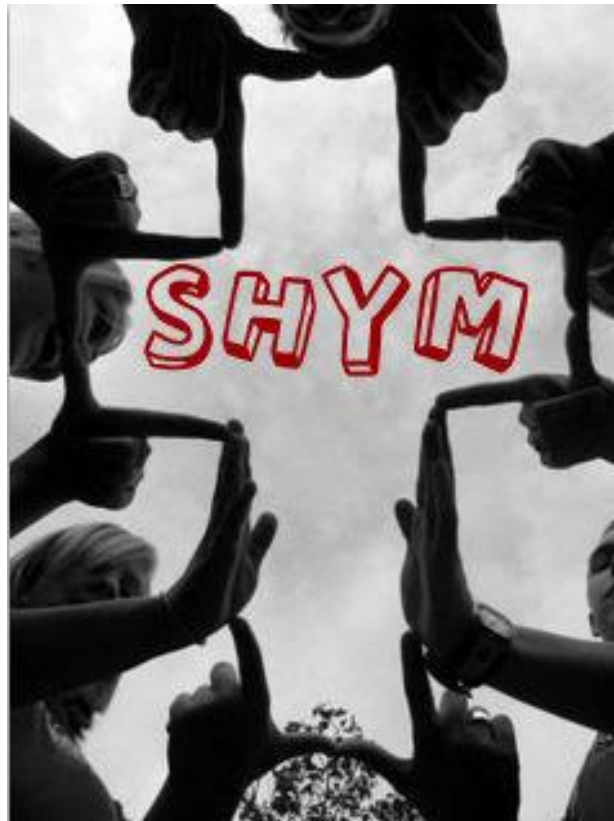


# ST. HENRY YOUTH MINISTRY

## HANDBOOK

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**“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 Director of Youth Ministry, at 937-434-9231 or by email at [msievers@sthenryparish.com](mailto:msievers@sthenryparish.com).

In Prayer,

Fr. Tom Shearer  
Pastor

Michael Sievers  
Director of Youth Ministry

## 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

## SHYM Mission Statement

***The mission of St. Henry Youth Ministry is to create a respectful and accepting environment, where teens of the parish deepen their faith and build Christian communities. We strive to be actively Christ-like through service, prayer, and life's opportunities.***

## 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](http://www.sthenryparish.com)
- Youth Ministry Email List – email Mike to be added to the list at [msievers@sthenryparish.com](mailto:msievers@sthenryparish.com)
- Facebook Page: “SHYM: St. Henry Youth Ministry”
- Youth Ministry column of the parish bulletin
- End of mass announcements
- Occasional mailings

### Youth Ministry Programming

- SHYM Meetings: SHYM meets roughly every two weeks on Sunday evenings. At the meetings we build community, grow in our faith, pray together, and have fun! Food is always provided. Meetings are led by a team of teen and adult leaders.
- 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. 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\*\***

## 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* (August-July).

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 prior to the off-site or one-time event.

### Dress Code

Participants are expected to dress modestly and reflect the values of the program. Participants violating the dress code will be asked to change or leave the event.

Specific expectations include:

- Shorts & skirts should be an appropriate length (past fingertips while standing upright)
- No midriff length tops that expose the stomach
- No low cut tops without an undershirt
- Pants should be worn around the waist; no sagging or visible underwear
- Girls: No tube tops, halter tops, or tank tops with spaghetti straps or visible bra straps

### 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 have a valid US driver's license and have auto insurance coverage.

Any exception must receive prior approval from the Director 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 Director of Youth Ministry to discuss your situation. All conversations will be kept confidential.

## **Medications**

Participants requiring any prescription OR over-the-counter medication must complete the "SHYM Medication Form" with parent's signature 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 Director of Youth Ministry. All medications must be in their original container with the participant's name clearly identified.

## **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 Director of Youth Ministry or the program director reserves the right to search and/or contact the appropriate legal authorities. When the Director 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.

## Additional Policies

### Discipline

Disruptive behaviors, including foul language, disrespect of others or property, excessive talking or other disruptive actions, will first result in a verbal warning. Continued disruptive behavior may result in the removal of the youth from the activity, regardless of the time or place of the activity/incident, at the parents' expense. A private meeting will be requested with the Director of Youth Ministry, the youth involved, and his/her parents. Suspension from one or all SHYM events is at the discretion of the Director of Youth Ministry, with input from the parents and pastor.

Any Illegal activity, including but not limited to alcohol, drug, or weapon possession, 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 Director of Youth Ministry, along with parents, will decide on any further disciplinary action and suspension from SHYM programming.

### 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 Director 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 (*see Adult Communication Policy*).

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 *VIRTUS Awareness Session* 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 Director 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 Director of Youth Ministry reserves the right to determine the areas that each volunteer participates in. The Director 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*.)

## 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. Leaving early requires parental permission.
- ❖ to wear appropriate clothing to all events. Specific expectations include:
  - Shorts & skirts should be an appropriate length (past fingertips while standing upright)
  - No midriff length tops that expose the stomach
  - No low cut tops without an undershirt
  - Pants should be worn around the waist; no sagging or visible underwear
  - Girls: No tube tops, halter tops, or tank tops with spaghetti straps or visible bra straps
- ❖ to turn off cell phones when arriving at an event unless instructed otherwise by leaders.
- ❖ to avoid the use of profanity, offensive language, & sexually suggestive references or innuendo
- ❖ to have an open mind to those with different backgrounds or ideas than you.  
Bullying will NOT be tolerated.
- ❖ to respect the property of all participants, volunteers, staff members, and that of the parish.
- ❖ 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 or any weapon or other materials that might endanger others.

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

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the ***St. Henry Youth Ministry Code of Conduct***, agree to follow its policies while a participant at any SHYM event, and recognize that I may be asked to leave if I choose not to follow the directions of the adult leaders.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Modified August 1, 2012*