

Youth Ministry Quick Start Guide

Welcome to youth ministry. As a youth leader you have the opportunity prepare teens for the future. Since today's teens are tomorrow's church leaders, it is important to involve them in leadership roles right now. Remember they are not only the church of the future; they are the church of the present.

An effective youth ministry reaches out to young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. It uses the full resources of all its members, leaders, and staff to assist youth in reaching their potential as a group and as individuals in their relationships with God, their families, the church, and the world around them.

Youth ministry is not easy. It requires understanding, dedication, flexibility and patience.

Bob Taylor defines youth ministry as “enabling and mobilizing the gifts of many persons to touch, with the truths of the gospel, the lives of youth in every realm of their being.” This includes the sum total of all a church does. It includes work done by professional youth leaders such as a youth pastor as well as volunteer youth leaders. It includes ministry with parents of youth.

Part 1: Understanding Youth Ministry

Understanding Teenagers

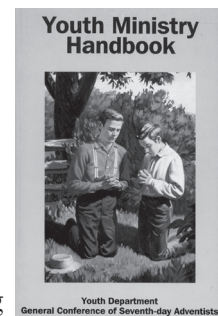
Youth encompasses high school students in grades 9-12, generally ages 14-18. If your church is small, the youth may be combined with other age groups.

Although they are still dependent on their parents, teens are looking to establish their individual identity. They are working at their first jobs, driving their first cars, dating, and often preparing for college. However, they are not just wrestling with finding their own place in society; they are also wrestling with their relationship with Christ and the Christian community.

The Five Basic Needs of Youth

- Acceptance and recognition
- Affection
- Success and achievement
- New experiences
- Security and inner peace

Source: *General Conference Youth Ministry Handbook*
Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org
or 800-328-0525
Catalog #620460



Mature leaders know how to deal with different personalities and bring people together for the benefit of all.

As teens get older, interest in spiritual growth often diminishes and takes a secondary place to making friends and fitting in. It is critical that the church support youth, both in public and private high schools.

The youth need more than a casual notice, more than an occasional word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor. — *Gospel Workers* p. 208

Qualifications for Youth Leaders

1. Know Christ as a personal Savior.
2. Be a student of the Word, living a life rich in prayer and devotion.
3. Have an understanding of and love for youth. Listen effectively and strive to understand their challenges, needs, conflicts and aspirations. Help them cope with the pressures of daily life.
4. Possess spiritual and emotional maturity.
5. Devote time to youth ministry.
6. Have the ability to communicate effectively with different cultures.
7. Be a team builder, with a good sense of humor, self-control, stability, honesty and enthusiasm.
8. Show genuine courtesy under all circumstances, without allowing a few individuals to impose their views onto the rest of the group.
9. Be able to organize and delegate.
10. Keep up to date with trends in youth ministry.

The Bible can answer questions about real issues youth are dealing with:

Who am I?

A child of God

What do I need?

Saving

Where do I belong?

In the family of God

How can I belong?

Through commitment to God

How do I relate to others?

In loving, caring responses

What's my future?

An amazing life forever with God

Part 2: Organizing Youth Ministry

Youth Ministries Council

Who is included?

Leaders of youth Sabbath school, the Adventist Youth Society, the Pathfinder Club and any other youth groups such as choir and summer/day camp directors. Including the pastor and parent representatives is also recommended.

The Role of the Youth Ministries Council

1. Assess the needs of your youth group
2. Choose goals to meet those needs
3. Plan strategies for reaching your goals
4. Find and use available resources
5. Provide learning experiences
6. Evaluate your church's youth ministry
7. Create a calendar
8. Plan social activities, service projects, inreach, and outreach
9. Oversee youth Sabbath school

How does it function?

Under the guidance of the youth ministry coordinator, this council evaluates your church's current philosophy of youth ministry and its needs, strategies, personnel, programs and projects. Then it determines goals, curriculum, budgets and programming. It also deals with marketing the program and recruiting volunteers.

Why is it important?

Together the youth leaders can reduce overlap, look for gaps in programming and coordinate efforts. As the chair of this committee, you can cultivate a cooperative and cohesive spirit. (For detailed information on chairing a committee, see pages 83-91 of the *General Conference Youth Ministry Handbook*.)

Developmental Tasks for Youth

1. Achieve mature friendships with people of similar ages and both sexes
2. Body acceptance
3. Emotional independence
4. Economic independence
5. Select a career
6. Prepare for marriage and family life
7. Become a contributing member of society
8. Show socially responsible behavior
9. Acquire values and a personal ethical system

Youth ministry exists to reach out to both churched
and unchurched young people so they might know Christ
and His church. — *Bill Wood, Atlantic Union Conference Youth Director*

Main Duties of the Youth Ministries Coordinator

- Build relationships with youth, their parents and leaders in the church and community
- Chair the youth ministries council
- Provide information to youth leaders, the church board and the congregation
- Represent the interests of youth ministries to the pastor, church treasurer, church ministries council and church board
- Become knowledgeable about youth culture

Steps to Starting a Youth Ministry

Determine Your Church's Needs

- Take a serious look at the current youth program
- Solicit input from youth, parents, teachers, and Pathfinder leaders
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of your current program
- Survey what youth want: fun activities, games/ice breakers, retreats, skits and drama, singing, service projects, Bible study, prayer, worship, talks from the pastor and other leaders, etc.

Take a Survey to Learn Who is in Your Group

- Ages
- Where they go to school
- Where they live

Select Your Priorities

- What can you realistically accomplish?
- What type of programs do the youth need and want?
- What needs improvement?

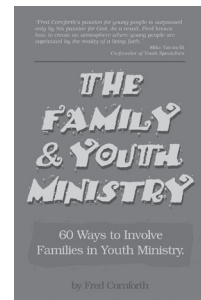
Youth Ministry and the Family

While the role of youth ministry in a teen's spiritual development is important, the parent's role is absolutely critical. Parents, more than anyone else, see shifts in youth culture. Parents and youth leaders benefit from working together.

The Family and Youth Ministry

One of the best resources available to help you build an effective youth ministry. Discover dozens of ways to build relationships and involve parents, grandparents, and youth together in ministry.

By *Fred Cornforth*
Available from
AdventSource at
www.adventsource.org
or 800-328-0525
Catalog #602010 \$8.95



There are four assumptions a youth leader must grasp and accept before working with parents.

1. Parents have the ultimate responsibility for raising their children. Unfortunately, some youth ministries spend much time and many resources trying to replace parents – a role youth ministry was never meant to occupy. A preferred approach is finding ways to help parents become more involved in their teen’s life.
2. Most parents want to improve their relationships with their children and are willing to invest time, but don’t know how. Youth ministry leaders must expand their ministry to include the parents. This will lead to improved relationships between parents and youth and greater parental support for youth ministry activities.
3. Parents are best equipped to participate in and encourage youth ministry leaders. No training center can teach the feelings of love and support most parents have for their children. Additionally, who better knows the background, temperament and personal struggles of a young person than his or her parents?
4. The church and school must stop competing with families for time. Dad is at a meeting one night, Mom the next. The weekend comes and the kids disappear for a youth retreat. Given the pace of life, the church and school should not monopolize what little time families have left.

Involving Parents

- Try to include at least one parent in every meeting or activity. Yes, it’s work to track down and schedule parents, but it’s worth it. Involved parents will be more informed and supportive.
- Hold training programs for parents interested in volunteering. (Plan ahead for how you will utilize the volunteers once they’re trained.)
- Produce a quarterly newsletter where you print the schedule of upcoming activities, which parents will help, additional volunteers needed and dates for your next parent training event. Include information about youth culture and parenting tips from experts.

Note: Don’t try to teach parenting classes yourself – leave that to the pros! Just develop relationships with parents by talking about their kids and how you can help each other in your roles. If you want parents on your team, you must communicate regularly.

Sources for Support

Create support groups for parents. Parent support groups are great, especially for blended families, single parents and parents of students with disabilities. Ask older parents if they would be willing to serve as mentors to parents currently facing specific issues with their teenagers.

Seven Secrets for Success in Youth Ministry

1. *Realize there are no simple solutions to the problems of youth*
2. *Avoid comparing today’s society to “the good ol’ days” when you were a teen*
3. *Keep your expectations reasonable*
4. *Partner with parents*
5. *Keep your promises*
6. *Stay balanced*
7. *Don’t try to be “one of them” – young people need a role model and leader*
8. *Make yourself available*

Build your church's library and resource center by adding new items for parents and teens. Advertise them in your newsletter. See page 17 for ideas.

Occasionally host an open house for families to visit the youth classroom and check out materials. Remember to invite grandparents for an intergenerational experience.

One of the most important things you can do for parents is encourage them to be faithful in having family worship time. Life is hectic, and a surprising number of families don't have family worship – some don't even know how. Yet Value Genesis research shows this is the most important thing families can do to keep their kids in the church. Share ideas informally or conduct a seminar to teach families how to make worship part of their day.

Working with Your Pastor

Your pastor can be your biggest supporter. It is important to ask for and listen to your pastor's counsel. In addition, it is crucial to keep your pastor constantly informed and involved with your youth ministry team. Here are seven ways to work with your pastor:

1. Create a regular appointment time, at least once a month.
2. Discuss your philosophies, goals and overall approach. Ask for advice and support.
3. Reveal specific plans for the coming month, including details of special events and programs.
4. Clear calendar items at least six months ahead of major events, projects and programs.
5. Work together on budgets. Explain the financial support you are requesting from the church.
6. Ask your pastor to attend events and give devotions/prayers even if he or she can't stay for the entire program.
7. Evaluate the youth ministry program together. Ask for your pastor's opinion and listen carefully. Ask your pastor how the youth can help.

Source: The ABZs of Adventist Youth Ministry by Stuart Tyner

Part 3: Maximizing Youth Ministry

Validating Your Purpose

Why does your ministry exist? Is it to provide youth with a social outlet? Or give them ministry options? Adopting a mission statement will help you answer these questions and give your ministry a sense of direction. In addition, it will help you plan your programs, attract and utilize volunteers, minimize conflict in the church and create a sense of professionalism.

In his book *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, Doug Fields summarizes youth ministry this way:

- Your purpose reveals WHY your ministry exists.
- Your potential audience defines WHO you plan to target.
- Your programs outline HOW you will attempt to reach your target audience and fulfill a purpose.
- Your process communicates WHERE you want students to go for spiritual growth.
- Planned values show WHAT is important to your ministry.

- The power of God determines WHEN growth is going to happen.

Mission Statements

Create a mission statement and make it visible in your meeting room with a poster or banner. Use it on all your literature and your church’s website.

Many different words describe the purpose of ministry. Here are some commonly used phrases to portray the concepts of biblical ministry:

1. Worship: love the Lord your God with all your heart
2. Service: love your neighbor as yourself
3. Evangelism: go and make disciples
4. Fellowship: baptizing them
5. Discipleship: teaching them to obey

Consider each of these concepts as you develop your mission statement.

Sample mission statements:

Together we will win youth to Christ, establish them in their faith, equip them for service, and train them for leadership in the church and the world so that we may present everyone complete in Christ.

**We exist
to reach out to churched and
unchurched young people
so that they might know
Christ and His church.**

_____ exists to REACH non-Christian junior and senior high students, to help them SHARE in God’s Word, to OFFER themselves in SERVICE to Christ, and to CARE for one another.

**CARE – fellowship
REACH – evangelism
OFFER – worship
SHARE – discipleship
SERVICE – ministry**

The goal of our student ministry is to EXPOSE teenagers to God’s love, to EQUIP them to EXALT God, ENJOY other believers, and EXPERIENCE the work of the ministry.

**EXPOSE – evangelism
EQUIP – discipleship
EXALT – worship
ENJOY – fellowship
EXPERIENCE – ministry**

Mission statements are reprinted from *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* by Doug Fields (Zondervan). This book is available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525.

A healthy youth ministry takes time and effort to build.

Distributing Information

A major part of your role is communicating information to various groups of people. Be sure to:

- Research: Keep yourself informed
- Plan for Action: Recruit potential youth group members and volunteers. Build meaningful relationships with influential people (student leaders, parents and grandparents, school staff, adult volunteers)
- Communicate: Learn to communicate effectively with your church members and the community. This can be done through posters, newsletters, bulletin announcements, post cards, phone calls, email, and the church website
- Evaluate: How can I communicate more effectively?

Tips for Communicating with Teens

- Make yourself available
- Listen
- Ask open-ended questions
- Don't show shock or surprise
- Don't judge
- Try to see it from their perspective
- Ask clarifying questions

Note: If your church has a communication director, he or she is an excellent resource for communicating with church members and the community.

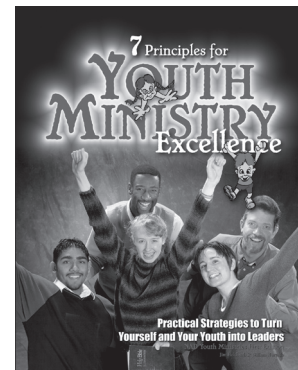
Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence

1. Grow spiritually
2. Equip for leadership
3. Nurture relationships
4. Plan with a purpose
5. Empower others
6. Promote your ministry
7. Mobilize for service (evangelism)

Source: *7 Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence* by Jim Feldbush and Steve Yeagley, with Ron Whitehead.

Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525

Catalog #620680



Using Small Groups

Small groups are a great way for youth to reconnect with both God and each other. Due to high divorce rates, mobility, technology and isolationism, youth are hungering for solid relationships and a place to belong. Many youth leaders find that having same-sex small group leaders and members works best.

Getting the Youth Involved in Church

It is important to get youth involved in church ministry. Now, not later, is the time for them to get involved and discover their talents. For example, some might discover that they love working with children while others may wish to work as greeters.

Depending on your church and on each teen, they may take on a leadership position all by themselves or start out as an assistant. Either way, it's great experience and keeps them connected. Your goal should be to include them with the rest of the church, not segregate them by only involving them in youth-only programs.

Boarding School Students

It is crucial to keep in touch with students who are away at boarding school. Ways to do this include inviting students to participate in the church newsletter by submitting articles about their experiences or favorite classes. Also, ask for pictures or any news people at home would find interesting. This will let them know that they're still an important part of their home church.

You could also start a letter-writing or email club and have youth at the home-church write letters to students who are away at boarding school.

Continue contact once they're home. In the summer and during school breaks, ask them to participate in meaningful service and leadership activities such as Vacation Bible School.

Public School Students

Public school students may feel disconnected from the rest of the youth group, especially if the majority attend private school. Find ways to keep these students involved and give them a forum to discuss issues they face attending public school.

Planning Programs

When planning programs, consider the culture of the church, the available time of the leaders, the amount of adult help and the accessible resources.

No church has the resources to create programs that directly compete with the secular world. However, we can offer something the world can't – caring relationships and the life-changing truth of God's Word.

Programs should always be designed for a specific purpose and audience, not just for fun or entertainment value. The focus should be on building relationships with God, peers, the church and community – not just producing programs.

Encourage your leaders to answer these questions when planning events:

- What's the point?
- Who's the target?
- Who's in charge?
- What's the duration?
- What do we need?
- How much will it cost?
- When do we start working on it?
- What type of follow-up system do we have?

A healthy youth ministry doesn't begin with catchy ideas but with spiritual leaders. Relying on God's power is the essential and foundational ingredient for building a spiritual legacy of long-term health. And in the long run health is more attractive than hype.

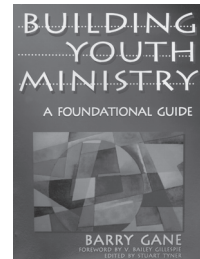
— Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*

Typical yearly programs include the following activities and times for reflection:

- Counseling opportunities (one-on-one)
- Meetings
- Recreation or campouts
- Field trips and rallies
- Sports days
- Spiritual learning/devotional activities
- Family/church gatherings
- Holiday activities
- Faith-building adventures
- Activities that develop critical thinking skills

Smart Planning Includes Making Your Objectives:

- Specific – concrete steps
- Measurable – so you can monitor progress
- Attainable – high, but within reach
- Realistic – within available resources
- Tangible – can be measured



*Source: **Building Youth Ministry: A Foundational Guide** by Barry Gane*
 Available from AdventSource at
www.adventsource.org
 or 800-328-0525
 Catalog #602131

Recruiting and Utilizing Volunteers

A team approach is always better than a one-person show. Whenever possible use the talents of the youth themselves; then, if you need extra help, look to the members of your congregation who have skills in areas you need. Here are three approaches:

1. Give volunteers one project at a time. Ask for volunteers to be in charge of just one event (a fundraiser, banquet, service project, etc.). Give them both the responsibility and authority needed to get the job done well.
2. Find volunteers one talent at a time. Find volunteers who have specific talents your program needs, such as organizing the master calendar, working on the budget or producing the newsletter.
3. Recruit volunteers to mentor one youth at a time. Ask volunteers to take special interest in individual teens, to pray for them, remember their birthdays, invite them home for Sabbath dinner and just be available to listen or talk.

Note: Because of problems and litigation issues, churches must screen all volunteers working with children and youth. Remember:

- Don't recruit a volunteer who has been a church member less than six months.
- Do not leave youth for whom you are responsible unsupervised.
- To protect yourself, have at least two adults present at all times.

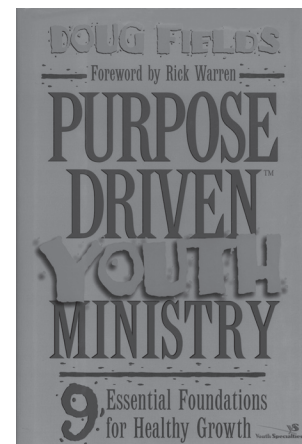
Great leaders don't run the program themselves. Rather they train and empower others to use their gifts for the Lord. – James Black, North American Division Youth Ministries Director

Part 4: Balancing Youth Ministry

Preventing Burnout

Youth ministry can be challenging; it doesn't have convenient hours or a beginning and end. Leaders must learn how to survive the trials and struggles of this emotionally demanding job without burning out. Well known youth ministries author Doug Fields offers these suggestions:

1. Young people will act their "spiritual age." Don't expect too much from them.
2. Don't feel the need to be liked by everyone. Leaders sometimes have to make unpopular decisions.



3. Set boundaries, especially if you have a family. Every time you say “yes” to overload you’re saying “no” to your family.
4. Learn to confront people with compassion and honesty. Don’t allow problems to fester.
5. Tap into your network. Have friends on whom you can count, both in and outside your ministry. Rely heavily on volunteers and the youth themselves to get the job done.
6. Find a mentor, a mature person who can encourage and guide you and help you stay balanced.
7. Build a master calendar and develop time management skills. If you don’t manage your time others will happily do it for you.

Source: **Purpose Driven Youth Ministry** by Doug Fields

Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525

Catalog #602400

Balancing Grace, Worship, Fellowship and Service

A healthy youth program will have all these elements in appropriate amounts. Youth need to feel accepted and valued; they need meaningful involvement in worship experiences; and they need friendships and mentoring. They deserve leaders who are stable and balanced, who they can trust to be there for them long-term.

In the early Christian church fellowship
was relational rather than recreational.

When mentoring young people, it is important to help them develop good habits. When firmly established, the following habits will prepare youth for life’s challenges:

1. Spending daily time with God
2. Engaging in Bible study and memorization
3. Assuming appropriate social and civic responsibility
4. Being involved with their church family
5. Tithing faithfully

It’s not necessary to force youth to share their faith. Most youth like to be active and participate in service projects. As they encounter people in the community, they will find opportunities to share their faith. Remember evangelizing is usually not easy, but Christ has commanded us to do it. We cannot fulfill our purpose if we isolate ourselves from the world.

Top 10 Things to Remember in Youth Ministry

1. Accept people as they are
2. Express unconditional love
3. Listen to them
4. Trust them
5. Be sincere and honest
6. Be mature and consistent
7. Plan ahead
8. Delegate responsibility
9. Encourage family unity
10. Keep up-to-date with current information

Helping Youth Experiencing Trauma

Some of the youth in your group are inevitably experiencing difficulties at home. Some will be coping with parents' divorce, and some may come from an abusive home. Some may be dealing with depression or involved with substance abuse or reckless behavior. Be sensitive to youth in all situations and be the mentor they need. Some may just need someone to talk to, while others may need serious help. Seek professional guidance from your pastor, a Christian counselor or other community resources.

Part 5: Evaluating Youth Ministry

Assessing Needs

Every 6-12 months your youth ministry council should ask the following: What are the current needs of our youth? Are they being met? Are we helping to strengthen families? Are our youth being challenged to serve? Are they gaining a vision for reaching unbelievers? What opportunities do we have? What might we need to change? (See page 88 of Barry Gane's book *Building Youth Ministry* for a sample Needs Assessment Survey.)

Utilizing Resources

Prayer is your first and best resource. Contact your church's director of prayer ministries (or someone interested in intercessory prayer) to form a team of volunteers who will commit to pray specifically for the youth and their leaders. This is not just something nice to do; it is an extremely powerful means of protection against Satan's assaults.

Contact your conference youth director for resource materials such as a list of potential speakers and musicians and information about Youth Emphasis Week, Youth Commitment and Celebration Day. Your conference youth director can also provide training sessions and explain the legal ramifications of counseling and confidentiality issues.

**You need a prayer team, a resource
team and a hands-on team.**

Budgeting

A budget, at best, is simply an estimate of how much money you anticipate spending during a specific amount of time. Your youth ministry budget reflects the level of commitment your local church has to this ministry. A small budget usually means one of two situations exists:

- a.) The church board has never stopped to consider its commitment to youth ministry, or
- b.) The church has had a bad experience with youth ministry and is hesitant about recommitting funds.

Find out from your church administration how the church handles the budgeting process, ask when the proposed budgets are expected, how they will be presented and who will make the ultimate decision on budget allocations.

A budget is your ministry vision
expressed in dollar signs.

With the youth ministry council, evaluate past budgets and carefully consider the current needs of the youth. Identify your categories and set figures for each area. Discuss your proposed budget with the appropriate church committee or personnel.

During the year keep careful records of your expenses to show accountability. Evaluate and adjust your budget on a regular basis.

Sample Budget

Here is a sample form for computing a budget. It can be adapted easily to fit your needs. Always check what is already in the department before adding new items to the list. Also consider what can be donated or borrowed. Search the internet and stores for freebies. Keep your supplies organized so they can be used repeatedly. Try to build up the basic supplies recommended in the Cornerstone Connections teacher's guide.

Resource Needs:

1. Adventist Book Center Materials
 - Cornerstone Connections teacher's guides _____
 - Cornerstone Connections student Bible study guides _____
 - Insight take-home papers _____
 2. Supplies to be purchased
 - Activity supplies _____
 - Paper products _____
 - Supplies recommended in the teacher's guide _____
 3. Equipment or major additions needed _____
 4. Outreach activities _____
 5. Additional nurture activities _____
 6. Printing and photocopying _____
 7. Other _____
- TOTAL** _____

Developing a Calendar

Determine how often your group meets and how many activities you would like to plan. Start slow, if necessary, but start with confidence. Be sure to include seasonal activities but keep the church schedule in mind. Set a tentative 12-month calendar and plan specifically three months in advance.

Communication is important to the success of your youth department. Keeping everyone informed helps avoid conflict between other church programs, leaders and parents. A monthly calendar keeps everyone informed of what is going to happen, when and where.

When planning your calendar, consider other events of your church or conference that may impact your division. Include these in your finished calendar. Consider the following possibilities.

January New Year's Party	February Bible Bowl	March Winterfest
April Training seminars – in-house and conference sponsored	May Youth Sabbath	June Camp meeting
July Nature camp/retreat	August Send-off party for academy students	September Bible conference
October Fall youth rally	November Can collecting	December Holiday programs

Conclusion

As you work with your youth group, remember that the measure of success is not found in the number of youth that shows up for activities, but in the quality of spiritual growth experienced by those who participate.

Resources

AdventSource – www.adventsource.org

Center for Creative Ministry – www.creativeministry.org

Center for Parent/Youth Understanding – <http://cpyu.org>

Center for Youth Evangelism – www.adventistyouth.org

Florida Conference Youth Ministries Department – www.empowerequip.com

Gente Joven is a quarterly magazine for Hispanic youth leaders that contains ideas, programs, activities and notice of upcoming events. Visit www.adventistbookcenter.com or call 800.765.6955 to order.

Group magazine – www.group.com – type “Group magazine” into the search bar

Insight magazine – www.insightmagazine.org

Involve Youth – www.involveyouth.com

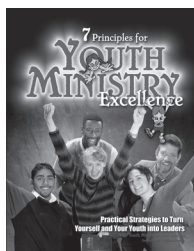
John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry – www.lasierra.edu/centers/hcym

North American Division Youth Adult Ministries – www.adventistyouthministries.org

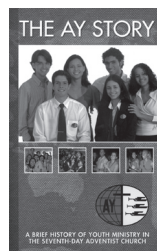
Youth Specialties – www.youthspecialties.com

Books

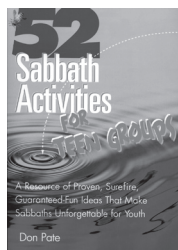
For a complete listing of youth ministry books, call *AdventSource* at 800-328-0525 or visit www.adventsource.org. The following resources are available from *AdventSource*:



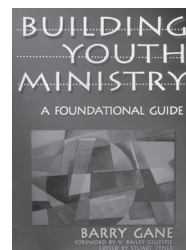
7 Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence
by Jim Feldbush and Steve Yeagley.
Catalog #620680



The AY Story
edited by Robert Holbrook.
Catalog #602040



52 Sabbath Activities for Teen Groups
by Don Pate.
Catalog #602355



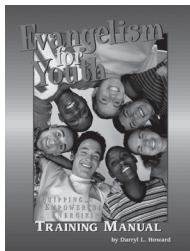
Building Youth Ministry: A Foundational Guide
by Barry Gane.
Catalog #602131



ChristWise Discipleship Guide for Youth and Christwise Leader's Guide
by Troy Fitzgerald.
Catalog #020850



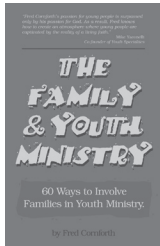
So, You want to be an AYS Leader by Sandra Ziglor.
Catalog #620465



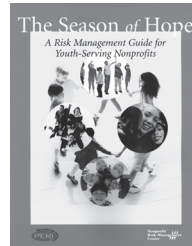
Evangelism for Youth
by Daryl L. Howard.
Catalog #602475



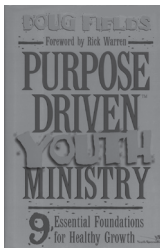
unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters
by David Kinnaman.
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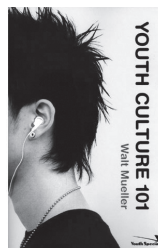
The Family and Youth Ministry by Fred Cornforth.
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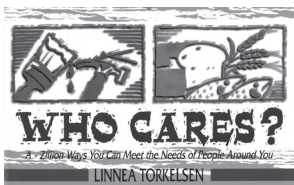
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Youth Ministries Coordinator Job Description

Introduction

Jesus gave us clear instruction as to the importance of our young people when He said, “Whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:5, 10).

When His disciples would have sent the young people away, thinking that they were interrupting the important work of the Master, Christ said, “Let them come . . . for such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14). Teenagers form a precious, most important part of God’s church. They are not only the “church of the future,” but also the church of the present.

Christ created the church to be a fellowship where people share in a common purpose and help one another grow in faith. The New Testament describes the church as “. . . his body, the fullness of him who filleth everything in every way” (Eph. 1:22). God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and supportive community with one another.

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is “a kingdom of priests” (I Peter 2:9). Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. Each Christian is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

As youth coordinator, you are a minister called by God to a particular and vital. God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry – scripture, spiritual power, God’s character, and spiritual gifts. He will supply your needs as you assume this important responsibility!

Duties of the Youth Coordinator

The following duties are included in your responsibilities:

- 1. Chair the youth ministries committee.** You will want to meet with those who nurture youth in Sabbath school, the Adventist Youth Society and any other youth ministries of the church, such as choir and summer camp. The agenda at these meetings should include the scheduling of all activities, fund raisers and trips for the year and a discussion of the Bible curriculum in Sabbath school. Together you can reduce overlap, look for gaps in programs, and coordinate

efforts. Your leadership should encourage a cooperative spirit in which all of the leaders of the various programs work together.

- 2. Planning and ideas.** In consultation with individual leaders and in the meetings of the youth ministries committee, you have a wonderful opportunity to spark new ideas. It is your responsibility to work with the program leaders and to draw together an overall plan and budget for a comprehensive youth ministries program for your church.

- 3. Program administration.** You will represent the interests of youth ministries to the church board, the pastor, the church ministries council, the youth Sabbath school leader, leaders of youth groups, and the church treasurer.

- 4. Information.** You are the primary source of information about youth ministries to the congregation. You should put together a calendar listing all youth activities and events for the local church and see that these events get advertised in the church bulletin and newsletter. Keep an up-to-date, permanent record of all the youth in grades 9-12 who are members of the church and also non-members who have attended outreach programs or visited Sabbath school. Also, provide information to your leaders about training events and new resources.

- 5. Age level specialist.** Because spiritual development is linked to intellectual and physical development, people are divided into developmental levels when their spiritual nurture is planned. Since this is related to chronological age, these developmental levels are often called “age levels” or “grade levels.” You can help teachers and leaders understand how to organize activities for this specific age level. You are responsible for conducting a needs assessment among the teens in the congregation and the community, and helping the leaders of youth activities understand these needs. You will want to support church leaders, while at the same time safeguarding the enthusiasm of the youth for whom you are responsible.

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Youth Sabbath School Leader Ministry Description

Introduction

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Paul describes the church as Christ's "body" (Ephesians 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church.

You experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church; the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. Thus, the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is "a kingdom of priests" (I Peter 2:9). Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. A youth leader, like any other church officer, is a ministering servant of God.

As a youth ministry leader it is important that you see teens as an important part of the present church, not just the church to come.

Duties of the Youth Sabbath School Leader

Although the program varies from church to church, the ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes the leader of the youth division of the Sabbath school can best be described in the following ways:

- 1. Planning.** You will provide leadership for the youth Sabbath school by bringing together a team of assistants and teenagers who will help plan and implement the group's activities. This includes overseeing the schedule of leadership, special programs, and teaching. It is vital that this group meet together at least once a quarter to brainstorm, make decisions, and create the calendar for the next few months. Learn to delegate.

- 2. Spiritual helper.** Teenagers whose trust you have won will come to you with questions and personal problems. This may occasionally require that you act as a bridge between troubled teenagers and their parents. If you really care, they will be able to see it. Often people at this age are very shy and you will want to preserve their dignity. Listening skills are important!

- 3. Teaching.** Unless you are in a very large church, it will often be your job to teach the Sabbath school lesson. On occasion you should schedule others to teach so there is more participation. Skills in group process and learning styles are essential to this task. It takes adequate preparation time. You cannot expect to minister effectively to the needs of teenagers if you simply glance over the teaching materials at the last minute. The North American Division Sabbath school curriculum for teens is quite demanding because it deals with the difficult issues of life: sexuality, occupations, the meaning of life, death and dying, ethics, etc. You cannot teach it with casual preparation. You cannot significantly touch the lives of your teens by finding an “easier” set of materials to use.

- 4. Building a sense of community.** It will be your work to create an atmosphere that is friendly, comfortable and safe, where God is praised, but where no question need remain unasked. The goal of the youth Sabbath school leader is to bring together a cluster of awkward teenagers and help them become real friends. Relational skills are key in this process. Smiles and expressions of caring are very important! Even the most shy person warms to a smile. Some of the more gregarious ones benefit from a hug. In most situations, a handshake or touch to the shoulder to accompany the warm smile shows you care. You must not be afraid to be vulnerable. Teenagers can be intimidating because of their directness and often rebellious behavior. Unless you are open and accepting in your manner, you will not be able to lead this age group.

- 5. Commitment.** Next to your commitment to have God’s presence in every aspect of your life, your commitment to serve your church is perhaps the most important one you will make. It is just as important as your vocational and relational commitments. Group members need to know they can depend on you and that your attendance and participation will be regular.

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