

Ten Things That Will Empower Your Youth Ministry Programs

1. Have a clear vision. Spend time visioning for the highest quality program you can imagine and then create a plan to bring it into manifestation.

- Create a team to create the vision.
- Prioritize items and create a plan of action.
- Involve the entire congregation in holding the vision.
- Implement the plan.

2. Value the children and teens. Recognize that they are members of your current congregation and deserve respect and to have a place to share who they are. They deserve the same time, space, staffing and budget considerations as the adult ministry.

- Validate children as individuals of worth—just as Jesus did.
- Let your children and church know how much you value kids. Greet them at eye-level and honor them for who they are and what they bring.
- Recognize that we are all exploring and learning together.

3. Good Communication. Let people know what is happening in your programs. Help them to understand how you are contributing to the spiritual growth and unfoldment of each student. Invite people to support the vision.

- Talk about your ministry with your minister other staff members, volunteers, parents, the community and the children.
- Create displays showing your programs in action.
- Share with the adults, each Sunday, what the children/teens are doing/experiencing.

4. Promote your what you offer. Share what you are doing and how you are growing and evolving. Get people excited about your programs so that they will tell others.

- Create a youth ministry flyer for your welcome packet.
- Create a parent's handbook and a teacher's handbook.
- Create an on-line newsletter.
- Add pages to your ministry's web-site that give details of what you offer.

5. Create age appropriate spaces. Fill your rooms with furnishings that are age appropriate. Make sure the rooms are clean and bright and fully stocked. Show that the children/teens are wanted, loved, and honored.

- Walk through your children's space twice.
- Evaluate it from an adult's viewpoint, then from a child's perspective. List needs and make changes!

6. Be a Team Player: Stay connected to the minister and board. Attend weekly staff meetings so you know what is going on in other parts of the ministry and they know what is going on in your area.

- Enlist ministry volunteers to help with special projects.
- Don't try to do it all yourself. Have a team mentality and invite others to assist you.
- Recognize that you are part of a ministry team. Youth ministry is not an island unto itself.

7. Develop a family ministry. The primary shapers of a child's development are parents and immediate family. Create resources and events that encourage the learning/exploration to continue at home.

- Create ministry events that give families an opportunity to get to know one another.
- Develop ministries to reach the entire family, such as home visitation, parent-training courses or family-crisis counseling.

8. Train your volunteers. Create a straight and clear path for volunteers to join your program. People are more likely to volunteer if they know what is expected of them, that resources will be provided and that they will receive training and support.

- Require back ground checks.
- Create a spiritual educator's application
- Offer regular meetings and trainings
- Support them
- Ask for commitment

9. Show your gratitude. Everyone wants to feel needed and valued. You do. And so do the people who help make your ministry possible. People will go the extra mile for someone who appreciates them.

- Take time monthly to thank those who have helped make your programs possible.
- Acknowledge the parents for their willingness to bring their children on a regular basis.
- Thank the children/teens for joining you in the fun.

10. Be mindful. The most dangerous threat to any ministry is "neglect." Stay present to both the needs of your ministry and of your personal needs.

- Stay connected to what is happening in the whole ministry and address the issues that affect your program in a pro-active way.
- Keep holding the vision of what you want to be happening.
- Take care of yourself in all ways. Keep up a daily prayer life.