

Student Handbook

Clarkston Free Methodist Church
Version 1.3 (December 23, 2010)

The Cove

He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

- Psalm 107:29-30

Our youth ministry at the Clarkston Free Methodist Church is called “The Cove.” It is intended to serve as a refuge for students from the storm of the world. It is a place where we seek to develop students who will love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and who love their neighbors as themselves.¹

Welcome to the youth ministry of the Clarkston Free Methodist Church. We are called “The Cove” and there are several reasons why we chose this as our name. For boats, a cove is a place of refuge from the storms of the world. It is a place where boats can be repaired, built up, and prepared to go back out into the open sea. Boats aren’t meant to spend all of their time in this haven, but rather to use it to be more effective as it serves its purposes.

We want to be a youth ministry that any person can come into, knowing that they will be loved and cared for. It is a safe refuge where students can grow, learn, and be prepared to go out into the world to do God’s work.

Our Mission:

To develop students who will love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, who will love their neighbors as themselves, and who will serve the world around them.

¹ Jesus said the greatest commandment is to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. He said the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. As a matter of fact the entire law can be summed up in these two commands. See Matthew 22:37-40

Our Ministry Purposes

We believe everything we do in ministry should have a purpose. A model that we've tried to follow is the five purposes in *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*. The five purposes are:

Worship – loving God

Discipleship – growing with God

Ministry – loving others as God called us to

Fellowship – growing together

Evangelism – showing God to others

How we achieve our purposes:

Sunday Morning 9:00 – 10:00

Goals: Discipleship, Fellowship

Each week there is a time of sharing and an in-depth Bible lesson. Students are always encouraged to bring their Bibles, and this Bible study time is especially conducive to taking notes or underlining Scripture.

Wednesday Night 6:45 – 8:15 (except during summertime)

Goals: Outreach, Worship, Fellowship

During the evening, we have a band play some music, there is a lesson, we have a game time, and small group time. The evening is geared toward being an easy evening for students to invite their friends. The small group times focuses on students talking about what was taught, and then praying for each other.

Summertime

Our time during the summer is very different. We no longer meet at our usual time on Wednesday nights. Please check to see what events are taking place and when.

Bible Quizzing

We have a program that runs during the schoolyear for students to memorize portions of Scripture and then compete against each other on their knowledge of what they've studied. This is a wonderful opportunity to go deeper in God's word, and to have great fellowship with each other. Open to Jr High and High School students. Please see Dawn McCoon for details.

Blacklight/Puppets

Our blacklight ministry seeks to present truths in an artistic way. Dance, puppets, and creative presentation are put together with groups of students, and then performed in a variety of contexts. Please see Amy Peterson for details.

Praise Band

Our praise band ministers primarily on Wednesday evenings. It is a priority to have students involved in singing and playing musical instruments. If anyone is interested in getting “plugged in” with our praise band, have them see Chris Horvath for further details.

Outreach events

We try to have an outreach event once a month – mini-golf, bowling, movie night, etc. These events are an effort to make it easier for students to invite their friends. The intent of these gatherings is to welcome new people to the group and to have fun as we fellowship together.

Service projects

We try to have one service project a month – soup kitchen, work project, volunteering opportunity, etc. We believe that followers of Jesus should be servants first, and we want to provide opportunities where students can serve together.

Typical big events during the year

Spring Hill -winter

Every winter we take a trip to Spring Hill for each the Jr High and High School groups. The trip is from Friday after school until Sunday early evening. The cost of this trip is typically around \$120. It helps us immensely to know early who is going, so watch for signup dates and discounts.

Check out their website - www.springhillcamps.com

Bible Quiz Nationals – summer

This is a one week event where those involved in quizzing get to travel to compete with other quizzers from around the U.S. Cost varies with travel needs. See Dawn McCoon for details

Mission Trips - summer

Short Term (about a week) Mission Trips are an important part of our ministry, and we believe that students, leaders, and our church benefits from sending teams to different cultures to be God’s hands and feet as they love people and serve the world. In past mission trips, we’ve traveled to West Virginia, Mexico, and Pontiac. Typically trips are announced in the Fall. There is a full application and interview process that students must be a part of to go on these trips. There is a large time commitment before and during these trips, and students cannot join the trip once the application time is over. Anyone who applies should be serious about the commitment for these trips.

All Male Retreat/All Female Retreat - summer

We plan each year to do a retreat with guys to one place and gals to another. This is for those students who have finished 8th grade and higher. It is a time to reflect, relax, and get ready for the school year without the distraction of the opposite sex.

Permission Forms

These forms are available outside Chris' office, as well as on our website – www.clarkstonyouthgroup.com. It is our policy that every student that attends a youth event (Go Karts, Spring Hill, swim night, etc.), have a permission form on file at the church.

Behavior

We teach a safe environment for students here at the Cove. This means that students who come, can expect to be free from verbal, physical, and sexual harm.

Any offense to this policy, if deemed serious enough by the staff or a leader, is grounds for immediate removal from the group. We will contact a parent or guardian so that you are aware of the situation. If there are repeated violations to our standard of behavior, we may ask a parent to be in the group to help us watch their student.

Social Networking – Facebook, Myspace

Connecting with friends through the internet is becoming increasingly popular amongst teenagers. Our goal is to have our teens behave responsibly on these internet networking sites. The written word can still be as harmful as the spoken word, and we will strive to address the same issues in the same way.

We encourage parents to be very involved in what their teens are doing online. It is a very good idea to have teens and parents sit down at a computer so both are familiar with what is being done on the computer in the house, and even away from the house. Bottom line – we encourage students and parents to communicate about what is appropriate to do on a computer.

Dress Code

We expect students to dress in appropriate ways on any activity that we do. There are many things that may make clothing inappropriate, but these are some standards we expect to have followed.

- Writing or pictures on clothing should not be vulgar in content
- Undergarments should not be visible
- For guys, pants should be pulled up and not sagging
- Shorts must be fingertip in length

- For swimming events: Swimsuits must be a one-piece or have two pieces that connect (tankini) and guys cannot wear Speedos, but must have appropriate swimwear.

Teens and Driving

Teenagers are discouraged in driving to events. We provide transportation to each event we host. For this reason, it is always helpful if a student can sign up for an event. In the event that a teen needs to drive to an event, a note is required from a parent or guardian stating the teen's name, the date(s), and the event(s) that the teen is allowed to drive.

If a teen wants to ride with another teen, a similar note is necessary. It should state the riding teen's name, the driving teen's name, the date(s), and the event(s) that the teen is allowed to ride with a fellow teen.

Youth Accounts

Teens have an opportunity to earn money through fundraisers. Any teen may participate. This money is kept in an account managed by the church and our youth account coordinators. This money that is raised can only be used for church events.

See Dawn McCoon for further details

Contacting Chris

I am typically available during office hours on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Typically, Tuesdays are my day off. Please refrain from calling me for work related items on this day as I try to take a Sabbath rest with my family.

There are many ways that you can contact me:

Church phone: (248) 623-1224

Email: chris@clarkstonfmc.org or thehorvath@yahoo.com

Chris' cell phone number is available up on request

You can contact me anytime in an emergency. For non-emergencies, please be sensitive to calling after 9pm and before 9am as we have young kids.

Chris home phone: (248)623-6143

Also, our website: www.clarkstonyouthgroup.com has a lot of information on it, including our calendar, and permission forms.

Helping us contact you:

Please make sure Chris has your email address (this is the best way to get current information) as well as any other contact information that would be helpful.