

## ***MPC Youth Ministry Philosophy***

### Key Elements

- Teaching – Melonie Park is deeply committed to interacting with God’s Word in a way that changes individual lives. To this end, the teaching of God’s Word is central to all we do. Quality, challenging, age-appropriate teaching should be seen at many levels, from Sunday morning youth time to small groups to trips and special events. It is not that we need to teach at every function but that we want to take advantage of the opportunities we have to see the students grow in their understanding and commitment to follow God’s Word.
- Mentoring/Discipleship – The influence of a mature believer on a growing believer is the most critical part of our youth ministry. We desire this to happen in one-to-one relationships and in small groups. Ideally, each small group will have a younger adult and an older adult that are seeking to bring a godly influence to the life of the student. (We recognize this will not always be possible.) The younger adult often has more available time and understanding and is more current on today’s life issues. He or she sets an example for the students to follow. The older adult brings experience, perspective and a greater depth in God’s Word, allowing those things to influence the student. As each one spends personal time with the student, his or her personal struggles and concerns can be revealed and discussed in a safe, mature environment.
- Community – The kids are involved in each other’s lives. This primarily takes place through small groups, but also the whole group is shepherded in a way that seeks to enable relationships outside of the small groups. There is a sense that the MPC Youth Group is their place and the people they want to be hanging out with. The involvement in each other’s life is not a superficial thing but is a close, open relationship where hardships and struggles are shared. The students can count on each other to be there when hard things in life occur.
- Integrated – Rather than being a ministry that is separate from the parents and the church itself, the youth ministry is integrated with both. Parents are encouraged to be involved, both in planning and in practical ways. Many small groups are led by parents who have students in other groups. The overall direction is set by a team of parents, volunteers, and church staff. The youth ministry is not isolated to the youth area but a clearly visible part of the greater church ministry, bringing its own strengths and influence to the greater body. The lines of what parents do, what church staff does, and what volunteers do are not clearly delineated but are based more on ability than roles. All work together for the good of the students.
- Fun – the underlying element for all these pieces is fun: quality, memory-making, belly-laughing, rolling-on-the-floor fun. We will have activities that may push the envelope some but in ways that cause fun memories to be made. We want the kids to enjoy the group, enjoy each other, and enjoy life. We’d like to see a fun-enough group that they want to bring friends, and those friends want to come back.
- Purposed – If the underlying element is fun, the overarching idea is purpose. The things we do are not an end in themselves. All of our activities will be connected to the purposes of helping the youth to grow and to seeing the Good News of Jesus taken to those who do not know it. We want to see people moving toward knowing Jesus as their Savior and seeing that Lordship

expand into all areas of their lives. This may be the true measure of our effectiveness--seeing students "know Jesus and make Him known."

- Prayer – All the elements listed above will have limited impact unless they are deeply connected to prayer. An expressed reliance on God in all we do not only honors God but opens the doors for Him to work in even greater ways, shaping our hearts and the hearts of those being ministered to.

### Role of the Youth Pastor

The Youth Pastor is the most visible leader of youth ministry. He is the point person, the main teacher, the visible leader to kids, parents, and other leaders. This does not mean that he is the main discipler for all kids. Using the analogy of a college football coach – the head coach leads and motivates the other coaches as much as he does the players. In reality, specialty coaches have much more personal connection with individual players. In the same way, the Youth Pastor is THE leader, but many students may have a more personal relationship with their small group leader and may go there first with their life issues. Similar to the head coach, the Youth Pastor's primary responsibility is the effectiveness of the overall ministry, but based on his gifts, abilities and time, he may also play a role in specific areas, such as leading a small group and discipling individual students.