



# Youth Group Handbook

This is an example of a youth group handbook outlining the philosophies and plans of youth program(s).



# Sample Youth Group Handbook

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We gather in the hope of creating a Christian community where youth can come to know that they are loved while learning to love themselves and others. The youth groups strive to be a sanctuary where youth are free to be themselves and embrace the knowledge that we are all



created by God. We recognize and appreciate that all people are created differently. God's love is unconditional for all beings and we seek to be vessels of that all encompassing love and nurture each person's unique gifts and talents. Through service and fellowship we aspire to create transformative experiences that challenge the youth and deepen their faith. The youth groups are a place where we celebrate that adolescent life is not fragile, but abundant and assured. In all that we do, we want the youth to experience God's trustworthiness, transcendence and love.

## **Beacons**

### **Community**

We develop a safe space for the youth through our nurturing of fellowship, fun, service and spirituality. In sharing the joyful abundance of life together, we create connections that strengthen our sense of community.

### **Fun and Fellowship**

Out of the larger group we create united teams bonded by friendship, love, service and commitment to one another. This allows the youth to experience close relationships and gain a sense that they always have a group of people to rely upon. They come together away from the pressures and expectations of teenage life with opportunities for ecstatic fun and friendships.

### **Service**

Just as God continually reaches out to us, we are compelled to reach out to others. We encourage the youth to work selflessly serving those in need. Service experiences are provided on a regular basis, and projects will range from construction, person to person relationships and the ultimate life experience of service on a mission trip. In these transformative experiences of service, youth group turns possibility into reality.

### **Spirituality**

The youth groups engage youth in an ever-deepening conversation about the fundamental questions of life. We invite the youth to further explore their faith journey by experiencing alternative and astounding forms of worship through prayer, meditation and music.

### **Vespers**

Vespers puts a focus on living a flourishing life now. The team discussions provide a time to communicate and express what is on their minds. During this time of talking together, youth bring to light, explore and share common issues, joys, concerns, triumphs and life challenges



that confront young people today.

## WHAT IS YG?

YG or “Youth Group” is a program of The Congregational Church of New Canaan for high school students. All 9th through 12th graders, regardless of church affiliation, are welcome to join YG. In general, YG meets each Sunday evening during the school year for fellowship, service, spirituality and fun. Activities range from teambuilding to vespers to service projects.

The highlight of the YG year is the annual Mission Trip. This nine-day trip during the winter public school vacation to a community where YG “Mission Fish” work side-by-side with Christian brothers and sisters to improve living conditions as they experience and embrace God’s love.

Over the years our vibrant youth program has continued to grow. During 2009-2010 there were more than 150 youth registered for YG with 85 regularly participating. The YG program now includes more than 50 regular weekly meetings and service projects.

## YG General Information

### YG Program Goals

YG shares a journey of faith, hope and commitment throughout each year. The goals of YG are:

- To provide meaningful experiences in a safe place in which to experience the challenges of working, playing and learning together in a community of Christian fellowship and love.
- To foster the knowledge and love of God through discussions, activities, friendships and service projects.
- To nurture each person’s gifts and talents in an environment that is universally accepting and loving.
- To offer youth an environment in which to discover they are not alone, provide a forum to discuss and deal with issues in their lives and to find people to love and support them through times of happiness, grief, fear and change.

### Weekly Events

We aim to incorporate each of the Beacons at least once during each month. Some events are geared toward furthering Christian experience, some are geared toward service, and some are simply for fun and fellowship.

### Service Projects



During the 2009-2010 year YG made meals for the Norwalk Emergency Shelter, delivered 150 Thanksgiving dinners to families in need and served the homeless in New York City shelters for a weekend.

110 high school students gave up a chance for relaxation and spent their February vacation in Toa Alta, Puerto Rico working with La Senda Antigua Church to rebuild and refurbish 7 homes in the underprivileged neighborhood of Barrio Piñas.

2010-2011 Service Projects:

- Bake-Off
- Senior/Freshmen Mini Mission Trip
- Turkey Day Service Project
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- YG Gives Back

## **Staffing**

This program takes the effort of many dedicated individuals. Along with our 2 full-time Youth Ministers there are 6 part-time adult Advisors who work with the Youth Ministers to nurture and attend to the needs of each member of the youth group. A copy of the church's Safe Church policy is available from the church office.

## **Teams**

Due to the fact that YG is such a large group we create teams of 15 to 20 youth which are each led by an adult Advisor.

The teams mix students from different grade levels and interests. Each team has an Advisor who plans weekly activities for the team members to have the chance to get together outside of the larger group of YG and have quality time with their Advisor. The teams enable youth to make close friendships and strengthen their sense of community and connection.

## **Financial Support**

The Congregational Church provides substantial financial support to the YG program; however YG looks to supplement that support through contributions and fund raising activities.

Parents of YG members who are not members of the church or who are non-pledging members of the church are asked to make a \$350 donation to the Congregational Church for each child they have in the program.

The Pancake Breakfast and the Mission Sponsor Program are the primary fund raising



activities.

There is an \$1000 fee for participants of the Mission Trip, a \$350 fee for the Ski Trip and a \$200 fee for the Senior/Freshmen Mini Mission Trip.

**Due to the nature of our trips and the non-refundable tickets we purchase, fees paid cannot be returned.** For the Mission Trip only, we will offer information for a third party providing trip insurance at an addition fee for each participant in the event of extreme circumstances such as sickness or injury.

Financial support from the church is available for families that cannot afford the trip fees. For information, please call Chris or Caroline at 203-966-2651 ext. 32 or 34 respectively.

## **Parent Support**

**Encourage:** We ask you to acknowledge your child's decision to make YG a part of their life and that you support and encourage his/her journey.

**Volunteer:** Providing activities, transportation and fundraising for a group the size of YG requires significant support. We ask parents to help out with at least two YG activities per year such as food preparation, driving, pool parties or set-up of fundraising activities. Sign-ups are available at the annual Parents Meeting in the Fall.

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up:** YG events are on Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 unless otherwise noted. Given our tight schedules on Sundays we appreciate your adherence to our drop-off and pick-up times.

Parent support is coordinated through the Senior High Ministries Committee (SHMC) which is a church committee comprised of volunteer parents of YG participants. The role of the SHMC is to provide resources, guidance and support to the Youth Ministers so that they can administer YG events most effectively and ensure that YG meets its goals. The SHMC is also the conduit for the Youth Ministers to communicate issues of importance to the parents of the YG participants.

Specifically the role of the SHMC is to:

- Recruit, coordinate and manage all parent volunteers for YG events
- Establish and enforce the attendance policy for "Covenant Events" through the Standards Sub-Committee
- Manage and respond to parental inquiries regarding programming and Mission Fish eligibility for the Mission Trip
- Assist the Youth Ministers in creating the annual calendar of YG events
- Provide advice and counsel to the Youth Ministers as necessary for YG programs and events,





particularly in the areas of safety and security.

The SHMC is led by two Co-Chairs who are responsible for:

- Managing monthly committee meetings
- Meeting with the Youth Ministers at least once a month to review programs and any issues that might have emerged
- Participating as a member of the Church Council and attending monthly meetings
- Meeting with the Senior Minister as needed to share insights on YG programming
- Leading the Standards Sub-Committee whose purpose is to enforce the YG attendance policy for Mission Trip eligibility
- Sharing information with Co-Chairs of the Middle School Ministries Committee as necessary

## **YG Mission Trip**

**The YG mission trip takes place during the New Canaan public school's winter vacation. This year the mission trip dates are February 17th to the 27th.**

Going on a mission trip is a life-changing experience. When the youth have the opportunity to work on meaningful projects that greatly improve the living conditions in communities, it shows them how much they can accomplish and impact other people's lives. Youth need to know that although they are not yet adults they are fully capable of doing significant work for people who really do need their help.

Mission trips are also a way for youth to learn about and live out the Christian call to service and loving our neighbors. We do not go on mission trips simply because we can. We go because we recognize and embrace God's love for us and God's desire for us to share God's love with others and be in community. Living out our call to love, and putting faith into action is transformative. The experiences that youth have on these trips impact them for the rest of their lives.

The YG mission trip is 9 days with a balance of hard work and fun designed to bring a ministry of love and hope to those in need. Participants leave our trip with a changed perspective on their world, and a better understanding of the difficulties faced by those who suffer the burdens of poverty, disability and neglect.

The program on the mission trip includes group work projects, meaningful interactions with community members, prayers, vespers and worship. During the trip the youth will help repair existing structures and build new ones. They will work in teams that are supervised by a YG advisor and a skilled builder. Safety is a serious issue and we take many precautions to make sure that no one is injured.



On the Thursday night before we leave for the trip we have the Mission Trip Send Off Dinner at the church. All youth and advisors who are going on the trip will come for the dinner and spend the night at the church before we leave early the next morning.

Our trip destinations are typically to sites that are not convenient using ground transportation from New Canaan. We use buses to get to the airport and then fly to our destination. Once we arrive at our destination we use buses or vans for transportation.

We want to take care of the youth as best we can so there are many chaperones who come on the mission trip. The 2 Youth Ministers lead the trip along with the adult Advisors. A team of skilled builders comes to lead the work projects. The senior minister and other adults also joins us for this adventure ensuring all the participants have the chance for a positive experience. We are even lucky enough to have YG alums come back to join the effort.

### **YG Attendance Policy**

YG members who would like to participate in the annual Mission Trip are required to attend the seven Covenant Events on the YG calendar. While all seven Covenant Events are required, the policy will permit Mission Fish one absence, provided that it is communicated in advance and made up through an activity of acceptable scope and time.

More than one absence of Covenant Events (including absences due to illness of other unforeseen events) may render the Mission Fish ineligible for the next scheduled trip. The purpose of this policy is not simply to mandate attendance; rather it is to help build a sense of community among Mission Fish, which is critical to the success of the Mission Trip.

The Mission Trip attendance policy is that there will be no late arrivals or early departures, with the exception of unforeseen illness or injury on the trip.

### **Covenant Events**

The Covenant Events for Mission Fish for 2010-2011 are:

- October 17: Youth Worship
- December 12: Teambuilding Day
- January 9: Worship and Vespers
- January 30: Commissioning Sunday
- February 17: Mission Trip Send-Off Dinner
- March 6: Pancake Breakfast
- March 13: Youth Sunday & Mission Sponsor Brunch

**Parents of Mission Fish are required to attend the Parent's Meeting October 3rd.**





## **Absences and Conflicts**

One absence will not impact Mission Trip eligibility provided that it is communicated in advance. A known conflict must be communicated in advance and in writing (not via email or phone) to the Youth Ministers no later than two weeks prior to the Covenant Event.

In the event that the Youth Ministers are not given advance notice, the conflict will be referred to the Senior High Ministries Standards Committee to determine if the Mission Fish should remain eligible for the Mission Trip. Absences for which two week advance notice is impossible (i.e. illness or family emergency) will be accepted.

If more than one absence from Covenant Events occurs, the Mission Fish may be rendered ineligible for the next trip (either this year's trip, next year's trip or the Quest Trip.) In such cases the Mission Fish must contact one of the Co-Chairs of the SHMC to determine if he/she will be eligible for the next trip. The Senior High Ministries Standards Committee will then meet to determine eligibility.

## **Make-Up Activity**

A make-up activity that is one and a half the time of the missed covenant event will be determined and monitored by the Youth Ministers. It is the responsibility of the Mission Fish to contact the Youth Ministers and to schedule the make-up activity. Make-up activities will be consistent with the objectives and mission of YG. All make-up activities must be scheduled with the Youth Ministers and completed by the Mission Fish within 30 days of the missed Covenant Event.

## **The Senior High Ministries Standards Committee**

The committee will consist of the Co-Chairs of the SHMC and other members of the SHMC to ensure that there are parent representatives for each grade level in YG. The Standards Committee will meet only as needed.

The Standards Committee responsibilities are:

- To gather information about the conflict referred to the by the Youth Ministers
- To talk to the YG member and their parents
- To decide how the conflict will be resolved and in the case of absences, if the Mission Fish will be allowed to go on the next Mission Trip or Quest Trip

The procedure of the Standards Committee is:

1. The YG member and parents will be notified in writing that the conflict will be brought before the Standards Committee



2. The YG member and his/her parents will be invited to meet with the Standards Committee members to discuss the situation, the reason for the conflict and any extenuating circumstances. All information will be kept confidential.
3. The Standards Committee will meet privately, consider all information and make a decision.
4. The Standards Committee's decision will be final.
5. The YG member and his/her family will be notified of the decision by phone and in writing.

## **Ten Commandments for the**

### **Mission Trip**

1. Thou shall think as "We" Not "I"
2. Thou shall be open to new experiences and ways of thinking
3. Thou shall respect the observances and traditions of those we serve
4. Thou shall be with thy buddy at all times
5. Thou shall be at events on time
6. Thy body shall not leave the group
7. Thou shall report any injury or sickness immediately to an adult Advisor
8. Thou shall not puff a weed of any kind nor space out on any pills or drink during the Mission Trip
9. Thou shall not trespass on thy neighbor's body, privacy or self-esteem
10. Thou shall be OK! Nay, excellent in the eyes of our God!

### **Emergencies**

In the unlikely event of an emergency, parents will be contacted quickly by the parent contact telephone tree that is used for such situations. If the emergency pertains to a single child, only those parents will be contacted directly.

### **2010 Fall Schedule**

All events are Sunday nights from 7:00pm to 8:30pm unless otherwise noted.

#### **Covenant Events are in bold**

Sunday, Sept. 12 <sup>th</sup> -	16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Beach Day (3:00-6:30)
Sunday, Sept. 19 <sup>th</sup> -	Scavenger Hunt
Sunday, Sept. 26 <sup>th</sup> -	Chinese Night (6:30-9:00)
<b>Sunday, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> -</b>	<b>Parents Meeting/Seniors Take Over</b>
Monday, Oct. 11 <sup>th</sup> -	Spiritual Flight Night & Sundaes on a Monday



**Sunday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> -**

**Youth Worship**

Sunday, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> -

Bake-Off and Team Announcement

Sunday, Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> -

Halloween Party

Fri.-Sat., Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> -

Senior/Freshmen Mini Mission Trip to NYC

Sunday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> -

Vespers and Games

Sunday, Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> -

Turkey Day Service Project (7:00-9:00pm)

Sunday, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> -

No YG - Happy Thanksgiving

Sunday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> -

Progressive Supper (7:00-9:00pm)

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Weekend (Times TBD)

**Sunday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> -  
YCMA)**

**Teambuilding Day (2:00-5:00pm at the NC**

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Weekend (Times TBD)

Sunday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> -

Christmas Worship and Celebration

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Weekend (Times TBD)

**2011 Spring Schedule (Tentative)**

All events are Sunday nights from 7:00pm to 8:30pm unless otherwise noted

**Covenant Events are in bold**

Sunday, Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> -

Team Movie Night

**Sunday, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> -**

**Worship & Vespers**

Monday, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> -

Study Break Mission Trip T-shirt Design

Fri.-Sun., Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> -

Ski Trip to Stowe

**Sunday, Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> -**

**Commissioning Sunday (9:00am)**

Senior Leader's Dinner (7:00pm)



Sunday, Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup> -	Super Bowl Party (6:30-8:00)
Sunday, Feb. 13 <sup>th</sup> -	Team Night & Vespers
<b>Thursday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> - (7:00pm)</b>	<b>Send-Off Dinner and Mission Trip Departure</b>
	<b>Mission Trip Returns Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> -</b>	<b>Pancake Breakfast (8:00am-12:30pm in shifts)</b>
Team Night (7:00-8:30pm)	
<b>Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> -</b>	<b>Youth Sunday (9:00am-12:30pm)</b>
Sunday, March 20 <sup>th</sup> -	Old Skool Games
Sunday, March 27 <sup>th</sup> -	Coffee House
Sunday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Choices
Sunday, April 10 <sup>th</sup> -	YG Gives Back
Sunday, April 17 <sup>th</sup> -	No YG - April Break
Sunday, April 24 <sup>th</sup> -	Easter Sunrise Service (6:00am)
Sunday, May 1 <sup>st</sup> -	Team Cooking Challenge
Sunday, May 8 <sup>th</sup> -	No YG - Mother's Day
Sunday, May 15 <sup>th</sup> -	What's You Calling?
Sunday, May 22 <sup>nd</sup> -	Playing in the Park
Monday, May 30 <sup>th</sup> -	YG Trip to Playland (3:00-9:00pm)
Sunday, June 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Beacon of Light Dinner (5:00-7:30pm)
Sunday, June 12 <sup>th</sup> -	End of the Year Pool Party (3:00-5:00pm)

## WHAT IS MSYG?

MSYG or "Middle School Youth Group" is a program of the Congregational Church of New



Canaan for middle school youth. All seventh and eighth grade students, regardless of church affiliation, are welcome to join MSYG. In general, MSYG meets each Sunday afternoon during the school year for fellowship, service and fun. Activities range from teambuilding to vespers to service projects.

The highlight of the MSYG year is the annual Mission Trip to Mountainside, a three day trip over Memorial Day weekend. There, MSYG works side-by-side with residents in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction to restore and improve the facility and experience and embrace God's love.

Over the years our vibrant youth program has continued to grow. During the 2009-2010 year there were over 100 youth registered for the MSYG program with 50 kids participating on a weekly basis. The MSYG program now has more than 35 regular weekly meetings and service projects.

## **MSYG General Information**

### **MSYG Program Goals**

MSYG shares a journey of faith, hope and commitment throughout each year. The goals of MSYG are:

- To provide meaningful experiences in a safe place in which to experience the challenges of working, playing and learning together in a community of Christian fellowship and love.
- To foster the knowledge and love of God through discussions, activities, friendships and service projects.
- To nurture each person's gifts and talents in an environment that is universally accepting and loving.
- To offer youth an environment in which to discover they are not alone, provide a forum to discuss and deal with issues in their lives and to find people who love and support them through times of happiness, grief, fear and change.

### **Weekly Events**

We aim to incorporate each of the Beacons at least once during each month. Some events are geared toward furthering Christian experience, some are geared toward service, and some are simply for fun and fellowship.

### **Service Projects**

During the 2009-2010 year MSYG delivered 450 service hours via monthly service projects and the Mountainside Mission Trip.



## 2010-2011 Service Projects:

- Cooking for a Cause
- Turkey Day (All Church) service project
- Bread and Roses Toy Drive
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- Bag Lunch Service Project

## Staffing

Our staff includes 2 full-time Youth Ministers, 3 part-time adult Advisors and 13 high school Juniors who serve as team Advisors. MSYG is also supported by the members of the MSMC and the church staff. A copy of the church's Safe Church policy is available from the church office.

## Teams

Due to the fact that MSYG is a large group we create teams of 10-15 youth. There are 5 teams and each one is lead by an adult Advisor and at least 2 Junior Advisors.

The teams mix youth from different grade levels and interests. The teams enable youth to make close friendships and strengthen their sense of community and connection.

## Financial Support

The Congregational Church provides substantial financial support to the MSYG program; however MSYG looks to supplement that support through contributions and fundraising activities.

Parents of MSYG members who are not members of the church or who are non-pledging members of the church are asked to make a \$50 donation to the Congregational Church for each child they have in the program.

There is an \$200 fee for participants of the Mountainside Mission Trip and a \$250 fee for the Ski Trip. If a child is unable to attend the Mission Trip (i.e. sickness, injury, etc.) after the fee has been paid there may be a refund of \$50. There are no refunds on fees paid for the Ski Trip.

Financial support from the church is available for families that cannot afford the trip fees. For information, please call Chris or Caroline at 203-966-2651 ext. 32 or 34 respectively.

## Participation Guidelines



Regular Sunday events are generally held at the church. All are welcome. New participants of friends must be introduced to the Youth Ministers.

For special events or events away from the church, permission slips and/or sign-ups must be completed by the deadline. The omnibus health and permission form covers all events.

MSYG members who would like to participate in the annual Mountainside Mission Trip are required to attend Covenant Events. This policy is outlined in detail in the Mountainside Mission Trip section.

## **Parent Support**

**Encourage:** We ask you to acknowledge your child's decision to make MSYG a part of their life and that you support and encourage his/her journey.

**Volunteer:** Providing activities, transportation and fundraising for a group the size of MSYG requires significant support. We ask parents to help out with at least one MSYG activity per year such as fundraising, special events, pool parties, driving or food preparation. Sign-ups are available at the annual

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up:** All MSYG events are on Sunday afternoons from 4:30 to 6:00 unless otherwise noted. Given our tight schedules on Sundays we appreciate your adherence to our drop-off and pick-up times.

Parent support is coordinated through the Middle School Ministries Committee (MSMC) which is a church committee comprised of parent volunteers. The role of the MSMC is to provide resources, guidance and support to the Youth Ministers so that they can administer MSYG events most effectively and ensure that MSYG meets its goals. The MSMC is also the conduit for the Youth Ministers to communicate issues of importance to the parents of the MSYG participants.

Specifically the role of the MSMC is to:

- Recruit, coordinate and manage all parent volunteers for MSYG events
- Establish and enforce the attendance policy for "Covenant Events"
- Manage and respond to parental inquiries regarding Mission Fish eligibility for the Mountainside Mission Trip
- Assist the Youth Ministers in creating the annual calendar of MSYG events
- Provide advice and counsel to the Youth Ministers as necessary for MSYG programs and events, particularly in the areas of safety and security

The MSMC is led by a Chairperson who is responsible for:





- Managing monthly committee meetings
- Meeting with the Youth Ministers at least monthly to review programs and any issues that might have emerged
- Participating as a member of the Church Council and attending monthly meetings
- Meeting with the Senior Minister as needed to share insights on MSYG programming
- Sharing information with Co-Chairs of the Senior High Ministries Committee as necessary

## **Mountainside Mission Trip**

The MSYG Mountainside Mission Trip takes place rain or shine Memorial Day Weekend each year. 2011 will mark our 13th consecutive trip to Mountainside.

Those qualifying members of MSYG, the Youth Ministers and the Advisors visit the Mountainside Treatment Center, which is located in the Northwest corner of Litchfield County, CT at the base of the Berkshire Mountains.

Mountainside is a spiritually based treatment facility. It offers innovative and individualized alcohol and drug rehabilitation based on the twelve-step program, addiction education, family counseling, meditation, yoga and adventure based initiatives. Our church has been involved with Mountainside since 1995 through former Youth Director Tim Walsh, who participated in the founding of Mountainside and is now the Assistant Executive Director.

Mountainside is situated on an 8,000 acre campus and been nationally recognized by government and treatment professionals for its outstanding programming and treatment services.

Mountainside's telephone number is (800) 762-5433. They will be glad to answer any questions you have regarding the center, its purpose, mission or policies. To view the Mountainside website go to [www.mountainside.org](http://www.mountainside.org).

## **Mountainside Mission Trip Goals**

- To participate in the transformative power of personal ministry and service
- To encounter the very different and difficult burdens of people who are struggling with alcohol and drug addictions
- To experience the joys and difficulties of living and working as a group for an extended period and the closeness and friendships that result
- To come to know God through experiences of unity, love, selflessness and service

## **Mission Trip Basics**

The MSYG Mountainside Mission Trip is a three-day mission designed to bring a ministry of



love and hope to those in need. Our Mission Fish return from Mountainside with a better understanding of the outside world and the dangers of alcohol and drugs.

## **The Mission**

The Mission Trip is a program that includes group work projects, meetings, prayers, vespers and worship. During the Mission Trip, the youth will help build and repair the facilities at Mountainside. The youth will interact with their team, junior and adult Advisors, as well as work with supervised groups of Mountainside staff members and carefully selected residents in treatment.

## **Mission Trip Requirements**

The mission trip is open to all MSYG members with the following conditions:

- At least one parent must attend the annual MSYG Parent Meeting. Arrangements will be made for those with a legitimate reason for not attending the meeting.
- Mission Fish must attend the two Covenant Events of Teambuilding Day and Commissioning Sunday as well as two of the other five Covenant Events.
- Mission Fish and parents must sign and return the Mission Trip application.

## **Timing**

The group leaves for Mountainside from the church on the Friday afternoon of Memorial Day Weekend shortly after dismissal of the New Canaan public schools. Unless otherwise notified, we expect the Fish to return from Mountainside on Sunday afternoon between 5:00pm and 6:00pm.

## **Transportation**

The group travels by bus to and from Mountainside. The trip takes approximately an hour and a half and food is provided during the trip.

## **Chaperones**

Each Mountainside Mission Trip is chaperoned by the two Youth Ministers, two part-time adult Advisors and the high school Junior Advisors. With all of this supervision, the typical youth to chaperone ratio is 4:1.

## **Sleeping Arrangements**

Youth sleep away from the residents of Mountainside and are segregated by gender. Typically, Friday night one gender will sleep in the lean-to's on the mountain and the other



will sleep in the yoga room, a warm, carpeted room with a bathroom nearby. They will switch sleeping arrangements for Saturday night. Should the weather not cooperate, everybody will sleep inside in separate male/female rooms.

## **Emergencies**

In the unlikely case of an emergency, parents will be contacted quickly by a predetermined member of the MSMC through a telephone chain established before the trip leaves New Canaan. If the emergency pertains to a single youth, only the parents of that youth will be contacted.

If necessary, direct contact with Mountainside can be made by calling (800) 762-5433 or (860) 824-1397 or after hours (860) 824-5152. Mountainside staff will always know where to find our group.

## **Disciplinary Action**

All Mission Fish are expected to adhere to the behavioral contract, a part of the Mission Trip permission form, as well as the Mission Trip Ten Commandments. All disciplinary actions will be handled on an individual basis.

## **Ten Commandments of the**

### **Mountainside Mission Trip**

1. Thou shall think as "We" Not "I"
2. Thou shall be open to new experiences and ways of thinking
3. Thou shall respect the observances and traditions of those we serve
4. Thou shall be with thy buddy at all times
5. Thou shall be at events on time
6. Thy body shall not leave the group
7. Thou shall report any injury or sickness immediately to an adult Advisor
8. Thou shall not puff a weed of any kind nor space out on any pills or drink during the Mission Trip
9. Thou shall not trespass on thy neighbor's body, privacy or self-esteem
10. Thou shall be OK! Nay, excellent in the eyes of our God!

## **2010 Fall Schedule**

All events are Sunday afternoons from 4:30pm to 6:00pm unless otherwise noted.

### **Covenant Events are in bold**

Sunday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> -

Kickoff Pool Party (12:00-2:00)



Sunday, Sept. 19 <sup>th</sup> -	Gross-Out Games
Sunday, Sept. 26 <sup>th</sup> -	Outdoor Games at Mead
Sunday, Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Super Scavenger Hunt
Monday, Oct. 11 <sup>th</sup> -	Cooking for a Cause
Sunday, Oct. 17 <sup>th</sup> -	Gamesplasion
Friday, Oct. 22 <sup>nd</sup> -	Lock-In (6:00pm)
Sunday, Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup> -	Halloween Party
Sunday, Nov. 7 <sup>th</sup> -	MSYG SIMS
<b>Sunday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> -</b>	<b>Parents Meeting/Advisors Take Over</b>
Sunday, Nov. 21 <sup>st</sup> -	Turkey Day Service Project
Sunday, Nov. 28 <sup>th</sup> -	No MSYG - Happy Thanksgiving!
<b>Sat.-Sun. Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> -</b>	<b>Salvation Army Bell Ringing (Times TBD)</b>
Sunday, Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Bread and Roses Wrapping Party
<b>Sat.-Sun. Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> -</b>	<b>Salvation Army Bell Ringing (Times TBD)</b>
Sunday, Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup> -	Team Reveal and Winter Olympics (6:00-8:00pm)
Sunday, Dec. 19 <sup>th</sup> -	Christmas Worship and Celebration

### **2011 Spring Schedule (Tentative)**

All events are Sunday afternoons from 4:30pm to 6:00pm unless otherwise noted

### **Covenant Events are in bold**

Sunday, Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup> -	New Year's Welcome Back Party
Fri.-Sun., Jan. 7 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> -	Ski Trip to Catamount
Monday, Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup> -	Catacombs



Sunday, Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> -

No MSYG - YG Ski Trip

**Sunday, Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> -**

**Bag Lunch Service Project**

Sunday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> -

Pregame Show Competition

Sunday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> -

Mystery Box Challenge

Sunday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> -

No MSYG - February Break

Sunday, Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> -

No MSYG - February Break

**Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> -**

**Worship and Vespers**

Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> -

Advisors Take Over

Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup> -

Around the World Dinner

Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup> -

Amazing Race (4:00-6:00pm)

**Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> -**

**Choices**

Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> -

Mountainside T-Shirt Design/Care Packages

Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> -

No MSYG - April Break

Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> -

No MSYG - April Break

**Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> -**

**Teambuilding Day (4:00-6:00pm)**

**Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> -**

**Car Wash (10:00am-4:00pm in shifts by team)**

**Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> -**

**Commissioning (9:00am)**

Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> -

Team Field Day

Fri.-Sun., May 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> -

Mountainside!

Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup> -

Beacon of Light Dinner (5:00-7:30pm)

Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> -

End of the Year Pool Party (2:00-4:00pm)

WHAT IS JYG?



JYG or “Junior Youth Group” is a program of the Congregational Church of New Canaan for younger middle school youth. All 5th and 6th grade students, regardless of church affiliation, are welcome to join JYG. In general, JYG meets each Thursday afternoon during the school year for fellowship, service, spirituality and fun. Activities range from games to spiritual discussions to service projects.

Over the years our vibrant youth program has continued to grow. During the 2009-2010 year there were over 45 youth registered for JYG with 20 participating weekly. The JYG program now includes more than 30 regular weekly meetings and service projects.

## **JYG General Information**

### **JYG Program Goals**

JYG shares a journey of faith, hope and commitment throughout each year. The goals of JYG are:

- To provide meaningful experiences in a safe place in which to experience the challenges of working, playing and learning together in a community of Christian fellowship and love.
- To foster the knowledge and love of God through discussions, activities, friendships and service projects.
- To offer youth an environment in which to discover they are not alone, provide a forum to discuss and deal with issues in their lives and to find people to love and support them through times of happiness, grief, fear and change.

### **Weekly Events**

We aim to incorporate each of the Beacons at least once during each month. Some events are geared towards furthering Christian experience, some are geared towards service, and some are simply for fun and fellowship.

### **Service Projects**

During the 2009-2010 year JYG delivered over 200 service hours via monthly service projects.

2010-2011 Service Projects:

- Care Package Service Project
- Turkey Day (All Church) service project
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- Bag Lunch Service Project
- Easter Baskets on Wheels

### **Staffing**



Our staff includes 2 full-time Youth Ministers, 1 part-time adult Advisor and high school sophomores who serve as junior Advisors. JYG is also supported by the members of the MSMC and the church staff.

A copy of the church's Safe Church policy is available from the church office.

## **Participation Guidelines**

Regular Thursday events are generally held at the church. All are welcome. New participants of friends must be introduced to the Youth Ministers.

## **Emergencies**

In the unlikely case of an emergency, parents will be contacted quickly by one of the Youth Ministers. If the emergency pertains to a single youth, only the parents of that youth will be contacted.

## **Behavioral Covenant**

All members must act in a manner consistent with the philosophy of JYG. The focus of the program is on people, recreation, spiritual growth, experiential education, and teambuilding in the context of a personalized community environment. As such, respect for oneself and all other group members, Youth Ministers and Advisors is critical and essential.

## **Disciplinary Action**

All disciplinary actions will be handled on an individual basis. However, all JYG participants are to adhere to the behavioral covenant.

## **Parent Support**

Parent support is coordinated through the Middle School Ministries Committee (MSMC) which is a church committee comprised of parent volunteers. The role of the MSMC is to provide resources, guidance and support to the Youth Ministers so that they can administer JYG events most effectively and ensure that JYG meets its goals. The MSMC is also the conduit for the Youth Ministers to communicate issues of importance to the parents of the JYG participants.

Specifically the role of the MSMC is to:

- Recruit, coordinate and manage all parent volunteers for JYG events
- Assist the Youth Ministers in creating the annual calendar of JYG events
- Provide advice and counsel to the Youth Ministers as necessary for JYG programs and events, particularly in the areas of safety and security





The MSMC is led by a Chairperson who is responsible for:

- Managing monthly committee meetings
- Meeting with the Youth Ministers at least monthly to review programs and any issues that might have emerged
- Participating as a member of the Church Council and attending monthly meetings
- Meeting with the Senior Minister as needed to share insights on JYG programming

**Encourage:** We ask you to acknowledge your child’s decision to make JYG a part of their life and that you support and encourage his/her journey.

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up:** All JYG events are on Thursday afternoons from 5:00 to 6:00 unless otherwise noted. Given our tight schedules we appreciate your adherence to our drop-off and pick-up times.

### 2010 Fall Schedule

All events are Thursday afternoons from 5:00pm to 6:00pm unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup> -	Rain Gutter Ice Cream Social
Thursday, Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup> -	Games-A-Palooza
Thursday, Oct 7 <sup>th</sup> -	Reverse Scavenger Hunt
Thursday, Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup> -	Care Package Service Project
Thursday, Oct. 21 <sup>st</sup> -	Tie-Dye Extravaganza
Thursday, Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup> -	Halloween Bash
Thursday, Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup> -	Group Initiatives (Round 1)
Thursday, Nov. 11 <sup>th</sup> -	Pongdemonium
Thursday, Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup> -	Turkey Day Service Project
Thursday, Nov. 25 <sup>th</sup> -	No JYG - Happy Thanksgiving
Friday, Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Late Night
Thursday, Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> -	Salvation Army Bell Ringing



Thursday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Party

### **2011 Spring Schedule (Tentative)**

All events are Thursday afternoons from 5:00pm to 6:00pm unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, Jan. 6 <sup>th</sup> -	New Year Games
Thursday, Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup> -	Cookie Communion
Thursday, Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup> -	Catacombs
Thursday, Jan. 27 <sup>th</sup> -	Pray it Up
Thursday, Feb. 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Fast Food Progressive Supper
Thursday, Feb. 10 <sup>th</sup> -	Treasure Hunt
Thursday, Feb. 17 <sup>th</sup> -	No JYG - Public School Vacation
Thursday, Feb. 24 <sup>th</sup> -	No JYG - Public School Vacation
Thursday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Group Initiatives (Round 2)
Thursday, March 10 <sup>th</sup> -	Games Games Games
Thursday, March 17 <sup>th</sup> -	Bag Lunch Service Project
Thursday, March 24 <sup>th</sup> -	Game Show
Thursday, March 31 <sup>st</sup> -	Worship Jam
Thursday, April 7 <sup>th</sup> -	Marshmallow Madness
Thursday, April 14 <sup>th</sup> -	Easter Baskets on Wheels
Thursday April 21 <sup>st</sup> -	No JYG - Public School Vacation
Thursday April 28 <sup>th</sup> -	Field Day
Thursday May 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Mother's Day Appreciation Project
Thursday, May 12 <sup>th</sup> -	Faith and Food



Sunday, May 22 <sup>nd</sup> -	Kickball at Waveny: Kids vs. Parents (3:00-4:00pm)
Thursday, May 26 <sup>th</sup> -	No JYG - Mountainside Mission Trip
Thursday, June 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Playing at Mead
Sunday, June 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Beacon of Light Dinner (5:00-7:30pm)
Thursday, June 9 <sup>th</sup> -	Water Blowout

## WHAT IS GUPPIES?

Guppies is a program of the Congregational Church of New Canaan for older elementary school youth. All 3rd and 4th grade students, regardless of church affiliation, are welcome to join Guppies. In general, Guppies meets each Thursday afternoon during the school year for fellowship, service, spirituality and fun. Activities range from games to spiritual discussions to service projects.

Over the years our vibrant youth program has continued to grow. During the 2009-2010 year there were over 40 youth registered for Guppies with 20 participating weekly. The Guppies program now includes more than 30 regular weekly meetings and service projects.

### **Guppies General Information**

#### **Guppies Program Goals**

Guppies shares a journey of faith, hope and commitment throughout each year. The goals of Guppies are:

- To provide meaningful experiences in a safe place in which to experience the challenges of working, playing and learning together in a community of Christian fellowship and love.
- To foster the knowledge and love of God through discussions, activities, friendships and service projects.
- To take the lessons learned in church school and reinforce them through games and interactive activities.

#### **Weekly Events**

We aim to incorporate each of the Beacons at least once during each month. Some events are geared towards furthering Christian experience, some are geared towards service, and some are simply for fun and fellowship.

#### **Service Projects**



During the 2009-2010 year Guppies delivered over 80 service hours via monthly service projects.

2010-2011 Service Projects:

- Church Staff Appreciation
- Turkey Day (All Church) service project
- Serve it Up
- Bag Lunch Service Project

## **Staffing**

Our staff includes 2 full-time Youth Ministers, 1 part-time adult Advisor and high school sophomores who serve as junior Advisors. Guppies is also supported by the members of the MSMC and the church staff.

A copy of the church's Safe Church policy is available from the church office.

## **Participation Guidelines**

Regular Thursday events are generally held at the church. All are welcome. New participants of friends must be introduced to the Youth Ministers.

## **Emergencies**

In the unlikely case of an emergency, parents will be contacted quickly by one of the Youth Ministers. If the emergency pertains to a single youth, only the parents of that youth will be contacted.

## **Behavioral Covenant**

All members must act in a manner consistent with the philosophy of Guppies. The focus of the program is on people, recreation, spiritual growth, experiential education, and teambuilding in the context of a personalized community environment. As such, respect for oneself and all other group members, Youth Ministers and Advisors is critical and essential.

## **Disciplinary Action**

All disciplinary actions will be handled on an individual basis. However, all Guppies participants are to adhere to the behavioral covenant.

## **Parent Support**



Parent support is coordinated through the Middle School Ministries Committee (MSMC) which is a church committee comprised of parent volunteers. The role of the MSMC is to provide resources, guidance and support to the Youth Ministers so that they can administer Guppies events most effectively and ensure that Guppies meets its goals. The MSMC is also the conduit for the Youth Ministers to communicate issues of importance to the parents of the Guppies participants.

Specifically the role of the MSMC is to:

- Recruit, coordinate and manage all parent volunteers for Guppies events
- Assist the Youth Ministers in creating the annual calendar of Guppies events
- Provide advice and counsel to the Youth Ministers as necessary for Guppies programs and events, particularly in the areas of safety and security

The MSMC is led by a Chairperson who is responsible for:

- Managing monthly committee meetings
- Meeting with the Youth Ministers at least monthly to review programs and any issues that might have emerged
- Participating as a member of the Church Council and attending monthly meetings
- Meeting with the Senior Minister as needed to share insights on Guppies programming

**Encourage:** We ask you to acknowledge your child's decision to make Guppies a part of their life and that you support and encourage his/her journey.

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up:** All Guppies events are on Thursday afternoons from 5:00 to 6:00 unless otherwise noted. Given our tight schedules we appreciate your adherence to our drop-off and pick-up times.

## 2010 Fall Schedule

All events are Thursday afternoons from 4:00pm to 5:00pm unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup> -	Krazy Kickoff
Thursday, Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup> -	Messy Games
Thursday, Oct 7 <sup>th</sup> -	Guppy Challenges
Thursday, Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup> -	All Aboard the Disciple Ship
Thursday, Oct. 21 <sup>st</sup> -	Staff Appreciation



Thursday, Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup> -	Halloween Party
Thursday, Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup> -	Buddy Bash
Thursday, Nov. 11 <sup>th</sup> -	Gratitude and Grace Collages
Thursday, Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup> -	Turkey Day Service Project
Thursday, Nov. 25 <sup>th</sup> -	No JYG - Happy Thanksgiving
Thursday, Dec. 2 <sup>nd</sup> -	ADVENTures
Thursday, Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> -	Nativity Rap
Thursday, Dec. 16 <sup>th</sup> -	Christmas Party

### **2011 Spring Schedule (Tentative)**

All events are Thursday afternoons from 4:00pm to 5:00pm unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, Jan. 6 <sup>th</sup> -	Follow the Star
Thursday, Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup> -	Guppy Games
Thursday, Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup> -	Serve it Up!
Thursday, Jan. 27 <sup>th</sup> -	Creation Celebration
Thursday, Feb. 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Paperpalooza
Thursday, Feb. 10 <sup>th</sup> -	Give it Up for Lent
Thursday, Feb. 17 <sup>th</sup> -	No Guppies - Public School Vacation
Thursday, Feb. 24 <sup>th</sup> -	No Guppies - Public School Vacation
Thursday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Escape to Fun
Thursday, March 10 <sup>th</sup> -	2 by 2
Thursday, March 17 <sup>th</sup> -	Bag Lunch Service Project
Thursday, March 24 <sup>th</sup> -	John vs. Philip



Thursday, March 31 <sup>st</sup> -	Cereality
Thursday, April 7 <sup>th</sup> -	Last Supper Game Show
Thursday, April 14 <sup>th</sup> -	Easter Smash and Bash
Thursday April 21 <sup>st</sup> -	No Guppies - Public School Vacation
Thursday April 28 <sup>th</sup> -	Lights! Camera! Action!
Thursday May 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Guppies Heart Moms
Thursday, May 12 <sup>th</sup> -	Jesus and Friends
Thursday, May 19 <sup>th</sup> -	The Challenge
Thursday, May 26 <sup>th</sup> -	No Guppies - Mountainside Mission Trip
Thursday, June 3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Fun at Mead
Sunday, June 5 <sup>th</sup> -	Beacon of Light Dinner (5:00-7:30pm)