

Adult Expectations

Synod Youth Workshop

We, the staff of the Synod Youth Workshop, value our adult sponsors who give their time and energy to assist and provide a space for our youth to meet God. **The minimum age for an adult sponsor is 23.** The following is a list of expectations for adult sponsors attending Synod Youth Workshop. On Tuesday night you will have an opportunity to talk with your adult small group leader about your role within the small group and your expectations. Please read this list as the basis for your participation as adult sponsors. In addition to these expectations, there are specific ways in which you can engage and lead within your group, along with your small group leader.

I. MAIN ROLES FOR ADULT SPONSORS DURING SYW:

- Support SYW staff and small group leaders
- Interact with the youth and adults in your small group;
- Provide adult leadership, transportation, security, and a responsible presence.
- Make sure all youth participants are in their assigned dorms at "dorm time" and in their assigned rooms at "room time." You will be responsible for making sure all of the youth (of your same gender) in your small group are accounted for at 'lights out' and you will report to a SYW staff hall monitor.
- Check in with your home group to make sure everyone is having a good time and to take care of any needs or concerns.

II. CHILD/ YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY:

- Each adult sponsor will be required to sign that they have read, understand and will abide by this policy and the expectations of the Synod of the Sun. This document can be found on page 10 of the policy. The signed copy will need to be turned in at the Adult Meeting on Monday night.
- Each adult sponsor will be required to complete Appendix G, "Volunteer Driver" document located on page 24 of this policy. The signed copy will need to be turned in at the Adult Meeting on Monday night

III. FULL PARTICIPATION:

- Adults (and youth) are expected to attend and participate in ALL Synod Youth Workshop events, as one is physically able. When adults sit on the sideline, uninvolved, youth get the signal that this behavior is okay. Please participate FULLY in this event, as you are able!

IV. STAY ON CAMPUS:

- Adults covenant with the SYW staff and youth to stay on campus, unless the entire Small group and/or conference is on a field trip or in case of an emergency. Otherwise, at no time are youth or adults permitted to leave the University of Tulsa campus. The only exception would be in the event of an emergency and then the adult sponsor should notify their small group leader and the SYW Director or SYW Coordinator immediately.

V. SUPPORT YOUR SMALL GROUP LEADER:

- Throughout the week, check in and coordinate with your small group leader. They may have things you can do to help.
- Also, resist the urge to take over. Let the small group leader guide the meetings. Your small group leader has prepared in every way for the week and will work to turn the leadership of the group over to the youth. Be flexible and open - the small group leader may have a direction in mind that you do not know about. Ask questions of the small group leader in between meetings.

VI. SUPPORT YOUR SYW STAFF:

- A great deal of time and energy has gone into planning this youth event. Be supportive of the SYW leadership and understand that not everything will come off as planned or even as you may think it should. Be flexible and supportive. Talk to your leader after group time.
- Communicate any problems, needs or concerns regarding your small group or home church group to your small group leader and/or the SYW Director or SYW Coordinator. There will be a registered nurse on site to assist with any medical needs or emergencies.

VII. YOU ARE THE ADULT:

- We encourage you, as an adult sponsor, to have fun, but at the same time to remember that you are an adult. Adults are expected to lead by example and reorient others who are not following the SYW covenant.
- All adults are responsible to help with the behavior of ALL youth at SYW. If you see something that should not be happening, please step in.

VIII. LISTEN FIRST, THEN SHARE:

- Especially as adults, it is imperative that we listen first and speak last. We want the small group discussion to be a time where youth feel comfortable sharing, asking questions, exploring, and wrestling with their faith and important issues, even with adults present. If an adult is first to speak and share their thoughts, this can quickly deter youth from speaking up.
- At this age youth are not necessarily looking for answers, they are looking for a safe place to explore what they believe and ask questions. Respond to their questions with more questions, instead of "answers" and "advice." Ask, "Will you say more about that?" Let the group as a whole wrestle with the topic at hand and you will be amazed at where the Holy Spirit will lead the group.
- At the appropriate time, be open to sharing both the triumphs and struggles of your own faith journey. When you do share, please remember that this Workshop is primarily for the youth and it is not therapy. The small group leader and the youth are here to listen to one another in the presence of God.

IX. SAVE YOUR CRITICISM FOR THE EVALUATION FORM:

- Not everything will be done the way you would have done it or think it should be done. Unless you are specifically asked by the SYW staff, your responsibility is not to "fix" what is "wrong" with the conference or small group. Please save your suggestions for the Evaluation Form.
- At all times, exude a positive and upbeat demeanor. Negativity is infectious - it spreads fast and kills a good time. If you have a major concern, please share it with your small group leader or the SYW staff away from the presence of youth and definitely *not* during your group time!

X. LOVE THEM ALL:

- If you are a parent of a youth attendee, your challenge is to treat your child as if they were someone else's kid. Be free NOT to be a parent this week. Give them the same respect and courtesy you give to every other youth at the conference. We recommend instead of seeking out your child, let them seek you out. It's amazing how much you can learn about your child from a distance.
- Everyone (youth and adults) is a child of God, no matter how obnoxious, disruptive, silly, timid, or hyper they may be. And God loves them—so can we. So, enjoy the week, treating everyone as we would treat the Christ. Spread the SYW respect, love, and hospitality.