



# **Fellowship In Senior High**

## **Parent Handbook**

State College Presbyterian Church

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FISH is an outreach ministry of the  
Education Ministry Unit of the  
State College Presbyterian Church

## What is FISH?

FISH stands for "Fellowship In Senior High." It is an outreach ministry of the State College Presbyterian Church to area high school youth. In FISH, the whole person is ministered to through a variety of activities, discussions, retreats and service/mission projects.

FISH is designed to enable youth, with compassionate leadership, to develop strong moral and spiritual values. Leaders and youth together confront and discuss pertinent issues like drug abuse, sexual activity, violence at home and school, and relationships with peers and parents.

FISH is adults and youth in partnership. Its goal is to create a sharing and caring community open to any high school youth wishing to participate. Everyone involved in FISH is treated as a child of God. Without imposing religion, FISH leaders are called upon to share their experience of Christ's unconditional love.

## The FISH Format

FISH is made up of youth *and* leaders. Each week all gather at 6:00 pm on Wednesday nights at the Church for a common meal. Following dinner there is a time for large group singing, fellowship and announcements. Typically, the large group then breaks into smaller groups for discussion of the evening's topic. These groups consist of 2-3 leaders with 8-10 youth each. This structure gives FISH a small group feel in the midst of a large group program. Sometimes rather than small group discussions, the program may be a large group outing or a guest speaker. The evening concludes following a large group closing circle beginning at 8:30 pm - a time of prayer and reflection.

Besides the weekly meetings there are retreats, fundraisers, service projects, and worship services. These activities help maintain a large group identity and give the youth an opportunity to interact with more of their friends and other leaders.

## F.I.S.H. IS A CIRCLE

**A circle of friends**, who stand together as an intentional community, committed to supporting and caring for one another. Joined by hands and hearts we recognize that collectively we are more than we are alone. The circle offers us a safe place to discover who we are and to be that together. It's a place where we are invited to come alive!

**A circle in motion** rolling back, remembering those who came before, and rolling ahead, eager to support those yet to stand within it. Our tradition contains sacred rituals, rhythms and repetitions, songs, prayers and celebrations.

**A circle that grows**, always maintaining room for one more. In the circle our differences are celebrated and our similarities affirmed. We remain open to growing in quality and quantity. We remain willing to take risks together, to try something new.

**A circle that expands**, reaching beyond to spread life and love to the world around. As members of the circle we seek to serve even as we are served ourselves. We practice compassion as our circle stretches to enfold others.

**A circle with a center** recognizing that wherever two or more of us stand together, the presence of God is there. It is a presence that takes on different names for different people, but in the circle we meet face to face and see the divine good shining in each other. From this center we learn love and forgiveness. From this center we are invited to shine on the world.



## **FISH Leader Covenant**

God calls us together, within this Church community, to serve youth and one another in the circle of FISH. Our task is to help create an environment of love and acceptance that nurtures spiritual growth among the youth and ourselves. Therefore, we will extend ourselves as mentors, models, teachers, and organizers.

*As FISH Leaders we commit to prayerfully deepening our presence with God so that we might:*

- *be present to the youth entrusted to our care;*
- *point to God's presence among and around us;*
- *help others explore the big questions of their lives and faith;*
- *create circumstances and an environment where we all feel comfortable and challenged;*
- *see and hear others with compassion;*
- *do little kindnesses;*
- *and embrace and accept our imperfections.*

## FISH Leadership

Leadership for FISH is provided by a team of adults who work together to create programs, develop projects, plan retreats, organize fundraisers, and decide on rules of conduct and policy. The most important work of the leaders is direct involvement with the youth to provide nurture and support. The leadership team is made up of adults ranging in age from 20 to 50 something.

**Michael Ozaki** serves as Associate Pastor for Youth and Mission. He is responsible for the overall program direction, leadership training and the main contact person for parents and youth in FISH. Mike can

be reached at [michaelscpc@gmail.com](mailto:michaelscpc@gmail.com), 814-238-2422 at the church, or cell 951-532-5105.

**Martha Trout**, Program Associate, is responsible for administration, registration, general organization, finances, and the management of information. She can be reached at [marthascpc@gmail.com](mailto:marthascpc@gmail.com), or at the church 814-238-2422.

**Amy and Mike Gordon** serve as Kitchen Coordinators for the FISH and LOGOS programs. They coordinate and organize the volunteer cooking crews, menus and food purchases. If you have a special concern about your youth's diet or food allergies, you may contact them directly at 814-404-8346 or [scamygordon@aol.com](mailto:scamygordon@aol.com).

**FISH is a program of the Education Ministry Unit of  
State College Presbyterian Church relying on that committee  
for guidance and support.**

## Program Content

The FISH program is based on a holistic approach to building faithful relationships. FISH tries to provide a variety of settings for youth - in partnership with the leaders - to have opportunities to find new relationships and strengthen old ones. This is facilitated by the integration of both large and small group activities each week. **The Dinner Hour is not an optional part of the program!!!** The time spent eating together is an important aspect of the overall fellowship. Unlike assigned small groups, dinner seating is open so that youth and leaders can choose to become better acquainted with new friends or catch up with old ones.

The weekly programs at FISH are thematic giving small groups a chance to discuss specific topics throughout the year. Small group time comprises the majority of a typical FISH evening. The program/discussion allows for open dialogue on a variety of issues. Topics such as sexuality, family relationships, global concerns, and dating have been explored through the eyes of faith. The leaders are equipped to facilitate discussion as they share their faith in Christ with the youth.

## Retreats

There are three retreats in the FISH program year. The focus for the retreats is on the expression of faith, through fellowship and quiet contemplation. Retreats have been known to have a talent night, wild games and the opportunity to grow in relationship with each other and God. They are a real get-away-from-it-all time.

Fall and winter retreats are generally held at Krislund Camp and Conference Center in Madisonburg, PA. The fall retreat focuses on building a community. The Friday evening of the retreat is set aside as a "Senior Retreat." It is a time for reflecting on the past, and dealing with the uncertainty of the future. The winter retreat is spent looking at deeper issues of faith and life. It is also a time for refocusing for the second half of the year.

The summer retreat is a week long experience of community at Assateague Island in Maryland. It is a week of primitive camping set in a beautiful, yet often bug infested, national seashore. The summer retreat provides time to focus on faith and to find expression for that faith in the life of the community.

There is a retreat fee (see pg. 7). **Scholarships are available.**

## Mission Opportunities

FISH usually offers a Mission Trip opportunity to coincide with Spring Break vacation. In the past we have gone to Farmington, Maine, Wheeling, West Virginia, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, PA to work on local building and renovation projects as well as work with an after school youth program and soup kitchen. The past several years the youth have gone to Pittsburgh, Broad Street Youth Initiative in Philadelphia and Highland Park, NJ. Other opportunities are provided throughout the year for local mission and service projects. Examples include working with Habitat for Humanity and the Women's Resource Center. Youth and leaders decide together what projects to pursue.

## FISH Worship Service

The first Sunday in June is reserved for the annual FISH worship service. The youth of FISH, under the direction of the Leadership Team, plan and provide leadership for the Sunday morning worship services at the State College Presbyterian Church. This service is recognized for its creative liturgies, original music, and moving testimonies. It is an opportunity for the youth to learn about worship, share their faith and experiences with the congregation, and publicly express their thanks to God for FISH.

## Fundraisers

Fundraisers are necessary to supplement the cost of the program and help make mission projects and retreats affordable. There will be fundraiser activities throughout the year. In recent years the youth have baked cookies and made Valentines as a way of raising funds to support the program.

## “Community Night” Event

One Wednesday a year we host a special Wednesday of FISH when EVERYONE is invited to join in the FISH experience. Dinner, singing, small groups, closing circle — it is the perfect opportunity to invite reluctant friends, curious neighbors and even your relatives to see what FISH is all about.

### Fees/Tuition

FISH is a total program of nurture and relationship building from dinner through closing circle. No one part of the program can be isolated and removed. A "tuition" has been established to help cover the cost of the weekly program for one youth for a full year. There are discounts if a family has more than one youth in FISH or other children in LOGOS. Full payment in September is preferable for budget and bookkeeping purposes, but other options are available.

To register a youth, parents must complete a registration form, insurance form, and pay the tuition.

	1 Payment	2 Payments	4 Payments
1 FISH Youth	\$200.00	\$100.00	\$50.00
1 FISH Youth & LOGOS child discount	183.00	\$91.50	\$45.75
2 FISH Youth	\$285.00	\$142.50	\$71.25
3+ FISH Youth	\$342.00	\$171.00	\$85.50

(Tuition is subject to change as needed)

Full or partial scholarships are available for those with a financial need. Please contact:

**Michael Ozaki (michaelscpc@gmail.com, 951-532-5103 or 814-238-2422)**  
**Martha Trout (marthascpc@gmail.com or 238-2422)**

## Other Tuition-Bearing Activities

FISH goes on 3 retreats and (usually) 1 mission trip each year. All youth are encouraged to participate in all of them. Separate tuition is collected for each trip to cover meals, travel, and housing. Trip costs are also aided by church support and fundraisers. (Activities Fees are subject to change as needed)

Activities Fees:

What	When	Tuition
Fall Retreat	September	\$75*
Winter Retreat	January	\$75*
Spring Break Mission Trip	March	\$300*
Assateague Retreat	June	\$300*

(\*Activities Fees are subject to change as needed)

No one will be excluded from the FISH program because of financial need. There are full or partial scholarships available. If you have a need, please contact:

**Michael Ozaki, Associate Pastor for Youth and Mission**  
([michaelscpc@gmail.com](mailto:michaelscpc@gmail.com), 814-238-2422 or 951-532-5105)  
**Martha Trout, Program Associate** ([marthascpc@gmail.com](mailto:marthascpc@gmail.com)  
or 814-238-2422)

**All scholarships will be given in the strictest confidence.**

# Behavioral Guidelines

The following behavioral guidelines are established to maintain the integrity of the FISH program and ensure the safety and well-being of all who participate. These guidelines apply to all FISH activities.

**Responsible Behavior** at FISH is characterized by the following:

- Abiding by the FISH Covenant
- Maintaining regular attendance
- Arriving on time to FISH activities
- Participating in the FISH activities (weekly meetings, retreats, fundraisers, etc.)
- Honoring small group confidentiality
- Respecting one's self, others, and the surroundings

**Irresponsible Behavior** includes, but is *not* limited to, the following:

- name calling
- disrupting group singing and/or announcements
- disrupting small group discussions
- using abusive language
- leaving the building during program without permission
- not assisting in clean-up after meals
- arriving late without permission
- leaving early without permission
- misusing church property
- smoking or any other tobacco use within sight of church property

## Consequences of Irresponsible Behavior

Irresponsible behavior will be addressed through a stair-step course of action resulting in one or more of the following consequences (listed from least to most severe):

- One-on-one discussion with a FISH leader
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) notified of the situation and individual **sent home** from FISH event. (FISH member may return to next function)
- Immediate **suspension** from all FISH activities until meeting is conducted between the individual, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the Associate Pastor, and at least one other FISH leader. This meeting will address the behavior and appropriate follow-up
- **FISH membership discontinued**

## **Non-Negotiable Behavior**

Non-negotiable behavior is behavior deemed unacceptable under any circumstance and will result in the immediate notification of parent(s)/guardian(s) and the individual being sent home (step 2 above). This behavior includes:

- Arriving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Possessing drugs or alcohol
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Sexual misconduct - verbal or physical
- Leaving the Church property without permission
- Vandalizing Church property
- Other behavior that may threaten the welfare of oneself, others, or the surroundings