

## A PARENT'S & STUDENT'S GUIDE TO YOUTH GROUP

So your son or daughter has expressed an interest in the Youth Group at the First United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights (CHUP). What does this mean? You may be wondering what exactly is a Youth Group? Because the country is filled with groups that try to get your child's attention, we wanted to let you know a little bit about what we do in Youth Group. So sit back, relax, and take time to read our Parent's Guide.

If you have any questions, feel free to call or email us.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUTH GROUP?

Although Youth Group changes every year, we believe that the purpose of Youth Group is basically threefold:

1. We believe strongly that young people today are under a great deal of pressure from our society. We believe that it is important to help them understand what it means to be a Christian in order to help deal with these pressures.
2. Youth Group is a place to regroup and be ourselves. Everyone can come and experience real friendship without worrying about peer pressure.
3. With programmed activities we can have fun and get to know each other in a positive environment.

This is a good chance to point out that although the Youth Group is based through a Presbyterian Church, we do not see Youth Group as a means to convert people of other denominations. We wish to provide for the basic needs of all Youth: Fellowship, Fun, and Friendship.

### BUT WHAT DOES A YOUTH GROUP DO?

This is a good question, and we don't really have an answer for it, because the Group changes as fast as the Youth do. There are a few more-or-less "regular" things we can point out, though:

**1. Sunday Meetings:** Most of Youth Group's activities occur at the church and the Open Door on Sundays. The Jr. and Sr. High youth meet from 7:00 to 8:30p.m. which includes all youth in grades 6th-12th.

The time is spent reviewing announcements, singing, discussion, games and other activities. Examples of discussions have been: "Who is God?", "The Bible", and this year "Basic Bible Literacy".

**2. Special Activities:** Frequently we get together for group activities. Activities have included Roller-skating, Ice Skating, Movie Night, Picnic, hayride, turkey bowl, etc. We try to make sure that all events are affordable. More expensive activities are supplemented by money raised by the Youth Group.

**3. Retreats:** Many of Youth Group's "Golden Moments" have occurred at what we call "retreats". These are weekend trips where we can get away from the city, slow-down and do some quiet thinking and have fun. These times include plenty of games, singing, lessons, food, free time, and just relaxing. Sample topics for retreats include: "Relationships", "World Hunger", and "What Is A Christian?"

**4. Mission Trip:** A mission trip is similar to a retreat with a few differences. We have one mission trip per year, and they usually last five or six days. The groups travel to a work site and donate hours of work for the week. Usually, this includes doing something for a Christian Agency that they cannot do for themselves; clearing nature trails, removing brush, making sidewalks, painting a house, etc. The rest of the time is spent doing devotions, free time and fun activities. Past work camp locations have included Tennessee, Kentucky, and New York.

**5. Fund Raising:** In order to keep the costs of our activities and trips to a minimum, the group holds several fundraisers during the year. The money we make enables us to cut costs significantly. Some events include car washes, Potato luncheon and Dining with a purpose.

**6. Service Projects:** We also try to give to the communities or individuals who need help. This is similar to our work camp but is only a day event and is usually local. Examples of projects done in the past: World Vision, serve food at a soup kitchen, participate in community clean-up projects, etc.

### **WHO LEADS THE GROUP?**

The leadership for Youth Group comes from several volunteers from the Church. There folks who are involved in everything from advising weekly meetings to chaperoning events. These are adults who are committed to helping young people explore Christian values and beliefs, and have fun at the same time. Any new volunteers are certainly welcome.

### **WRAPPING IT UP**

This is, in a few short paragraphs, the Youth Group of the First United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights (CHUP). We hope that we have expressed ourselves well enough to allay any fears that you as a parent have. Like you, our commitment, is to your children.

1. In closing, let us offer a few suggestions that, have proven helpful over the years. First, we encourage you to ask questions about Youth Group. Ask your children what they've been doing. Ask us what we've been doing. Parental interest is great for all of us.
2. A second suggestion has to do with discipline. We've struggled over the years, as kids have been hurt because a parent has refused to allow them to attend a meeting as a punishment. Our theory is that if your child has done something worthy of punishment, then keeping them away from church probably won't help them. As we mentioned before, we're trying to influence these young people in a positive, Christian direction. Taking that away is certainly a harsh punishment.
3. Lastly, we'd encourage you, as parents, to get involved. If you'd like to help out at meetings or retreats, let us know! Maybe you don't feel comfortable being "up front". We always need drivers or other types of help. No experience necessary! Let us know. Don't be a stranger.

Thanks for taking the time to look through our Parent's Guide. We hope that you have a better understanding of Youth Group as a result of it. Again, please feel free to contact us about anything.

#### **Contact info:**

First United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights  
50 Stratmore Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205                      412-921-6153

For current information about events and activities please visit our web site: [www.chup.org](http://www.chup.org)

Please feel free to call the office or email us at: [youth@chup.org](mailto:youth@chup.org)

#### **Youth Group Volunteer Core Staff:**

Matt Bandi  
Rev. Dave Carver  
Mary Kalbaugh  
Joe Knouff  
Kristen Knouff  
Dennis Piper  
Adam Robinson  
Tim Salinetto