

COLUMBIA UNITED METHODIST YOUTH CLUB  
DINING ROOM GUIDELINES  
FOR PARENTS, CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND STAFF

1. As far as possible Table Parents never leave the table except as the entire group moves for some of the Family Fun events.
2. Everyone is expected to support and follow the directions of the Dinner Dean at all times. Hands up means it is time to give attention to the Dinner Dean.
3. Everyone - including all adults in the room - participates in the Family Fun. No spectators! (Not everything is always equally "fun" for everyone. When it is not, those who would not necessarily be involved for their own sake are involved for the sake of the good time and joy of all the others.)
4. Everyone is served at the table before anyone starts eating.
5. Talk should be in conversational tones and sound levels so everyone in the room can visit without shouting!
6. Children and youth are given responsibility for serving themselves, like any adult is, from the family style serving dishes.
7. Table Parents are expected to take the steps necessary to see that those at their table practice good stewardship of food. Young people and adults are expected to eat all of whatever they put on their plates. The taking of small portions is encouraged.
8. Children and youth are not required to eat food they do not like or want, anymore than an adult is at a similar event! The responsibility for teaching children and youth to "eat their vegetables" or be willing to try new and unfamiliar foods does not belong in Youth Club.
9. Regardless of what is (or isn't) eaten, all are expected to be cooperative members of the table fellowship, and to be pleasant and positive at the table.
10. If a child/youth does become "uncooperatively unmanageable" and after all lesser steps have been taken to resolve the problem, the decision is put on her/him as to whether she/he stays in the Dining Room or goes with a leader to another area to eat "privately".

11. Children/Youth take turns being the "Server." The server brings the food to his/her table and returns the dishes to the kitchen at the end of the meal. The server is the only person who is allowed to be up from the table. The reason for this is:
  - to avoid traffic collisions and spilled food;
  - to avoid wasting time as crowded lanes slow down necessary movement;
  - to encourage conversations and table time with the "table family" group.
12. Once dinner begins, no one is to be excused to the restrooms, or for any other purpose, except for genuine emergencies.
13. Therefore, all need to stop at the restrooms on the way to the Dining Room to assure comfort! The reasons for this are the same as in #11 above.
14. Good manners are encouraged and reinforced. "Please" and "Thank You" and other expressions of courtesy are expected during the entire Dinner Hour. Napkins belong on laps. Elbows do not belong on the tables. We wait until everyone is served before we begin to eat. Instead of reaching across the table for food, we politely ask to have it passed.