**Presbyterian Youth Connection (PYC) at First Presbyterian Church**

**Youth Group Covenant**

**Mission:**

The Youth Ministry of First Presbyterian Church Tullahoma is committed to helping youth have a relationship with Jesus and become more like Jesus. We are here to **REACH** students with the love of Jesus Christ, **CONNECT** them to the community of believers, **EQUIP** them to grow in their faith, **ACT** through service, and **EXALT** God with their lives.

As a member of our youth group, I acknowledge my need for meaningful relationships with other youth. I also know that this youth group and church exists to help me deepen my relationship with God, other Christians, and all of the people that God has put in my life in order to be a better disciple for Christ. I must always try to keep God’s priorities before my own. Because of these things, I commit to the following:

Christ gave us an example of respect and love for all, because of His example I will create an environment of respect wherever I am.

* **I will respect** other people’s stuff. I will not go through or touch another’s possessions without first asking and receiving their permission.
* **I will respect** what others have to say by listening when they are talking. I will allow others to speak their ideas and not distract them or take away from their ideas by talking while they are talking. I will help provide a trusting environment for my peers. When others share something about themselves, I will not repeat that information to other people outside of the group.
* **I will respect** the serious topics that sometimes come up in youth meetings by being serious at the appropriate time. I will take the knowledge and teachings of God and Jesus as a time to listen and not distract others from these teachings.
* **I will respect** others with my words. I will use positive language that reflects Jesus Christ. This means I will refrain from profanity, derogatory comments, and “put downs” at all times. I also will not gossip about our youth group or others. Our youth group’s definition of gossip is saying anything true or false, including rumors, that causes another to lower their opinion of the person being talked about.
* **I will respect** the group and turn my cell phone off when the youth activities begin because I know that they can distract me and others from learning more about God. I will not turn them on again until after the activities are over.
* **I will respect** the leaders and the group by participating in all lessons and activities. I will commit to being fully present, to the best of my ability, during our gathering times and to making PYC a priority in my life.
* **I will respect** myself and our youth group by being truthful and genuine. I will also be accepting of others and I will take them as they come, knowing that they may come from a different background than me, because that is what Jesus has asked us to do. I know that God created us as unique individuals; I will respect that uniqueness in others, including those less fortunate whom I may encounter when participating in the mission work of our youth group and the church.
* **I will respect** the church property, because it belongs to all of us. I will clean up messes and respect the property of others, which includes the places we visit, the vehicles in which we travel, restaurants where we eat, and facilities where we stay. If I mess it up, I clean it up…. if I break it I buy it!
* **I will respect** myself and my youth group, by using only appropriate displays of affection if I am in a relationship. Handholding and goodbye hugs are appropriate. Kissing and too close contact is inappropriate.
* **I will respect** the need for safety. I will never go off by myself. My leaders need to know where I am at ALL times, and I will refrain from activity that could harm me or others.
* **I will respect** the safe environment of the youth group by promising I will never bring any weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vaporizers when with the Youth group. I will also help keep a safe environment by not being violent.
* **I will commit** to building one another up, recognizing that we are not in completion, but rather are called here to practice cooperation, mutuality, inclusiveness, and community, seeking in all things to be instruments of God’s love, peace, grace, hope, and forgiveness.

**Guidelines for Consequences:**

When this covenant is breached, consequences will be considered opportunities to disciple and lovingly guide youth toward making better choices. Appropriate consequences will be decided upon by the Minster to Youth, the Pastor, and adult leaders. Covenant breaches fall into three groups: minor, moderate, and major.

**Minor violations** refer to those things which, though they may seem minor, either are inconsistent with who we are as a church youth group, or undermine what we are trying accomplish. Adults need to immediately address any minor concerns and it will be expected that speaking to the issue will be enough to resolve the issue. It is further expected that there will be no further need to address the issue. These types of violations deal with reminding and teaching our youth what is expected at during PYC and on church-sponsored trips. Consequences appropriated to the offense will be decided upon by the appropriate adult. Minor violations include things such as:

* *Use of inappropriate language*
* *Being late for an activity or disregarding the schedule*
* *Not participating in group activities*
* *Removing oneself from the group*
* *Disregarding directions from adults*

**Moderate** **violations** refer to those things which require more than a word of instruction or correction. A moderate concern will require sitting down and dealing with the issue and involving the Minister to Youth or Pastor in the issue. Consequences appropriate to the offense will be decided upon by the appropriate adults. Moderate violations include:

* *Repeated violations of the minor rules*
* *Disrespect of any of the adults during a Youth meeting or on a trip*
* *Disrespect of one’s surroundings*
* *Going off alone or leaving a designated area without permission*
* *Missing a scheduled event*

**Major violations** refer to those things which not only do not belong at an activity or on a trip, but which also fundamentally undermine the activity and/or trip. These violations will result in the person’s parents or legal guardians being called and being involved in the decision concerning the consequences. A major violation may result in someone being sent home at the parent’s expense and possibly losing privileges of coming to youth events for a specified time. Major violations include:

* *The use of alcohol, tobacco, vaporizers, inhalants, illegal drugs, and/or weapons*
* *Sneaking out*
* *Any illegal activity such as shoplifting or vandalism*
* *Physical fighting*
* *Sexual activity of any kind*

**\*Please return this page to PYC and keep the first two pages for your records and to refer to at later times.**

Because I am a youth, I understand that I do not have to be responsible for enforcing the rules. I understand that is the responsibility of all of the adults present, not me. I will however, be an example to others.

As an important part of First Presbyterian’s Presbyterian Youth Connection, I commit myself to this covenant. I also understand that there will be consequences to any inappropriate behavior. In signing this covenant, I vow that I have read and understand these guidelines. I recognize that a covenant is a binding promise, and my signature means that I agree to follow this covenant.

Youth Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As a parent or guardian of this youth, I expect my child to behave in this manner and understand that there will be consequences to any inappropriate behavior. I have read and understand these guidelines.

Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_