Youth Director to participate in ongoing-onsite programs (e.g. Youth Groups) is needed. A new On-Site On-Going Activity Release form **MUST** be completed for every new program year.

FULL PARTICIPATION

Youth must remain at the site of activity/event during the entire time of event, whether on/off church grounds unless other pre-arrangements have been made with the parents and youth minister has been notified (preferably in writing.)

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are permitted at youth events. During some events, youth may be asked to not use cell phones except in emergencies.

DRIVERS

When traveling as a group to an outing, **adult volunteers/parents** may be asked to help drive.

FEES

Various events cost a nominal fee to participate in. All youth are welcome, regardless of their ability to pay. Scholarship funds are available to those in need of assistance. Arrangements can be made through the Youth Director.

VISITORS

Youth are welcome and encouraged to bring friends of appropriate age (whether members of the church/faith or not) Youth Ministry events at any time.

PARENT-YOUTH MINISTER COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to introduce themselves to the Youth Director and Volunteers as they drop-off and pick-up their children for group events. Parents are also encouraged to keep the Youth Director informed about:

- achievements of child (sports, academic, extracurricular, etc.)
- illness or hospitalization
- family issues (death, accident, divorce, etc.)
- teen issues (school, peer, dating, etc.)

This information enables us to offer the best pastoral care for our youth. We can celebrate in their achievements and support and pray for them through their struggles.

VOLUNTEER PARENTS/ADULTS

Volunteers create the success of the Holy Trinity's Youth Ministry program. Parents/adults are welcome to visit at any time. There are also various ways to become more directly involved in the programs.

Occasional Involvement - Provides and serves snacks/refreshments, aids with transportation. Present only for time of service.

Frequent Involvement - Aids in leading small group discussions/activities from regular evening gatherings to retreats. Present for entire event.

Regular involvement - Direct involvement in planning, organizing, and leading events/activities.

STRUCTURES OF PROGRAMS

EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUTH

In order to create a successful youth community, members must realize the responsibilities and commitment involved in their membership to the youth group community. Here are some expectations, that when modeled appropriately, will promote pride in self, others and the group, building a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for all:

- An openness, respect, and willingness to enter into prayer with the group.
- Willingness to take ownership and responsibility for the group, planning meetings, participation, etc.
- A spirit of giving and contributing to the group versus taking and getting from the group.
- Attending the proper group as designated by the age/grade level.
- A respect for the diversity of the group's membership.
- A willingness to be open to varied ideas from one's own ideas.
- Youth should work to be inclusive with other members of the group.
- Youth should have respect for group and individual confidentiality. They must also know when it is appropriate to break a confidence and know how to do this.
- Youth should work to recruit other young people to join the ministry.

GROUP NORMS

There are several ways the youth can model the above expectations and encourage fellow group members to do the same. Below are guidelines for group gatherings that will help facilitate healthy and prosperous growth of our youth community:

- Participate in the group as fully as you are able.
- Be on time for all group sessions/events.
- Be concerned with your own feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality regarding whatever is discussed in the group.
- Always speak for yourself never for someone else.
- Speak in the present tense. This will make you more aware of your own feelings and better able to communicate them to others.
- Work toward accomplishment of the group tasks.
- Suspend negative attitudes and put-downs toward yourself and others.
- When speaking of someone in the group, always speak directly to the person. Instead of saying, "John said," say, "John, when you said."

- Listen to what others have to say. Accept the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, opinions, and ideas of others as honestly being theirs. Avoid doubting what someone is saying before they can even explain their point.
- Stay on topic, keep focuses, avoid rambling and detours.
- Give some acknowledgment to the speaker that his/her message has been heard.
- Remind one another of these group norms.
- Use positive statements towards others.

DISCIPLINE

We are about building Christian community. This calls for respect of self, others, God, and the facilities. It asks for community members to act in a responsible Christian manner. At times, however, unsatisfactory conduct may occur and will be handled in the following manner.

Illegal Behaviors:

The following behaviors may result in a phone call to parents and removal of the youth from the activity no matter the time or place of the activity/incident. The Youth Director, along with parents, will decide on any further disciplinary action and suspension.

- Possession, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, cigarettes, or tobacco products
- Vandalism or theft
- Possession of firearms, knives, or other dangerous weapons
- Harassment/abuse of others
- Any other acts which in the leader's discretion creates danger to the safety and well-being of the individual or others

Disruptive Behaviors:

First time occurrences of disruptive behavior will be met with a warning. If misconduct continues, a private meeting with the Youth Director and teen will take place and a sitting out of the activity may occur. If there is no correction of behavior and misconduct becomes prolonged, then the youth will be removed from the activity, parents contacted and conference set-up. A Code of Conduct Contract will be mutually agreed upon. Contract is to be signed by parent/guardian and teen. If there is no cooperation, the youth will be suspended from Youth Group activities.

- Use of foul language, especially in ways which show disregard for others
- Put-downs of others; action of disrespect for others
- Disruptive actions

CANCELLATION POLICY

For inclement weather, we follow U-46. If they close their facilities (weekdays or weekends), our events are canceled. For other cancellations, an email will be sent to those on our list, as well as a text to the youth and parents.

AMENDMENT POLICY

Parents and volunteers will be notified in writing when policies are to be added or amended.

MYTHS ABOUT YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Ministry is just playing games. – Comprehensive youth ministry incorporates learning and applying their faith, serve to the church and community, developing leadership skills, and social events.

My child can't attend youth group regularly, so they can't come or aren't welcome to the special events.

All youth group events are open to anyone at anytime. There is no required attendance policy or special membership. Whether a teen comes to one, none, or all of the regular group meetings, they are ALWAYS welcome to come to the events that interest them. Every youth isn't always interested in youth group, but they may be interested in some of the special events (service, socials, and outings). This is why we offer a wide variety of events to meet as many needs as possible.

My child's friends aren't Lutheran/Christian, they wouldn't fit in a youth ministry event. - Every youth ministry event is open to any youth Lutheran or not. The atmosphere is very warm and welcoming.

I want my child to go on retreat/mission trip/youth group, but they don't - so I won't force them to go.

This is a tough situation. Holy Trinity's total youth ministry offers great activities that are designed to meet the needs and situations of where the kids are at – whether they want to be there or are present through strong parental encouragement. We support the parental encouragement of their child's participation. We are confident in the quality ministry we offer that we can provide a positive experience for almost any teen.

Only the kids active in youth group are being ministered to. – This is why the 'ministry of presence' is so important in total youth ministry at Holy Trinity. The young people of Holy Trinity do not become connected to their church community through youth group alone. Connections are built through relationships, meeting teens on their turf, invitations, and attentiveness to their needs. This is why connections to the church come in ministry of presence to ages beginning below the youth group in Sunday School, visits to sporting events, work, mail ministry with newsletters/notes of affirmation, involvement with scouts, athletics and more.