

Community Life Covenants

The scary part about getting a group of teenagers together is dealing with the vast array of personalities shoved into one meeting space. In an ideal world, church is nondiscriminatory in nature and does not pick favorites. Unlike school, all are welcome and respected for who they are as individuals. Church is the one place where the homecoming queen and the band geek will be best friends. This may not always be the case at first glance, but through the development of a solid community life covenant, members of a youth group can come to an agreement on how they want to identify and define themselves. It is through a covenant that an authentic and loving youth group community can be formed. There are two primary kinds of community life covenants that can be implemented: youth group covenants (intended for weekly meetings) and event covenants (such as a mission trip, retreat or camp). The covenant should be designed and agreed upon by all members of the group. Together, leaders and students agree that the things on the list are non-negotiable and promise to adhere to all things listed.

Youth Group Covenants

Whether students will admit it or not, they like rules. Students operate well within boundaries. If they know what they can and cannot do, they feel safe and comfortable. However, we all know that every group has a rule breaker who wants to push the boundaries. A youth group covenant will make the rule breaker in the group feel like it was his or her idea to stay within a confined set of respectful boundaries and not break the rules (thus not making other youth in the group feel unsafe or uncomfortable). That said, the covenant is designed and agreed upon by the entire group.

One suggestion for the first youth group of the year is to designate 20-30 minutes for the youth and adults to brainstorm ideas for the covenant. Ask students, “What are the things we all can agree upon for our group? What kind of place do we want this to be? What are our goals? How do we want to treat each other?” Once completed, copies should be hung at the entrance to the youth room as well as the front of the room as a reminder that youth group is a safe place where all are welcome.

Westminster Youth Community Covenant

*Covenant: a solemn agreement between the members
of a church to act together in harmony.*

1. We will always have fun.
2. We will always respect each other.
3. We will welcome and appreciate everyone.
4. We will put our cell phones and other distractions away.
5. We will always listen when others are speaking.
6. We will always seek to serve others and love others because
7. God first loved us.

**“Empowering Youth to Love God, Each Other,
Themselves, and the World.” Matthew 22:37-39**

Event Covenant

The difference between a weekly youth group covenant and an event covenant is that an event covenant will be more specific. Event covenants can be made for lock-ins, mission trips, retreats or special outings. One arena where an event covenant is most helpful is that of a mission trip. If you are going on a mission trip in an unfamiliar city or country with 10-15 teenagers, you will want to know you can trust them at all times, to be keenly aware of their surroundings, the culture and each other. Mission trips also have a unique set of circumstances. When hard work is involved, people sweat and start to smell. Nobody wants to be put in a situation where they have to tell another mission team member that they smell bad and should shower. Youth leaders do not want to have to constantly tell students to get off their cell phones and participate in projects at hand. A covenant in these types of situations will ensure that for a set period of time, participants will respect every aspect of the event. Again, these covenants should be made prior to the event with input formal participants and a copy should be signed by each person involved. It is helpful to hang the signed covenants in a common area at the event as a constant reminder of the mutual respect agreed upon for one another.

Westminster Youth Nashville Mission Team Community Covenant

1. No slacking, no excuses.
2. If you don't know, ask.
3. Be consistent.
4. Get to know everyone - especially the homeowner.
5. Cell phones do not leave dorm area at the church.
6. Drink plenty of water.
7. Share first.
8. Practice respect and global tolerances. Be open-minded.
9. Do what is asked of you – share responsibilities.
10. Treat others with love. Be cool.
11. Always clean up after yourself at the worksite and in the dorm.
12. Absolutely no drugs, alcohol, or weapons.

I hereby agree to the elements of this community covenant.

I agree to uphold these standards and hold my fellow mission team members accountable to them.

X _____ **Print Name** _____

Author: Victoria Schaff

Editor: Kelly Boone Sloan

Project Manager: Gina Yeager-Buckley

