

The vision for Maryville Area Youth (MAY) is to be a gathering of children and youth from small to medium sized churches in the Maryville area to provide a community of support, fun and faith-based fellowship. A struggle for many adults as they search for a faith community is to find somewhere that aligns with their beliefs religiously and socially or a tradition they are familiar with and has a robust youth and children program. What many churches struggle with is finding chaperones and resources to put together engaging and fun youth events. By finding churches who may have different liturgy and practices but common ground in the ministry and words of Jesus Christ, we can form a consistent and appealing program that children and youth feel they can show up to every week to see friends, share thoughts and learn together about their faith journey.

## **Organization**

A rotation of three to four churches that can host youth events once a month on an agreed day of the week (Wednesday/Sunday). The churches will, together, have an overall leadership team that will provide support and guidance to all the volunteers and keep up weekly communication, regardless of if it is that church's week to host. This guidance can come through an agreed upon curriculum or overall theme that is shared with all the adult volunteers. Parents will be kept informed through consistent communication through email, online calendars, church announcements and social media posts. The hope is to lessen the weekly burden on all the churches while providing weekly engagement for their children and youth. In a town the size of Maryville, it is likely that a group of churches will have children and youth who already attend school together and will limit the drive that parents will need to get their children somewhere.

## **Programming**

The hosting church is responsible for providing chaperones and food for that event when it is their 'on week'

Adults from other congregations are encouraged, but not required to attend on their 'off weeks'

The meal could be the gathering or ending time for all children, youth, and adults to enjoy fellowship together (Lunch could be beginning for a Sunday event, dinner could be closing event for Wednesday nights depending on when churches are able to meet)

Youth will be divided into grade groups for age-appropriate discussions that all center around the same subject

Certain rituals will stay the same every week regardless of location (sharing of concerns, prayer habits, opening/closing ritual)

The weekly event will be a springboard for larger gatherings throughout the year

A parent conversation group could be formed to meet at the same time as the youth meet to discuss what it is like to be a parent in this time, find common ground and enjoy their own form of fellowship

### **Individual Church's Responsibilities**

Communicating events well and consistently to their families

Encouraging their families to take part

Finding volunteers who can reliably attend

Completing background checks on volunteers

Routine communication with pastors/leaders of other MAY churches

### **Upcoming Events**

**Sunday, April 3 St. Andrew's - 5:00 pm- Family Dinner and Games**

**Sunday, May 15 Highland Pres.- 12:00 pm- Outdoor games and cookout**