

A Quick Start GUIDE



YOUTH EMPOWERED TO SERVE

A Quick Start Guide for Youth Empowered to Serve

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Adventists**

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Introduction

“Where are our young people?” Have you ever heard this before? Chances are you have, and on more than one occasion. You’ve probably also heard the many opinions on how to attract and maintain youth and young adult presence in the church. The reality is that there is no single reason why the numbers in this segment of our church are down. Rather, it is a result of myriad of related and unrelated causes. Many of these causes could be lessened if not eliminated through discipleship.

If we boil the Gospel down to the most succinct definition in regard to our lives, most would agree that these three things are necessary 1) Acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice, 2) Commitment to the cause of Christ in making disciples and taking the good news to all the world, and 3) Demonstration of God’s love for all and our commitment to His cause. However, throughout the ages, commitment has always come more naturally after demonstration.

Youth Empowered to Serve (YES!) engages young people in discipleship, with a two-fold mission: changing their lives while changing the world. This mission is within the context of serving communities in Christ’s name.

An important part of YES! is the network of young people throughout North America who engage in random acts of kindness, strategically planned service events, disaster response, and emergency relief. These young people demonstrate compassion and follow Christ’s example in meeting the needs of others. This network consists of affiliations with various schools, youth organizations, youth ministries, and community service.

No one has ever seen God;
but if we love one another,
God lives in us and His love
is made complete in us.

— 1 John 4:12 NIV

From a worldly point of view,
money is power, but from the
Christian standpoint, love is
power.

— Ellen White
Adventist Home Pg. 195

YES! is not intended to replace any existing vibrant youth or social ministry, but rather to augment and enhance these ministries. In some cases, due to congregation size, community demographics, or other reasons, you may identify a need for a more permanent and clearly defined YES! ministry.

Three Components of YES!

- 1) Mentorship
- 2) Leadership
- 3) Active Service

Mentorship: Mentoring is a significant need in the Seventh-day Adventist church today. In an effort to eliminate legal risks, minimize offense, and reduce the chances of rejection, many have taken a hands-off approach to this type of ministry. However, if we look at Christ's example with the 12 disciples, we see that He actively took a personal interest in their lives, stories, failures, and accomplishments. Each member of the church, regardless of the ministry or department in which they are involved in, should take a personal interest in the church's young people.

Leadership: There was a time when teens and young adults were the driving force in accomplishing the work set forth by Christ, particularly in the beginning years of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Local churches should attempt to return to those roots, putting teens and young adults in important positions of leadership, giving them responsibility and opportunities to try their creative ideas and initiatives. However, be sure to mentor your church's young leaders. Leadership opportunities without mentoring is sure to be ineffective, as is mentoring without any opportunities to lead.

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

—Psalm 82:3-4 NIV

Active Service: There is plenty of discussion in churches regarding the gospel, but the discussion often lacks gospel action. The majority of Christ's time in ministry was not in the synagogues, but amongst people, showing them love by healing, feeding, listening, sharing, and caring. Active service helps young people connect what they hear in church and read in the Bible with the experience of the gospel. It connects head and heart. The experience is crucial in a young person's faith development.

The Advantages of Young People in Social Ministry

Youth and young adults bring energy and untainted passion to ministry. They are generally more willing to try new things, step outside their comfort zone (with the support of friends), and look at things differently. These characteristics, when applied to Godly causes, can be extremely valuable and effective in showing the good news to the world.

Fresh Perspectives: In some cases, social ministry that once met a need continues to offer the same services even though the needs have changed or diminished. Young people can help identify new needs that may not have been previously noticed or considered. Likewise, when a church ministry has lost its sense of gospel action, putting young people in leadership can challenge the church body to revive this important ingredient.

Current and Relevant Initiatives: Young adults can help Adventist Community Services and other social ministries, introduce and implement new policies and ideas that may reduce resource output while serving more clients, increase and invigorate your donor base, and much more.

Marketing and Technology: Young people are a wealth of knowledge when it comes to social networking, marketing strategies, database development, and other technological advances from which older adults may be disconnected. Rather than ignoring it, tap into this resource.

Collaboration and Youth-Adult Partnerships

Youth-adult partnerships happen when young people and adults become engaged together in their communities. While activities such as feeding the homeless on the streets may initially be intimidating, a strong adult support network that is focused on mutuality rather than hierarchy and combined with regular involvement in such activities can help emotional and psychological barriers break down. For this reason, YES! ministry cannot exist without adult involvement. Adults and young people are equally important to the strength and success of social ministry.

Remember to value your younger volunteers. Let them know how important they are to you and your ministry. Frequently, members of this age group simply feel like free labor. To avoid this, give them ownership and responsibility, and value their input and contributions. There are many other non-profits, agencies, and causes for which they could volunteer. Give them worthwhile reasons to be active in your church.

Different Types of YES! Ministry

YES! has taken on many different shapes and sizes at the local church level throughout North America since it was redefined in 2008. This is due to the wide diversity of churches and communities, and the understanding that in social youth ministry, one size does not fit all. The following are some options to consider.

- **Local YES! Chapter:** The local chapter is your local church engaging young people in regular ministries of compassion. This can include any of the following and more.
 - Community acts of kindness
 - Regular tutoring/mentoring program
 - Relief projects meeting immediate needs in your community
 - Projects that focus on the emotional and spiritual needs in your community

You may find your local chapter is as simple as:

- Your AY group's regular involvement in social ministries
- Your AY group, Pathfinders, and young adults volunteering in your local church Adventist Community Services center
- A similar group volunteering in non-Adventist service agencies within your community

For more ideas and ways to serve others, visit www.AdventistYES.org

In some cases, local chapters grow to a point where they begin organizing, funding, and implementing their own long-term projects and programs to impact real needs in their community. And though YES! is created for young people and should be lead by young people, community projects work well when you include people of all ages. This will help develop healthy youth-adult partnerships.

- **YES! Coalition:** The coalition is regional, involving more than one church within the community, and generally includes youth and young adults from several churches collaborating on social ministry projects. Coalitions can cross conference lines and are focused on the united efforts and

Ask your local conference about the YES! Leadership Certification Program available for young adults and youth leaders. If your conference does not offer this program and you are interested in getting started, contact the North American Division Adventist Community Services office at www.communityservices.org

resources within a specific area. Like the chapter, a coalition volunteers with Adventist and non-Adventist organizations, and may organize their own programs or projects based on relevant community needs.

- **YES! Conference:** Some conferences and union conferences may choose to develop a YES! ministry on a larger scale. This sometimes involves rallies and larger events with a focus on the development and empowerment of young people within the context of social ministry.



Tips for Involving Youth in Community Service

By Laura Conrad & Justin Vibbard

Tips for Involving Youth in Community Service is a unique collection of wisdom collected from dozens of youth leaders, community service leaders, and young people sharing what they've caught in regard to serving others. Some wisdom is broad and general, such as, "Get to know the youth in your church." Other advice is more pointed and specific, such as, "Offer computer skills mentoring for senior citizens."

Available at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525.
Catalog #602549

Tips for Effectively Implementing a YES! Ministry

Needs Assessment: To successfully impact a community it is essential that you understand its real needs. Your own biases and life experiences can alter perception of these needs. This is why it is important to conduct both demographic surveys (researching data regarding socio-economic status, age, education level, race, etc.) and psychographic surveys (i.e. face-to-face inquiries about needs and community improvement). To learn more, visit www.communityservices.org.

Community Needs Assessment

The Community Needs Assessment CS-102 is available through the General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department at www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org. This assessment is part of the International Institute of Christian Ministries (IICM) Community Services Curriculum.

Sample Questions for Community Needs Assessment Surveys/ Interviews

Before you begin, define your community. What geographic boundaries are you using? What groups are you targeting? What other defining attributes are you considering?

When conducting interviews, start collecting information from community members who are in a position to know community needs. These people might be community leaders, professionals, or other individuals who have affiliations with particular organizations or agencies. In addition, survey neighbors or those coming and going from a local restaurant or grocery store to gain a larger perspective. Your questions will vary depending on whom you are surveying.

Sample Questions

- What are the greatest needs in this community?
- My church wants to help with some of the important needs in our community. What are some of the needs on which it would be helpful to focus?
- What organizations are currently active in meeting important needs in this community?
- What needs are already being met by other organizations and groups?
- Are the current services coordinated? If not, would the community benefit if they were coordinated?
- What are some of your concerns for the community?
- What do you value about your community?
- What are some regularly scheduled community events that people attend?

Refrain from asking, “What can young people do to meet these needs?” Many times responses to such a question are pigeonholed, restricting your group’s opportunities for discussing more complex and diverse community needs.

For simple demographic surveys check your local library, government offices, and census data as found on www.census.gov through the American FactFinder. Census data can supply data on ethnicities, age ranges, gender, family make-up, socio-economic status, and much more for a very specific area. All reports are free to the public through the American FactFinder.

Collaboration: Thomas Edison once compared the human body to a community “made up of innumerable cells and inhabitants.” If the cells and vital inhabitants within our body stopped working together and pursued a solo agenda, life within this body would cease to function, and many of those cells and inhabitants would cease to exist. So it is within communities and churches. If everyone operates solo, or within silos, you may find the community and/or church ceases to exist, and at the very least, your ministry will have been ineffective in accomplishing its mission. Think cellular—not silo—when embarking on a social ministry. Find out with whom you can collaborate inside and outside of your church. Consider local government agencies, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based ministries/organizations, both Adventist and non-Adventist. Identify aligned missions and visions and develop relationships, both personal and organizational, that will help you make a greater impact.

Organize: In a world that is constantly changing, remember it is even more important to be organized. Your volunteers, no matter what age, will soon stop showing up if your directions are not clear and accurate. Provide clear expectations, and start early enough to have time to assess, plan, and implement. Implementation without a plan can create more problems in the community, as assessment without a plan can lead to gathering invalid information. Allow time for all three stages so your ministry can have maximum impact on the community.

If you want to find a starter project that requires minimal resources, try contacting the local volunteer coordination agency in your community. In many counties, parishes, and communities, this organization is The United Way, Hands On, or another similar agency that networks volunteers with local agencies.

Check out *The Ultimate Volunteer Guidebook for Young People* by Christine Reyna Maxwell for step-by-step instructions geared at youth and young adults desiring to make a difference in their community. Available at www.amazon.com.

Identify Gifts: Involve young people with marketing ideas and communication skills in sharing your message. Find those who are skilled in administration to see that the necessary plans and documentation are clearly prepared and available. Engage those skilled in relationships for recruitment. Find the right person for the right job and watch your ministry grow!

Learning: Groups often engage in one day of service, such as helping with a food drive, and then life returns to normal and the experience is soon forgotten. It is important to make an intentional effort to help young people learn about the joy of service. This can happen in a variety of ways, such as:

- Providing youth with an opportunity to develop or refine a specific skill or skill set (database design, carpentry, customer service, etc.)
- Discovering and discussing larger issues behind the immediate or local issue in which they are involved (i.e. why are certain families and groups more likely to live in poverty, and how can their situation change, both locally and globally; what can be done to alleviate local food shortages?)
- Allowing youth to teach/mentor other youth, cementing their current knowledge and expanding their outlook and understanding of an effective team
- Helping youth understand more about the true love and compassion of God and His plan for their lives

Reflection: One of the most crucial aspects of any young person's service experience is reflection. Reflection involves taking time to debrief after a project, discussing the why (for what purpose your group did this), the what (difference you made), and the how (it made you feel). Reflection encourages a regular dialogue on the personal impact each particular activity has on those being served and those serving. Acquire a "YES! Journal" for each participant so they can record their experiences. Intentionally plan reflection time following each project or activity. Reflection must happen immediately following the activity. Do not wait a week or even a day or participants will forget.

Many youth groups complete spiritual gift assessment/identification profiles (sometimes called "servant profiles"). Tie in this component with your service-based ministry. Find ways to incorporate the various components of service ministry into what you are already doing in youth ministry.

Engage Your Group in Discussion

When you are driving back home after a project, engage your group in discussion. The youth will naturally want to talk, and an occasional guiding question will encourage them to connect with each other about their experience with ministry.

Sample Questions for Reflection, Discussions, and Journaling

- What was the most meaningful part of your experience?
- What did you learn from the people you worked with?
- What do you think they learned from you?
- What did you learn about discipleship?
- Did you find a stronger or weaker connection with God during your experience? Explain.
- Is there anything in the Bible to which you can relate your experience?
- What does this project mean to people your age?
- Why should people your age be concerned with helping others?
- What difference did your project make in the community?
- What feelings did you experience during this project?
- Would you participate in a YES project again? Why or why not?
- List two things you learned about God today.
- Is your life at home going to be different as a result of this experience? If so, how?
- What did you like the most about your experience?
- What did you like the least about your experience?
- What did you learn about yourself today?
- What did you learn about others today?
- How can you use what you learned today in your daily life?
- How did this project affect your faith?
- What skills did you develop while working on this project?
- What needs were met by your project?
- What contributions did you make in this project?
- How did you help in the planning process? What decisions did you make? How did you solve problems?

Engaging in ACS Ministries

YES! leaders are encouraged to utilize the resources and programs available through Adventist Community Services' ministries: Community Development, Crisis Care, Tutoring and Mentoring, Disaster Response, and Elder Care. Contact your local conference for more information on ministries active in your area, or go to www.CommunityServices.org.

Non-Profit Leadership Certification Program (NLCP)

Offered annually in North America by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, NLCP prepares laity, pastors, and social ministry leaders for effective organizational leadership. NLCP covers topics such as board structure, effective operation, and fundraising. More information is available at www.CommunityServices.org.

YES! Leadership Certification Program

Adventist Community Services and Adventist Youth Ministries have joined forces to offer a combined-ministry leadership development certification. YES! Leadership Certification is divided into two parts, and is intended for young adults and youth leaders who want to make a difference in their community. Upon completion, these leaders are expected to go and lead service-driven youth ministries in their churches, federations, areas, and/or conferences.

- YES! Community Leadership Certification (YCL) focuses on spiritual development, community awareness, and leadership development. Designed for young adults, youth leaders, and community service leaders, the YCL certification equips and develops participants to lead youth and young adults in effective ministries of service for their communities.
- Adventist Youth Disaster Response Leadership Certification (AYDR) prepares young adults and youth leaders for serving others in times of disaster and crisis. AYDR operates within the framework of ACS DR, the official disaster response ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States and Bermuda.
 - o The YCL certification is a prerequisite that must be completed before beginning the AYDR Leadership Curriculum

Service Learning

Many educators are interested in implementing a Service Learning approach in the classroom. Service Learning takes the “why” out of learning and adds purpose to both community action and classroom education. To find out more about Service Learning and what YES! and Adventist Education are doing to make it a reality, go to www.AdventistYES.org.

The National Youth Leadership Council defines Service-Learning as a “Teaching and Learning Strategy”. Cathryn Berger Kaye defines Service Learning as, “a researched based teaching method where guided or classroom learning is applied through action that addresses an authentic community need in a process that allows for youth initiative and provides structured time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge.”

Conclusion

Thank you for volunteering to lead youth and young adults into a lifetime of service. When we are led by Jesus and have a sincere compassion for others, we will have many opportunities to offer God’s encouragement, support, comfort, and unconditional love.

Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525.



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Tips for Involving Youth in Community Service is a unique collection of wisdom collected from dozens of youth leaders, community service leaders, and young people sharing what they’ve caught in regard to serving others. Some wisdom is broad and general, such as, “Get to know the youth in your church.” Other advice is more pointed and specific, such as, “Offer computer skills mentoring for senior citizens.” Dive into this one-of-a-kind collection of wisdom and humor.

Catalog #602549

Tips for Youth Leaders



By Steve Case

Tips for Youth Leaders is a unique collection of wisdom from by Steve Case and other youth leaders over the years. Some of these are broad and general, such as “Be sure you’re connected to God.” Others are rather pointed and specific, such as “If staining the carpet is the unpardonable sin, put it on the ceiling instead of the floor.” As you serve in youth leadership, add your own tips to this book, and pass it on to another youth leader.

Catalog #602548



Bridges 101

By Ruthie Jacobsen

Ruthie Jacobsen shares refreshing ideas for regular people who have given the Lord of the harvest permission to throw us into His harvest. Jacobsen's lively stories demonstrate that witnessing can be stress-free, creative, fulfilling, and even, believe it or not, fun! Every chapter will open your eyes to new possibilities for sharing your love for Jesus in your neighborhood.

Catalog #417490

The following resources are available online or from your local bookstore

Live for Others by Health Mullikin and Scott Simmons

The Ultimate Volunteer Guidebook for Young People by Christine Reyna Maxwell

101 Ways To Help People In Need by Steve Sjogren

101 Ways To Reach Your Community by Steve Sjogren

77 Creative Ways Kids Can Serve by Sondra Clark

Non-Profit Leadership Certification Program

The Non-Profit Leadership Certification Program (NLCP) is hosted annually by Adventist Community Services. NLCP is designed to prepare attendees for non-profit management responsibilities and social evangelism. Participants will learn about assessing community needs, cross-cultural ministry, marketing fundamentals, improving leadership skills, financial resource development, and much more. Visit www.communityservices.org for more details.

Websites

Adventist Community Services www.CommunityServices.org

Youth Empowered to Serve www.AdventistYES.org

Youth Empowered to Serve Facebook Page www.Facebook.com/AdventistYES

Youth Empowered to Serve Twitter Feed www.Twitter.com/Youth2Serve

NAD Youth Ministries www.AdventistYouthMinistries.org

Adventist Community Services needs assessment information, training workbooks and curricula, and more www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/article.php?id=53

Youth Service America www.YSA.org

Global Youth Service Day www.GlobalYouthServiceDay.org

HandsOn Network www.HandsOnNetwork.org

Live United www.LiveUnited.org

Random Acts of Kindness Foundation www.randomactsofkindness.org

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service www.MLKDay.org

Red Cross—find first aid and CPR training www.RedCross.org

Make a Difference Day www.MakeADifferenceDay.com

Youth Empowered to Serve

This Quick Start Guide for Youth Empowered to Serve is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or an experienced volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series include:

- Youth Ministries
- Personal Ministries
- Sabbath School Superintendent
- Interest Coordinator

For a complete list of Quick Start Guide titles visit www.adventsource.org



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