

Mission Statement and Rules:

We strive to create an environment for adolescents to experience the fullness of human life.

The bedrock of youth ministry at Sherman street is the notion presented by St. Irenaus: "The Glory of God is the human being fully alive." At Sherman Street we will work to empower all students to experience being fully alive.

We will focus on students participating in Freedom, Identity building, and Togetherness.

Freedom in our society is often defined as "the lack of limits." That is not how we will define it. Instead, Freedom is "the fulfillment of potential." As image bearers of God we have been created with unbelievable potential (eternal life, sinless existence, fruit of the Spirit...) and we believe that access to that Freedom is present here and now (maybe not completely, but in abundance).

Identity. The main developmental question of adolescence is "Who am I?" Since the answer, for all people, to this question is "I am an image bearer of God," we will provide space for this question to be pursued honestly. Students will be given the freedom to seek who they are in our environment. We believe that when we give students respect, honor and dignity they may wonder without fear of being judged or manipulated into moral behavior modification. Being fully alive exists by being authentically oneself, because that is who God created us to be. We will provide space for students to discover and test their authentic self.

Togetherness. Since we are created in the image of the Triune God, we are created social. We are made to be in relationship with others. Since this is a reality of the human experience, we strive to create a space where authentic, respectful and dignified social encounter can thrive.

RULES: We only have two rules at Sherman Street Youth Ministry (this doesn't include our new COVID related rules).

1. Respect everyone. Both those present and not present.
2. No violence. Physical or emotional.

Because this youth ministry strives for Freedom, Identity, and Togetherness, these rules will be held strong in our groups. I think of it as a field to play in with a boundary surrounding it. The boundaries in this case are the two rules, and as long as students are staying within the boundaries, they are free to do as they like. When students inevitably test the boundaries, they will be pointed back to the large play space in the middle and asked to return to it. If students are unable to play within the boundaries (respect and nonviolence) they will be asked to leave that event. Students will always be invited back provided they can stay within the boundaries. These boundaries are not to keep people out but are in place to allow the Good to THRIVE! Being fully alive includes respect and nonviolence so we will be diligent to provide opportunity for Full Life.

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