

**SJYM  
Handbook  
Of  
Best Practices**

**Revised April 2014**

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Dear SJYM (St. John's Youth Ministry) Leader,

***We do background check our SJYM leaders.***

Beginning in August 2007, St. John's implemented a volunteer enlistment process for those wishing to volunteer with children and youth ministries at St. John's. This enlistment process involves the running of background checks. Anyone who has not successfully completed the volunteer enlistment process, in its entirety, is not permitted to volunteer at St. John's sponsored youth events.

***How was this decision made?***

Senate Bill 187, passed by the 123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio State General Assembly, became effective March 22, 2001. This legislation required all organizations using volunteers to notify prospective and current volunteers that they may, at any time, be subject to a criminal background check.

In accordance with the above law, the Ohio Community Service Council was mandated to develop a set of "best practices" for organizations to use when screening volunteers who work with children. **The document suggests that organizations that can financially afford it make every effort to utilize all of the recommended "best practices," including successful background checks.**

In addition, the St. John's insurance carrier informed St. John's that we must comply with guidelines and recommendations for developing a volunteer enlistment process in order to maintain our good standing with Church Mutual and to protect the church entity from litigation. Although not mandatory, **it is recommended by our insurance company that we comply with the "Best Practices" document and complete successful background checks on our volunteers** who work with children and youth.

As a result, the Youth Network, as well as the Church Council-at-large, voted to implement a volunteer approval process for those who volunteer with children and youth ministries in our congregation.

If you have any questions about background checks or any of the Best Practices in this handbook, please don't hesitate to talk to any of the Youth Staff at St. John's.

## **SJYM HANDBOOK OF BEST PRACTICES PURPOSE**

Throughout the history of the Hebrew People, their practice of worshiping God in holy places is recorded. Sometimes the holy place of worship was no more than a small tent or a pile of rocks on the plains. At other times, the place for worship was a beautiful ornate temple with many grand chambers. No matter what the place of worship looked like; the people treasured it as a holy place, a sanctuary where they were able to worship in safety and harmony. We as God's people need to do all that we can to maintain St. John's as a nurturing, affirming, sheltering place for our children and youth. A "Safe Sanctuary". St. John's must continue to be a place where people of all ages can congregate for worship, study, and service with the assurance that they are safe and secure in the community of faith.

It is the purpose of the membership and staff of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church to provide a safe and secure environment for children and youth entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those children, youth, and their families to grow in their relationship with God and with one another. A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written Best Practices handbook. The following Best Practices handbook is for the protection of all children, youth, employees, volunteers and the entire church family at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

### **SCOPE**

This Best Practices handbook shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of children and youth while attending activities sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Church.

## ***Youth Ministry Mission Statement***

- We are committed to welcome all children and youth to Jesus Christ,
  - To equip them with an active faith and,
  - To send them into the world to serve in Jesus' name.

### **YOUTH MINISTRY VISION STATEMENT**

**OUR VISION IS TO WRAP OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN A WEB OF FAITH SO LOVING AND CARING THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS WANT TO BE A PART OF A LOCAL CONGREGATION.**

### **YOUTH MINISTRY GOALS**

**EACH YOUTH HAS THE OPPORTUNITY ...**

- **TO BE SURROUNDED IN A WEB OF FAITH.**
- **TO HAVE A BIBLICAL SELF-ESTEEM.**
- **TO HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD.**
- **TO DEVELOP A MEANINGFUL PRAYER LIFE.**
- **TO BE INVOLVED IN MEANGFUL SERVICE PROJECTS.**
- **TO DEVELOP FAITH/LEADERSHIP SKILLS.**
- **TO HAVE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE.**

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Oversight Group**

- The Youth Network will act as an oversight group for all youth activities sponsored by St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.
  
- All decisions made by the Youth Network concerning the care of youth and children while in attendance at St. John's sponsored youth events will be reflected in this handbook.
  
- Emotional and physical safety is a priority at all church youth events. The Youth Network will have annual discussions concerning safety issues within the youth program and will take necessary action to rectify safety concerns.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**SJYM LEADERSHIP TEAM Enlistment Process**

**Those adults interested in joining the SJYM LEADERSHIP TEAM must go through the prescribed enlistment process as outlined below.**

1. Each interested adult must complete a SJYM LEADERSHIP TEAM Application Form.
2. Each Applicant must have his/her church membership status confirmed.
3. Each Applicant must have his/her "Length of Involvement" at St. John's confirmed.
4. Applicants must be a member of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church or have been in attendance for at least one year.
5. Member applicants must be involved with St. John's for a period of no less than six months prior to completing a SJYM LEADERSHIP TEAM Application Form.
6. Each interested adult must complete a Background Investigation Consent Form.
7. All Applications are required to submit to a background check before being considered for approval.
8. Background checks are site specific to St. John's and must be run through an approved background check agency.
9. All background check results must be reviewed and approved by a Youth Staff person.
10. All applicants will have a face-to-face interview with a Youth Staff person.
11. Each applicant's identity will be confirmed with the applicants Driver's License or similar identification.
12. New leaders are asked to read the SJYM Handbook of Best Practices and sign the agreement to follow all St. John's youth ministry best practices.
13. The Youth Staff will maintain a SJYM LEADERSHIP TEAM list.
14. A file will be created for each SJYM leader and kept under lock and key.
15. SJYM leaders are to attend a program specific training event before volunteer duties commence.
16. Review of SJYM leader performance will take place on an ongoing basis by a Youth Staff. Any problems or concerns should be brought to the attention of the Youth Staff for appropriate action.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 001: Expectations for SJYM leaders**

Each SJYM Leader is expected to....

1. Read and follow the information in the SJYM Handbook of Best Practices
2. Use the youth program Mission Statement as a basis for programming.
3. Be familiar with and not challenge the precepts set forth in the Apostles Creed.
4. Be growing in Christian character.
5. Be committed to affirming the youth and adults at St. John's.
6. Be committed to creating and providing both an emotionally and physically safe environment throughout the youth program.

**Guideline 002: SJYM Leader Conduct Standards**

1. Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of minors is prohibited.
2. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal or illicit drugs while volunteering will not be tolerated.
3. The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials while volunteering will not be tolerated.
4. Volunteers must treat all peoples of all races, religions, and cultures with respect and consideration.
5. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior with any youth is inappropriate.
6. Dating or "going out" with any youth is not an option.
7. Sexual gesture or overtures a youth makes to a SJYM Leader should be reported to the Youth Staff.
8. Driving alone with a youth should be avoided.
9. Discretion must be used in dealing with all youth, especially regarding physical contact. Innocent behavior can be misinterpreted. Physical touch must be limited to appropriate touch (non-demanding, gentle touch of shoulders, hands, arms, and head; no touching where a bathing suit would normally cover.) Sitting a child on a leg is appropriate only at pre-school/K age.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 003: Supervision**

1. At programmed events, youth are not to be intentionally left alone without adult supervision.
2. SJYM Leaders are to make sure the door to an occupied room is open whenever a volunteer finds him or herself alone with a youth. It is recommended that doors remain open during programming whenever possible. In the case of non-windowed rooms, doors should remain open at all times.
3. SJYM Leaders are to make every effort to avoid situations where a volunteer is alone with a minor.
4. SJYM Leaders must make every reasonable effort to wait outside of the bathroom (in the hallway) for a youth, unless they are accompanied by a third person.
5. All programs are to be held in central, highly visible locations.
6. A responsible supervisor shall randomly monitor all children's and youth activities.
7. When all youth have been picked up by their rides, the adult group leader may leave.
8. Youth are expected to stay with the youth group, at the site, throughout the entire scheduled activity, unless parents have given verbal or written permission to the Youth Staff noting permission to leave early.

**Recommended Teacher/Student ratios\***

- Birth – 3 years      1:4
- 4 yrs. – 5 yrs.      1:5
- 6 yrs. – 8 yrs.      1:6
- 9 yrs. – 14 yrs.      1:8
- 15 yrs. – 18 yrs.      1:10

\* Recommended Teachers/Student Ratios from Best Practices Document

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 004: Basic Safety and Behavioral Expectations at youth events**

*General behavioral expectations...*

1. Respect others. (i.e. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Be affirming.)
2. Respect property.
3. Pay attention to the person who is leading the group.
4. Stay with your group unless given special permission by the group leader to go elsewhere.
5. Hats and headgear are removed when in the sanctuary.
6. All youth events and activities are drug free, alcohol free, and tobacco free.

*Gym expectations....*

1. Stay off the stage.
2. Only adults and designated teen leaders are to go into the sports closet.
3. 'Freeze and listen' when you hear the whistle.
4. Use only indoor sporting equipment in the gym.

*Playground expectations....*

1. An adult leader must be with the children on the church playground at any scheduled youth group event.
2. Follow the playground guidelines listed on the sign.
3. Children must walk to the playground. Remind children of parking lot safety. Watch for traffic. Use the sidewalk stepping stones, next to the Family Life Center, whenever feasible.

*Dining Area expectations....*

1. All food and drinks will be consumed in the dining area.
2. Pick up and clean up after yourself.
3. Sit while eating or drinking.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 005: Confidentiality**

1. SJYM Leaders should not take on the role of counselor to any youth.
2. All cases of suspected child abuse must be reported to the Youth Staff.
3. SJYM Leaders are not to share publicly any private matters of St. John's youth or families.

**Guideline 006: Bad Weather/Cancellation**

1. When the local School District issues a school closing, all youth-group-related activities for that day and evening will be cancelled.
2. Cancellation or postponement of any youth activities is at the discretion of the group leader. Use the appropriate means to communicate cancellations or postponements.

**Guideline 007: Entertainment**

1. Movies, music, and all forms of entertainment need to be age-appropriate.
2. R-rated movies or explicit lyrics are not acceptable.
3. Youth and SJYM Leaders who want to bring in a movie, music selection, or other form of entertainment to share with the group must bring it in advance to be previewed by the group leader for appropriate content.

**Guideline 008: Health Form and Parental Medical and Liability Release Statement**

1. Emergency Medical Authorization & Parental Medical and Liability Release Statements will be completed and collected on an annual basis, or as needed, from youth participating in on-going youth activities.
2. St. John's will conform to and supply any other health-related forms that may be requested by a church-trip host such as a camp, retreat, or training site.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 009: Emergency**

1. It is recommended that a cell phone be available at all off-site youth activities.
2. All regularly scheduled youth events should discuss and practice emergency procedures for fire, tornado, storm, or other emergency events at least once per season.
3. Fire procedures are posted in each room and are to be followed.
4. Follow the emergency procedures in this Best Practices Handbook.

**Guideline 010: Driving Standards**

1. No one under the age of 21 is permitted to drive passengers to youth events that take place off the church property.
2. It is recommended that church van drivers be at least twenty-five years of age.
3. It is recommended that SJYM Leader drivers have at least \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident liability insurance. It is also recommended that Volunteer Youth Staff drivers have a \$1 million personal liability umbrella policy.

**Guideline 011: Caravan**

1. Each driver will receive specific written directions, and if needed, a map to the destination.
2. There is to be no competition or socializing between vehicles.
3. No one is to leave a vehicle without driver permission. 'Chinese Fire Drills' are strictly prohibited.
4. Agree on a distress signal before departing such as consistently blinking headlights. This signal should communicate to all vehicles that there is a problem that warrants pulling off the road.
5. All vehicles will stay together unless otherwise planned. Our insurance policy requires us to travel together and caravan together.
6. There should be at least one cell phone among the caravan.
7. When driving youth in your car or church vehicle, please **do not** use your cell phone. Whenever possible, pull over to the side of the road to a safe spot or hand your cell phone over to a passenger.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices**

**Guideline 012: Promotional Release**

A promotional release form, signed by a parent, is required whenever someone under the age of 18 is involved in youth program promotions. These promotions could include pictures, names, or voices involved with the church web site, facebook and other social media, videotapes, photographs, digital pictures, slides, or audio tapes.

**Guideline 013: Technology**

**FOR SJYM ADULT LEADERS:**

1. When driving youth in your car or church vehicle, please **do not** use your cell phone. Whenever possible, pull over to the side of the road to a safe spot or hand your cell phone over to a passenger.
2. Please refrain from using your cell phone at youth events. If you have to return a call or text, please excuse yourself from the room to do it.
3. Each retreat or camp may have their own specific technology guidelines. Please follow and model these guidelines.
4. Texting messages **to youth** should be limited to youth group reminders, event changes, small group encouragements, and other ministry-related texts. Other important conversations should happen face-to-face.
5. **Do not** use your cell phone camera, personal camera, or any other digital recorder in sleeping areas or bathroom areas.
6. Pictures of children and youth taken while at a St. John's church event **can not** be posted without signed written consent by parent. See individual's St. John's emergency form for approval or denial. You must get permission from a paid church staff member before you post any pictures.
7. Only youth staff may create and administer official pages for the St. John's Youth Ministries and church-related youth ministry programs.
8. **Before accepting** a youth's friend request on facebook, remember that youth will have access to your pages and facebook comments. Adults who accept friend requests from youth **should only** communicate on a youth's facebook wall and **not through** private messages. Adults are encouraged to communicate with youth through the closed groups set up by the youth staff.
9. Please post **only positive** comments about youth events and activities at church.
10. Talk to the youth staff about any further technological questions or concerns. **When in doubt, talk to a member of the church staff.**

## FOR SJYM TEEN LEADERS

1. Please check your e-mail **once a week** for any youth ministry communications from youth staff.
2. Do not use your cell phone when you're a leader at a youth event. If your parent texts you or calls you, please excuse yourself from the group, and go into the hallway to return your parent's text or call. Please return promptly to group. You will be missed!
3. Do not use your cell phone camera, personal camera, or any other digital recorder in sleeping areas or bathroom areas.
4. Follow and model the cell phone guidelines set up for a specific retreat or camp.
5. Do not bring i-pods, i-pads, ear buds, gaming devices, and other electronics to events where you are a leader (unless asked by the youth staff to bring them).
6. **Be mindful of whatever** you post on facebook. St. John's teen leaders are people of integrity, godly character, and positive influence.
7. **Be mindful** that your posts on facebook of **youth ministry related events** are a reflection of our Christian witness, the event, and St. John's. Post positive comments only.
8. Pictures of children and youth taken while at a St. John's church event **can not** be posted without signed written consent by parent. See individual's St. John's emergency form for approval or denial. You must get permission from a paid church staff member before you post any pictures.
9. Talk to the youth staff about any further technological questions or concerns.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

**First Aid Procedure**

1. Assess the situation. Always care for life threatening situations first. Do not put yourself or others in danger when approaching a victim to administer first aid.
2. Call 911\* and/or send for help.
3. Calm and comfort the person. Never leave an injured person alone.
4. Do not move an injured person unless he or she is in an immediate life-threatening situation. Avoid twisting or bending the victim.
5. Apply basic first aid to the best of your level of training.
6. Stay with injured person until emergency personnel have arrived.
7. Report any and all injuries to the Youth Staff within 24 hours.

***\*WHEN YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD CALL 911***

When the person

- Is or becomes unconscious.
- Has trouble breathing.
- Has chest pain or pressure.
- Is bleeding severely.
- Has pain or pressure in the abdomen that does not go away.
- Is vomiting or passing blood.
- Has seizures, a severe headache, or slurred speech.
- Appears to have been poisoned.
- Has injuries to the head, neck, or back.

**Off-Campus Events/Emergencies**

SJYM leaders taking children/youth off-campus for church sponsored events must have emergency contact information in their possession. Emergency information and Medical release forms should be taken on all church sponsored trips out of Franklin County, Ohio

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

Allergy Alert

Some children have extreme allergic reactions that are potentially life threatening. Please be sure to ask the child and, if possible, the parent to see if they have any known allergies.

Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction—Call 911 immediately

- Any change in breathing patterns
- Sudden redness on face, neck, or hands
- Sudden listlessness or paleness
- Sudden onset of itching, coughing, sneezing; or an increase in coughing
- Swelling or puffiness anywhere on the child's body

Emergency Procedures

**Tornado:** Calmly lead youth to the lower basement of the church (by the choir room). Have your class sit on the floor and wait for further instructions. There is a battery-operated radio, in the youth office, in the cabinet above the printer. Follow the emergency instructions on the radio.

**Fire:** Calmly and immediately take your class out of the nearest safe exit. Meet at the Shelter House. Parents need to meet their children at the Shelter House.

**“Boo Boos”:** Assess the situation to make sure it's not a serious accident. Apply basic first aid. Report the injury to the Youth Staff. Frozen sponges can be found in each refrigerator of the church building. First aid kits are found in the gym and in the kitchenette.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

**Discipline Procedure**

1. **Step one:** Give a warning. Tell the youth that this is a warning and what it is that they are doing that's disruptive or hurtful and what will happen if it continues. Make sure the youth understand the consequences of his or her behavior.
  
2. **Step two:** Direct the youth to a time out spot away from the group. Give him or her a few minutes to calm down and refocus. Speak to the youth alone. Use the 30/30 method. Take 30 seconds and have the youth tell you what he or she did wrong and to think of something better that he or she could have done. Then take 30 seconds to affirm the youth. Make this a positive learning experience. Return with the youth to the group.
  
3. **Step three:** If it continues, let the youth know that you will be talking to the Youth Staff and that their parents will receive a phone call from the Youth Staff.
  
4. **Step four:** Talk to Youth Staff within 24 hours.

**Use of Facility**

1. Schedule facility use through the Youth Staff or Church Secretary.
2. Clean up after any event, leaving the facility like you found it (or better).
3. Only with permission should individuals use the technical equipment. (i.e. sound system, video recorder, church computers, DLP projector, stage lights) as each requires specific knowledge to operate.
4. Report all damages and/or accidents to the Youth Staff within 24 hours.
5. The last person to leave the building should lock exterior doors and turn off lights in the building.
6. No red dye drinks in the Family Life Center.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

**Usage of Church Vehicle**

1. The church van should be scheduled through the church office.
2. Keys should be obtained from the church office.
3. The driver should follow all procedures as described in the 'Church Van Manual' (located in van).
4. Any problems during the trip should be documented on the Church Van Incident Report and given to a Youth Staff member.

**Handling a Vehicle Breakdown Procedure**

1. Do your best to park the vehicle in the safest spot you can find away from the flow of traffic.
2. Make a note of your location (mile marker) in case you need to call for help.
3. Look for the problem and determine how serious it is.
4. Adults should consider leaving the vehicle to discuss what kind of help you need and think through where you could obtain it. Remain calm and confident.
5. Think through what help aids you possess. (i.e. Cell phones, credit cards, road assistance or towing service memberships)
6. Return to the vehicle and talk with the students. Describe the situation openly and honestly. Pray together for protection and help. Ask for their best cooperation and support.
7. If students need to leave the vehicle, they should move together to a place that is designated by an adult.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

Publicity Procedure

**Written Articles:**

Keep your articles concise and to the point. Be sure to run articles in advance, allowing maximum opportunity to be seen and read.

The deadline for the Eagle is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. The deadline for the bulletin is Wednesdays at noon. Eagle and bulletin articles may be given to the Church Secretary. Any youth news articles that SJYM leaders would like the Youth Staff to publish should be turned into the Youth Staff by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month for the Eagle and by Monday for the bulletin. NOTE: Church Secretary and Youth Staff may need to adapt publicity to make it fit into the space allotted.

**Bulletin Boards:**

There are youth boards outside of the Youth Office and in the basement of the church. Bulletin boards in classrooms require approval of the teacher of the class before being used. Bulletin boards in the north entrance require approval of Church Secretary before being used. Taping items to windows, doors, or walls is greatly discouraged by the Property Management Team. When posting pictures of youth do not display last names.

**Website:**

Submit articles/digital pictures/videos to Youth Staff. Allow plenty of time for input of information.

Pictures and videos posted on the web need to have individual permission from each person in the photos/video and be approved by the Youth Staff.

**TV unit in link and north entrance:**

Turn articles/digital pictures into the Church Secretary. Allow plenty of time for input of information.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

**Finance Procedure**

1. Think through how much you might spend in advance of an event. Request monies through the Youth Staff. Get approval before spending.
2. Upon approval, purchase items. Keep all receipts. Turn in your receipts to the Youth Staff for reimbursement.

*For more detailed account of finance procedures, budget, and monies available see Paid Youth Staff.*

**NOTE ON FUND RAISING:**

All new fund raising events need to be approved by the Youth Network.

The Finance Team asks for completed paperwork on all fund raising activities to be turned into the Finance Team and the Church Financial Secretary.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

Sleepover/Overnighter Guidelines

- The “Open Door” and the “Third Person” guidelines should be followed. The goal is to have no less than two adult male and two adult females spending the night.
- Signed medical emergency authorization forms need to be secured along with updated emergency numbers for the evening.
- As long as any youth are awake, one adult should also be awake.
- Separate sleeping quarters should be designated for males and females and should be properly supervised with same-gender adults.
- Adults should use good judgment regarding PG or PG13 movies. No R-rated movies shall be permitted. All movies should be age-appropriate.
- There are to be no cameras in sleeping areas. Cell phones with cameras need to be turned off when in sleeping areas.

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

**Definitions of Abuse:**

**Physical Abuse**—Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to another. Examples are burning, shaking, kicking, choking and fracturing bones.

**Emotional Abuse**—Abuse in which a person engages in unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the victim of worthlessness.

**Neglect Abuse**—Abuse in which a person endangers another's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical or education.

**Sexual Abuse**—Abuse in which sexual contact between a minor/elderly and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The minor/elderly is not capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts.

**Harassment**—Consists of unwelcome or unsolicited speech or physical contact based upon race, sex, national origin, age, color, or disability that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work, worship, or study or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work, worship or study environment.

**Sexual Harassment**—ranges from visual signals, gestures or messages to verbal comments and/or physical contact. Sexual harassment may either be subtle or blatant demands for sexual favors that create a hostile work, worship or study environment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, menacing behavior, sexual extortion, solicitation of sexual favors, unwanted interactions of a sexual nature, the display in the church fellowship of demeaning, insulting, intimidating or sexually suggestive verbal, written recorded or electronically transmitted messages.

## **St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

### **Youth Ministry Best Practices Procedures**

#### **Child Abuse:**

The law of the State of Ohio may require that pastors and counselors report any incident of suspected abuse or neglect. Failure to do so can result in criminal charges. Employees of St. John's Lutheran Church may report suspected abuse directly to a pastor, but must follow Ohio law with respect to reporting requirements. Volunteers who suspect child abuse should determine the next step to be taken. If it is determined that a report should be made to Franklin County Children's Services, it may be encouraged that a volunteer who initially suspected abuse make a report to ensure accuracy of fact. However, it is recommended that a pastor or paid staff person report suspected abuse unless an exception is made under seal of the confessional.

Suspected abuse or neglect shall be reported to Children's Services. Individuals making reports of suspected abuse, or neglect or dependency of a child should provide as much information as possible, including:

- Name and address of the child victim
- Age of the child
- Names and addresses of the child's parents or caregivers
- Description of the alleged abuse or neglect
- Name and address of alleged perpetrator(s), if known

Reports made to Children's Services are confidential, and referral source names or locations are not shared. Reports can be made anonymously. Volunteers are encouraged to share pertinent information with a pastor and/or to a paid staff member.

Should a staff member or SJYM adult leader be accused of abuse or neglect, the following actions should be taken:

1. The staff member/SJYM adult leader's involvement will be suspended until the alleged incident is fully investigated by the appropriate personnel.
2. Continued involvement by the individual in the ministry/activity shall be subject to approval by the pastors or his/her designee.

**SJYM LEADER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as a SJYM adult leader at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, have had the Youth Ministry Handbook of Best Practices made available to me. I am aware of the contents of the Youth Ministry Handbook of Best Practices and will do my best to uphold its guidelines and procedures.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION CONSENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (applicant complete name), hereby authorize St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, criminal, or police records, including those maintained by both public and private organization and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information, which may be material to my qualifications as a volunteer or for employment now, and if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteering or employment with St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

I release St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

The following is my true and complete legal name.

---

Full name (printed)

---

Maiden name or other names used

---

Signature

Date



## WORKER'S STATEMENT

The information contained in my SJYM LEADER Application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I authorize any references to give you any information, including opinions, which they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with minors.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to work within the best practices of the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Youth Ministry Handbook of Best Practices and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Witness Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses' Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must be over 18)



# St. John's Youth Ministries

## Emergency, Liability, and Promotional Release Form

*This form needs to be completed annually. Make a copy for your records. Return to the youth staff.  
You are responsible for contacting us and updating the form after changes occur.*

### INFORMATION:

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name student prefers being called \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) or Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Facts concerning student's medical history, including ALLERGIES, MEDICATIONS BEING TAKEN, and any PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS/LIMITATIONS to which a physician should be alerted:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS (who should be contacted in an emergency):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**LIST ANY SITUATIONS (personal, family, health, diet) that we should be aware of concerning your child:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF HEALTH INSURANCE CO.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **POLICY NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Please copy your health insurance card and attach copy to this form.)**

**FIRST AID MEDICATIONS:** The following is available in the St. John's first aid kits to treat minor afflictions. The dosage is determined by size/age of child and the specific directions listed on the medication. Please indicate whether or not these medications may be given to your child/youth. You will be contacted if illness develops or emergency treatment is required.

YES	NO		YES	NO	
_____	_____	Cortisone Cream (for itching, bug bites)	_____	_____	Ibuprofen tablets
_____	_____	Neosporin	_____	_____	Children's Liquid Ibuprofen
_____	_____	Hydrogen Peroxide	_____	_____	Tums
_____	_____	Benadryl	_____	_____	Tums KIDS

**LIABILITY RELEASE:** I understand all reasonable safety precautions will be taken at all times by St. John's Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Church (Grove City, Ohio) and its agents during events and activities. I understand the possibility of unforeseen hazards and know the inherent possibility of risk. I agree to not hold St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Grove City, Ohio), its leaders, employees, and volunteer staff liable for damages, losses, diseases, or injuries incurred by the student of this form.

Signature of Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please continue and complete Emergency Authorization and Promotional Release on back or next page.**

# EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION

In the event reasonable attempts to contact the legal guardians from the information given have been unsuccessful, I hereby give my consent to take my child/youth to a licensed physician or dentist or hospital and hereby give my consent and authorizations of any treatment deemed necessary by a licensed physician or dentist, including but not in limitation to emergency surgery or medical treatment, and assume the responsibility of all medical bills, if any.

Preferred Doctor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred Dentist's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**(Do not complete if you signed above)**

I do not give my consent for emergency medical treatment of my child/youth. In the event of illness or injury requiring emergency treatment, I wish the church authorities to take not action or to \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PROMOTIONAL RELEASE

I understand my child or youth may be photographed or recorded on video during the course of events held by St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Grove City, Ohio). I consent for my child or youth's image to be used in either print, electronic, or video form for the promotion of the children's and youth ministry of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Grove City, Ohio). My consent includes but is not limited to the church's website\*. I release St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Grove City, Ohio) from any liability connected with the use of my child or youth's picture or voice recording.

Signature of Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*We do not put personal information or names of children or youth on the church website. If you have questions or concerns about the promotional release please talk to us.

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Reason for report \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident \_\_\_\_\_ Program/Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and Age(s) of Minor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Quote the child's first words verbatim: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what happened: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What action did you take? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Has the incident been resolved?  yes  no Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were there any witnesses?  yes  no Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of witness (if possible) \_\_\_\_\_

Report submitted to: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person completing report: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***VAN/TRAILER INCIDENT REPORT***

**Please fill out if you have any vehicle problems, damages, etc. to the van/trailer while you are using the van/trailer. Give this report to the Youth Staff ASAP so it can be passed on to the appropriate people. Thanks for taking the time to fill this out!**

TODAY'S DATE:

DATE OF INCIDENT:

NAME OF GROUP USING THE VAN:

WERE YOU USING THE TRAILER?

WHAT ARE YOU REPORTING?

WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

WHAT ACTION DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE (IF ANY?)

LIST DAMAGES (IF ANY):

LIST COSTS (IF ANY):

DRIVER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_