

FIRST PLYMOUTH

YOUTH NEWS

esmith@firstplymouthchurch.org

JUNE 2009



I've found that many churches don't quite know what to do with their youth ministries. They know *they like having them*. It makes them feel good that youth want to be a part of their church, and they like the enthusiasm and energy that youth can bring to the community. Many churches have only a handful of youth (often the minister's kids), and long for a bigger youth presence. Some churches, like ours, have dozens of active youth—so many, in fact, that the church sometimes finds itself being annoyed by all those crazy teenagers who are running around the building.

Through my own observations and through conversations with my friends who work with youth in churches all over the country, I came up with this list—the Ten Commandments of Youth Ministry. These ideas convey what I believe about youth ministry, and I think they lay the groundwork for helping First Plymouth fully integrate youth (and children) into the life of the church.

- 1) Thou shalt acknowledge that youth are a part of the church.** The church is not an adult institution that allows youth to participate under certain rules and conditions. The kingdom of God "belongs," says Jesus, to children. So much more the church! We adults just borrow space.
- 2) Thou shalt not bemoan "kids these days."** "Kids these days" are very much like the kids in other days. Think about what you were like as a teenager. Remember? Teenagers today are just like that, but with different fashions, music, and lingo.
- 3) Thou shalt not blame everything on the internet, cell phones, and texting.** Yes, youth spend a lot of time with those technologies. But they are just that—technologies. They allow youth to communicate with one another, much like telephones with cords, letters, and drive-in movies allowed youth to communicate in the past.
- 4) Thou shalt respect the ability of a youth to teach you something.** Church is not a place where adults teach young people things that they don't know. It's a place where we all learn from one another, and where we all have something to teach. Even youth (and children too).
- 5) The church building shall be a place for youth as well as adults.** This sometimes means that messes will be made, things will be misplaced, and decor might be awry. This is as it should be. A church building is a house for God's people, and like a house, it is meant to be lived in. Youth live here too.
- 6) Thou shalt not utter the words "maybe we could get the youth to help."** The youth are not a labor force, a cheerleading squad, or a built-in audience. Let your programs and ideas stand on their own terms, and if a youth wants to participate, then you know you're doing something right.
- 7) Thou shalt not ask a youth's opinion without being prepared to hear it.** Youth sometimes say or believe things you might not say or believe.
- 8) Thou shalt support the youth with your resources.** Our youth have lots of energy, ideas, and passion for helping to heal the world. They do not, however, have a lot of money. If a 15-year-old wants to help rebuild a church destroyed in a hurricane in Louisiana, they can't do it without your help.
- 9) Thou shalt be a presence in the lives of our youth.** We need adults to work as mentors to our youth, and to be a presence in their lives. Yes, you can do it. Our youth are not scary, and will not laugh at you. Unless you make a joke.
- 10) Thou shalt revel in our youth.** We have dozens of young people active in this church, many of whom show up week after week, more frequently than many of our adults. They are a creative and passionate bunch, who try to live out the values of the church and of Jesus Christ. Be thankful for their presence, listen to what they have to say, and support them any way you can. The old cliché is true: they are the future.

CAMPS AND RETREATS:

July 19-25

First Plymouth Community Camp

July 26-August 1

MADD Camp

FUNDRAISING

Attention youth and parents: First, thanks to all who have helped with our fundraising so far this year. We've done a great job!

In the fall, we'll start a new set of fundraising efforts, focusing on grocery card sales and monthly babysitting nights. We'll need everyone's help to make it happen!

REMINDERS

—There are still some 2008-2009 Youth Group hoodie sweat-shirts available! These are available to youth for a suggested \$15 donation (don't sweat it if you don't have it), or to parents and other church folk for a \$20 donation. We currently have all sizes, but the smaller ones are going fast!

—Invite your friends to youth activities over the summer!

—Our Summer Lock-In is June 26th. We'll meet at the church after VBS finishes for the day (probably in early afternoon), and we'll spend the rest of the day and the whole night doing fun stuff at church, hanging out, and hopefully sleeping a little bit. Parents can pick up their youth at 8:30 on Saturday morning.

—Don't forget to buy stock in our Senior High Mission Trip, so you can attend the Stockholder's Reception on July 18th!

THANK YOU!

The First Plymouth youth program takes hard work from many different people! Here is a list (incomplete, of course!) of those who have lent a hand recently:

- Thanks to all the parents who have prepared dinner for the youth groups throughout the whole year! Special thanks to Nanette Harland, who has coordinated our meal schedule.
- Thanks to the youth mentors who have helped with youth group so far this year: Dave Kroll, Brian Eley, Ben Westlund, Greg Verzosa, and Julie Bennett!
- Thanks to the parents who are helping with our fundraising efforts, *especially* those who have taken on a leadership role! Your help is invaluable!

CALENDAR

June 3-20	Eric is on vacation (!!!), but available by phone or email
June 22-26:	Vacation Bible School Youth Volunteers Needed!
June 26	Lock-In!
July 5-16:	High School Mission Trip to New Orleans, LA
July 18:	High School Mission Trip Stockholders' Reception
July 19-25:	First Plymouth Community Camp at La Foret
July 26-August 1:	MADD Camp at La Foret
August 16:	Youth Group Resumes! Youth Choir Resumes! Youth Sunday School Resumes!
November 6-8:	Middle School Mission Trip at La Foret!

ERIC'S CONTACT INFO:

Cell Phone/Text:	828 337 0975
Church Phone:	303 762 0616
Email:	esmith@firstplymouthchurch.org
Church Website:	www.firstplymouthchurch.org
Available on:	Myspace, Facebook