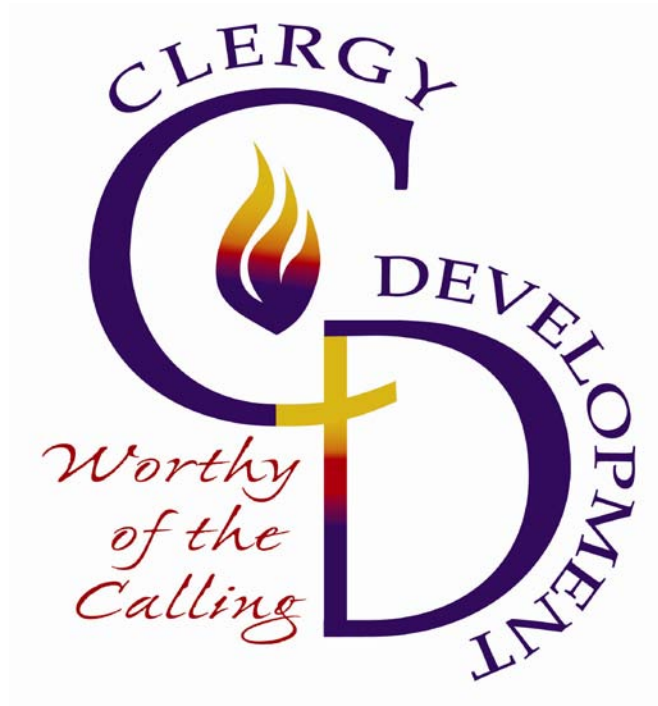

Faculty Guide

Developing Youth Ministry



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Lenexa, Kansas
913-577-0500 (USA)
2009

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, of all creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people, the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ, through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people in a form that is referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe that God calls and that persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled and amazed by God's call. The *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual, Church of the Nazarene*, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful

preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, “preparation” never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1:7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the “mystery of God,” which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to “make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach “the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1:5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one’s charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward’s principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a “job.” It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ’s Church. The person who embraces God’s call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister’s stewardship must be should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to “shun” the love of money. Instead, the minister must “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.” He or she must “fight the good fight of the faith” and “take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called” (1 Tim 6:11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes that “the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; ‘in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left’ (2 Cor 6:6-7)” (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ “must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching . . . able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God’s Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world that He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ’s Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation—one’s education in all its dimensions—for ministry in Christ’s Church should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe that the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe that God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect that those

standards be observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe that Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules that comprise the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

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Introduction

Intended Use of This Faculty Guide

This Faculty Guide serves as an instructor's guide for teaching principles of *Developing Youth Ministry* to adult learners who are preparing for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The content is based on intended outcomes defined through the collaborative process conducted at Breckenridge, CO, USA, between 1990 and 1997. The materials prepare the pastor-teacher to present the topic by providing background reading, lesson plans, lectures, instructions to the teacher, and teaching resources for each class session. In the lessons complete lectures, questions for guided discussions, and defined learning activities are provided.

The pastor-teacher who will lead this module should hold a master's degree. Ideally, the pastor-teacher should have participated as a student in a module using this material prior to teaching the material to others. This Faculty Guide assumes that the pastor-teacher has some basic understanding of youth ministry.

It is further assumed that learners participating in a module using this material will be high school graduates and be adult learners beyond the traditional college age. Learners are assumed to be motivated to learn, and to have adult life-experiences. No prior college classroom experience is assumed on the part of the learners.

Acknowledgments

Every module is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the module for publication. This module is not different. Many people have contributed to this module. Every effort has been made to accurately represent the original intent of the principal contributors.

Principal Contributors

The principal contributors for this module are:

Rev. Dean G. Blevins, Ph.D. (Module editor and compiler): Professor of Christian Education and Director of the Master of Christian Education, Nazarene

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Sylvia Cortez: Director of Discipleship Ministries at Point Loma Nazarene University. Sylvia has served alongside young adults for over nine years in the area of spiritual formation.

Rev. Dave Curtiss: USA Canada Coordinator for NYI, has over 35 years experience in ministry, including twenty-six years as a youth pastor, and a leader in professional youth ministry. He is a much-sought after conference and retreat speaker as well as author of over 100 articles for publications and professional journals.

Rev. Rick Edwards: Professor, Foundations of Youth Ministry, European Nazarene College, Pastor of Christian Formation, Christ Community Church of the Nazarene, Olathe, Kansas. In addition to youth ministry, Rick served 12 years as editor and writer of youth curriculum for the Church of the Nazarene.

Rev. Jamie Gates, Ph.D.: Director, Center for Justice and Reconciliation; Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work Point Loma Nazarene University. Having been raised in South Africa during the difficult Apartheid years, Jamie continues to study and work towards justice and reconciliation as core theological and social concerns.

Rev. James K. Hampton, Ph.D.: Associate Professor of Youth Ministry, Asbury Theological Seminary. Jim has served the church as a local church youth pastor, a denominational leader (NYI), co-founder of a youth publishing company (Barefoot Ministries), and now as a professor teaching youth ministry and practical theology.

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served as youth pastor at Shawnee Church of the Nazarene for 11 years. His current research interests include Christian religious education, postmodern curriculum theory, and videogame studies.

Rev. Mark Holcomb: Professor of Christian Education and Regional Youth Ministry Coordinator Olivet Nazarene University. After Mark served as a local church youth pastor for 23 years, he moved to Olivet in 2004 where he teaches in the area of youth ministry. He is program director of the MA in Youth Ministry, and mentors students called to a life of ministry. He has served as the Chairman of the USA/Canada Council and Global NYI Vice President since 2005.

Rev. Ron Jackson: MidAmerica Nazarene University Director of Community Life, Adjunct Professor in Youth Ministry. Ron is a 30-year veteran in youth ministry having served full time in churches in Alabama, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas.

Rev. Simon Jothi: Academic Dean of South Asia Nazarene Bible College and visiting lecturer for South India Biblical Seminary. Simon served as youth pastor for nine years and is now actively involved in ministerial preparation for South Asia.

Rev. Michael A. Kipp: Assistant Professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Northwest Nazarene University. Prior to his current position at NNU, Mike spent 11 years as a youth pastor in California, Kansas, and Idaho.

Rev. Jon Middendorf: Senior Pastor of Oklahoma City First Church of the Nazarene and teaches theology at Southern Nazarene University. Jon has served as a youth pastor, Pastor of Student Ministries, consultant and coordinator of Big Picture Youth Ministry Training—a ministry to train and encourage professional and volunteer youth workers.

Rev. Bruce Oldham, Ed.D.: Professor of Christian Education, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Bruce served as teaching faculty and department chair for Christian Education (2002-07).

Rev. Rudolph A. Prescod: Caribbean Nazarene College. Rudolph (Rudy) and his wife Barbara served as Pastors on the Demerara/Essequibo District—Guyana from 1985 until June 2004. They moved from their native country Guyana in 2004 to serve as Director of Admissions at Caribbean Nazarene College, Santa Cruz, Trinidad.

Revision History

Second Quarter 2009. Revision 1, the current version,

- The Lesson Overview, Introduction, Body, Close format was established.

Intended Outcomes for the Module

The *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* define educational preparation for ordination. Additionally, each region of the International Church of the Nazarene has developed educational guidelines to qualify educational programs for ordination offered within their region.

The USA Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* defines outcomes for the overall ministerial development program. The module assists candidates in developing these skills. Other modules in the program may also address the same outcomes. The specific outcomes that relate to this module are:

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

CP25—Ability to prepare, organize, and deliver a biblically sound, basic scheme of teaching and discipleship formation using youth techniques and skills in culturally appropriate ways

CP26—Ability to develop and utilize existing youth ministry forms by which individuals, families, and congregations may be formed into Christlikeness

CP27—Ability to assess and implement emerging youth ministry approaches to ministry in light of enduring theological (Bible, doctrine, philosophy) and contextual (history, psychology, sociological) perspectives

About This Module

A module is composed of two major works—a Faculty Guide and a Student Guide. Both are necessary for the whole body of information and learning activities pertaining to the module topic. You will need a copy of both.

We have tried to design this module to be flexible and easy to adapt to your situation. You as the instructor will need to be familiar with the information, activities,

questions, and homework that are provided in both works. In some cases you may need to modify the illustrations or questions to meet the needs of your group.

Rationale

There is no doubt that youth ministry represents the fastest growing arena of congregational care and service in the last half century. The phenomenon began primarily in North America, but has grown as a global concern within the Church of the Nazarene. While ministry “to” youth—primarily through local youth groups—seems to be a recent church event—beginning in the mid-19th century—ministry “by” and “with” youth extends back to the early church. One might argue that young people bring a visionary role to the church, often living and leading at the forefront of revival and church renewal throughout the history of Christianity. Providing sound ministerial leadership that both guides and empowers youth remains a crucial task for local congregations. All too often youth leadership must rely on entrepreneurial, independent, ministry training, often inconsistent with Wesleyan Holiness teaching and practice. This module attempts to provide a comprehensive approach for a theologically grounded, faithful, ministry with young people for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Note from the Original Authors

This module represents the diligent work of more than fourteen youth ministry educators across the globe. The lessons were designed by both seasoned and emerging youth educators working individually and collectively on this project. As with most multi-authored work, the curriculum offers a diverse range of insights and methods that often overlay each other with common themes and concerns. While not uniform in design, the module offers a united desire to shape and empower future youth leaders in their ministry both to and with young people.

The Principle contributor for each lesson was:

- Lesson 1—Dean Blevins
- Lesson 2—Mark Hayse
- Lesson 3—Mike Kipp
- Lesson 4—Blevins/Hampton
- Lesson 5—Blevins/Hampton
- Lesson 6—Jim Hampton
- Lesson 7—Sylvia Cortez
- Lesson 8—Mike Kipp
- Lesson 9—Deirdre Brower-Latz

Lesson 10—Jon Middendorf
Lesson 11—Simon Jothi
Lesson 12—Mark Holdomb
Lesson 13—Jamie Gates
Lesson 14—Rick Edwards
Lesson 15—Ron Jackson
Lesson 16—Sylvia Cortez
Lesson 17—Bruce Oldham
Lesson 18—Rudy Prescod
Lesson 19—Rudy Prescod
Lesson 20—Dave Curtiss

Module Development

One reason for developing this module is for the benefit of extension education. We understand that teachers all over the world are called upon to teach courses that are not in their area of specialty, but they teach them because they want to see pastors trained and leaders developed for the church. Extension education is basic to rapid church growth. We want to provide this as a resource for extension educators. If it helps others along the way, that's fine too.

Another reason for developing this module is to equip indigenous faculty. We believe that a class like this is best taught and contextualized by someone from within the culture of the students. There are many fine teachers who are leaders in our churches around the world who do not have higher degrees in theology but who have the skills to teach a module like this effectively. We want to set them free to do so, and in so doing, to actually improve the module and make it more dynamic and meaningful for their context than it would have been had we held on to it and insisted on teaching it ourselves.

About This Faculty Guide

Note: It is critical to remember that active participation by the learners will enhance their learning. That means you will not be an information-giver. This module is not about you. The focus of the module is helping students learn. Your role is to design an environment in which your students will learn. Sometimes you will give lectures. At other times you will guide discussions or assign your students to work in groups. These kinds of activities keep the participants actively involved in the learning process. Learning is a team activity.

The Faculty Guide has been written to guide an instructor as he or she prepares to teach this module. It contains complete lesson plans to provide a solid educational design for the topic. You will need to prepare for each lesson well in advance of the meeting time. Often there are background reading suggestions for the instructor or you may know additional reference materials you want to interject into the lesson.

A two-column format was chosen for the Faculty Guide. The right-hand column contains the contents of the lectures, descriptions of activities, and questions to keep students involved. Questions that are intended to

be answered or discussed by the students are in italic type. The left-hand column is to give suggested instructions to you, the teacher. It also contains examples you can use to illustrate concepts in the lectures. Whenever possible you should use examples from your own experience and from your students' real-life context.

Large white space has been left in the left column to allow you to write notes and personalize the Faculty Guide.

The Faculty Guide has two major components: the Faculty Guide Introduction, and the Lesson Plans. You are reading the Faculty Guide Introduction now. It provides a teaching philosophy for adult learners, background information for organizing the module, and ideas about conducting the lessons.

Each lesson of the Faculty Guide is numbered with a two-part page number. Page 5 of Lesson 3 would be numbered "3-5." The first number is the lesson number and the second is the page number within the lesson.

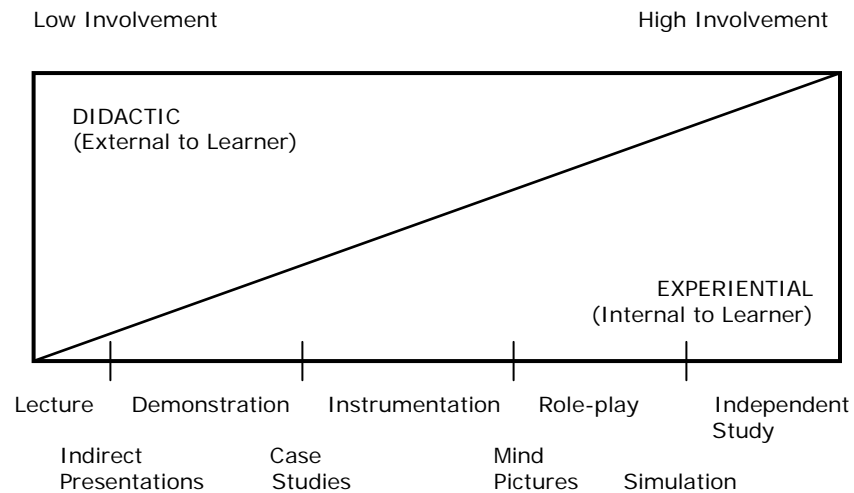
The Lesson Plans are complete in themselves. They contain an Overview, Introduction, Body, and Close. The Lesson Overview provides you with a planning tool for preparing and conducting each lesson.

The Lesson Introduction should get participants' attention, bring accountability for homework, orient them to the place this lesson holds in the overall module, define the intended objectives, and prepare them for the learning activities.

The Lesson Body is the core message of the lesson. The key is to keep the learners actively involved. Even in lectures, ask questions that prompt learners to think about the content not just hear the lecture.

The following chart shows a continuum of learner involvement in different teaching methods. Lecture requires the least learner involvement, and independent study requires the most learner involvement.

METHODS CONTINUUM



A variety of learning activities are used to present information and allow learners to experiment with their new knowledge. Each individual has a set of preferred methods of learning and he or she has different life-experiences that can color or filter what he or she actually learns. A variety of learning activities help adults adapt to the learning task—by hearing, by doing, by reading, by discussing, or by combinations of these. The learners should have opportunities to test and clarify their new learning by talking with the instructor and other participants, and applying new knowledge in real or contrived situations as soon as possible.

The Lesson Close provides a time for answering questions, reviewing the information, connecting this lesson to future lessons, making assignments, and punctuating the finish. The close does not provide any new information but gives a sense of closure to the lesson.

Homework assignments are important learning activities. They provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize classroom learning. Working on these assignments also extends the learning experience beyond the time constraints of class time.

The student—especially the adult student—needs frequent and timely feedback about his or her learning. While interaction with other students helps the learner refine what he or she is learning, feedback from the instructor is also critical to the quality of his or her

learning and ultimately to his or her persistence in the Course of Study.

It is your responsibility as the instructor for this module to provide students with timely responses to homework assignments in order to enhance the learning process. Ideally, homework should be returned at the beginning of the next lesson. Reviewing and responding to homework will also provide you with critical information about what your students are learning and how well the teaching-learning process is succeeding.

Please note.

Since these modules are preparing the learner for ordination rather than leading to a university degree, a letter grade may not be appropriate. Your response to the learners' assignments should be thoughtful and in most cases it should be written. Its purpose will always be to refine and enhance the learning of the student.

Letter grades will not be issued at the end of the module as a measure of completion. Completion of the module is based on attendance, participation, completion of all homework, and showing competence in the ability statements.

Recommendations for printing. You may print this Faculty Guide if desired. The introduction and lesson plan segments are formatted for printing on both sides of the paper. The Student Guide can also be printed and can be printed either on one or two sides.

About the Student Guide

The Student Guide for this module contains the series foreword, acknowledgments, syllabus, all resources, lesson objectives, and assignments. The Student Guide should be made available to each student in either hard copy or electronic format.

Each resource sheet in the Student Guide is numbered at the top for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1." In the Faculty Guide, in the left-hand column, you will be informed when to refer to the appropriate resource.

The first page for each lesson

- Reminds the student of the assignments that are due
- States the learner objectives
- Gives instructions for the homework assignment
- Sometimes includes relevant quotes

For each lesson, there are several support pieces, which we have called simply “resources.” They help guide the flow of the lesson. Some resources are basic outlines that guide the student through a lecture. Others direct small-group activities. For some lessons, data/statistic resources are given. And for some modules homework assignment information resources are included.

You must determine how each resource will be used in your context. If an overhead projector is available, then transparencies can be made. Resources also can be used as part of a PowerPoint presentation.

The instructor may photocopy resources to use for his or her own lecture outlines. There is space to add notes from the Faculty Guide, from a textbook, or from the additional suggested readings. Add in your own illustrations too!

Suggested Meeting Schedule

The module lessons are designed to last 90 minutes each. Each lesson is complete in itself with an opening, a middle, and a closing. They are sequential. Each lesson assumes the learners have mastered material presented in previous lessons. The lessons can be grouped in a variety of ways to accommodate the schedules of your learners.

When lessons are taught in the same meeting, instructors will need to adjust homework assignments because participants will not have time between lessons to prepare homework. It is very important for the instructor to always be looking ahead and planning for upcoming lessons.

Here are three suggestions—out of many—for ways that the meetings can be organized.

1. Resident campus: The class can meet two days a week for 90 minutes. Present one lesson per meeting time. Total time: 10 weeks.
2. Extension education: The class can meet one day—or evening—each week for 3 to 3 1/2 hours. Present two lessons per meeting with a break period between lessons. Participants will need to travel to a centralized location for meetings, so make it worth their time. Total time: 10 weeks.
3. Intensive module: Meet for one week. Present two lessons in the morning and two lessons in the afternoon. All reading would need to be done in

advance of the week of classes and all homework would be due 2-3 months after the week of classes. Total time: 3 months. Also, it might be possible to conduct 3 lessons on a single day (Saturday)—1 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. Total time: 7 weeks.

Date	Lesson
	1. Introduction to Youth Ministry
	2. Cultural and Social Contexts for Youth Ministry
	3. Psychological and Developmental Influences in Youth Ministry
	4. Biblical and Theological Foundations of Youth Ministry
	5. History of Youth Ministry
	6. Philosophical Foundations of Youth Ministry
	7. The Youth Minister's Relationship with God
	8. The Youth Minister's Relationship with Others
	9. The Youth Minister's Relationship within the Body of Christ
	10. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Worship
	11. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Witness and Evangelism
	12. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Nurturing and Teaching
	13. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Compassion and Service
	14. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Community and Fellowship
	15. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Simplicity and Retreat
	16. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Offering Direction
	17. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Pastoral Care
	18. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Equipping Leaders
	19. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Empowering Youth
	20. Youth Ministry Craft—The Legacy of Long-term Ministry

Recommended Textbooks

Each module within the Modular Course of Study is intended to be textbook independent. This does not imply that the modules are textbook irrelevant or that the module content cannot be enriched by selecting and requiring that students study a textbook along with the lessons provided in this faculty guide.

If these modules are adapted for use outside of the English-speaking countries of North America, a specific textbook may not be available in the language of the students. Therefore, the module does not rely on one textbook. The instructor may select any doctrinally sound textbook that is available to the students.

This is not to suggest that you would use three textbooks, but that if you would like to incorporate a textbook into the curriculum one of these would be recommended.

Recommended text

Burns, Jim with Mark DeVries. *Uncommon Youth Ministry: Your Onramp to Launching an Extraordinary Youth Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2008. Originally Published as Jim Burns &

Mark DeVries. *The Youth Builder* Ventura CA: Gospel Light. 2001.

Dean, Kenda Creasy, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn, Eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001.

Dean, Kenda Creasy and Ron Foster. *The Godbearing Life, the Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998.

A Hidden Agenda

Hidden curriculum issues . . . because the way we teach teaches

In each session, there are certain methodological and environmental things to consider.

First, consider the classroom arrangement. Whenever possible, the room should be arranged to encourage a sense of community. The group should sit either in a circle or around a table. If the group is very large, chairs can be arranged for easily moving into clusters for discussion.

Second, consider how you present yourself as teacher. Standing behind a lectern with your students facing you in rows says that you are above the students and have something to give them—although in a very large group this standing to teach may be unavoidable. Sitting as part of the circle makes the teacher a co-learner at the same level as the students. Speak naturally. Pay close attention to your students, and value the things they share. Learn their names. Encourage participation. Remember that you are modeling for them, and the way you teach will teach them far more than the words you say.

Third, invite the Holy Spirit's presence in the classroom. Do this each time the class meets.

Fourth, the sharing of stories activity does more than help the students begin to reflect on their own Christian experiences. It is a way to build community between the students. This is more than an exercise to be checked off. It is vital to set the tone of your intentional community.

When meeting times exceed 90 minutes, consider adding break times. The break between segments is an important time for community building. Remain available to the students during this time. Consider

offering coffee or tea during this time as a way to encourage fellowship.

Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Ministerial Preparation Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in every module in which you participate. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

The Syllabus contains this explanation of journaling. Journaling provides the spiritual formation component for the module and is an integral part of the learning experience.

Journaling is an effective way to get students to think beyond the classroom to real-life applications of classroom concepts.

Have students read the journaling section during the Syllabus review in Lesson 1 and emphasize that journaling is an assignment for each lesson in the module.

When giving assignments in each lesson, assign journal writing each time the group meets.

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your

candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, and aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available. However, as computers become more and more an integral part of our lives, the use of a computer for journaling may take on that special bond.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over

each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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Lesson 1

Introduction to Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:20	Introducing Youth Ministry—A Ministry, A Method, A Map	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 1-1
0:30	Practical Theology—A Method of Reflection	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 1-2 Resource 1-3 Resource 1-4
0:50	The Map of Youth Ministry Education	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 1-5
1:10	Identifying Strengths and Challenges	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 1-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dean, Kenda Creasy. "Fessing Up: Owning Our Theological Commitments." In Kenda Creasy Dean Chap Clark and Dave Rahn, Eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001, 27-36.

Regional Sourcebook and/or *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordained Ministers* (1999, revised 2005), Church of the Nazarene. Available online (accessed 06/28/2008) at

<http://nazarenepastor.org/ClergyEducation/DistResource/Sourcebooks/tabid/74/Default.aspx>

Section 424-425.2 *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene 2005-09. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House. Available online (accessed 06/28/2008) at <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/gensec/2005-09Manualtrans/display.aspx>

White, David F. *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2005, 88-199.

Woodward, James and Stephen Pattison, eds. *The Blackwell Reader In Pastoral and Practical Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000, 1-19.

Lesson Introduction

(20 minutes)

Getting Acquainted

Give each student a moment to introduce themselves to the class. Ask them to briefly give their name and ministry context. Tell them that they will have additional time to introduce themselves later.

Invite the students to meet together in pairs. Ask them to introduce themselves to each other and discuss the questions. Encourage them to write their answers on a piece of paper that they can keep. You may want to write the questions on a board, flipchart, or PowerPoint, before the start of class.

Bring the class together and ask for one or two insights from each category. Place the answers on a board or flipchart if possible.

Spend a few minutes looking at the Student Guide and the class requirements, especially if this is the first module that the students have encountered.

1. What was the major influence in your life that led to your call?
2. What key knowledge do we need to possess before we work with youth as ministers?
3. Name three basic skills or abilities necessary for ministry to or with youth?
4. Does any of this knowledge or these skills change if we move from one ministry setting to another?

Orientation

This lesson incorporates both a general introduction to the scope of youth ministry education and a basic method of theological reflection known as practical theology. You will have opportunity to assess your readiness for ministry.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- possess preliminary knowledge of co-learners' assumptions concerning youth ministry
- model the method of theological reflection in practical theology
- understand the importance of the four Cs in youth ministry
- demonstrate a preliminary understanding of the rest of the module in light of their own capabilities

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Introducing Youth Ministry—A Ministry, A Method, A Map

(10 minutes)

Kenda Creasy Dean, Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004, 1-69.

Entering into youth ministry brings a person into the very “heart” of the church. Young people represent not only the future of the church but also the congregation’s present “heartbeat.” Kenda Creasy Dean, professor of youth ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary, notes that youth often supply the kind of passion that gives life to the congregation, fresh visions of what the church can accomplish for the Kingdom of God and compassionate care for people that often challenge the limits of other members in the church.

Youth also display an emerging independence, the ability to be both weak and strong at any given moment. At times youth seem more fragile, like children, needing extreme protection and guidance. At other times young adults demonstrate a kind of seasoned maturity and resiliency that allows them to meet challenges more mature adults struggle to overcome. No longer fully dependent on adults, but not completely independent of adult guidance and support, youth provide a type of “semi-dependence” that allows them to exercise their gifts while relying on the guidance of others. Youth embody the term “relational.” In their most independent moments they still recognize the need to be in relationship with other people. In their weaker times they recognize that relationships support their lives during tough moments.

Refer to Resource 1-1 in the Student Guide.

In one sense youth ministry, as ministry, seeks to help youth define the quality of their relationships through the Gospel, so relationships may be understood as holiness or Christ-likeness. Youth ministry focuses on work both for and with youth. Following the Apostle Paul’s confidence in Timothy we can say with confidence “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Tim 4:12).

Ask students if there is wording in other translations that they prefer.

Youth ministry involves supporting youth in areas where they still depend on adult guidance, but also empowering youth to live out their own Christian lives

Have the board or flipchart available where the answers were written down.

Allow for response and discussion.

to the fullness of their potential, in their witness, their lives, their loves, their faith and their purity.

Review your answers from the beginning of class.

How many of these answers focus on supporting youth (particularly in areas where they are not yet fully self-reliant) and how many answers focus on empowering youth?

Which of these answers support the goal of living Christ-like relationships? Why?

What do we need to add to our list to make our approach more comprehensive, more faithful, to the role of the youth minister as one who both supports and empowers Christ-like relationships with youth?

Lecture/Discussion: Practical Theology—A Method of Reflection

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 1-2 in the Student Guide.

Throughout this course you will discover various insights on the nature of youth ministry. Hopefully the lessons will provide you with resources and skills to be a better minister with young people. Before moving to the rest of the module, however, there are two basic approaches that undergird most of your ministry.

- The first approach represents a particular way of thinking about ministry—and even about life—that takes God seriously in everything we do. This approach, or “method” of reflection, frames our thoughts and decisions about faithful ministry practice.
- The second approach involves gathering a basic understanding of the different competencies needed for a comprehensive understanding of ministry. This approach actually provides a basic framework, or a “map,” for organizing the different aspects of ministry into a coherent plan.

Let’s first look at the method. This class began with a discussion of your working knowledge of youth ministry. In a sense we began with our personal experiences and then began to raise questions through our reflection about what we considered important for the sake of ministry with youth. The lecture then provided a definition of youth ministry that included both a definition of youth and a Christian goal for youth ministry. We were asked to assess how well we did in light of this broader definition and to envision what else we needed to add to make our view of ministry more faithful. Our opening exercise actually

modeled the method that guides all youth ministry, a method known as practical theology.

Woodward, James and Stephen Pattison, Eds. The Blackwell Reader In Pastoral and Practical Theology. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000, 1-18.

Editors James Woodward and Stephen Pattison note the term “practical theology” describes both a domain within the broad field of theology as well as a particular method of theological reflection. When ministers use the term theology, they primarily describe a particular discipline of exploring and talking about the nature and actions of God in the world.

Christian theology begins with the assertion that God has been revealed in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ministers have sought to name the grace of God, offer salvation through Jesus Christ and discern the movement of the Holy Spirit in the world using the resources in scripture, in the historic core of Christian doctrines and the church’s ministry with people, as well as through the experiences of day-to-day Christian living. Over the years different specializations grew up around certain resources that inform our theology, our discernment of the being and activity of God.

McGrath, Alister E. McGrath Christian Theology: An Introduction 4th edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, 105-111.

Refer to Resource 1-3 in the Student Guide.

Different ministers and academic theologians began with a specific resource they used as the key source to begin theological reflection. Some ministers began by studying scripture and seeking to find correspondence between God’s actions in the Bible and the world today. Other ministers choose to focus on historical periods of the Church or specific Christian doctrines as a key resource and attempt to explain their meaning for today. Still other specialists focus on how we think, particular philosophies concerning life, and relate those philosophical reflections to Christian life and meaning. Other ministers choose to begin in the pastoral practice within the church or in the practical concerns of daily Christian living as the beginning point for seeing and understanding how God is at work today.

Like the overall framework of a house, all of these approaches provide the basic architecture of theology. Together they lift up important points for our consideration: scripture, church history, theological convictions, philosophical assumptions, pastoral concerns, and daily life.

Allow for response.

Can you name experiences in your life or in the church, when one of these approaches to theology—to exploring and talking about God in the world—was most evident?

Have you had classes or modules that represent one of these approaches?

Can you think of times when you discussed key scriptures, important historical events in the church, key Christian doctrines, philosophical assumptions in your thinking, pastoral concerns or just life in general?

Why are all of these approaches important?

In this class the final two approaches are most important. That does not mean that we ignore scripture, or church history, or doctrine. We will find that the “contents of the Christian faith” remain vital or else it will be hard for us to call our ministry a Christian ministry. However, the method we will employ begins in daily living and our pastoral responsibilities in the life of church. This method has proven a powerful resource for both youth ministers and youth alike. While we begin in everyday experience and ministry practice we also take advantage of the full experience provided within the life of faith as well as God’s revealed will found in scripture and the doctrine of the church. Nevertheless experience, while not the final teacher, becomes the context to shape our questions for learning.

Dean, 2001, 27-36; White, 89-199.

Kolb, David A. Experiential Learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984.

Refer to Resource 1-4 in the Student Guide.

First, we will be asked to start by naming our concrete experiences, seeking to name and **connect** their importance to challenge our understanding of their true meaning. We will then ask to **reflect** on those experiences, probing our assumptions and revealing what we think is the most important part of those activities.

Once we have explored fully the experiences of youth and our ministry with them, we will then bring the knowledge we have gained into direct conversation with Christian thought and historical practice. In this phase we will **detect and evaluate** our daily practice with the Christian faith, allowing our core Christian convictions to shape a more faithful ministry.

Then we will attempt to **project** what new ministry will look like that proves more faithful to the nature of God and what God is doing in the world and encourage you to implement this ministry. Obviously these new, more faithful, approaches to ministry create even newer experiences that we can then connect, reflect, connect and project once more to create an even deeper more mature approach to our ministry.

Lecture/Discussion: The Map of Youth Ministry Education

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 1-5 in the Student Guide. Read through the four descriptions.

Section 400, International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordained Ministers.

As our method of practical theology suggests, youth ministry does not occur in a vacuum. Every act of ministry must always be in conversation with the core of Christian convictions and in conversation with other skills and abilities necessary for ministry. The *Manual, Church of the Nazarene* lists the majority of these competencies in the section addressing education for all ministers under the general section on Ministry and Christian Service. The list includes four major categories.

The “big four” of Content, Competency, Character and Context describe the core domains that guide not only ministry preparation but also life-long learning. When you think about the range of material covered under these domains you realize that ministers can never master everything they need to know. Mastery is not the issue. Gaining basic competency should be the goal when we are entering ministry. We can then expand on our abilities throughout our ministry based on the wealth of knowledge God provides. Perhaps the key issue revolves around passion. Do we have the passion to give ourselves to these domains?

- When it comes to **Content**, do we have the passion to learn everything about the Christian faith that God has provided through scripture, doctrine, and Church history, particularly as they reveal God’s vision of holiness?
- When it comes to **Competency**, do we have the passion to develop all the skills we need to guide congregations as faithful ministers?
- When it comes to **Character** do we have the passion to allow God to shape and form our personal, moral, spiritual lives according to Christlikeness?
- When it comes to **Context**, do we have the passion to want to learn everything about people’s social/personal circumstances so that we can lead and minister faithfully?

If we can say “yes” to these questions, if we can acknowledge a godly passion for God and for others, then we will be able to engage these domains throughout our ministry as life-long learners—beginning today.

Allow for response.

Which of these domains seem to be emphasized the most in youth ministry?

Which of these domains represent the greatest challenge for youth ministers to develop a basic competency for ministry?

Which domain encourages ongoing life-long learning?

Lecture/Discussion: Identifying Strengths and Challenges

(15 minutes)

When we bring together our new practical theology method and our comprehensive map of ministerial preparation, we realize that, by rearranging the domains, we are left with a great resource for navigating youth ministry.

Refer to Resource 1-6 in the Student Guide. Spend some time going through the outline.

Rearranging the map of ministry preparation to match our method of practical theological reflection allows this course to provide a range of lessons that will help us become both accomplished practical theologians and competent youth ministers.

We begin with context, developing our ability to really understand the contexts that influence our ministry practice including culture and personal lives that youth live within. Reflecting critically and creatively on these contexts helps us to identify the opportunities and challenges we face as youth ministers. We can then bring this information directly into conversation with the very contents of faith that detect and evaluate our understanding of youth ministry via scripture, doctrine, history and even the philosophical assumptions that often influence our approach or model of youth ministry.

The outcome of this conversation then calls for two different forms of projecting ministry into basic abilities. First, we have to acknowledge how this information shapes who we are as ministers. In other words, we have to deal with our own spiritual journey and our relationship with God and those close to us as well as our strategies for youth ministry. Secondly, we begin to fashion the ministry practices, particularly those involved with discipleship and shepherding, forming and empowering youth and youth leaders for the sake of faithful discipleship. Since there are a number of these practices we will spend a lot of time

reviewing each of them, but all of these strategies and activities must be held in balance with our understanding of context, the Christian faith, and our own personal journey as ministers.

Allow for response.

Review the titles of our lessons. Which lessons seem most familiar?

Which titles represent the possibility of new information?

Rearranging the map of ministry preparation to match our method of practical theological reflection allows this course to provide a range of lessons that will help us become both accomplished practical theologians and competent youth ministers. In a sense we will begin the journey of lifelong learning even as we travel through the different lessons in this class. Hopefully we will see how even a module like this one begins to connect to the overall educational plan for ministry training. We will get a sense of what it means to be a well-rounded minister that works to nurture and empower youth into Christlike relationships, which is the ultimate goal of our ministry.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Have we accomplished the objectives?

- possess preliminary knowledge of co-learners' assumptions concerning youth ministry
- model the method of theological reflection in practical theology
- understand the importance of the four Cs in youth ministry
- demonstrate a preliminary understanding of the rest of the module in light of their own capabilities

Look Ahead

Next week we begin to explore the social context of youth in earnest.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Engage in the cycle of practical theology in a one-page writing exercise. First, imagine that you are in a discussion with your instructor. Select a particular experience in your ministry and "work through the cycle." Summarize the event in a paragraph or less so you both can read the information and your instructor has an idea of the context. Reflect on the implications of the ministry event, discuss the implications and key observations that emerge in your conversation and write down key thoughts in sentence form. Identify a scriptural passage or key theological doctrine that affirms or critiques your observations. Write another paragraph summary of this portion of connecting your ministry with the Christian faith. Finalize your paper by suggesting one or two action steps you can take the next time to make your ministry more faithful.

Spend time interviewing people in your church about what they believe ministers need to know (content and context), be (character), or do (competency) in order to be faithful youth pastors. Compare their observations with the overall plan for the class, what do they affirm as important for ministry? What seems to be missing? What does this exercise tell you about the church's expectations?

Spend time looking for items that you think represent the social world of young people. If you were to approach youth with “missionary eyes” treating youth subculture like a foreign land, what would you identify as representative of their culture? How would you define youth culture in your context? If you want to include young people in this exercise you might use Resource 1-7 to help them think about specific categories in youth culture. Since Youth's social context includes both community and parents, spend time identifying some of the major institutions in your community that influence the lives of young people. You may identify negative influences but try to identify as many positive influences that you can work with as a partner. What are the qualities that make up a positive, supportive institution? Summarize key points from this exercise.

Spend time talking with at least five parents of youth. Ask them what they consider are their key concerns for their children and for other youth. What do they look for from a good youth pastor? Write down a summary of your conversation

Read and complete Resources 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9. Bring them to the next lesson.

Write in your journal. Review the four domains of ministerial preparation. Which of these domains represent the greatest challenge for you in developing a basic competency for ministry? Which domain encourages ongoing life-long learning?

Punctuate the Finish

Paul writes a powerful challenge for all of us in youth ministry in the book of Ephesians. As you hear these words, how are you challenged in your understanding of what you need to prepare to be a faithful youth minister? The good news is that we might not have to do everything on our own, we are part of a church called to minister to and with youth. But we do have a goal that we are all called to by God's grace. As you hear these words let them be both a word of affirmation and a word of challenge for this week.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:11-16

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Lesson 2

Cultural and Social Contexts for Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Youth Ministry and Culture	Small Groups	Resource 2-1 Resource 1-7
0:20	Youth Ministry and Subculture	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-2 Resource 1-7 Resource 2-3
0:30	Youth Ministry and the Neighborhood Community	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-4
0:45	Youth Ministry and the Household Family	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-5
0:55	Youth Ministry and the Congregation	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-6 Resource 2-7
1:10	Youth Ministry and Asset Building	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Hampton, James and Mark Hayse. "A Different View of Family Ministry" [article online] Nashville: *Youthworker Journal*, 2003. Accessed 30 May 08. Available from http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/family/different_view.php. Internet.

Roehlkepartain, Eugene C. *Building Assets in Congregations: A Practical Guide for Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy*. Minneapolis, Search Institute, 1998, 33-35.

Rabey, Steve. "Investigating Teens, Pop Culture, and Spirituality" [article online] Nashville: *Youthworker Journal*, 2004. Accessed 16 June 08. Available from <http://www.youthspecialties.com/freeresources/articles/culture/teens.php>

Related articles from the Center for Youth and Family Ministry [website] Fuller Theological Seminary. Accessed 30 May 08. Available from <http://www.cyfm.net>. Internet.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on each student to respond to at least one of the questions.

Collect homework papers. Papers should be evaluated—giving ideas, suggestions, questions, comments and corrections. Homework should be evaluated and returned by the next lesson. However, a grade will not be assigned. Completion of the module is dependant on attendance, class participation, and achieving success with the outcomes/ability statements.

As part of your homework you were to talk to people in your church about what they expect youth pastors to "Know, Be, and Do."

What did they affirm as important for ministry?

What seems to be missing?

What does this exercise tell you about the church's expectations?

Orientation

In every youth ministry, youth are surrounded by multiple contexts:

- The context of culture
- The context of subcultures, especially youth subcultures
- The context of their neighborhood communities
- The context of their household families
- The context of their congregations

Effective youth ministry is aware of and responsive to the powerful influence of each of these contexts. At first, this may sound like an overwhelming task. However, by cultivating sensitivity and awareness, youth ministers can learn to understand, appreciate and harness the power of each of these contexts. This lesson is designed to aim the youth minister toward these goals.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand definitions for terms "culture" and "subculture"
- identify the range of social contexts that shape youth and their culture
- identify strategies for working with youth in their neighborhoods and within their families
- articulate why congregations are vital to healthy youth ministry

- identify the types of assets that help youth grow and mature

Motivator

Youth ministry must be biblically and theologically based. At the same time, youth ministry must be carefully shaped according to its immediate social and cultural contexts. Neither of these needs is more important than the other. Content alone cannot be understood and accepted unless it is contextualized.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Youth Ministry and Culture

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 2-1 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Allow for response.

Use Resource 2-1 as your guide as you work together. You will have about 10 minutes before we come back together to share ideas.

In light of the answers you created and the definitions offered, can you offer a preliminary but overall definition of culture?

How does this definition relate to the culture youth live in?

Lecture/Discussion: Youth Ministry and Subculture

(10 minutes)

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures, new edition*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1977, 35.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz believes that culture deeply and powerfully shapes every human being. He writes, "What man is may be so entangled with where he is, who he is, and what he believes, that it is inseparable from them." Put another way, culture is like the water in which fish swim. The fish simply takes the water for granted, but the fish is completely indebted to the water for life itself. In a similar way, culture surrounds all of us and affects the way we live our lives, but often without our conscious awareness of it.

Historically, God's people have resisted culture. The apostle Paul put it famously when he wrote, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:2). Certainly, culture does not often reflect the vision and values of the Kingdom of God. At those points, its influence should be resisted. However, God calls us to share Christ in a culturally effective way.

Think about it: isn't that what God did in sending Jesus to us? What could be more culturally effective than to reveal salvation to human beings through another human being? God's greatest work was not accomplished through an angel or another "other-

worldly" sign. Instead, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (Jn 1:14, TM). Culture itself is not the enemy of God's people. Instead, it is only some of the sinfully-aimed "powers and principalities" within culture that tempt God's people to do evil (Eph 6:12). Not all powers in culture are evil, because God has created them (Col 1:16). To summarize, God's people should carefully and critically assess the powers within culture, in order to determine whether or not to avoid or utilize them in the name of the Gospel of Christ.

Allow for response.

What aspects of your culture seem to be the most helpful and good for youth ministry?

What aspects of your culture seem to be the most harmful and bad?

Refer to Resource 2-2 in the Student Guide.

Youth develop a sense of identity—vision, values and commitments—by interacting with opposing forces within culture. They "construct" their selves out of cultural interactions, just as we all have done when growing up. This reality is not lost on the marketplace. Within a broader culture, subcultures are carefully mass-produced and marketed to youth who are hungry for identity. Sometimes, these subcultures are categorized together as "popular culture," because they are mass-produced, distributed and exchanged.

Henry A. Giroux and Roger I. Simon. Popular Culture, Schooling, and Everyday Life. Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1989, 226-227.

The beliefs, social forms, symbols and signs of these subcultures may be touched (such as clothes or toys), spoken (such as slogans or slang), seen (such as corporate logos or cartoon characters), heard (such as music or sound effects), or smelled (such as perfume or food). Culture is like a big field within which subcultures clash and collide. Subcultures define themselves by differing from the greater culture and from each other. Youth often prefer the symbols and language of one subculture over another.

Dick Hebdige, Subculture, the Meaning of Style. London, England: Methuen, 1979, 18.

Use Resources 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9 as the class discusses the questions.

Can you describe the beliefs, social forms, symbols and signs that accompany:

- *The subculture of "jocks" or athletic youth?*
- *The subculture of "tech-heads" or youth that enjoy technology?*
- *The subculture of "artists" or youth that prefer music and arts?*
- *Are there other youth subcultures in your settings? What terms do students use to categorize their friends in their setting?*

Can you name and describe any other subcultures that are represented within your own youth group?

In your youth group, how do members of one youth subculture tend to treat those of a different subculture?

Have you typically seen subcultures as enemies or allies to youth ministry? Explain what you mean.

The apostle Paul seemed to understand the value of contextualizing the Gospel of Jesus Christ within and among many cultures when he wrote:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (1 Cor 9:19-23).

The Gospel writers also seemed to understand the value of contextualization. For example, Matthew wrote a Gospel that presented Jesus in a way that easily connected with those of a Jewish context. In contrast, John presented Christ in a way that aimed at those of a Greek philosophical mindset.

Within youth ministry, there are good ways and not-so-good ways to present Christ to those of different subcultures. Cultural contextualization requires careful discernment.

Allow for a few quick responses.

If you were going to write an advice column about cultural and sub-cultural contextualization in youth ministry, what would you say?

Refer to Resource 2-3 in the Student Guide.

Here are some “dos and don’ts” to consider in youth ministry contextualization:

- Do take time to watch, listen, and learn about the subcultures of your youth. By doing so, you will show them that you care about the things that matter to them.
- Do participate in the activities of the subcultures of your youth. Try to be “in” their world without being “of” their world.
- Do show patience and do be slow to judge or criticize the subcultures of your youth. They may not be well equipped to tell the difference between

criticism of their subculture and criticism of themselves. If something about their subculture needs to be addressed, then ask them to talk and think with you about what they are doing. A thoughtful, careful conversation is generally more effective than scolding or shaming. Your mission is to help youth in thinking Christianly, not to coerce them into pleasing you or pleasing God on your own timetable.

- Don't assume that a single subculture (especially your own) is better or holier than the subcultures of your youth. The Gospel is trans-cultural, meaning that it can both work within and work despite any individual subculture.
- Don't pretend to be an "inside member" of a youth subculture. Instead, play the role of a curious, interested, visitor.
- Don't assume that all of the members of your youth group belong to the same subculture. If one or two subcultures are dominant, then you may need to go the extra mile to learn and value more about the minority subcultures in your youth group. If you fail to do so, then you may unintentionally teach that "weirdos" don't belong in the church, or that cultural conformity is godly. On the other hand, if you succeed in valuing the minority subcultures in your youth group, then you will teach your youth that everyone belongs in the Kingdom of God.
- In his article entitled, "Investigating Teens, Pop Culture, and Spirituality", Steve Rabey of *Youthworker Journal* says it well when he writes that "the goal of being a youth minister is not trying to be cool by knowing everything, but trying to be open to learning about it and modeling how you adopt a lens of faith through which you see popular culture and everything else in your life. Your job isn't to know everything, but to help young people interpret what they see within the framework of their faith, so that they can make connections between their own experiences and their faith tradition"

<http://youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/culture/teens.php>

Lecture/Discussion: Youth Ministry and the Neighborhood Community

(15 minutes)

Like all communities, your neighborhood community reflects culture. It is likely that within your neighborhood, multiple subcultures are represented. In this case, however, those subcultures may be determined less by popular culture and more by age, ethnicity, and class.

Allow for response.

How would you describe the culture and subcultures of the neighborhood surrounding your congregation?

Like all communities, your neighborhood cares about its youth. Some members of your neighborhood see youth as a problem to be solved, while others see youth as an investment in the future.

How do you think that your neighborhood views its youth? Explain why you think so.

In some neighborhoods, congregations like yours take a very active and public leadership role while other congregations tend to focus more on the concerns of their own people.

Which of these does your congregation tend to do? Explain why you think so.

The neighborhood surrounding your congregation is both a mission field and a God-given resource for your congregation. It is a mission field because most certainly there are people in your neighborhood who are not a part of the Kingdom of God and who do not experience the hope of Christ at work in their lives. At the same time, your neighborhood is a God-given resource. According to the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace, God's grace is "freely bestowed upon all people" in your neighborhood, enabling them to embrace righteousness and good works" through Jesus Christ.

In short, God has placed people in your neighborhood who can and will nurture the healthy growth and development of youth—people with whom your congregation should partner. If your neighborhood and your community both care about youth, why not work together? Such strategic partnerships for youth ministry have the potential to build trust between your congregation and your neighborhood. Increased trust means increased opportunities for ministry, both inside and outside of your congregation.

Manual, Church of the Nazarene 2005-2009.

Allow students to brainstorm for a few minutes creating a list before looking at the resource.

What steps do you think you could take in order to strengthen the partnership between your neighborhood and your congregation?

Refer to Resource 2-4 in the Student Guide.

Eugene Roehlkepartain suggests the following (paraphrased) guidelines for building partnerships between congregations and neighborhoods:

- **Count the cost:** Be sure that a partnership will require a great investment, but be even more certain that the potential benefits are worth it.

- **Build bridges between “in-reach” and “out-reach” efforts:** If a competitive environment exists between resources for “our kids” (congregation) and “their kids” (community), then that must be first overcome.
- **Tie the partnership to your congregation’s strengths and values:** Unless your congregation can see that the partnership makes sense with its tradition and heritage, it is unlikely to maintain any commitment that it might make.
- **Begin by nurturing relationships:** Put your early emphasis on listening to each other, understanding each other, and building trust with each other. In short, earn the right to be heard.
- **Focus on common ground:** Focus your early efforts on helping all youth toward health, toward caring for others, and toward responsibility. If you target conversion right away, you will undermine the trust that is being built. In today’s culture, evangelism often arises out of relationships that have been carefully and lovingly built.
- **Involve the youth, the congregation, and the neighborhood in decision making:** In any true partnership, all stakeholders must take part in the planning and decision making processes. Partnerships are not *done for* others, but *done with* others.
- **Commit to the neighborhood:** Too often, congregations are willing to abandon neighborhoods for better places elsewhere. God has placed your congregation within your neighborhood for a reason. Find out what it is, and do it.
- **Keep it simple:** Start with short-term, bite-sized goals. Then build up to something bigger.
- **Put “neighborhood” into job descriptions:** Unless “partnership” or “neighborhood” is written into your ministry leadership positions, it probably won’t be addressed.
- **Be willing to change:** If you want to help the neighborhood become a healthy, safe place for youth, then the congregation must be willing to change as well.
- **Take the long view:** All partnerships take time to grow and deepen, especially when congregations are involved.

Roehlkepartain 1998, 149-154.

Allow for response.

Which of Roehlkepartain’s guidelines seem like they might be the most helpful among your youth group, congregation, and neighborhood right now?

Why?

For more suggestions on building youth ministry partnerships between your congregation and your neighborhood, read Eugene Roehlkepartain's book, *Building Assets in Congregations*, chapter seven.

See also the work of Carl Dudley and Nancy Ammerman. Both are globally recognized experts in mobilizing congregations for neighborhood ministry. Ammerman and Dudley have each written much on the subject. In particular, see their co-authored book, *Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities*. This resource was not written in an "ivory tower", but only as the result of their years in the field helping congregations. *Congregations in Transition* is full of proven methods for helping congregations to build vital connections with their neighborhoods.

Dudley, Carl S. and Nancy T. Ammerman. Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities, Jossey Bass, 2002.

Lecture/Discussion: Youth Ministry and the Household Family

(10 minutes)

Diana Garland. Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999, 83.

Garland, 1999, 84.

In her comprehensive work on family ministry, Diana Garland describes culture as "the family's story on who 'their people are.' " Later, she defines culture more technically as "the core values of those who share an identity with a place, a religion or membership in an ethnic or class group." To Garland, families are social contexts in which their members acquire shared behaviors, values, identity, and meaning. This process can be referred to either as "socialization" or "enculturation", and it is mediated through shared experience, tradition building, and story telling. Household families generally enjoy greater opportunity to influence the growth and development of youth than any other social or cultural institution, including the congregation.

Parents can be some of a youth minister's greatest strategic allies in nurturing the faith and lives of youth. Youth ministers can also be great strategic allies for the concerns of parents as well! Sadly, however, many youth ministers fail to establish effective partnerships with parents for a variety of reasons, including:

- The youth minister's insecurity before other adults
- The youth minister's arrogant assumption that he or she understands youth better than parents
- The emotional tension that often divides youth from their parents
- Parental indifference or hostility toward the congregation.

Allow for response.

Right now, how strong are your partnerships with the parents of your youth? What have you already done to nurture those partnerships?

What do you imagine that you still need to do to nurture those partnerships?

What obstacles will you face, and what will it take to overcome those obstacles?

Roehlkepartain suggests that in order to establish close partnerships with parents, youth ministers must shift their thinking from building well-attended programs to supporting the work of families that is already going on. However, in order to do this, he suggests that the following strategies (paraphrased) must be employed:

Roehlkepartain, 1998, 130-141.

Refer to Resource 2-5 in the Student Guide.

- **Get to know the families of your youth:** This is the first step toward partnership with parents. Learn their stories. Gather personal information from them. And most importantly, present them with a safe and personal “face” that connects them to the youth ministry and the congregation.
- **Respect the limits on your parents’ involvement:** Parents may not be able to run the youth ministry for you. Their family commitments may prevent them—or their youth—from participating in much of the program that you direct. However, if you are able to support, educate, and equip parents to develop a healthier life together at home, then that can be the true measure of your leadership effectiveness.
- **Provide opportunities for parents and teens to interact:** Do most of your youth ministry events pull families apart into age-exclusive activities, or do you largely provide a safe environment in which parents and youth can develop new and safe ways to connect with each other?
- **Empower parents through education:** Ask the parents of your youth to identify their critical concerns. Then provide social experiences in which parents can pool their knowledge and experience together.
- **Provide support for parents:** Parents need each other, because raising youth is very challenging. Help them to form relationships with each other. Direct them to community resources, such as counselors and programs.

For more suggestions on building youth ministry partnerships with the parents of your youth, read Eugene Roehlkepartain’s book, *Building Assets in Congregations*, chapter six.

See also the work of Chap Clark and Kara Powell at Fuller Theological Seminary's Center for Youth and Family Ministry (www.cyfm.net). A wide range of research-based articles and audio resources on family issues and family ministry are archived there. Other helpful resources on youth culture, ministry strategy, ministry relationships, and the person of the youth worker are archived there as well.

Lecture/Discussion: Youth Ministry and the Congregation

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 2-6 in the Student Guide.

Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry: Reaching the Been-There, Done-That Generation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994, 42.

http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/family/different_view.php

The congregation is the common denominator between culture, neighborhood, family, and youth group. It is the network that links together all four. A wise youth pastor will seek to engage the whole congregation in youth ministry, rather than attempting to organize and lead separate ministries to neighborhood youth, the families of youth, congregational youth, and the congregation itself. This kind of ministry is often referred to as "intergenerational." In his book, *Family-Based Youth Ministry*, Mark DeVries describes the misguided attempt to lead a youth ministry that is isolated from the rest of the congregation as the "one-eared Mickey Mouse" phenomenon. He challenges youth ministers to integrate youth with adults in all typical youth group settings. Sadly, DeVries' admonition is too scarcely heeded.

Put another way, the congregation needs to become an intergenerational family for youth. The Pentateuch presents a social and cultural model in which God's people function as an intergenerational family of faith, nurturing their children together. The New Testament renames the people of God as the body of Christ, an intergenerational means of grace for those within it and for the world (Acts 2:17-21; 1 Tim 4:12). This intergenerational faith family does not replace the household family, but enriches and empowers it for ministry to youth:

This understanding of (the household) family and of the role of the faith community doesn't demean the nature and purpose of the family . . . The Church exists as a covenant family of families that share a mutual commitment to nurture the faith of all its families.

The place to begin is by asking some hard questions about your congregation's current attitude, structure,

and purpose. Let these suggested questions guide your reflection:

- When does your whole church gather together? During those gatherings, do different age levels interact or group separately?
- How often does your church feel like a collection of small groups, independent from one another?
- How often do your youth minister to the congregation? How often do they minister alongside adults?
- What percentage of your congregation's calendared events and emphases are "all-ages friendly"?
- When do youth enjoy the opportunity to participate in the work of decision-making committees or lead in corporate worship?

In order to help your congregation become an effective context for intergenerational youth ministry, community ministry, family ministry and congregational ministry, start by asking this single, simple question: "What can we do together (intergenerationally) instead of doing apart?" For example, if youth are already engaging in neighborhood service projects, can the youth invite congregational adults to join them? Or, if the congregation successfully offers a Vacation Bible School to the neighborhood each year, can the congregation enlist youth as teachers and support staff?

By aiming at "two for the price of one" or "three for the price of one" ministries, the congregation can begin to assume its God-ordained place as the network that links together all ages, all classes, all ethnicities, and all cultures in your neighborhood. Eugene Roehlkepartain and Eboo Patel describe this kind of congregation as a "crucible" for the spiritual growth and holistic development of youth. They argue that congregations should shift their focus from delivering programs to becoming "vibrant cultures" that contribute to the socialization of youth:

Roehlkepartain and Patel 2006, 237-238.

[Congregational] potential can only be understood and tapped when . . . recognized as complex, dynamic, and multi-faceted ecologies or systems in which spiritual development is influenced through a web of relationships, rituals, expectations, and other interactions and processes across time.

Allow for response.

With this in mind how do you answer these questions:

In what ways is my congregation already effectively functioning as a network that integrates the youth ministry with other ministries?

In what new ways could my congregation function as an intergenerational network for youth ministry?

There is no shortcut to intergenerational ministry—only the long road of building partnerships that are based upon the careful, conversational cultivation of shared vision with your congregation.

For further background reading on the idea of congregationally-based, intergenerational youth ministry, read the online article by James Hampton and Mark Hayse, “A Different View of Family Ministry” (http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/family/different_view.php).

For strategies on how to develop a partnership for intergenerational ministry between your congregation and your youth ministry, read Eugene Roehlkepartain’s book, *Building Assets in Congregations*, chapters three through five.

Refer to Resource 2-7 in the Student Guide.

For ideas on ways to sponsor intergenerational ministry through worship, education, discipleship, fellowship, mission, and evangelism, refer to Resource 2-7, “Practical Tips for Building an Intergenerational Youth Ministry.” We will not read through this together in class but you will find it very informative and helpful.

Lecture/Discussion: Youth Ministry and Asset Building

(15 minutes)

When congregations, families, and communities come together for the sake of intergenerational youth ministry, then it becomes much more possible for youth to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible in the name of Christ. In fact, those three words—healthy, caring, and responsible—have been the specific research interest of Search Institute in Minnesota since 1989.

<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/40AssetsList.pdf>

Search Institute has devoted itself to identifying the cultural and social contexts of effective youth work—specifically including youth ministry—in order to determine the “building blocks of healthy development . . . that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible”. In short, when congregations, families, and communities form active partnerships for

Refer to Resource 2-8 in the Student Guide. Spend some time going over this resource.

the sake of their youth, they can accomplish much more together than they ever could apart.

Search Institute has identified 40 assets, clustering them into two groups: external and internal. External assets include positive social experiences that encircle youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time that assist them in making healthy choices.

At first glance, this list seems intimidating. "It seems impossible," we say to ourselves, "to give attention to all of these things!"

At second glance, we start to think, "Some of this stuff isn't even possible in the church!"

At third glance, we protest, "Isn't a lot of this the family's business, or the school's, but not ours in the church?" Hopefully, after working through this lesson, you are less inclined to get sidetracked by these objections and protests.

The Institute offers several resources that assist in using this material. The document is available, free of charge, online at <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/40AssetsList.pdf>. This address is listed in your Student Guide.

If you will take seriously the idea that effective youth ministry:

- Requires many adults—not just one or two—to get involved in the lives of youth
- Stands strongest when cooperating with the household families of youth
- Cares about all youth, whether inside the congregation or outside in the neighborhood
- Seeks to engage community resources through the establishment of trustful partnerships with neighborhood leaders
- Views the whole congregation as a youth ministry "crucible"
- Takes the long view toward building an intergenerational ministry
- Seeks to help youth become healthy, caring and responsible
- Pursues all of this in the name and the power of Jesus Christ . . .

Then you will find that 40 assets, or 8 clusters of assets, or 2 groups of assets are not as daunting as they may seem:

- As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Prov 27:17)
- Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (Ecc 4:12)
- For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Mt 18:20)
- And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Heb 10:24)

Roehkepartain's book, *Building Assets in Congregations*, is a very practical workbook that is designed to help you learn how to nurture the faith and development of your youth by maximizing the partnership power of your youth ministry program, the families of your youth, the intergenerational faith community, and youth in the community. Chapters one and two outline the framework for asset building.

In the final analysis, God has designed your own congregation to function as a spiritual culture that can help youth regain the fullness of the image of God through the power of Christ who is "the new Adam"—the model for restored humanity (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15).

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

Name one idea that you feel is high on your list of things that you will take with you from this lesson.

Look Ahead

Youth not only live in various contexts, they also grow and develop as persons as they journey through life. Next lesson we will explore the various changes young people experience as they travel through early, middle, and late adolescence.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read Resource 2-9. Write a 1-page paper about how you are going to implement 1 or 2 of the ideas.

Write a 2-3 page paper addressing the following questions:

- When you were a youth, who worked to build assets in you?
- Who can you identify within your congregation who is already at work to build assets in your youth?
- How many of the 40 assets do you recognize in your students?
- Which of the 8 clusters of assets does your youth ministry put the most time and attention into? Which clusters receive the least attention? What do you think about that?
- How could a mentoring program help you to build more assets in more youth?
- Other than your youth ministry program, what other social resources exist among your families, your neighborhood, and your congregation that could help build assets in your youth?
- What will it take to start the kind of conversations that lead to strong partnerships with those resources?

Write in your journal. Reflect on what brought you to this place in your life and what you want the future to look like in your ministry.

Punctuate the Finish

God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again (Phil 1:6, NLT).

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Lesson 3

Psychological and Developmental Influences in Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Personal Stories	Small Groups	
0:15	Early Adolescence	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 3-1—3-3
0:35	Middle Adolescence	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 3-4 Resource 3-5
0:55	Late Adolescence	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 3-6 Resource 3-7
1:15	Importance of Transitional Periods	Small Groups	Resource 3-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Clark, Chap. "The Changing Face of Adolescence: A Theological View of Human Development." In *Starting Right*, Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn Eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2001, 41-61.

Elkind, David. *All Grown Up and No Place to Go: Teenagers in Crisis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing, 1998, 111-161.

Dean, Kenda Creasy, Chapman Clark and David Rahn, eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, 63-76.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2-3 students to read their 1-page paper on implementing something from Resource 2-9.

Return and collect homework.

Papers should be evaluated—giving ideas, suggestions, questions, comments and corrections. Homework should be evaluated and returned by the next lesson. However, a grade will not be assigned. Completion of the module is dependant on attendance, class participation, and achieving success with the outcomes/ability statements.

Orientation

This lesson will provide a brief overview of the three periods of adolescence known as; early, middle, and late adolescence. Additionally you will be exposed to the importance of *transition* for persons from childhood to adolescence and then adulthood.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- identify the differences between early, middle, and late adolescence
- explain the implications for each stage of development for youth ministry
- demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of these transitional periods in the lifecycle

Motivator

Do we actually take the developmental realities of young people seriously? If so, how would we structure our youth ministry to 12-year-olds differently from those that are 15 and 18?

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Personal Stories

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Share a story of an interaction with an adult who seemed to understand you as an adolescent from a developmental perspective and one that did not.

Bring the students back together and allow a few to share.

Lecture/Discussion: Early Adolescence

(20 minutes)

This section includes a number of descriptive areas, prepare in advance whether to divide the class into groups or treat this as a class-wide experience. At each juncture allow students an opportunity to process the information by discussing in groups, as the class as a whole, or in a journal exercise. The following discussion questions may be used in either approach.

Erickson's developmental stages were discussed in Lesson 9 of Providing Christian Education for All Ages.

Sanrock, Adolescence: An Introduction, 331.

Overview

Name a particular song or video clip that seems to summarize some of the developmental struggles youth experience.

Why is it so powerful? As we go through the following overview how does this song intersect the very characteristics discussed?

Traditionally theorists assert there are three psycho-developmental tasks of adolescence. They are; identity formation, autonomy, and belonging.

The leading theorist on identity formation is Erik Erickson. He proposes that, here in this fifth developmental stage, if adolescents do not emerge from this time with an integrated sense of self they will experience "identity confusion." Two of the vital components of Erickson's identity formation theory are personality and role experimentation. In some ways these function as different suits of clothes to try on. This is precisely why some adolescents can seem so different in personality from day to day. It is not simply due to the various physiological changes that are taking place, but perhaps due to an intentional shifting through the myriad personalities and roles they are trying until they find the one(s) that "fit." The one that is chosen leads to a stable sense of self. Although some have questioned and even rejected some of Erickson's ideas (such as "crisis"), his seminal work in this field still provides an important benchmark for adolescent development.

The process of becoming a unique individual that is differentiated from one's family and friends, but

particularly parents, is called "individuation." Another way of talking about this same process is that of being an autonomous self in which one's locus of control is internal. In some ways this process is closely associated with the opposite side of the coin, "attachment" (which will be discussed later).

What is important to understand about individuation, is that "the adolescent's push for autonomy has little to do with the adolescent's feelings toward the parents. Psychologically healthy families adjust to adolescents' push for independence by treating the adolescent in more adult ways." Stereotypical rebelliousness in adolescence comes when parents, instead, respond to the adolescent's parlay into more adult responsibility by attempting to control them as when they were children. This sort of authoritarian style of parenting commonly ends up backfiring as it pushes the young person further from parents rather than drawing them closer. This process of individuation is natural and necessary in the development of a healthy self and attempting to hold it back is akin to fighting gravity. At some point, the adolescent will be forced to make efforts to exert their autonomy or they will remain children in their parent's house forever.

Sanrock, Adolescence, 188.

Definitions of "autonomy" and "authoritarian" may include some cultural assumptions based on the rise of Western psychological theory. However the idea of young people finding their own way in life and the ability of families to empower youth to do so while staying in relationship represents a basic biblical concept often associated with marriage in Judeo-Christian settings. You may want to invite students to describe what "autonomy" or "authoritarian" looks like in their cultural setting and explore what a healthy understanding of these terms look like in their culture. This may be a common learning strategy for each of the key terms listed in this lesson. However, the theory presented has been tested in broader cultural settings and seems to apply in many circumstances as a workable theory with some modifications.

Sanrock, 193.

Closely associated with individuation is attachment. In the last twenty years or so, developmentalists have looked at the importance of adolescent attachment to their parents. They have found that "attachment to parents in adolescence may facilitate the adolescent's social competence and well-being, as reflected in . . . self-esteem, emotional adjustment, and physical health." This sense of attachment provides important connections for the adolescent to the adult world as they negotiate their own passage from childhood to adulthood. An extremely important part of this journey is deciding to which groups and causes one will give themselves. Parental attachment plays a crucial role in this process, in providing security, and to enable the adolescent to not commit prematurely to any identity and/or community before they are developmentally equipped.

Give an example of how you have seen a young person with whom you work seeking to demonstrate their uniqueness.

Allow for a few short responses.

How did you do this as a young person?

Early Adolescence

Key Descriptor—Concrete

Ages—11-14

Refer to Resource 3-1 in the Student Guide. This resource will be the guide for the lecture/discussion.

Refer to Resource 3-2 in the Student Guide.

Physical

Since the turn of the 20th century the age of onset of puberty has been steadily declining in the United States. There is much debate as to the cause of this phenomenon, from hormones in the food supply to the availability of good nutrition. However, no conclusive studies have been performed. Puberty is measured by the onset of menarche in young women. Generally, this event corresponds to the onset of puberty in both sexes.

With puberty come secondary sexual characteristics such as the deepening of the male's voice, the development of breasts in women, and growth of body hair in the arm pits and pelvic region in both sexes. Undoubtedly these changes are the source of both excitement and consternation of young persons.

Allow for response.

Do you remember the discomfort and/or elation you experience at this time of life?

Who helped prepare you for these changes? Anyone?

Identity Formation

Along with physical changes comes the ability to begin to think of one's self as separate from one's family of origin. Up until this point we only understand our own identity as being a son/daughter of our parents and thus embedded in our families of origin. With growing cognitive ability comes the growing capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection. These abilities—which develop at different rates in each individual—give way to the ability and necessity to exert one's individuality and uniqueness.

In early adolescence this process is just beginning and some role experimentation may be evident, but by middle adolescence it is the norm.

Allow for response.

When did you first begin to see yourself as unique from your family of origin?

What were the accompanying behaviors that resulted from this realization?

Relational/Social Development

Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan. Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls Development. Harvard University Press, 1992.

Lyn Brown and Carol Gilligan note that at this stage girls appear to be the most relationally intuitive beings on the planet. Young girls are constantly “reading” the situation and relating their identity to the moment. A pervasive question in the background is—“Do you like me?”

Boys carry with them an internal reservoir of experiences and observations of suffering—they store it up and process it later and much slower than girls. This is to say boys take in a lot of information without seemingly being affected by it, at the time. However, in middle adolescence, as their cognitive abilities begin to catch up with girls they begin to process the experiences stored up in their reservoir.

Generally speaking, groups at this point are organized by gender, with girls spending time with girls and boys with other boys—although this changes to mixed groups as middle adolescence approaches.

Allow for response.

Who were your “best friends” at aged 12?

What did you like to do together?

Cognition

Sanrock, 10.

Although Piaget’s fourth and final stage of cognitive development—formal operational thought—roughly corresponds to this time of life, it has been my experience that not many early adolescents demonstrate these abilities. In fact, it seems that most still default to more concrete processing.

For a formal operational thinker, the ability to consider and conceptualize the abstract has developed. One of the sure signs of this stage is the ability to think about thinking.

The advanced concrete operations thinker—the early adolescent—is able to follow logical patterns and arguments quite well. For example, in one of Piaget’s most famous experiments, a young person was presented with three beakers of the same capacity. Two of the beakers were of the exact same size and shape with the same amount of water in them. The third beaker was taller and more slender than the other two but of the same capacity. A person working in concrete operations is able to pour the water among the various beakers understanding the amount is unchanging even though it looks different in the different sized beakers.

What is important to understand about the early adolescent's cognitive ability is their ability and comfort following linear reasoning. For example that $A + B = C$, or that God's grace + our sin = salvation. However, to discuss abstract concepts such as the Trinity will be beyond the cognitive ability of most young persons in this stage.

Allow for response.

Can you remember the things you thought about as a 12-14 year old?

How did you mentally process ideas such as "eternal life" and "heaven"?

Moral Development

Sanrock, 422.

Refer to Resource 3-3 in the Student Guide.

Lawrence Kohlberg is a leading theorist with regard to the moral development of persons. His theory of moral development is based on moral reasoning that unfolds in a series of stages.

For the early adolescent the corresponding Kohlbergian stages are Stage 2 and Stage 3. These stages correspond to that of moral reasoning based upon rewards and self interest or a desire to be seen as "good." The young person in these stages will either obey because they believe it is in their self interest to do so or because they desire to be thought of as "good" or "obedient" by those in authority.

There are six stages in Kohlberg's entire schema, but Kohlberg himself admitted that few individuals ever reach stage 5, and even fewer reach stage 6.

Allow for response.

What are some implications for youth ministry with this age group based upon this understanding of moral development?

What are some pitfalls to be aware of about persons in these stages from a moral development standpoint?

Lecture/Discussion: Middle Adolescence

(20 minutes)

Key Descriptor—Self-Protection Ages—14-18

Physical

Refer to Resource 3-4 in the Student Guide.

The physical changes that began in the early adolescent generally run their course during middle adolescence. That is not to say that no physical change occurs after age 18 but the average person has

completed the majority and most dramatic changes by this age.

Sanrock, 93.

Middle adolescents typically show strong preoccupation with their changing bodies. This is an important issue for which those of us working with young persons must be sensitive. Some youth workers think it is acceptable to tease young people about these changes . . . this should not be!

Obviously the timing, duration, and affects of puberty cannot be controlled by the young person and so we must show extreme discretion if and when we broach this subject.

Allow for response.

What are ways we can meaningfully and sensitively discuss the realities of these changes in the Church?

Do any passages of scripture come to mind in discussing puberty and the accompanying metamorphosis that occurs?

Identity Formation

As mentioned before, role experimentation during middle adolescence is the norm. The Ericksonian researcher James Marcia presents a helpful theory here. Marcia (like Erickson) subscribes to the idea of "crisis" being quite important to identity formation. *Crisis* as Marcia uses the term is a meaningful sifting through the alternatives. This process is undertaken in order to make a commitment to a particular role and path that suits the young person. Marcia defines the various combinations of "crisis" and "commitment" as seen in Resource 3-5.

Refer to Resource 3-5 in the Student Guide.

A young person who has done some sifting through the various roles and identities but has not yet made a commitment is in Identity Moratorium. This is probably the normal and healthy place for the majority of middle adolescents to occupy. The youth that has not meaningfully sifted through alternatives but has made a commitment is said by Marcia to be Identity Foreclosed. This is not where we want our young people to end up. The rub comes however for the Christian family that "wants" their child to make a decision for Christ at a young age, typically they have not yet sifted through the alternatives.

Allow for response.

How can we help them not become foreclosed?

Perhaps the only way is to allow for doubts and role experimentation later in their adolescent years without condemning them for doing so.

For the person who has not done any sifting and has made no commitments they are Identity Diffused and thus basically just floating along through life without any real aims and direction. Finally, for the student who has both sifted through alternatives and made a commitment Marcia identified them as having Identity Achievement. This is the place we desire all young people to reach, but for most this is not likely until after middle adolescence.

Allow for response.

What are some implications for youth ministry given this "sifting of alternatives" that is taking place in middle adolescence?

How might we reassure parents/families during this time?

Relational/Social Development

Groups in middle adolescence are noticeably different than in early adolescence. The groups now become characteristically heterosexual. This does not necessarily change the reality that the most trusted group of friends is typically of the same gender of the young person, however. This group is known as the "cluster." It is markedly different than the clique which is typically organized in a different manner than the cluster which is generally based upon self-image. In other words young people of strong self-image will band together while those with lower self-image will also group together. The cluster is typically a group of 4-7 young people—typically of the same gender—that become akin to a family to each other.

D. S. Holmes. "Projection as a Defense Mechanism," Psychological Bulletin 83 (1978), 677-688. Holmes is well known for his Social Judgment Theory.

This group plays a vital role in the individuation of the young person. This is so because for a time, the cluster's influence will replace that of the parents. This is not to say that parents do not always have a very strong influence in the life of the young person, but in the process to fully individuate and become their own unique self the cluster plays this important role for a time. Generally by the end of middle adolescence the cluster has disbanded as each member has gone their own direction.

Chap Clark, Professor of Youth, Family and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, class notes.

Allow for response.

Did you experience a "cluster" of friends in your middle adolescence?

What kind of influence did they have on you?

Cognition

In middle adolescence young persons achieve the ability to think abstractly. Piaget called this formal

Sanrock, 109.

operational thought. One of the sure signs of this stage is the ability to think about thinking. This can be quite an exhilarating experience for the young person who is able to, for the first time, step outside their own skin enough to consider what it is that is taking place within her or him. With this new found ability come both blessings and distractions. Some developmentalists subdivide Piaget's final stage of cognitive development into early and late formal operational thought.

Sanrock, 109.

It is characteristic of the early stage for thinking to submerge reality as the world becomes one gigantic possibility. Thus the ability can become a distraction and will be evidenced in the common refrain of some middle adolescents as "what if?" or "but it's possible" In the late stage a restoration of intellectual balance comes as the adolescent "accommodates to the cognitive upheaval that has occurred."

Have the class respond to this statement by Chap Clark, Professor of Youth, Family and Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary.

An important issue that comes with this ability to abstract is the "reservoir" talked about earlier with regard to the relational/social development of early adolescents. Here in middle adolescence, this reservoir—particularly for young men—will begin to surface and it becomes necessary to deal with these issues, particularly painful events of childhood. This is due to the developmental ability, for the first time, to cognitively deal with these issues.

Allow for response.

"How well they resolve the adolescent issues will have a great impact upon the health and length of the individuation process—if not resolved they will carry the scars well into adulthood."

How does the ability to think abstractly effect the individuation process?

Moral Development

Sanrock, 423.

For the middle adolescent the corresponding Kohlbergian stages are Stage 3 and Stage 4. These stages correspond to that of moral reasoning based upon desire to be seen as "good" and understanding duty, respectively. The young person in stage three will obey because they desire to be thought of as "good" or "obedient" by those in authority.

The adolescent in stage 4 will have made an important step however. For this young person their ability to think abstractly will enable them to conceptualize the need for a functional society, to have rules, justice, and order. This is an important distinction and a mark

of a more “adult-like” development. The visible difference between the early and middle adolescents in this area, during times of open dialogue in groups, is quite distinct.

Allow for response.

How might we help adolescents to “mature” with regard to this part of their development?

What role might group discussions play in this process?

Lecture/Discussion: Late Adolescence/Emerging Adulthood

(20 minutes)

Key Descriptor—Abstract Ages 18-25

Refer to Resource 3-6 in the Student Guide.

Physical

Physical development is essentially a non-issue in late adolescence since the majority of persons become physically mature by about age 18.

Identity Formation

The goal of late adolescence/emerging adulthood is to complete this process of identity formation. For this to successfully conclude a person must have sifted through the alternatives and then made a commitment to an identity that likely involves a role in life—typically in terms of finding meaningful work.

Refer to Resource 3-7 in the Student Guide.

There is a growing new body of research on emerging adulthood that must be mentioned at this point. Jeffery Arnett’s research has produced five characteristics of emerging adults. They are:

1. The age of *identity explorations*—trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work.
2. The age of *instability*.
3. The most *self-focused* age of life.
4. The age of *feeling in-between*, in transition, neither adolescent nor adult.
5. The age of *possibilities*, when hopes flourish, when people have an unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives.

Jeffery Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*, 8.

These characteristics are being placed here because of the strong connection each of them has to the identity formation process. Because this has not yet been resolved for the late adolescent/emerging adult they have not fully achieved adulthood, which is defined by Arnett as:

Arnett, 15.

1. Accepting responsibility for one's self.
2. Making independent decisions.
3. Becoming financially independent.

It is speculation that this process of identity formation has been de-railed in part to the common "outside-in" process of identity formation that seems common in many cultures. This process is based upon three misconceptions of the foundations of identity. They are:

1. Performance—what I'm good at or excel at defines who I am
2. Conformity—the *Middle Kids (60% of the population)*—this is basically a view that young people who do not "stand out" must simply conform in order to survive.
3. Image—someone with uniqueness (could be looks) or anything that gives the person in power a reason to feel good about themselves.

Allow for response.

How can we help facilitate an "inside-out" process of discovering who we are in Christ and according to scripture, rather than that based upon what I do?

What role ought our youth ministries to have with our emerging adults?

Relational/Social Development

At this stage, late adolescents are making decisions about the type of person with whom they would like to spend their lives. Although this process began in middle adolescence, it takes center stage at this point. There may still be evidence of "groups" in the lives of late adolescents but more often than not the "groups" are closely associated couples.

Clark. "The Changing Face of Adolescence: A Theological View of Human Development" in *Starting Right*, Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn Eds. Zondervan 2001, 57.

A good rule of thumb in dealing with late adolescents comes from Dr. Chap Clark who suggests that late adolescents ought to be "Treated as adults but guided as adolescents."

Allow for response.

How can this advice be actualized in your setting?

Are there things that ought to occur in terms of contact with young people who have left our youth groups?

What role(s) do healthy Christian couples play in the youth ministry in your setting?

Cognition

Although some developmentalists subdivide Piaget's final stage of cognitive development into early and late

formal operational thought, not all late adolescents will have reached the late stage of formal operations. There may still be some remaining “overwhelming” nature of their ability to think widely and abstractly. However in the late stage a restoration of intellectual balance comes as the adolescent “accommodates to the cognitive upheaval that has occurred.”

Sanrock 109.

Allow for response.

Can you remember when your thinking settled into more adult-like patterns?

Moral Development

The adolescent in stage 4 will have made an important step however. For this young person their ability to think abstractly will enable them to conceptualize the need for a functional society, to have rules, justice, and order. This is an important distinction and a mark of a more “adult-like” development.

Sanrock, 423.

For the even more advanced in terms of moral development, Kohlberg’s final two stages (5 and 6) theorize, respectively, the rights of the community versus individuals and even the ability to conceptualize universal human rights.

As mentioned above, few have ever been found to have reached stage 5 (only 10% of the population) and even fewer stage 6.

Sanrock, 423.

Allow for response.

How does the Great Commandment “pull” us toward Kohlberg’s stage 6?

In what ways might we be able to facilitate moral development beyond what is typical in our specific culture?

Small Groups: Importance of Transitional Periods

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 3-8 in the Student Guide.

The transitions into puberty and adolescence and then into adulthood are significant as we have encountered in this lesson.

Bring the groups back together to share their insights.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What is one vital fact that came from today's lesson for you to take home and practice as you work with young persons?

Look Ahead

To this point we have spent considerable time looking at youth and youth ministry from within their social and developmental context. However, how should we look at youth from God's vantage point? What does scripture, doctrine and even the church's ministry to young people have to say about the nature of youth and youth ministry? Beginning with the Bible and the basic beliefs of the church, we will begin this exploration in the next lesson.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Interview an adolescent in each of the stages of development this week to explore further the developmental issues discussed here. Write a 2-page paper about what you felt was an important discovery from the interviews.

Identify a key scripture and an important doctrine that guides your ministry with youth. Include also, a one-paragraph summary of your theological motivation for youth ministry.

Read Resource 3-9.

Write a letter in your journal to yourself as an adult, from the perspective of yourself as a middle adolescent, about how you would like to treat middle adolescents when you are an adult.

Punctuate the Finish

"Adolescence is changing—and quickly. Puberty is starting earlier and the questions of identity and autonomy later and later. This means that the concept of youth can no longer be limited to the two programmatic foci of North American youth ministry,

junior and senior high. From fifth grade [in North America] to the mid-20s, young men and women are finding themselves in a state of flux, continually on the lookout for anyone who would bless, affirm, and help them to finally land as a unique, responsible person. This is where youth ministry is at its best – recognizing the unique needs and dreams of the merging generation—and taking it seriously enough to reach out.”

Chap Clark
“The Changing Face of Adolescence”

*An alternative to this Punctuate the
Finish would be to read the lyrics of
“At Seventeen” by Janis Ian.*

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Lesson 4

Biblical and Theological Foundations of Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	It is God's Ministry	Lecture	Resource 4-1
0:10	It is God's Ministry	Small Groups	Resource 4-2
0:25	Consistent Ministry—Biblical Considerations	Guided Discussion	Resource 3-8
0:35	Consistent Ministry—Creedal Considerations	Lecture	Resource 4-3 Resource 4-4
0:45	Holding Convictions Together—Your Personal Credo	Class Activity	Resource 4-5
1:05	Pertinent—A Real Life Youth Theology	Lecture	Resource 4-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dean, Kenda Creasy. "Fessing Up: Owning Our Theological Commitments." In Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn, Eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001, 27-36.

Dean, Kenda Creasy. *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.

You need not read the whole book but find a chapter that is most relevant to this lesson.

Hampton, James and Rick Edwards, Eds. *Worship-Centered Teaching: Guiding Youth to Discover Their Identity in Christ*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Middendorf, Jon. *Worship-Centered Youth Ministry: A Compass for Guiding Youth into God's Story*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill of Kansas City, 2000.

Root, Andrew, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007.

Core Values, Church of the Nazarene available online [accessed 1/05/2009] at the Church of the Nazarene website.

<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/administration/visitorcenter/values/display.aspx> For multiple

translations see

<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/gensec/CoreValues/display.aspx>

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students.

What did you learn from your interviews?

Return and collect homework.

You are to keep your scripture, doctrine and motivation paper for now.

Orientation

This lesson is designed to help the youth minister understand and apply biblical and theological foundations to the practice of youth ministry.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the importance of theological foundations in guiding youth ministry
- understand the narrative nature of the gospel and the narrative orientation of youth
- relate the holistic nature of salvation in Christ to the holistic development of adolescence
- reflect on the vital connection between youth and the whole people of God
- see youth as members of the priesthood of all believers
- nuance the impact of holiness based on the developmental concerns associated with adolescence
- relate missional direction of the church with the passion of youth

Motivator

“(U)sing relationships for the sake of developmental needs represents a misguided concept of church. Youth ministry focuses on relationships, not only because of who teenagers are but because of who God is. God is a relationship . . . Christian tradition uses the relational language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to describe the persons of the Trinity . . . and this God’s love is so generous the Godhead cannot contain it. Significant relationships with other Christians matter because they teach us something about what God is like . . . the One who can love us in spite of ourselves and who loves us passionately enough to suffer willingly on our behalf.”

Dean and Foster, The Godbearing Life, 1998, 27.

Lesson Body

Lecture: It is God's Ministry

(5 minutes)

To this point in the module most of the lessons have focused on the nature of youth and their context. Beginning with this lesson, we will attempt to discern a different perspective, God's perspective, for the nature of ministry both to and with youth. After all, we need to acknowledge that any ministry, if it is to be Christian, must be God's ministry first and our efforts second. Our efforts prove important, no doubt, but we must look to God's ability as our source, to God's purposes as our goal, and to God's actions as our guide if we hope to offer authentic ministry.

There are a number of important helping roles that adults might play in and through the lives of youth. Many different adults provide young people quality counseling, compassionate care, recreation, entertainment, and spiritual guidance. In any of these actions the Holy Spirit may well be at work implicitly or indirectly through these adults—and the youth they are working with. However, youth ministers receive an explicit, direct, call to make sure God is “up front” in our ministry, to make sure that we represent God's passion and purpose. We begin with this assumption:

Youth ministers receive a call to name God's desire for youth, to discern God's direction for youth, and to witness to the power of God at work both with and for youth today.

When we accept this responsibility we expressly accept our role as theologians. The word theology might be defined as the “making God known” either through study, or witness, or just everyday life. Everyone reveals something of what they think or believe about God in everyday conversations and actions. However ministers remain dedicated to a disciplined understanding of God so that our actions and attitudes

- remain consistent with what we believe
- coherent so people can understand them
- pertinent so people can see how God is at work in their lives as well.

There are a lot of places we can begin this task. Often youth ministers begin with specific biblical passages that speak to the lives of youth, core Christian convictions that guide ministry, and a specific vision of what they hope God will do in the lives of young

Refer to Resource 4-1 in the Student Guide.

people. Where we begin might be different, but we need to have a biblical and theological view of our ministry, a means for assessing what we do and envision what we must do to insure that our actions are explicitly Christian.

Dean, 27-36.

Clarifying what we believe, making sure our ministry is shaped by God's vision, proves crucial for any long term ministry. This lesson begins a process that may take several years of ministry, honing our core biblical and theological convictions into a coherent philosophy for youth ministry. Other courses often push us deeper into the Bible and into our core Christian beliefs. However, we must also ask how *what* we believe fits into our ministry—ultimately God's ministry—to and with youth.

Small Groups: It is God's Ministry

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students.

Refer to Resource 4-2 in the Student Guide.

This is just a beginning and by the end of your preparation for ministry you will have additional knowledge to make your beliefs stronger. And throughout your ministry you will continually gain more insight that will strengthen your beliefs.

Guided Discussion: Consistent Ministry—Biblical Considerations

(10 minutes)

Today's youth are interested in truth, accuracy, and clarity. The Modular Course of Study has made an effort to avoid confusion over the phrase "Word of God." In the 20th-Century, "Word of God" was used interchangeably for the Holy Bible, and Jesus Christ—the Son of God, the Logos of the Trinity as declared in John 1.

This module will clearly identify whether references are to the written record in the Bible or to the living person of Jesus Christ.

Refer to Resource 3-8 that the students read for homework.

Allow for response.

What are some of the prominent/primary stories of the Old Testament and New Testament?

Summarize some of these primary biblical stories and how they make a difference in the lives of youth, particularly revealing God's plan for salvation and God's call to live Christlike lives.

How often do young people hear these stories in your youth ministry?

Call on students to read these scriptures.

Let's read and review the passages of scripture mentioned in the homework reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Luke 1:26-56, 1 Timothy 4:6-16 and 2 Timothy 1:3-7.

How might these passages speak of the possibility of what youth offer to the church and to the world as God's agents in mission and ministry?

Lecture: Consistent Ministry—Creedal Considerations

(10 minutes)

While scripture provides a good beginning for the message and purpose behind youth ministry, the church has also looked to doctrinal summaries of the Christian message as another key resource. Beginning with the early church, Christians have sought to confess their faith through concise statements that make up the core convictions of biblical faith and practice. One of the earliest versions, known as the Apostle's Creed, has guided churches throughout the centuries.

Refer to Resource 4-3 in the Student Guide. Read through the creeds. The students have seen these creeds in several other modules so you may not need to read them but only refer to them.

The Nicene Creed expanded on the earlier creed and was adopted in the 4th century.

Refer to Resource 4-4 in the Student Guide.

In a similar manner the Church of the Nazarene ascribes to an "Agreed Statement of Belief" that is quite similar to the Apostle's Creed. This Statement of Belief attempts to summarize the basics of the Christian faith within our tradition.

The Articles of Faith are available in multiple languages online (accessed 12/15/2008) from the Church of the Nazarene's official website
<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/administration/visitorcenter/articles/display.aspx>

In addition the Church of the Nazarene has developed sixteen Articles of Faith that elaborate on the Agreed Statement of Faith. These Articles provide the core convictions of our tradition about the nature of the Triune God, the person and mission of Jesus Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit, salvation and holiness, the life of the church, the practice of the sacraments, and the return of Christ.

Drawing from scripture, these doctrines try to summarize the nature of God and God's purposes in the world. As a key resource, they guide the core message of the Christian faith.

Allow for response.

With the creeds, Statement of Faith, and Articles of Faith in mind, identify the crucial statements for today's youth.

Why are they crucial?

What is the importance of salvation for youth?

Class Activity: Holding Convictions Together—Your Personal Credo

(20 minutes)

Ultimately what we believe about the message of scripture, about the nature of the Christian faith, and about youth, must come together to provide a biblical and theological "credo" for Christian ministry.

Credo means "I believe," Johnson, 9.

Creeds reflect an agreed statement of belief within a church tradition (creeds, articles of faith). This is usually the result of much thought, debate, and finally, agreement. The term can also describe a personal and community public "confession" of what is crucial to us. Historically this confession or statement of belief is given during church membership or repeated during a worship service. However, we are called to live this creed during the rest of our lives as we apply these core convictions to everything we do.

When we turn to ministry, a credo expresses what we believe God intends in our ministry for the sake of youth. Each of us must fashion our personal convictions into a coherent statement, but that credo must also relate to the message of the Bible and the doctrine of the church.

Refer to Resource 4-5 in the Student Guide.

Read through the sample credo. How does this statement relate to what you think is important? What would you agree with or what would you change?

The goal is to allow students to find points of comparison, even disagreement, but also to challenge them to shape their own personal credo for youth ministry.

First, work on the credo by your self. After you have perhaps made some adjustments to it, partner with someone else and work together. We will then spend the last portion of this time sharing and working together.

Make sure students understand that within the faith community of other denominations, the word "Creed" has very specific meaning and use. We are not replacing or competing with these time honored creeds.

Lecture: Pertinent—A Real Life Theology of Youth Ministry

(20 minutes)

When one turns to the nature of and purpose of youth ministry, the same doctrines remain available to guide our goals and actions. In addition The Church of the Nazarene provides one other valuable resource that describes not only the essentials of our belief but the nature of our practice in youth ministry. These “core values” speak directly to what we should consider important in youth ministry, but they must manifest themselves in ways that speak directly into their lives. In many ways the core values provide a broader biblical/doctrinal perspective under three core themes: Christian, Holiness, and Missional. Our responsibility remains taking these central beliefs and asking how they relate directly to the lives of youth but also reflect the basic shape of our youth ministry.

Refer to Resource 4-6 in the Student Guide.

As we review these basic assertions we also have to show how they relate directly to youth and youth ministry.

Christian

Obviously the primary goal with youth ministry is to see Jesus as Lord of the life of every young person in our ministry. This vision shapes our desire for youth to accept Christ by grace through faith and live under the direction of the Holy Spirit. However, many youth in different cultures today actually respond best by first exploring and following Jesus’ life and commandments before making an actual statement of faith. For adults used to a process where we first “believe” the gospel, then “belong” to the church as the formula for salvation, they may be surprised as youth first attach themselves to the youth ministry, seek to live out the Kingdom of God, and ultimately respond to Christ by faith, allowing the Holy Spirit to fully direct their lives.

Stafford and Albin.

In truth this approach has roots in the Wesleyan tradition, where many early members of John Wesley’s class meetings often had spiritual experiences after they joined the class. The goal remains the Lordship of Jesus but the process may reflect a different approach that connects with the lives of youth.

Christian should also define our approach to youth ministry. No matter how entertaining, no matter how much numerical growth, each of our practices,

Dean and Foster, 59-60.

Root, 62-84.

programs, and relationships need to model Christlikeness first and foremost. Often youth ministers use the term “incarnational” (incarnation means enfleshment as in Jesus’ taking on human form) to mean that our ministry must “embody” Christlikeness in all we do. Incarnational ministry does not mean youth pastors “become” Jesus—a danger that leads to a messiah complex in some young ministers—but that Jesus is revealed in relationships with and among young people. As Andrew Root cautions, we cannot abuse these relationship for personal objectives, instead we must be willing to patiently work with youth to understand their struggles and be alert to how Christ might be at work in their lives. At best we must make sure everything we do in our ministry remains a worthy witness to Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:22).

Holiness

One primary distinctive of the Wesleyan tradition revolves around a deep appreciation of the depth of transformation available by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification describes a depth of relationship with God that Nazarenes believe remain available to all people. Holiness of heart and life defines this perspective, a life of total love expressed toward God and manifested in daily living toward other people. Young people often respond to the vision of holiness offered in the gospels. However, many times the developmental nature of youth presents particular challenges.

While there may be moments of deep, experiential change, often young people find themselves on a journey into holiness, constantly growing in grace, moving toward that distinctive moment of entire sanctification. Premature pressure to force this issue often results in youth attempting to live the holy life in their own strength rather than yielding to the Holy Spirit’s direction. Young people can become discouraged and begin to doubt the very power available to them. With nurture and careful discipleship youth often find themselves ready to embrace all that God offers at the appropriate time.

Holiness also defines youth ministry. Holiness not only describes individual experience, the term also characterizes the nature of the community that seeks to be “set apart” to God. For youth ministers the challenge remains maintaining the same vision of holiness of heart and life within the ministry, resisting cultural temptations to be something less than what God desires. Often youth ministry faces social

pressures to provide programming that merely repeats social values of materialism, entertainment, or a surface spirituality. Instead youth pastors must work to insure that the practices and strategies they embrace resemble God's direction. Whatever the cultural challenges, the values of the Kingdom of God must come first in youth ministry.

Missional

Youth can embrace God's missional call. Youth see the possibility of God being at work in the world, of God making a difference, and need empowerment through the very practices of the church that shape missional living. If there is a danger, it may well be that the very idealism that empower youth to see what God can do, often makes young people impatient with the church. Youth can be held captive to their own idealism and may reject the church if they feel left out or abandoned in their own efforts. Young people need to experience God's missional call in worship, to ground their actions through faithful discipleship, and to explore their gifts through evangelism and compassionate care of others.

A mission ally-shaped youth ministry recognizes that youth remain a part of God's mission in the world. Youth pastors will work to teach young people to be patient, but pastors will also stand as youth's advocate with the rest of the congregation. Youth ministers will need to make sure that youth are part of the larger church, connected and integral within the congregation. Such integration allows youth the opportunity to see how God is at work in the church.

At the same time the same integration allows the very passion young people have to also inspire and challenge the rest of the congregation. Historians often find young people at the forefront of any revival, taking the lead in calling the church to boldly follow God's mission to engage and redeem the world. Youth ministry attending to missional concerns will work to see that both the youth and the rest of the congregation work together for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Youth pastors remain challenged to reflect on how their biblical/theological doctrines speak directly to the lives of youth in order to transform them into Christlike disciples. As long as the ministry fits in with God's mission, youth will be transformed according to God's direction.

Example: Red Moon Rising: 24-7 Prayer, by Pete Greig and Dave Roberts, Relevant Books, 2003.

Give examples from your context of how this is happening.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

Which of the three challenges of the lessons remains the most difficult for you in your working theology of ministry?

- *Consistency—drawing from the sources of faith*
- *Coherence—keeping key points organized*
- *Pertinence—keeping youth in mind*

Why?

Look Ahead

Each community has their own history and their own culture. It may be closely tied to the communities within a short distance but it is still unique. Next lesson will look at both your local history and the larger picture of the history of youth ministry.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Rewrite your original paragraph statements into one-page position papers. Remember that the work does not need to be completely but this will give you a chance to explore and elaborate on what you believe is crucial for youth ministry.

Investigate the history of youth ministry in your local church. How did it begin? Who have been some of the primary leaders?

Read Gary Hartke's "A History Of Nazarene Youth International" available online (accessed 12/15/2008) at <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/nyi/resources/history/display.aspx>

Read Resource 4-7.

Read Resource 4-8.

Write in your journal. How important to you is your knowledge of Theology? Do you believe that your youth need accurate theological information? Do you know that they actually care?

Punctuate the Finish

“More than simply telling numerous disconnected stories, we recognize that for the people of God there exists one grand narrative, beginning with the earliest chapters of the Bible and extending through the history of the Christian Church down to the present day. It is a *megastory* with a grand plot: God is reconciling the world to himself through His people. In more recent years, such an approach to ministry that calls persons to find their identity *within* the grand Story of God has been given the name *narrative*. Although the name may be a recent development, the method of inviting subsequent generations to participate in the *megastory* of God, to discover their identity with that Story, and to develop a character in light of that identity has deep roots in Scripture and Christian tradition. Such an approach to ministry and discipleship has been the distinctive way in which the people of God have talked about God.”

Green, "Participating in the Story of God," 26.

Lesson 5

History of Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	History of Local Youth Ministry	Class Activity	Homework
0:20	A Historical View of Youth	Lecture/Discussion	
0:30	Global Youth Culture and North American Historical Definitions of Youth	Lecture	
0:35	Cycles of Youth Ministry in North America	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 4-7
0:55	History of Nazarene Youth Ministry	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 4-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dean, Kenda Creasy, Chapman Clark and David Rahn, Eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, 77-90.

Hartke, Gary (February 2005). "The Organizational History of Nazarene Youth International in the USA", Nazarene Youth International, Church of the Nazarene.
<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/nyi/resources/history/display.aspx>

Nazarene Youth International, *NYI Charter and Ministry Plans* Church of the Nazarene

<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/nyi/resources/carter/display.aspx>

Senter, Mark III, *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry: And Its Radical Impact On the Church*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992, 35-60.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each others position papers.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson is designed to help the youth minister understand the historical origins of youth ministry, particularly within the Church of the Nazarene, in order to effectively draft an NYI ministry plan in accordance with the NYI Charter

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- recognize the historical influences on social definitions of youth and young adults
- identify Robert Raikes' Sunday School as one of the beginning points of youth ministry
- recognize several 19th century youth ministries; particularly Christian Endeavor Societies as the forerunner of contemporary youth groups
- review 20th century North American youth ministry developments including congregationally-based young people's societies, parachurch youth clubs, as well as see youth ministry as a maturing academic discipline and Christian norm
- understand the beginnings of the NYI and its commitment to purity, mission, scripture, and youth empowerment
- review The Global NYI Charter and Ministry Plan

Motivator

Believe it or not, the age of adolescence has not always been a part of historical study.

Lesson Body

Class Activity: History of Local Youth Ministry

(15 minutes)

This is based on the homework assignment.

List answers for reference during the lesson.

Where do many of the terms and concepts, from your research of your community, originally come from?

Did you find any interesting or unique facts?

Who are the other organizations doing youth work in your community?

How do people in your congregation 'know' who belongs in the youth group? What is the criteria?

Lecture/Discussion: A Historical View of Youth

(10 minutes)

To be honest, most people live roughly in a 100 to 120 year-old historical "box." In other words, our historical awareness of how life functions remains shaped by roughly three generations of human knowledge and experience. When we are born we rely on our parents' and grandparents' generations for their understanding of history and how the world should work. As we grow older, and grandparents pass away, we replace that distant history with our own experience—and later that of our children—in understanding of how things should work. Unless we take time to cultivate a larger "historical consciousness" we remain limited by our assumptions, sometimes repeating mistakes of the past, or struggling with the unexamined expectations of others. However, when we turn to a better understanding of our historical roots we find resources not only for understanding, but often for inspiration as youth ministers.

Before discussing the history of youth ministry, you must recognize that you have to deal with the subject of that ministry—youth themselves. Honestly the concept of "youth" remains an elusive topic in history, the age Joseph Kett defines as "semi-dependence" where young people live in a world neither fully dependent on adults nor fully independent as contributors to society.

Kett, 1977

Bakke 2005, Balch and Osiek 2003, Osiek and Balch 1997, Perdue et al. 1997

While biblical studies of children and the family have grown in recent years, specific studies of youth or young adults remain limited. Perhaps for good reason, since one of the earliest biblical accounts of youth or young adults may well be Deuteronomy 21: 18-21 where parents are given permission to punish disobedient sons by stoning them to death!

Blenkinsopp 1997, 70-71.

Nevertheless one does find evidence of youth and even youth culture at different points in history. Often, in pre-industrial Europe, poor youth who did not qualify to inherit their family's meager farms found themselves forced to wander the countryside or move to towns. As wanderers, these young people (mainly boys) often banded together through apprenticeships or other loosely fraternal arrangements in Britain, Germany and France until they reach some sense of professional competence or economic independence.

Gillis, 1974, 8-35.

While elusive, there does seem to be a relationship between a social view of young people who are no longer children but not quite adults, and the culture they live within. Seeing our concept of youth tied to culture and history allows us to understand how the same concept may be understood differently in different global settings. For instance, in some African settings and other global contexts, young people do not advance to adulthood until marriage—regardless of age. Rather than fixing a strict age level to this category, one must pay attention to the specific historical and cultural expectations, asking how the church can best minister with a group of people who live in the transition between childhood and adulthood.

What is your definition of "youth" or "young adult"?

Is there another word in your community/culture that is preferred?

What ages do you typically assign to this category? Why?

How do adults in your church define youth? Why?

Note that Kett's category does not mean that adults remain self-reliant in everything, they remain in relationship with other people; however adults have the ability to contribute fully to the relationship, a type of full "interdependence" if not independence.

Do you agree with Kett's definition of semi-independence?

Lecture/Discussion: Global Youth Culture and North American Historical Definitions of Youth

(5 minutes)

For all of the local emphasis on cultural expectation of youth, today one finds a global “youth culture,” exported with similar norms and expectations communicated primarily through media. This youth culture seems to be primarily a western export, including some of the popular ideas concerning the nature of youth ministry. Recognizing this prevalent—albeit primarily North American view—of youth and youth ministry, youth ministers may find it instructive to explore how these concepts surfaced out of their historical circumstances.

Wallach, 1997, 1-54.

Schultze, et al., 1991, 24-27.

Believe it or not, the age of adolescence has not always been a part of historical study. Until the end of the 19th century, children went through the teenage years, but these years were largely viewed either the end of childhood or the beginning of adulthood. The time for transition was generally quite short, though recognizable even in Christian circles for less than desirable reasons. For instance, young people were often blamed for spiritual or moral decline by older generations during the foundation of the nation. And young people proved later the primary target of many revival campaigns in later periods.

Hine, 1999.

Nevertheless the primary discovery of youth as adolescents occurred around the turn of the 20th century. There were many social factors that influenced the development of adolescence as a specific developmental and social age: specifically the rise of the industrial era when fewer young people were needed to work, the creation of mandatory public school systems that provided a new social setting, and the rise of economic wealth which turned young people into consumers.

However, chief among these influences was the work of social scientists like G. Stanley Hall. Hall, who was heavily influenced by the ideas of Darwin, applied the scientific, biological aspects of Darwin’s views to the study of adolescent development. The result was a two volume set, *Adolescence*, which Hall completed in 1904. Hall’s study affirmed the belief that heredity interacts with environmental influences to determine the individual’s development.

Sanrock, 2007, 6.

His most important finding asserted that adolescence was a time of “storm and stress” in a person’s life,

White, 2005, 19-41.

Savage, 2007, xv.
Hine, 9.

Schultze, et al. 1991, 14-45.

where conflict abounds. Hall's definition of youth, combined with the other social influences created a historical/cultural view of a distinct age-level or youth "subculture" recognized today. The post World-War II concept of "teenager" did not surface until 1941 in a *Popular Science* Magazine. Throughout the twentieth century young people in the United States stayed in school longer, delayed life decisions like marriage and vocation, yet gained greater consumer influence due to the economic generosity of their parents. The idea of young people, struggling to make the now longer transition from childhood to adulthood was a part of the social fabric of Western society.

With this new advent of a distinct cultural and developmental age, many agencies stepped in to address the needs of youth. Chief among these was the church. From groups like the Society for Christian Endeavor to the Miracle Book Club to the YMCA's and YWCA's, the church has been at the forefront of creating programs in order to reach this new age group of adolescents.

Lecture/Discussion: Cycles of Youth Ministry in North America

(20 minutes)

If one chooses a logical beginning point for ministry with youth, at least in Western culture, one could begin with Robert Raikes's creation of the Sunday School in England. While normally associated with ministry to younger children, there is evidence that Raikes' ministry would have included older children that today would be considered young adolescents. Admittedly this is an arbitrary point to begin, but the rise of Sunday School ministries marked the beginning of a special "para-church" ministry that spread throughout North America and marked a special emphasis on providing Christian education to children and youth alike.

However the early efforts of Robert Raikes (circa 1780-1786) in England provide the impetus for just one of many historical expressions of youth ministry in North America. Similarly the Christian Endeavor Societies (circa 1881) probably serve as the fore-runners of the modern youth group. These societies, while initiated and supervised by adults, invited young people to meet independently in groups often run by the youth themselves and based on basic rules of mutual accountability—called the "pledge."

The societies were so popular they were adopted by many churches and denominations like the Luther "League" and (Methodist) Epworth 'League" as church related youth groups. These groups were to change dramatically as the modern ideas of youth shifted during the 20th century when innovative para-church ministries like Youth For Christ and Young Life dominated programming ideas; however the concept of youth groups seemed to be settled. Most current thinking about the need for youth to gather together formally in the church for the purpose of developing Christian principles and leadership owe their origins to Christian Endeavor; while most youth ministry strategies find their source in Youth For Christ movements. In each circumstance the discipleship innovations were indebted to innovative Christian leaders responding to social and cultural forces.

The next section of the lesson may not prove as important to students depending on their global contexts. Teachers are encouraged to invite students to spend time reflecting how youth ministry has emerged in their historical context. However, as noted, many North American influences have infiltrated globally so the instructor may want to use the following information for reference during discussion. North American instructors should recognize that the next section proves very important for explaining many of the assumptions adults have about the nature of youth ministry in local churches.

*For a fuller description of the cycles see Mark Senter's *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*.*

*For more information see Strauss and Howe's website on *The Fourth Turning* available online (accessed 1/05/2009) at <http://www.fourthturning.com/>*

As noted, just as many recent ideas about youth emerge from North American soil, so do many assumptions concerning the nature of youth ministry so a historical overview of these efforts may prove helpful for understanding the assumptions and expressions of youth ministry in other cultures. If you look throughout history, there are cycles that are evident. The economic world has shown that cycles in the way certain industries or even economies work is the norm. For instance, William Strauss and Neil Howe (1998) in *The Fourth Turning*, show the importance of cycles in history.

The same proves true of youth ministry. Mark Senter (1992) wrote *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*, which details three cycles that have occurred. Each cycle has lasted approximately fifty years and every cycle follows the same pattern: for the first 20-30 years of a youth movement there was an excitement and constant innovation which drove it forward in attempts to reach the young people for Christ. Then around year 30 something happened. Stagnation began to characterize the movement and increasingly did so for the next 20 years while the movement's

earlier momentum and good reputation carried it along. Finally a crisis happened and there was no longer a way to disguise the fact that the movement was bankrupt.

Refer to resource 4-7 in the Student Guide.

After this cycle, youth work would traditionally struggle for another 20 years before entrepreneurial innovations in working with young people could set in motion a new cycle of youth ministry. These cycles have usually been initiated by an event outside youth ministry that is pivotal in shaping the world of the adolescent. Senter notes that these cycles continue and suggests a beginning fourth cycle mentioned in the Resource 4-7. As you review some of the key influences and responding youth institutions within the North American historical setting do you see similarities in local ministry today?

Allow for response.

In your opinion what impact has the creation of the adolescent/youth subculture had on the culture at large and the church in particular?

While explaining why adolescents don't act like adults, Ron Koteskey states that one reason is the self-fulfilling prophecy—namely, that young people act irresponsible, immature, etc. because that is what adults expect of them. If we take this idea seriously, what should be the expectations of the church for adolescents?

Responses will give you an indication of whether students read the homework assignment.

As you think about the fourth cycle of ministry, what are some of the trends you think will emerge? Why are these trends important?

What helpful information did you learn from reading Resource 4-7?

How are you going to incorporate what you have learned into your youth program?

Lecture/Discussion: History of Nazarene Youth Ministry

(30 minutes)

NYI Global Director Gary Hartke's February 2005 report "The Organizational History of Nazarene Youth International in the USA" provides a helpful overview of the history of youth ministry in the denomination. Drawing from a number of helpful resources, his synopsis provides a helpful understanding of the history and future of the global NYI. Hartke begins,

Youth Ministry in the Church of the Nazarene began in the very first Church of the Nazarene founded in

1895 by Phineas Bresee in Los Angeles, California. Eventually, Bresee's church would be the mother church to other Nazarene churches, and ultimately, be influential in the convergence of other holiness churches to become the denomination known as The Church of the Nazarene. Youth ministry was part of that emerging story. By 1903 there were two youth ministries entitled "Company E" and the "Brotherhood of St. Stephen" offered to the young people in Bresee's church. Company E, led by Mrs. Lucy P. Knott, was the name designated for the young ladies in the church who met on Friday evenings for study of the Word, united and intercessory prayer, testimonies, and evangelism.

Hartke, page 1.

Hartke continues,

Together, the members of Company E and the Brotherhood of St. Stephen searched the Scriptures for a verse that would represent their desire to live what they described as "the higher Christian life." This was a life led by the Holy Spirit resulting in spiritual growth and maturity. The two groups ultimately agreed on 1 Timothy 4:12 as their theme verse. The King James version of the Bible was their source: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." These young people of Company E and The Brotherhood of St. Stephen wore a badge which consisted of a Maltese cross with "1 Tim 4:12" engraved into it. The young men and young women wore this badge as a visual reminder of their commitment to live the higher Christian life.

Before the formation of a denomination, the importance and effectiveness of youth ministry was becoming noticed due to the efforts of willing people like Lucy P. Knotts and R. E. Shaw, both members of the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene. In 1907 the leadership of the Church of the Nazarene began what would be a fifteen year journey of a general youth ministry by the creation of a fourteen member Committee on Young People. This committee was established to send out circular letters to local churches for the purpose of gathering information, and then evaluate the information contained in the replies. The following is a portion of the report submitted by the Committee on Young People:

The replies received revealed the fact that there is at present no demand for any definite organization for young men or women in our churches . . .

Taylor, 1948, 13.

owing to the fact that in the large majority of our churches there are not a sufficient number of young people to warrant separate, and in some cases, no society at all; therefore, we recommend that each church be free to choose whatever methods may seem to be wise in their particular case, but that nothing be done in any church without the consent of the Pastor and the Church Board.

Hartke, 10.
Hartke, 45.

These early expressions of Nazarene youth ministry begin to explain how young people and the vision of holiness and missional outreach continues throughout the history of the Church of the Nazarene. At times efforts to reach and disciple youth fell behind a largely adult effort at evangelism and church consolidation, but never for long. At times youth ministry became the central setting for ministerial leadership training in the Church of the Nazarene, and the location for innovation and new expressions of organization for the sake of ministry from the inception of the Nazarene Young People's Society in 1923, to the establishment of Nazarene Youth International in 1977.

Refer to Resource 4-8 in the Student Guide.

The full Charter and Ministry Plan is available in multiple languages at <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/nyi/resources/charter/display.aspx>.

One such innovation occurred when a 1997 commission totally rewrote the NYI Constitution and presented for ratification to the 2001 NYI Convention the new *Charter and Ministry Plans*. Hartke recounts:

This document was created in two parts. The first part, The Charter, contained information that provided the foundation for youth ministry globally. The second part, The Ministry Plans, was designed to provide a standard local, district, and regional ministry plan. However, instructions were included to enable each level to modify the plans resulting in more effective ministry.

Hartke, 40.

The result of the newly ratified *Charter and Ministry Plan* marked significant changes at the global and local level. NYI was restructured globally, incorporating global ministry staff positions within NYI while also providing internationally based youth ministry leadership through World Mission. On the local and district level, key responsibilities were clarified at the local church level in regards to leadership, particularly the relationship between youth ministers and NYI local presidents and organization as NYI Councils. In addition to clear lines of accountability to the local congregation, the NYI was empowered with a degree of flexibility to make ministry more effective and charged with three particular ministry responsibilities:

Evangelism

The NYI develops and implements a variety of ongoing ministries and special events to reach young people for Christ.

Discipleship

The NYI develops and implements a variety of ongoing ministries and special events to nurture and challenge young people to grow as disciples of Christ, in personal devotion, worship, fellowship, ministry, and leading others to Christ.

Leadership Development

The NYI develops and implements a variety of ongoing ministries and special events to mentor and equip young people to be leaders for Christ and His church.

Spend a few minutes looking over Resource 4-8.

Allow for response.

Were there any surprises in the document that you were not familiar with?

How do the guidelines compare with your local church organization?

Do you see examples of different historical emphases at work in the expectations of parents and other people in how youth ministry occurs?

Are there changes that you can make to organize or adapt youth ministry in your context based on the Charter and Ministry Plan?

What resistance will there be?

Who will be your supporters?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

Return to the concepts and terms you developed from your local history studies.

Explain how these concepts match

- a biblical/historical view of youth prior to the 20th century
- a primarily North American view of youth following the 20th century.

What shifts have been made in thinking about youth that shape global youth culture?

Look Ahead

The next lesson looks at the philosophical foundation of youth ministry and how your philosophy impacts your ministry.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Review your local youth ministry setting in light of the *Charter and Ministry Plan*. Write a brief (one-two page) assessment of that ministry context in light of the NYI Ministry Plan's definitions of membership, leadership and organization (the Council). What improvements might you suggest?

Developing a sound plan for youth ministry includes both a Biblical/theological foundation as well as a historical appreciation of the expectations of any youth ministry. However, such a plan also must reflect the primary values and overall goals of the youth minister and the local church. Returning to your investigation of your local ministry context, what are the primary values and goals *expressed* through this ministry? How do these values and goals match up with your own understanding of what a youth ministry should value and the goals it should set? In other words, *why* should you have a youth ministry in this particular context and *what* should that ministry be all about? List four or five possible responses.

Write in your journal. Reflect on where your local church youth ministry program is and where you would like to see it in five years. Identify the adults and youth that will make it happen.

Punctuate the Finish

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.

1 Timothy 4:12 (NLT)

Lesson 6

Philosophical Foundations of Youth Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Why Youth Ministry?	Small Groups	Resource 6-1 Flipchart or board
0:20	Philosophy of Ministry	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 6-2—6-4
0:45	From Philosophy to Model	Lecture	Resource 6-5 Flipchart of board
0:50	Models of Ministry	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 6-6 Resource 6-7
1:20	From Model to Program	Lecture	Resource 6-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review/Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Yaconelli, Mark. *Contemplative Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006, ix-xix.

Dean, Kenda Creasy, Chapman Clark and David Rahn, Eds. *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2001, 109-124.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students.

Return and collect homework.

What ideas for improvements did you suggest for your local youth ministry setting?

Orientation

This lesson will assist you in understanding how one's philosophy of youth ministry directly impacts the specific model of ministry that one implements.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- demonstrate how a philosophy of ministry lends itself to particular models of ministry
- articulate why ministry models are important
- identify the various models available
- implement models based on their current context and faith tradition

Motivator

In order for youth ministry to be both successful and congruent with one's faith tradition, the ministry model and practices must reflect the theological and philosophical beliefs of the youth pastor and his or her faith tradition.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Why Youth Ministry

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 6-1 in the Student Guide.

Why should the church have youth ministry?

What are the most important values a youth ministry should be built upon?

You will have about 10 minutes to share together before we come back together to share with the whole group.

Allow for responses—write on a board or flipchart, or have someone type on a computer using PowerPoint.

Are there any commonalities that emerged?

Were there any major differences that arose? Why?

While we may agree on some reasons for why we do youth ministry, and even on many of the values it should be built upon, we've also seen that even in this group there is a diversity of opinion on the why and what of youth ministry. Today, we're going to explore those key questions.

Lecture/Discussion: Philosophy of Ministry

(25 minutes)

Allow for response. Chances are that most students will not be able to define it, unless they have had a previous module where they had to write their philosophy.

Refer to Resource 6-2 in the Student Guide.

John M Dettoni. An Introduction to Youth Ministry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1993, 38.

Maybe you've heard the phrase "philosophy of ministry" before.

Can someone tell me what it is and what is its connection to youth ministry?

Look at the definition of "Youth Ministry Philosophy" found on Resource 6-2.

As John Dettoni points out, a youth ministry philosophy really answers the two basic questions you discussed earlier—"Why have a youth ministry?" and "What is youth ministry all about?"

Allow for responses. Point out that every single value listed is important because all are interconnected. In addition, human beings, even teenagers, are complex individuals who are impacted by all 11 values.

Now, pick the category "Rationale for youth ministry" and ask students what they believe is the rationale for youth ministry. Chances are students will have different beliefs about this. If for some reason, their beliefs about this topic are all similar, chose another of the topics, perhaps the relationship of youth ministry to the whole church, and repeat the process.

Allow for responses. If students do not suggest it, point out that not even every Nazarene student in this class agreed on the eleven structures.

Refer to Resource 6-3. Use the mini-lecture to guide students through the resource.

Do you think it's important to really address all of these issues? After all, it's only youth ministry.

In your opinion, should all Nazarene churches adopt the same philosophy of ministry? Why or why not?

While there is a common theological heritage we share, each local church will have differing views on many of the elements of a philosophy of ministry. One suburban, long-term established Nazarene church may follow very traditional patterns related to issues like leadership styles, the rationale for youth ministry, or the place of youth ministry in the whole church. A smaller, inner-city emerging Nazarene congregation may have very different views on each of these subjects. These differences of belief are dependent on many contextual issues: education level; location of the church; primary socio-economic group present; presence or lack of theological training; etc. These differing beliefs will result not just in a differing philosophy of youth ministry, but ultimately different practices of youth ministry from one another.

Norman DeJong has created a tool to help us better understand this issue of philosophy of ministry and how it impacts ministry. We start at the bottom of the ladder and begin to work our way up. The first rung deals with the issue of authority: upon whose authority do we do what we do? While that may appear to be a no-brainer, the reality is that too many people are doing youth ministry for reasons other than the fact that God called and empowered them.

The second rung asks us to consider what it is that we believe about the teenagers with whom we're working.

Do we believe they are the church of today or tomorrow? How do their developmental issues impact our understanding of things such as whether teenagers are capable of assuming leadership, or even being sanctified?

As we continue to climb, the next rung asks us to have the end in sight. Where do we want to go? What does a fully-formed disciple look like?

Next, we start addressing how will we get there? This is where we start thinking about specific models of ministry. We'll address this aspect more fully later in this lesson.

On the fifth rung, we look at the available resources and consider how we can use them in order to reach the goals we have for ministry and our students.

Lastly, after we have put the ministry model in place, we then closely examine what we are doing to see whether we are meeting the goals we established. If not, then we work to discover why not and what we need to change in order to get there.

Refer to Resource 6-4.

Walk students through each of the four phases, expanding on each one. Be prepared to answer any questions students may have.

The creation of a philosophy of ministry is a time-consuming task. To help you with this task, let's look at a four-phase process developed by Aubrey Malphurs.

- Phase One: Mission—the “Why?” question. Why does the ministry exist?
- Phase Two: Core Values—the “How?” question. How will the ministry conduct its mission?
- Phase Three: Vision—the “What if?” question. This provides a mental picture of what this organization or ministry should look like.
- Phase Four: Strategy—the “What now?” question. How can we accomplish this mission?

Now, having looked at what a philosophy of ministry should contain, and the steps to move from philosophy to model, let's examine exactly what a model is.

Lecture: From Philosophy to Model

(5 minutes)

A model of ministry tells us what the youth ministry philosophy should look like in real life. It helps us understand how the ideas and ideals of the youth ministry philosophy will be organized. Through the basic components of the model, one should be able to understand what the ministry's philosophy of ministry is about.

However, a model is just a conceptualization. While it moves us from philosophy toward the real world, it is only an intermediate step. Models have to be lived out through programs. A program is the detailed, planned activity of the model and philosophy applied to a particular youth ministry in a particular local church. It is the “doing” of youth ministry.

In one sense, we can say that our philosophy of ministry establishes our goals while our chosen model of ministry provides the methods by which to reach those goals.

Refer to Resource 6-5 in the Student Guide.

Philosophy of Youth Ministry answers:

- WHY have a youth ministry?
- WHAT is youth ministry all about?

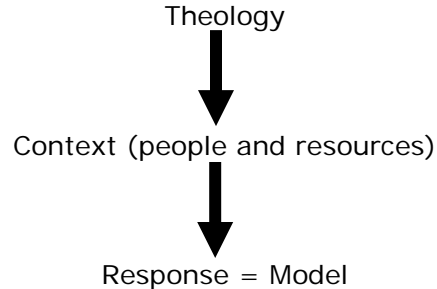
Model of Youth Ministry answers:

- WHAT should a youth ministry look like?

Program for Youth Ministry answers:

- HOW will our youth ministry operate?

In choosing a model, your *experience* of youth ministry and your *theological priorities* will predispose you to favor some approaches over others.



We start with our theology and philosophy of ministry. Then we examine our current context—people and resources. Once we understand it, then we can develop a response to our unique setting and need. The resultant response will be a model of ministry. The model will help ensure we not only are moving toward the goals we laid out in our philosophy of ministry, but will also ensure we are meeting the needs of youth at their various levels of commitment.

Lecture/Discussion: Models of Ministry

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resource 6-6 in the Student Guide.

As we consider what type of model to adopt, there are many things we need to consider. One core issue is an examination of the relationship between fellowship and

Mark H. Senter III. *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, xiii-xiv.

missiology. In *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, Senter notes that Missiologist George Peters frames the discussion as centrifugal versus centripetal approaches to mission. Centripetal draws momentum toward a central point (in this case, the church), while centrifugal strategies spin energy toward the periphery (the non-churched). Historically, church-based ministries have focused on nurture and discipleship (centripetal) while parachurch ministries have concentrated on evangelism (centrifugal).

Point out the horizontal line on Resource 6-6.

A second core issue that's important in thinking about a model revolves around developmental issues. At what stage of a young person's life is it possible for evidences of spiritual maturity to appear so that the young person can be a full participant in the life of the faith community? Are there theological issues that prevent adolescents from full participation in the life of the church? In short, the question becomes, are youth the church of the present or the future?

Point out the vertical line on Resource 6-6.

In considering any model of youth ministry, one must decide where you fall in regard to these two axes.

Refer to Resource 6-7. Students should follow along as you use the resource to lead them through the models of ministry.

Let's look at three models which have proven themselves particularly helpful in youth ministry.

1. Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry—Doug Fields' model

Drawing from the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22: 37-39), Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church, has suggested that there are five primary purposes that all churches should practice. Doug Fields, the youth pastor at Saddleback, has applied these five purposes to youth ministry, as found in his book, *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry*.

The five Scriptural purposes are:

- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Fellowship
- Worship

Side note: Back in the 1970's, Nazarene Youth International created a five pointed logo which listed these five purposes as the organization's primary objectives.

This model of ministry seeks to create programs and ministries which give students at all levels of commitment the opportunity to engage each of these purposes.

Dorothy Bass and Don Richter. *Way to Live: Practices for Teens*. Upper Room Books, 2002.

2. Christian Practices—Kenda Creasy Dean, Mark Yaconelli, Tony Jones, Mike King, Dorothy Bass' models

Tony Jones. The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life Zondervan, 2005.

Mike King, Presence Centered Youth Ministry IVP Books, 2006.

Mark Yaconelli Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry Zondervan, 2007.

Foster and Dean, 110-111.

King, 151.

One growing model advocated by a number of current youth ministry specialists begins with the assumption that ministry occurs primarily through practices or disciplines that shape the spiritual life, rather than through general activities or programming. Particular attention is given to basic spiritual disciplines such as worship, celebrating communion, prayer, scripture reading, compassionate service and witness. The primary ministry focus in this approach is to teach youth to appreciate and engage in different spiritual formation disciplines as individuals and as groups.

Kenda Dean and Ron Foster write “As we participate in the soul-shaping practices of faith, our life begins to look like Jesus’ life . . . Participating in the practices of faith defines our shape and our call as Christians.” A major goal is to encourage young people to develop a “rule of life” or series of commitments to maintain both certain Christian values and specific spiritual disciplines that both cultivate youth devotion and guide their witness in the world. Mike King writes “A rule of life is an intention to place Jesus Christ at the center of life, community and ministry.”

3. Incarnational-Relational—Andrew Root’s framework

While the previous models rely primarily on programming or practices, one other prominent approach begins with relations, particularly between adults and youth (but sometimes also between young people themselves.) This model trusts that Christ becomes manifest in the middle of open, honest relationships shaped by Christian intention and guided by the Holy Spirit. As noted in the previous lesson, Andrew Root, cautions that relationships must take seriously the lives of youth and calls for creating a space or place, where youth can authentically share their pains, hopes, and passions.

Root, 83.

Root writes “Just as Jesus incarnate, crucified and resurrected was fully our place-sharer, so we too, as Jesus’ disciples, must ourselves become place-sharers, suffering with and for young people. I believe that when we rethink and reimage relational youth ministry as place-sharing, we will be able to see human-to-human relationships as the location of God’s presence in the world, and therefore honor the broken and yet beautiful humanity of adolescents (and ourselves!).” Ministers in this model trust that Christ may work not only through adults but also through youth, even those who have yet to embrace the gospel. Root offers the following guidelines that provide a sound beginning for this approach.

Rules of Art for Meaningful Relationships as the Presence of God

- The youth pastor should have a connection to all adolescents in the congregation but be in a relationship with a few.
- All adolescents should be invited into relationships of place-sharing.
- The youth pastor is to support, encourage and assist adult and adolescent relationships of place-sharing.
- Relationships should be built around shared interests or a common task.
- Relationships should develop as organically as possible, in which adults are authentically human—in an open-and-closed manner—alongside adolescents.

Root, 207.

As one might imagine, each of these models acknowledge that programs, practices and people are all important in youth ministry. However, in each model, one of these domains guides the efforts of youth ministry more than the other two emphases. Where one begins, and what one trusts makes the most difference, establishes the model.

Break students into small groups of 3-5 people. Ask them to evaluate the three models presented and suggest whether any of the three might work in their youth ministry. Allow the groups to then report back to the whole class.

Lecture: From Model to Program

(5 minutes)

Refer to Resource 6-8 in the Student Guide.

Walk through Resource 6-8 with students, going over each question and elaborating on it. Be prepared to answer any questions that may arise.

Choosing a model of ministry that fits us is not as easy as one might think. It requires us to ask good questions. Resource 6-8 provides 11 questions that one must ask and answer in order to choose the right model of ministry.

While choosing a model is important, it is equally important once the model is chosen to continue to use our philosophy of ministry to continue to guide us.

Have any of you ever driven a tractor to plant seeds? When you do, it is important that you find a point on the horizon to aim for, and keep your eyes on it the whole way in order to have a straight row. If you don't, when you get to the end of the row and look back, you'll probably discover that your row looks like a

geometric figure. The same thing is true once we've picked our model. We still have to look at individual practices within that model and determine whether they fit the elements of our philosophy of ministry.

And once we have established the model and put into place our programs and ministries, we then have to do good evaluation to determine whether the model and practices are moving us where we wanted to go. That means that we have to plan ahead with our key principles in mind. We have to know when (and why) to say "yes" and when to say "no" to ministry programs and activities, as not all programs (even really good ones) are the best fit for our context and philosophy of ministry.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What is the purpose of a philosophy of ministry?

Why are models important?

What is the most important concept or idea you will take away from today?

Look Ahead

While understanding one's philosophy of ministry proves crucial for faithful youth ministry, ministers also have to pay serious attention to their own relationship with God. The next lesson offers wise guidance in nurturing our own spiritual walk with God through spiritual disciplines.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Using Resource 6-4, write a 4-page paper that answers each of the four phases, and then suggest which model of youth ministry you would want to adopt for your current ministry.

Complete Resource 6-9.

Read Resource 6-10.

Read Resource 6-11.

Write in your journal about what you've learned today, and what difference it could make for you, your church, and the youth you work with.

Punctuate the Finish

Creating a philosophy of ministry may seem like a lot of work (it is), and not all that important for youth ministry (it is). Even the writer of Proverbs understood that in order for ministry to be successful, the minister must have a sense of where he or she is going and how to get there. He wrote, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov 29:18). It is our hope that you

will take the time to not only discover that vision for ministry, but also discover the best model to help you implement it so that your vision for ministry becomes a reality.

Lesson 7

The Youth Minister's Relationship with God

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	A Centered Life	Lecture/Discussion	
0:20	Transforming Practices	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 7-1 Resource 7-2 Resource 7-3
0:50	Cultivating a Reflective, Contemplative Spirit	Lecture	Resource 7-4 Resource 7-5
1:05	Creating Space for Discernment	Lecture	Resource 6-10 Resource 6-11
1:15	Life As Prayer	Lecture	Resource 7-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1978.

Freeborn, E. Dee, Tartaglia, Janine, Tracey, Wesley D., Weigelt, Morris A. *The Upward Call*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994, 51-124.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's homework paper on a model of youth ministry.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will explore how spiritual practices shape and nurture our faith journey and help us lead others in more holistic ways. This lesson will also show how reflection, contemplation and prayer give way for the gift of discernment to take shape in our personal and professional life.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- be motivated to practice youth ministry from a healthy, personal, spiritual center
- reflect on their faith journey and create space for centering their life in spiritual discipline
- demonstrate various discernment processes for health and wholeness

Motivator

There comes a point in our ministry when we discover that we must learn how to *be* in the presence of God before we *do* in the name of God. When we commit to nurture our faith journey we are able to minister out of an abundant life, centered on spiritual discipline where we encounter God's grace. The spiritual disciplines advance, deepen, enrich and convert us, both as individuals and congregations. They free up space and time for us to be continually reminded of God's love and grace, and by participating in them we learn to live more balanced lives where God brings deeper meaning to our relationships and new life to even the most ordinary events of our lives.

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: A Centered Life

(10 minutes)

So now the LORD says, "Stop right where you are! Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16, NLT

A Centered Life of Spiritual Discipline

In the fifth chapter of the letter to the Galatians, the writer implores God's people to be made in God's holiness by guarding their hearts and minds against the ways of the world and by learning to live in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. This is such a striking passage because it calls us to be awake and aware of harmful living, and to choose instead kingdom living which brings *freedom*. As youth ministers we share in the sacred responsibility of guiding young people to an understanding of what it means to live kingdom lives in this world. If we are going to guide others in this way then we will need to understand what it means to live authentic lives before God that enables us to be led by the Holy Spirit. Apart from the ways we learn this in community, we also learn this through the spiritual disciplines that regularly connect us to God and nurture our faith.

Though the spiritual life is much broader, consider the fact that there is an external and internal side to our faith. The external side includes the things we do, our outward behavior as a result of serving God. The internal side includes the relationship we develop with Christ and the character shaping qualities we gain as a result of being transformed.

The purpose of this guided discussion is to identify the external and internal sides of faith and to explore the idea that our outward behavior does not necessarily result in a transformed life that reflects the character of Christ.

Possibilities: Read the Bible, pray, attend church

Possibilities: love, joy, peace, etc.

What are some external things we do simply because we are Christians?

What are some internal qualities or, character shaping qualities we gain as a result of being Christian?

Does our external faith, the things we do, always influence our internal faith?

What is the relationship between our external and internal faith?

What did you learn from the homework assignment Resource 6-9?

For various reasons Christians tend to emphasize outward behavior. We certainly have more control over what we *do*, and are often rewarded or praised for our actions. But again, Galatians tells us that a life led by the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Our external faith, the things we do, are a vital part of the faith journey and serve as a continual response to the grace and love we receive from God as well as the ways we introduce others to kingdom living. But the nature of our faith can never be rooted solely in the things we do.

The danger of focusing on our actions without paying attention to the inner life is that we can perform without being transformed in our hearts and minds. We can choose to do things and we can be involved in ministry without being led by the Spirit. However, when we are led by the Holy Spirit we enter a process where we are ever-learning new ways of being, new ways of seeing, and new ways of being with others.

This process is a commitment to the knowledge that we must know how to "*be*" in the presence of God before we "*do*" in the name of God. There is a need for balance where our being informs our doing and vice versa. It is also the understanding that our identity is not found in our work but in the fact that we belong to the One who deeply loves us. It is what author Henri Nouwen has repeatedly written about—that we need continually to discover that we are the beloved. When we realize our belovedness, we are able to more fully serve with greater freedom and confidence.

Careful balance of doing and being requires a life centered on spiritual discipline where reflection and discernment becomes a guiding tool for our own lives and the lives of those around us. Especially in our ministry roles, part of our commitment to others requires that we commit to develop an authentic relationship with God.

When we engage in more faithful ways of being and doing, then our learning and our practices become a sacred obligation that express joy, hope, and faithful

discernment. And when we are faithful in developing this relationship with God we are making room for God to speak into our daily life, our work, our relationships, our time, money, everything!

In many cultures there is a growing expectation for immediate results which makes it difficult for us to slow down, to rest and to nurture our faith journeys. This growing penchant for immediate results sometimes finds its way into the church and impacts the way we worship or the ways we expect to grow and be challenged in our faith. But spiritual growth is a life-long process and so comes steadily. The ability to recognize the various ways God is continually speaking to us takes practice.

Because it takes time, it is easy to get caught up in the business of ministry, and often times the first thing we begin to neglect is our own spiritual nourishment. This busyness even creeps into our own learning patterns. We may find ourselves listening to a sermon or reading a devotional thought and suddenly what we hear challenges us, and rather than allowing the lesson to incubate within us so that it becomes a source of change in our lives, we quickly begin to plan how we might use this in our next lesson, sermon or ministry event. Teaching others the lessons we are learning is vital but we must take the time to carefully learn these lessons in authentic ways, allow them to take root in our lives so that we can adequately guide others through the journey of that lesson.

Jewish scholar and theologian Rabbi Abraham Heschel poignantly said, "We have so much to say about the Bible that we are not prepared to hear what the Bible has to say about us." In our attempt to be faithful ministers of the gospel, it is possible to run the risk of allowing the journey of those we lead to supersede our own faith journey.

Abraham Heschel, The Insecurity of Freedom. New York: Farrar, Strous and Giroux. 1972, 171.

Lecture/Discussion: Transforming Practices

(30 minutes)

Our work in ministry will always find us having to answer the question, "What does it mean to have an intimate relationship with God? Is this possible?" I believe the answer is yes, and that there are numerous ways to encounter God and even develop and nurture our relationship with God. What does this intimate time with God look like? There are a variety of ways to put ourselves in places where we might encounter God.

The Spiritual disciplines are those practices we engage in that help us create rhythms for sustaining a centered life of continually seeking and returning to God with our whole lives. In this way our minds, hearts, bodies, relationships and time are continually offered to God. Participating in spiritual disciplines brings deeper meaning to our lives because we are forced to examine what we really believe and thus, what we do as a result of that belief. They also help us create balance in our spiritual journey by focusing on various dimensions of being Christian in this world. As one pastor explained it to me, "We form habits so that habits can form us."

The goal of the disciplines is not to develop and maintain a *devotional habit*, and thus fall into the trap of more doing. The spiritual disciplines are actually freedom from this type of distraction. The disciplines help us to live a devoted life to the Holy One that continually invites us into relationship.

Refer to Resource 7-1 in the Student Guide. Read through this with the class.

Depending on your context or your personality, the word "discipline" may be un-inviting. Discipline can often connote a sense of perfecting a given task. For this reason, it may be more practical to see the spiritual disciplines as *practices* we participate in, especially when we understand that we may never be fully perfect in our practice of them. In other words, it is not how well we are able to pray, fast or sit in silence. Rather, it is the encounter we have with God in those moments and how they shape and form our character and daily actions.

While talking with university students about spiritual disciplines a young man once asked, "Why should I participate in spiritual disciplines if I'm already aware of world hunger and a host of other social issues, and am already immersed in compassionate ministry?" This question indicates a common misunderstanding that the spiritual disciplines exist only for the purpose of making us aware of the needs of the world and our role in it. However, if this were the sole purpose we would soon abandon the disciplines simply because there are easier ways to gain this type of information, not to mention the fact that the needs might quickly become overwhelming. Though solidarity with others through the disciplines is certainly a necessary way that we are formed, the spiritual disciplines do not exist for this sole purpose.

Nor do the disciplines exist so that we can boast about our ability to perfect them. The disciplines are only a

Dean Blevins, Nazarene Theological Seminary.

means to an end and not the end itself. The "end" if the disciplines is learning how to be in God's presence and listening to God speak into all the events of our lives. God is the focus we continually return to. When we learn to be in the presence of God we are better able to offer this presence to others, even and maybe especially in the midst of difficult pain or pressing social issues. It is a very Wesleyan concept after all, that as Christians "we participate in the means of grace in order to become a means of grace in the lives of others."

In this way, the spiritual disciplines work on us. They work on the inner life, those places within us that reveal who we really are and not just the person we project to others. For example, when we fast for whatever reason outside of ourselves, it becomes also an opportunity for us to practice feasting on Christ. In the process, this discipline may make us aware of our own "hungers" and the many ways we attempt to satisfy those longings instead of feasting on God. The spiritual disciplines open us to God's interpretation of our lives. But we will not be able to recognize God's voice if we do not develop the ability to adequately quiet ourselves, listen and reflect through the various disciplines.

Refer to Resource 7-2 in the Student Guide. Have the students spend a few minutes completing the exercise.

Have the students briefly discuss the following section about the ways we choose spiritual disciplines and then guide the discussion with the questions.

Dr. Doug Hardy. Discussion for "The Personal & Spiritual Development of the Minister" Course at Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2006.

An important consideration regarding the spiritual disciplines is the reality that left to our own devices we often choose those disciplines that we are most familiar with or those that are comfortable for us to practice. Whether we realize it or not our practices have also been influenced by our families, experiences, friends, church, education, money, etc. These influences are not particularly bad and are only problematic when we choose to not go beyond what is most comfortable for us. We must learn to grow and be challenged in various ways and if our default mode is too narrow than we miss out on allowing God to bring transformation to our lives in all ways possible.

When you consider the disciplines you listed, is there a qualitative life to them or do you find yourself simply performing these tasks? Is the list of disciplines diverse or similar?

What criteria did you use to gather these—based on frequency, personality-based, perhaps their effectiveness, other factors?

Refer to Resource 7-3 in the Student Guide. Have the students review the information and discuss its relevance to them and their ministry.

There have been many ways to talk about and organize the disciplines. This resource introduces the various disciplines through five main categories that include: Word-Oriented Practices, Sacramental Orientated Practices, Ascetic Practices, Connecting Practices and Serving Practices. When organized in this manner it is evident that the spiritual disciplines serve many purposes. Since these categories reflect five character-shaping qualities that reflect who we are called to be, using this handout as a guide for discerning spiritual disciplines may be very useful.

Allow for response.

Is there anything on this list that is surprising to you?

Which category seems the easiest for you? Which category is a challenge for you?

For which category might you need to create more balance?

Dr. Doug Hardy

"If you truly desire to love and serve God, then you will be sought out. And if you are sought out then you'll need to learn how to be present to others."

This was a powerful statement I first heard in seminary that helped me realize the responsibility and nature of my pastoral call. Understanding what it means to be truly present to others can be life-giving to both parties. But I have also discovered that constant ministry to others in this way can lead to fatigue and stress if I do not slow down for rest from all that is happening and reflection on all that is happening.

For many, it is not the ministry of presence that depletes our energies over time as much as it is the self-care required to be able to set aside our needs in those moments with others in order to be fully present. Being present means that we are fully attentive to the person(s) before us so that we can support, listen to them and give direction when needed. People seek out ministers for various reasons and often for reasons they may not be aware.

The ability to discern the needs of others takes careful listening skills and discernment. Every person is unique in their experiences and needs and no formula of counseling or spiritual encouragement will suffice for everyone. But how do we develop the ability to carefully and prayerfully discern what others need in order to lead them from darkness into light, from a place of confusion to understanding, from grief to abundant growth and freedom? The answer to these questions must be rooted in the ways we work out our own faith through the various seasons of life.

University chaplain Mark Carter arrived at an important lesson in his own life as he was preparing for ministry to young adults. Having received a substantial amount of academic training, to his surprise as he began searching for a position the doors remained closed for quite some time. In the midst of this confusing and questioning time, it became evident to Mark that God was calling him into a different type of preparation—that of developing a more reflective and contemplative life. This wilderness experience eventually became a great light to him and to others as Mark recalls hearing God speak into his life the challenge that *he would not be able to lead others where he himself had not been*. We must be willing to enter the ongoing process of reflection and contemplation that sustains relationship with God or we will not be able to lead others through the same transforming process.

Henri J. Nouwen, The Way of the Heart, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981, 12.

Author Henri Nouwen has recommended the gifts of solitude, silence and prayer as disciplines that not only help guard against allowing the ways of the world to creep into our ministry and churches, but that lead us through our own wilderness experiences as well as through times of great celebration and growth.

Imagine that you are with someone you deeply love and that loves you in return. What happens when you are together? My guess is that you sit patiently with that person and *lean in* toward them, right? We lean into those persons because we want to hear what they have to tell us; we don't want to miss a word being spoken. Intimacy with God can be that way. We learn to lean into our relationship with God for the purpose of mutual listening. And the idea of listening is a crucial one for Christians.

We recognize it in the Shema, the first instruction that God gives his people, "**Hear**, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again" (Deut 6:4-7, NLT). David's cry in Psalm 119:36, *Incline my heart, O God*, rightly expresses our daily desire for God's sanctifying work in our life.

A life of reflection and contemplation is an invitation to the process of wholeness—the great shalom. Jeremiah 29:11 is a beautiful passage rich in meaning but

perhaps one of the most often mis-interpreted passages of our time. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* The literal meaning here is God knows the plans that he is continuously in the process of making, and they are plans to give his people *Shalom!* To wish shalom on someone means to wish them *peace*, but it also means to wish them *wholeness*. A centered life of spiritual discipline learns to receive the various seasons of life trusting that God is always present.

Lecture: Cultivating a Reflective, Contemplative Spirit

(15 minutes)

Despite the many gifts that reflection and contemplation provide we still often resist. There are numerous reasons for why we might set aside time for reflection and contemplation. Some reasons include ministry assignments, personalities, relationships, our work or home environment, the need to keep up with the culture of the young people we lead, and on and on. Even some worshipping congregations with unhealthy expectations for involvement can be a hindrance. Brennan Manning writes

Recent studies have shown that the average congregation on a Sunday morning can tolerate only 15 seconds of silence before someone feels compelled to break it with an announcement, a song, a prophecy, or whatever. Ironically, the church itself often impedes our efforts to reach inward and upward toward God. As Parker Palmer notes: "Too often the church is an enemy of our solitude. Too often the church is one more agent in the vast social conspiracy of togetherness and noise aimed at distracting us from encountering ourselves. The church keeps us busy on this cause or that, this committee or that, trying to provide meaning through motion until we get 'burned out' instead and withdraw from the church's life. Even in its core act of worship the church provides little space for the silent and solitary inward journey to occur (sometimes filling the available space with noisy exhortations to take that very journey!)"

Brennan Manning, Ruthless Trust. The Ragamuffins Path to God. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000, 78-79.

Though reasons vary for why we set aside time with God, they often stem from our need to belong. In *The Holy Longing*, Ronald Rolheiser argues that there is within us all a deep longing for a sense of belonging, and a desire to figure out things related to life and love. Rolheiser describes this holy longing as that

Ronald Rolheiser, The Holy Longing. New York: Doubleday, 1999, 5.

desire within us that constantly seeks peace and "spirituality is, ultimately, about what we do with that desire."

He goes on to say that everyone has a spirituality because all of us know this restlessness, this holy longing and desire. Therefore, if spirituality is what we do with that desire then we all choose a spirituality that is either life-giving or destructive. There can be multiple desires within us, the desire to be good and the desire to sin, the desire to live a simple life and the desire to indulge in all that life has to offer. And it is reflection and contemplation that guide us into discovering those deeper longings that throughout our day normally go unnoticed or unchallenged. Discovery of these deep longings may actually be painful because they reveal core issues at work within us. Through solitude, silence and contemplation we might be confronted with ego, pride, self-rejection, hurts, bitterness, and so on. But a willingness to work these out in our lives will eventually bring new life. The process of learning to abandon the many ways we seek unrealistic fulfillment in other things, though painful, helps us discover the incredible rest and hope we have in God.

Freeborn, Tartaglia, Tracy, Weigelt, The Upward Call. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994, 113.

While comparing contemplation to that of a growing redwood, Morton Kelsey says, "It is simple and natural, like a seed growing and becoming a tree. At the same time it requires the right conditions, conditions not provided by the secular world today." The reality is that for most of us, life is busy and hectic and the conditions are more hindering than helpful when it comes to cultivating a reflective, contemplative spirit. At first it may be very difficult to cultivate. Impinging thoughts, body aches, fear of silence, discomfort with God or self all work to block our efforts. But taking those impinging thoughts into God's presence, if we follow them out, may actually be a tool to inform us about something we need to address. The important thing is to practice, and even experiment. Know that movement within silence is okay and good. In fact, many people often discover pain or fatigue as they begin to practice silence and stillness. Again, if we are faithful to develop this practice, even our bodies sometimes tell us what our mind is ignoring, that we are tired and need rest. The point is to listen to your life.

I want to suggest a few practices that might help us continue to learn this sacred obligation of cultivating reflective, contemplative spirits throughout our day. A simple way to begin to develop a reflective spirit might

be to begin with daily prayers, specifically, morning, afternoon and evening prayers. For centuries, people have been pausing throughout their days to reflect on God if only for a few moments. This pause, not unlike the Sabbath, is a simple reminder that God is the center of all that we do. We pause at various points in our day as a symbol of our desire to continually return to God. Though pausing requires much practice and may in fact seem like a distraction at first, monastic traditions have long known that these calls to worship throughout the day are not interruptions but are in fact our real work of remembering to invite God into the center of our work, play and rest.

Refer to Resource 7-4 in the Student Guide. Read through these prayers together.

Scripture reading is another way to reflect and is perhaps the most common way we can contemplate on the character and ways of God as well as find direction for our own lives. Many Christians have used *Lectio Divina*, a sacred reading of the scriptures, as a way to pray through scripture that is different than normal Bible study. Developed during a time when most people were illiterate and books were not easily accessible, *Lectio Divina* became a way for the congregation to meditate on the message they heard in the scriptures being read. In their listening they would capture a word or phrase that stuck out to them and repeat it over and over until they memorized it. Once memorized, they would continue to allow that word or phrase to take hold of their mind and heart often hearing within the words an invitation. In this way they would pray the scriptures over and over again. *Lectio Divina* can be practiced individually or in groups. A guide to group *Lectio Divina* is included for you.

Refer to Resource 7-5 in the Student Guide. You can have students read this later.

As we cultivate this contemplative spirit we may come to find that we are more willing to bring unpleasant encounters or relationships before God especially as we are made aware of our anxieties. All of us at one point will encounter someone who is angry with us or who is difficult for us to love. One helpful exercise of praying for that person while also bringing ourselves into prayer is to pray the Lord's Prayer by inserting their name in the prayer as often as possible. For example,

Insert someone's name in the blanks as you read through the prayer.

" _____'s Father in Heaven,
 may your name be honored.
May your kingdom come soon,
May your will be done in _____'s life just as it is in
 heaven.
Give _____ food for today,
 and forgive _____'s sins,

as he/she forgives those who have sinned against him/her.
And don't let _____ yield to temptation,
but deliver _____ from evil.
For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

I know no other remedy for healing my own life from pain caused by someone else than to pray for them; to pray for their healing and wholeness. Prayer in this way transforms me and creates in me a desire for their lives also to be transformed.

One final suggestion to consider for cultivating a reflective, contemplative spirit is the use of a prayer corner. A prayer corner or room or chair is simply a designated place you return to again and again to encounter God. You may choose to place some things there, favorite books or objects that have special meaning for you in your spiritual journey. The point is simply to return again and again. People who have created this tangible space have witnessed that it is not long before that particular space helps usher them into the practice of reflection and prayer more quickly. Though at first it may be very difficult to stay focused, eventually we find that even our bodies have memories and so, this type of space can be very helpful for training our minds toward contemplation.

A truly contemplative life draws us into the reality that all of life belongs to God and that everything that makes up our lives is brought before God—our work, rest, play, relationships, home, times of renewal—these are all offered up to God who sanctifies them all.

"Pay attention to your life" says Frederick Buechner. What he means of course is that we need to slow down long enough to be witnesses to what is happening in our own lives. We will not be able to do this without periodically removing ourselves from the many noises in our lives and taking the time to pay careful attention. But as we commit to be in relationship with God in this way, we might discover ourselves rising and ending our days with increasing love for God and others.

Allow for response.

Which of the forms of prayer presented appeal to you personally?

What forms of prayer have provided you with opportunities to listen, as well as talk with God?

Lecture/Discussion: Creating Space for Discernment

(10 minutes)

This section pays some attention to the idea of creating space for discernment so that we are living healthy and whole lives. Discernment will play itself out in terms of choosing activities, saying yes and no, and saying yes to Sabbath.

Practicing Our Faith. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997, 117.

Allow for response.

Responses will indicate the students' faithfulness to the reading homework.

Call for honesty!

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. Spiritual Disciplines Handbook. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005, 290.

As we learn to create space to develop reflective and contemplative spirits we naturally enter into the process of discernment. Many of our daily decisions are small. But we are always in the process of making bigger decisions—choosing right from wrong, giving and taking, knowing when to move forward or to wait, not to mention the host of issues facing those we lead. These bigger decisions impact not only our individual lives but those around us. "The practice of discernment makes intentional a process of reflection on and participation with God's Spirit as the fundamental context in which we live and make choices."

There are many ways spiritual discernment can impact our faith journey and our communities but for our purposes we will focus on how discernment impacts the way we make decisions as we attempt to minister out of a healthy center.

What did you learn from Resource 6-10?

What did you learn from Resource 6-11?

How do you balance your life?

Which of the 5 relationships mentioned is the first to be neglected?

What is the one thing that you never neglect?

How do you accomplish Sabbath?

Knowing how to work for God's approval before the approval of others

Colossians 3:23-24. *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."*

Our insecurities are often so deceptive that they often blind us from the varied and mixed motives always at work within us. Many refer to this as a false self—"An identity rooted in secondary things like accomplishments, productivity, people pleasing, fame or success. The false self is always an identity that can be lost because it is a self we develop."

There is within us all a desire to belong and to perhaps confuse that belonging with the accolades we receive through our ministry and service to the church. We all like to be liked. We enjoy the attention we receive when an event or a lesson has gone well. We enjoy being sought out by others and enjoy being able to help others. All of these can be very healthy ways to interact with others and let us know we are being helpful ministers. It is when we rely solely on these encounters and allow them to feed our ego that we become unhealthy. Relying too much on the feedback we receive from others often just sends us on an emotional roller coaster ride because we run around trying to please others rather than ministering out of our deep convictions developed from a reflective life.

A truly reflective heart knows the insecurities at work in the inner life and is able to name and face these insecurities in the presence of God in humility and without fear. As we come before God with our honest confessions about some of our motives often based on our insecurities, God transforms them into a right way of being and we re-discover what Augustine spoke of long ago—that “our hearts are restless till they find their rest in [God].”

Lecture: Life as Prayer

(10 minutes)

Praying without ceasing and doing all to the glory of God

If prayer is anything, it is first and foremost practicing the presence of God. But prayer is also a way to encounter ourselves and God. In his book, *Praying the Psalms*, Walter Brueggmen challenges us to “Allow [yourselves] to be pressed by the experiences that force you to address the Holy One.” Brueggeman describes the various experiences or phases in our journey to describe the Christian life and the movement of many Biblical stories. The basic premise is that we are always moving through three phases: Orientation, Disorientation and Reorientation. Brueggeman suggests that the Psalms are a way to pray through these phases, particularly the disoriented phase; a stage he believes we encounter most throughout life.

We all experience moments of *Orientation*, moments when we have a sense of a clear direction; when life seems fairly whole and balanced. We are content and at peace with ourselves, others and life in general. The

ground beneath us seems fairly sturdy, the road ahead often exciting, and our options wide and varying.

We all experience moments of *Disorientation*. Any time we experience the pain of loss, deception, grief, shattered dreams, false hope, and difficult transitions, among many other things, we are ushered into a state of disorientation. Though our default mode may be to see a set-back as only a frustration, a mirror of our not-yet-mastered faults or weaknesses, these times are not only healthy patterns of growth, but are quite necessary to our development as human beings.

We all experience moments of *Reorientation*, when we emerge from disorientation with a renewed sense of hope and often a renewed understanding of God or the faith journey. It is the resting place; the calm after the storm of disorientation that makes it possible for us to move forward with a renewed sense of trust in God. So, praying the Psalms becomes a very helpful way to pray through the various seasons of our spiritual pilgrimage and growth.

Mudhouse Sabbath, MA: *Paraclete Press*, 2003.

Prayer is paying attention to all of life—your life in particular, the life of those around you, the world, your work, relationships. As Lauren Winner notes, Jews have prayers for everything. Prayer incorporates every aspect of life, challenging us to see every activity in its relationship to God. When saturated with prayer we are challenged to see and listen in an entirely different way, to pay theological attention to the simplest actions in life.

Prayer can also be continual. The process of practicing the presence of God is most often attributed to Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk with a desire to maintain an ongoing conversation with God throughout the day and regardless of the task. In his case he would primarily practice the presence of God in the place where he most spent his time, the monastery kitchen. Attempting to seek God throughout his day, Brother Lawrence gave us two gifts,

- the testimony that it is possible for us to pray without ceasing,
- that prayer can transform even our most ordinary events.

We have talked much about being people of balance, spiritual disciplines, reflection and prayer. A way of maintaining accountability for these practices is to create a Rule of Life. A rule of life simply states that we believe there are practices that advance, deepen, enrich and convert us, both as individuals and

congregations. As Scott Richardson states, a rule of life answers the question, "What do we need to do if we are serious about loving God with our entire being and loving our neighbors as ourselves?"

Refer to Resource 7-6 in the Student Guide. If there is time, you can read through this. The students may have already studied this concept in other modules.

Prayer is paying attention in our encounters with God. Through these daily prayers and encounters we center our lives on the Holy One, continually inclining our hearts, continually seeking and being found in Christ, continually resting in God's presence until our lives become a prayer to God.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

We have presented many ways that the youth minister can begin to establish and maintain a healthy and centered life. This way of living is a commitment to organize our lives around God rather than our own agendas. Though this can be a difficult process it ultimately leads to a more rewarding and restful journey.

Allow for response.

Would you say that your life is currently organized around God and his ways?

What has been most challenging to you about this lesson?

Look Ahead

The next lesson will focus on the Youth Minister's Relationship with others. Just as we spent time looking at ways to minister out of a healthy center, we will turn to ways of maintaining healthy relationships with those we minister alongside.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Interview 2-3 people and ask them about the spiritual practices they have found to be meaningful in their life. Write a one-page paper on your findings.

Choose a spiritual practice that has been introduced to you through this lesson and attempt to practice this every day this week. Write a one-page paper on your observations.

In *The Upward Call*, Weigelt and Freeborn discuss the idea of saying "No" so that we can say "Yes" by challenging us to practice "The discipline of blessed subtraction." In a prayerful act, answer the following questions and ask God to reveal those areas in your life where you may need a better sense of balance.

- How do I create space for my relationship with God?
- What can I eliminate from my life to draw closer to God?

- Are there moments during the day when I can capture time with God?
- Is there a specific place where I can do that away from my work space?
- Are there ways I can say no to some current program(s) or routine in my ministry so that I can say yes to my own spiritual pilgrimage?
- Are there people in my life that can help me discern where I find my value?

Write in your journal. Discuss aspects of your rule of life, what areas currently nourish your spiritual life? What areas encourage you to grow spirituality? What areas can "become means of grace" to other people?

Punctuate the Finish

Lord of All Life, we come before you not knowing who we are. We strut our stuff, trying to impress others with self-confidence. In the process we hope to be what we pretend. Save us from such pretense, that we might learn who we are through trust in you to make us more than we can imagine. Help us, Augustine-like, to reread our lives as a confession of sin made possible by your love. Bind up our wounds and our joys so that our lives finally make sense only as a prayer to you. Amen.

Stanley Hauerwas. Prayers Plainly Spoken. InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Prayers Plainly Spoken by Stanley Hauerwas

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Lesson 8

The Youth Minister's Relationship with Others

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Relationships with Youth	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 8-1 Resource 8-2
0:25	Incarnational Relationship Ingredients	Small Groups	Resource 8-3
0:50	Relationships with Parents and Families	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 8-4
1:10	Relationships with Other Adult Youth Workers	Lecture/Discussion	
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dean, Kenda Creasy and Ron Foster. *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1999, 71-138.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on students to share what they learned from their interview.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will address the system of relationships in the life of the youth minister. The relationships that will be addressed are those between the youth minister and

- the young person
- parents and families—including that of the youth minister
- other adult youth workers

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- identify the vital components of incarnational-relational youth ministry
- explain the implications for this type of ministry with the parents and families within the youth minister's sphere of influence
- demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of modeling appropriate pastoral care with other adult youth workers

Motivator

Do we actually take relationships with young persons, families, and other youth workers seriously? Often we can be tempted to simply substitute programs for the hard work of relationships. However, if we want to follow the example of Jesus Christ we must demonstrate in our own lives a “self-emptying love” (Greek—“kenosis”) like that described in Philippians 2:5-11.

*Have someone read Philippians 2:5-11. **Not** The Message version.*

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Relationships with Youth

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 8-1 in the Student Guide. Have one of the students read The Message version of this verse.

Incarnational-Relational Ministry

If ever there was a passage of Scripture that captures the heart of God for the relationship between the youth minister and the world it would have to be Philippians 2:5-11.

In this “Christ-hymn” Jesus is presented as the definitive prototype of a missionary God whose sole motivation was love, which acted in obedience to his Father to come to earth, be made a servant, and make the ultimate sacrifice in that obedient service. In this passage the youth minister—and every Christian—has the template for self-emptying love that was the trajectory of Jesus’ entire life. In this passage is a pattern of our life’s work.

It is the calling of every follower of Jesus to live “in his steps” as Peter’s first epistle reminds us. That being said then all followers of Jesus ought to pattern their living after his example, which is neatly summed up in this passage. Of course the middle section does not appear to be very encouraging—the part about death—obviously quite different from our traditional understanding of “fun,” a term often associated with youth ministry in many contexts.

This way of living “in his steps” is not something that we “put on” when we act as youth ministers either. Ministry is not something we “do” like an extra assignment, the term describes a holy way of living toward and with one another. In other words, this pattern of humble, self giving love is to characterize the lives of all Christians—but I dare say, especially that of the minister. The implications of this are that not only our congregations, but our own families must be recipients of our own *kenosis* a self-emptying associated with the passage we just read.

Kenda Dean and Ron Foster remind us in their book, *The Godbearing Life*, of the Eastern Orthodox notion of the *Theotokos* or Godbearer. This phrase describes, literally, Mary’s (the mother of Jesus) role—she

actually bore God to the world. And although not in this literal manner, we too are invited to nurture the growth of the living Spirit of Jesus Christ in our lives and the lives of the young people with whom we work. In this manner we live so that the presence of Jesus in us will be just as obvious as it was in Mary.

It seems that this way of living can prove particularly difficult in our own homes. Perhaps this setting provides the most important place for God-bearing (or Christlikeness) to occur. With so much of what takes place in our homes influencing our ministries—for good or ill—perhaps the most vital place for us to mimic Jesus' servant ways occurs in our home, with our own families and friends. Somehow it seems that these relationships represent part of the mystery of Jesus' way. We cannot "fake it," so we had better be very serious about inculcating this Christlike way of living in every aspect of our lives in order to be found faithful.

There is a saying, "Christians are a lot like tea bags, you never know what is inside until they are in hot water." Working with young people will ensure that we will all find ourselves in some sort of hot water at some point—as will being a parent! And when we do, all around us will find out what is inside. It would seem self-evident that when we cultivate this sort of "holy living" in our homes, that not only we will shape what is inside ourselves, but we will perpetuate Jesus' example with those whom we love more than anyone else on the earth. May this way of living and being saturate all we do and are in our homes and ministries.

Allow for response.

What part of this introduction is particularly difficult for you to actualize in your life?

Who is someone that is a living example of the Philippians 2 passage in your life?

Relationships with Youth

The book, *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*, by Chap Clark, proposes that the "defining issue for contemporary adolescents" in North America revolves around "abandonment." Youth experience this abandonment at work, in school, on sports teams, at church and even within families. Clark writes,

Sports, music, dance, drama, Scouts and even faith-related programs are all guilty of ignoring the developmental needs of each individual young person in favor of **the organization's goals** . . . even very young children learn that they are only as valuable

Chap Clark. Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers. Baker Academic, 2004, 39.

Refer to Resource 8-2 in the Student Guide.

Clark, 47, emphasis added by author of this lesson.

as their ability to contribute. Rarely are youth activities, especially group activities . . . safe places that allow children to explore latent potential, develop appreciation for a sport or activity, or even enjoy being involved.

That hurts me! I am afraid of the number of times I have overlooked the individual in favor of the crowd. I mean I did try to care for the single student . . . but only if they came on the retreat or mission trip. I have forgotten the parable about the one sheep in favor of the 99. In fact, I may have forgotten about the 99 sheep (or youth) only because it was not 100—which was my goal for that night! David Elkind, the noted developmental psychologist, describes this phenomenon in his book, *Ties that Stress: The New Family Imbalance*. He writes:

Elkind, Ties that Stress: The New Family Imbalance.

. . . postmodern children and adolescents are feeling victimized. They believe that they must suppress their own needs for security and protection to accommodate their parents' and society's expectations that they be independent and autonomous. Like modern mothers, postmodern young people either turn their anger on themselves (for letting themselves be used) or at the world around them.

Have we overlooked young people's needs because we were only thinking about our own? Have we forgotten about the importance of the individual young person in favor of the crowd? Have we "stepped" over the hurting young person in order to get our stuff done? Have we bought into the lie that bigger is better? Do we really think it gives us more value to have a "large" (whatever that means) youth ministry? Have we forgotten about our first love who has never forgotten about us?

To characterize the correct Incarnational relationship with young people there are at least three required ingredients. Those are

1. Authenticity
2. Integrity
3. A John the Baptist mentality

Small Groups: Incarnational Relationship Ingredients

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 8-3 in the Student Guide.

In your group read through your assigned topic. Your group will report to the class about the topic and give some examples relating to the topic.

Divide the class into 3 groups.
Assign each group one of the 3 topics.

Allow about 5 minutes for the groups to meet and about 5 minutes for each group to report.

Allow for response.

What is it about young persons' lives (from a cultural and developmental perspective) that makes these three characteristics of the youth minister so critical?

How have you (or someone you know) displayed these characteristics in your ministry, or can you give possibilities when you or others have been tempted to not demonstrate these characteristics?

Lecture/Discussion: Relationship with Parents and Families

(20 minutes)

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Parents and Families of Youth

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers, by Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, emerged from the largest study ever conducted on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents in the United States. In excess of 3,300 students, **and their parents**, were involved in telephone surveys in a nationally representative sample. Both English and Spanish speaking persons were surveyed. Further, 267 in-person interviews were conducted across the country and in nearly all of the 48 contiguous states. The research that went into this study was conducted during 2001—2005 through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The noted sociologist Christian Smith was the architect of the study.

Smith lists eleven points in his concluding chapter. Among his findings are some encouraging things like the great value that most young people place on their faith system and the statistical difference that religiously grounded relationships make in an adolescent's life. The largest observation, however, surfaced in this comment:

*" . . . contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misperceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that **the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.** Grandparents and other relatives, mentors*

Refer to Resource 8-4 in the Student Guide.

and youth workers can be very influential as well, but normally, parents are most important in forming their children's religious and spiritual lives . . . the best social predictor . . . of what the religious and spiritual lives of youth will look like is what the religious and spiritual lives of their parent *do* look like."

Smith and Denton. Soul Searching, 261, emphasis—lesson writer.

The bottom line of this observation states; if we are not engaging parents in spiritual growth our attempts to engage their adolescents in spiritual growth may simply be temporary phases the young person goes through. It is possible that failing to enlist parents in their youths' spiritual growth contributes, at least in part, to the reason why so many young people in the United States graduate from high school—and Christ's Church—when they reach age 18.

I wish I could tell you the answer to this situation, I cannot. I do not know what it means for all of youth ministry—let alone exactly how to deal with this in my own church. Maybe it is time for us to take seriously our titles as "pastors to youth and ***their parents.***"

If Christian Smith is right, and I believe on this point he certainly is, then youth ministry ***must*** meaningfully engage the parents of the young people we are seeking to influence for the Gospel. Maybe cultivating parent relationships can happen with the smallest of adjustments to our programming . . . maybe it means that youth ministry needs a radical makeover. Regardless of the cost, I am absolutely convinced that something must change with the way we minister to and with parents.

If it becomes necessary for us to re-learn what it means to be youth workers then bring it on! If I am not adequately able to do all forms of ministry, and I am not, then I need to develop partners in ministry that can. This principle is just too important to ignore! Frankly, there were always 20-40% of the parents of my youth group I would be absolutely delighted for students to turn out like. They were deep, spiritual people who lived each day with an aim to please God. But if young people ended up like the other 60-80% of parents of youth, things in the church were not going to get better. I am afraid that could be where we are.

Simply said, *Soul Searching*, makes clear beyond any denial that youth ministers must focus on parents, as much as young persons, as part of their ministry. One simple corrective involves inviting parents—really involving them—in what is already going on in the

ministry. Whether as guests, participants, or even sponsors, parental attendance and participation in the spiritual formation practices of the youth group substantially influences the spiritual growth of youth and adults.

Of course this suggestion does not solve all problems. It will take much more than simply inviting parents into the current structures and experiences of the youth. However, these invitations provide a good start and such participation would likely shape the type of activities in which the youth were involved. In any event the spiritual lives of the parents and families of youth must be a part of the youth ministers job description.

The Family of the Youth Minister

There is much that could be said about the family of the youth minister, particularly those who are married with children. The subjects under this concern could range from the importance of family devotions, to involving the spouse in ministry, to the need for the family to be supportive of the youth minister, etc. However, the single issue that I want to raise here is simply that the youth ministers' family is their first ministry priority. Without this primary objective of first taking care of one's own household (in an authentic, integral, and self-emptying-love-sort-of-way), all of one's "outside" achievements are worthless.

Paul writes to Timothy of the qualifications for both Overseers and Deacons in his first letter to his young protégé. In both of the lists of qualifications the family is mentioned as an important indication of the person's fitness to be a leader in the church. Elsewhere Paul writes to the Ephesians of this same topic. He warns the Ephesians of the critical importance of the relationships of husband to wives, wives to husbands and of each with their children.

These relationships ought to be saturated with all of the very same characteristics of good youth ministers. They must be persons of love, integrity, that listen and put the needs of their family above that of their own. What use is it to be a beloved youth minister if our own spouses and children have not learned from our example to love and serve the LORD Jesus?

Single youth ministers often overlook this important question. However, our relationships with current family often reflect our ability to form intimate relationships throughout our life. Whether our

immediate "family relations" involve only extended family and close friends, how we respond to the needs of those people close to us often reveals our ability to balance ministry during the crucial moments in our lives.

Allow for response.

How did your own parents model love and respect to you in your family?

Share the example of a minister's family that you know who models these characteristics well.

Lecture/Discussion: Relationships with Other Adult Youth Workers

(15 minutes)

Pete Ward. God at The Mall: Youth Ministry That Meets Kids Where They're At. Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, 54.

"Youth ministry requires a team approach." These may be self-evident instructions but they are important to state clearly. There is no way one adult can meaningfully minister to more than a handful of young persons. In other words, if there are more than 4-6 students in a youth group, youth ministers will find it vital to have others involved. Further, even if there are only 4-6, it is important to involve at least another person, in upholding one's integrity and purity.

Kenda Dean and Ron Foster in, *The Godbearing Life*, use the story from Numbers 11 to remind us of the importance of "sharing the mantle" of leadership with others as youth ministers. In this chapter Moses comes to within a moment of complete burn-out as the leader of Israel. He finds himself daily the mediator of disputes and the judge in innumerable decisions for this enormous group of persons he has been commissioned to lead out of Egypt into the desert. He realizes, finally, that he cannot do it by himself. He first complains to God as if it is His fault . . . God answers that Moses ought to lead through delegation (my paraphrase). And so God instructs Moses to,

Summon before me seventy of the leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with you. I will come down and talk to you there, I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the Spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone (Num 11:16-17, NLT).

Moses follows God's instructions and his burden is relieved. The importance of gathering the elders was not for the benefit of Moses, but for

the benefit of Israel because they would have lost their leader had something not changed.

The importance of personal character cannot be overstated. It is more important to be short-handed than to bring in the “wrong” type of adults. An elder in ancient Israel was someone of experience and a person that others respected. These are vital characteristics of anyone in ministry. Too often the stereotypical youth workers are young, fun, perhaps athletic and male. These descriptions do not fill the Numbers 11 vision of proper leaders for the people of God. Instead leaders are called “elders” and their qualification and empowerment comes from the spirit God places in them. Let us look for this same “spirit” when we seek other adults to work with young people.

Another important value of the adult volunteer team of youth workers is the modeling healthy relationships (between adults) that can be a natural outcome. When a team of likeminded Christian adults comes together to love a group of young persons, powerful modeling on several fronts takes place. Not only do the young people realize there are a number of adults seeking them out in their own context with authentic, and self-emptying love, the youth also witness these adults showing that same love, respect, and kindness to each other. This can be revolutionary in the lives of young persons who, today, may be surrounded by marital discord, bickering siblings, and the news reports of antagonism between various factions all around.

Adult volunteers provide the type of support for the youth ministry, and each other, which only comes from persons who really understand what we face in youth ministry. Often we have much in common with these people who serve not only as our partners in ministry, but also as some of our very best friends.

What might be some other positive natural outcomes of involving a “team” approach to youth ministry?

Would it be important to involve persons on this team different from yourself? Why or Why not?

Allow for response. Challenge the students to think beyond the easy answers.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What is one vital fact that came from today's lesson for you to take home and practice as you work with young people?

Look Ahead

Normally our relationships in youth ministry occur in and through the church. As we begin to contemplate our relationships in local congregations, how would you define the term "church?"

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Speak to various other adults in your congregation about their willingness or unwillingness to serve as adult volunteers in youth ministry. Use the conversations to help build a philosophy of team youth ministry.

Interview two to three people in your local congregation and ask them for their definition of the church. In their context how do they understand their relationship to the local congregation?

Read Resource 8-5. Write a one-page response.

Write in your journal a prayer to God about how your ministry involvement (like that of Moses) has become overwhelming and of your grave need for him to provide "elders" to help carry your burden.

Punctuate the Finish

"It was Moses' custom to set up the tent known as the Tent of Meeting far outside the camp. Everyone who wanted to consult with the LORD would go there.

Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in their tent entrances. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at the entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses" (Ex 33: 7-9, NLT).

Do you have a time and place to meet with the LORD?

Is it a visible witness of your relationship with God?

Lesson 9

The Youth Minister's Relationship within the Body of Christ

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Hopes and Expectations	Small Groups	Resource 9-1
0:12	Hopes and Expectations	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 9-2—9-4
0:47	The Ones You Love	Lecture/Discussion	
1:00	Participating in the Body of Christ	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 9-5
1:15	Alongsideness—Unity in the Body	Lecture/Discussion	
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Nouwen, Henri, *In the Name of Jesus*. New York: Crossroads, 1989.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on students to share their responses to the article that was read for homework.

Collect and return homework.

Orientation

Building on the previous two lessons which considered the youth minister's relationship with God and others, this lesson will explore the multiplicity of relationships encountered by youth ministers within the body of Christ. It will consider the role of youth minister as a model, example, bridge builder, and reconciler in their relationships with others within the church. The need for youth ministers to maintain healthy relationships with their own families, the congregations they serve and others in ministry is vitally important.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- consider and reflect on the nature of the church relationships they currently participate in
- consider their understanding of healthy relationships as single or married youth ministers
- understand and commit themselves to developing a healthy approach to the relationships that they are a part of within the congregation
- identify and consider ways of expanding their relationships

Motivator

"In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had" (Phil 2:5, TNIV).

In your understanding of The Church, who is The Church?

What is your ideal understanding of relationships within the church?

Call on someone to read Philippians 2:1-18.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Hopes and Expectations

(7 minutes)

Divide the class into 2-3 groups.

In your group discuss the questions.

Refer to Resource 9-1 in the Student Guide.

Lecture/Discussion: Hopes and Expectations

(35 minutes)

The reality of youth ministry varies widely depending on circumstances: For example, are you paid? Do you work full-time for the church? Are you a volunteer in leadership? Do you work part-time for the church? Do you work with a team, or are you on your own? Are you single or married, male or female? No matter what your circumstances, the question of dealing with *expectations* within the body of Christ can be a crucial one. What do you expect of your church?

- advocacy for justice?
- service to the poor?
- proclamation of hope?
- support for ministry?
- transportation for young people?
- the attendance of other leaders as volunteers?
- young people who will actively participate in activities?
- financial backing and a budget to work with?

And what does your church expect of you?

- perfection?
- Modelling faith?
- being a voice for justice and hope?
- absolute Integrity?
- all your Time; Energy; Commitment; Enthusiasm; and Longevity?

Hear feedback from the small group discussion, focussing particularly on the question of current practice and expectations. Be prepared for different cultural settings to reflect different realities, and be aware of the range of leaders in the room.

The reality for many of us is that we usually have very high hopes for our churches and our ministries, and they often have high hopes for us. Our cultures will also impact upon our expectations. In some cultures it

is likely that hospitality, open homes, intense amounts of time and participation in one another's lives is both permissible and normal. In other cultures it is more likely that there will be rigidly scheduled times, with limitations set on seeing one another and participating in one another's lives as a church family or youth group. Depending on where you start, you may well have different questions to address when thinking about your relationship within the body of Christ.

Invite students to return to small groups or dyads and discuss Resource 9-2 in the Student Guide.

For many youth ministers there is never enough time in the week to do all that they would dream of doing. There is also the added reality that trying to do all that the church asks, (and all that they don't ask for, but seem to expect), can create even more pressure. Then there is the vision and calling that the youth ministers have for their own lives. The question of balance then becomes a critical one for youth ministers to consider.

Allow for response.

What do you think "balance" means in relation to youth ministry?

How do you understand the idea of being called?

What does that have to do with sacrifice, aren't we called to "give of ourselves?"

Ask two different students to read:

- *Deuteronomy 6: 4-6; 10: 12*
- *Matthew 22: 37-39*

It is certainly true that deeply embedded within the idea of being called to minister is the notion of sacrifice, but what does that mean in our cultures? How does sacrifice (which at times has led to high-impact, short term ministry) mesh with the evidence that young people crave stable, long-term relationships in order to understand their faith?

How does the idea of sacrifice tie in with the biblical command uttered by Jesus to love God and love others *as yourself*? In Western culture the challenge includes *balancing* an appropriate amount of personal time in relation to the time spent with others, particularly youth. In some cultures the challenge relating to balance includes *seeking* an appropriate amount of personal time in relation to the time spent with others, particularly youth. Other cultures view the relational balance differently, often focusing on the *nature* of the relationship maintaining genuine hospitality or maintaining one's "honor" (or "face") in the midst of relationships. Nevertheless, we need a sound sense of our personal identity in the midst of cultural expectations.

While it is an important idea, the notion of loving yourself, taken to an extreme, can certainly lead into selfishness and self-focus, on the other hand, embedded in the idea of loving yourself well is the idea of discipline.

Refer to Resource 9-3 in the Student Guide.

Truly loving oneself means being willing to

- Reflect honestly on your life and practice
- Think holistically about your way of living
- Think about who you are, what you do, and why you do what you do
- Loving others and being outward looking
- Living well within creation

Are there other ideas that should be added to the list?

Allow a little time for reflection.

Take a moment to think about your calling. Do you feel as passionate about your youth ministry now as you did when you were first called? Why or why not?

Think about how your lifestyle as a youth minister impacts the people around you. Would you describe yourself as living a balanced life?

If you DO lead a balanced life, be prepared to share the disciplines you've learned with other students. If you do not, be prepared to share the needs you've identified with others. We are on a journey together in ministry and we need to be willing to share with each other as we work to BE the body of Christ.

If it is true that we must lead lives that demonstrate Godliness, holiness and balance, how is this possible? How can we help juggle our hopes for holistic lives with the demands placed upon us by the expectations of our congregations? Here are some suggestions gleaned from people whose lives are devoted to thinking about leadership:

Refer to Resource 9-4 in the Student Guide.

1. Focus on Christ: prayer, scripture reading, developing habits of spiritual living
2. Clarify expectations: sit down with your church leadership and the team you work with and consider their explicit and implicit expectations for your leadership
3. Acknowledge tensions: be honest about the areas where you find it most difficult (e.g. your church leadership/church expects numerical growth in the youth group, but you are investing in a small number as part of developing discipleship)

4. Build in seasons of time and rest: look at the long term view of your ministry. Have you built in Sabbath rest; time dedicated to retreat? Have you built in time for rest? Are you able to take a day away from ministry and be with friends?
5. Give and receive: recognise that as you give of yourself you must also find places or people from whom to receive. Be willing to be gracious in receiving.
6. Surround yourself with strong people, build a team: resist being a one-person-show. Don't be afraid of other people who are better than you and can propel your ministry in other directions. Remember that Jesus spend as much time with the disciples as the multitudes. Resist being the only one who can lead, or make decisions, or set direction, instead, deliberately cultivate key others who are equally strong as you. You will still shine.
7. Care for the weak: be a person who advocates for those who are different from yourself. Exercise compassion, learn the art of empathy.
8. Develop accountability and find a mentor: find someone to be held accountable to, for your thoughts, time, actions and ministry. Find someone more experienced than you to mentor you and develop you. Deliberately seek someone out who will ask good questions of your ministry. Recognise that working alongside people in need can be draining. Build in systems of support; people who you can share in confidence with. Develop systems of support that are outside of your local church.
9. Put others first: think of those you love and put them first. If your friends never see you, or family begin to ask questions of your time, remember that people are always more important than programs. Attend carefully to the needs of those who love you.
10. Live holistically: take a lesson from Jesus and spend time alone. Take care of your body—with food and sleep, exercise and prayer. Remember that we are created to be co-creators with God, find time to celebrate, laugh as well as cry. In general seek to live a whole life before God. Love the world and learn to care for the creation you are a part of.
11. Learn to say no: realise that it is important not to say yes to every request. Learn the difference between the truly urgent and the seemingly urgent.

Be available but remember that we need to empower people we serve to develop and grow into interdependent not dependent human beings.

Adapted from Eugene Peterson's Contemplative Pastor; Marva Dawn's Keeping the Sabbath Holy; Henri Nouwen's In the name of Jesus, and Creative Ministry; William Willimon's Pastor; and Pete Ward's, Youthwork and the Mission of God.

12. **Invest in relationships:** it is vital to realise that youth ministry takes place over time and that the fruit of the relationships may not be immediately evident, but the importance of allowing genuine relationships to exist between you and other leaders, young people and your family will be a part of the transformation that God brings about when people are in relationships with each other.

This list is not exhaustive, what other disciplines might you cultivate?

How would you implement these things?

Lecture/Discussion: The Ones You Love

(13 minutes)

In addition to the suggestions in Resource 9-4 there are other dynamics that may impact the life of leaders. The way you live your life as a single leader or married leader is significant. You will be perceived as a role model for the young people you serve. Caring for yourself, accepting yourself, and learning to love yourself is vital. Being someone who cherishes and nurtures your relationship with God and with those you love will be one of the most significant things you do. This is because we are created to be in relationships, mirroring the trinity, who exists in a community of love.

Regardless of whether or not you are single or married, ensuring that you work well with other leaders is important. Developing appropriate relationships with your team-workers, people in your church, and expanding your circle of friends takes time and energy. It is important that you discipline your life to do this.

Single in leadership

As an unmarried leader, your time is often perceived by others as less full or important and more flexible, and your own temptation can be to pour all time, energy and enthusiasm into the youth you serve. However, there are enormous questions to ask here:

Do you have relationships with people of your own age and maturity? Do you cultivate these relationships? Do you love others and give your life to others in mutual

relationships? It is critical for single youth ministers to develop healthy relationships with people who can give them support and love at a mature level. Your time is, perhaps, slightly more flexible, but you must discipline yourself to create the space for you to have time to nurture your relationship with God and others. You also must be careful to ensure that your relationships with young people are not merely related to enhancing your self-esteem or a way of masking loneliness. It is important as a single person to deal in healthy ways with your sexuality, the need for love, ways of sharing and shaping time and cultivating relationships that will help you to grow and be transformed. Incidentally, the last two sentences are equally true for married people.

Allow the single leaders to share the issues that are most critical to them in developing healthy relationships with non-youth.

Married in leadership

As married leaders, the questions shift again: to what extent does your family become involved in your calling and ministry? Is your husband or wife automatically involved? How do you discipline your time? How do you ensure that you have the time and energy for your blood family as well as your Christ-family? Certainly there is often an assumption of getting two adults for the salary of one in church settings, and while there is some truth to that (it is impossible to exclude the family) there is also an important reality that time devoted to being a wife or mother, husband or father is also important.

What are the ways you nurture a positive relationship with your family?

Your time may be slightly more rigid, however, it will be important to strive for balance. Many marriages have been sacrificed on the altar of a youth minister's inability to say 'no'. You also must be careful to ensure that your relationships with young people are not merely related to enhancing your self-esteem or a way of masking loneliness. It is important as a married person to deal in healthy ways with your sexuality, the need for love, ways of sharing and shaping time and cultivating relationships that will help you to grow and be transformed.

Allow the married leaders to share the issues that are most critical to them in helping their families to thrive.

If you are married you also must pay time and attention to your marriage. Does your spouse understand the demands of your ministry? Do you share a vision of your marriage that touches on time, money and life-style? Do you have an open-house

If it seems appropriate, it may be helpful to assign the students a "date" with their spouse and encourage them to write a covenant/hope statement for their marriage relating to their marriage and ministry.

policy? Do you spend time together privately, working on communicating and loving each other? Do you deliberately set times when you are able to reconnect with each other? Listening to one another and reflecting deeply on one another's hopes and expectations of marriage and ministry will be vital.

Shared dangers

See Robbins, Duffy. "Through Many Dangers, Toils, and Snares" in Duffy Robbins. This Way to Youth Ministry. Grand Rapids: YS/Zondervan, 2004.

The role of power and intimacy must be considered. Those in youth ministry often will be seen as having authority and power in a relationship with young people and other leaders. It is vital that youth ministers—married or single—reflect carefully on their use of time and energy. Likewise, caring for young people, sometimes vulnerable, always needing to be nurtured and cared for can lead to relationships that seem intimate and then can lead to inappropriate relationships. Taking heed, guarding time, being ruthlessly honest, allowing accountability partnerships to develop are all critical. If married, listening and responding to the concerns of your spouse can be vital, and allowing other people's instincts to guide you can be extremely important. If single, it is vitally important to have people you are accountable to, and listen to their instincts. It is sometimes difficult to perceive the danger if we are too close to it.

Lecture/Discussion: Participating in the Body of Christ

(15 minutes)

The gap between our expectation of ourselves and the body of Christ we are a part of and the realities that we experience can create tension and stress unless it is acknowledged and accepted. It is important to consider the *hard* issues of finance, time allocation, job descriptions, budgets and so on, and the more *soft* expectations of hopes for young people, spiritual development, relationship building and so on. Although all of these areas are worth exploring in this session we are considering our expectations of our own participation as ministers and the lives we lead in several key areas.

The question of being a participant in the life of the congregation you serve is important. This speaks to a particular understanding of ministry: either ministry from above or ministry from within/below. In the church there has historically been some debate. Is the

minister **one of** the congregation or **above** the congregation, leading from a different level/place? In the understanding of ministry that has been developing over the last years, the idea of incarnational-ministry has been vital. The leader ministers from within, alongside and **as one of** the congregation. The minister, in this view, is as likely to have weaknesses and needs as any other member of the congregation, and is considered a participant first, leader second.

The importance placed upon this view is derived from scripture. Reflecting again on Philippians 2, the model that Jesus Christ offers is one of coming amongst, enfleshment, being one of and with the people—even though he was entitled to much more, he willingly chose to be clothed in human flesh and die our death. The idea of the incarnation serves as a model then of our ministry. If that is true then in the body of Christ we are both a participant and LEADER, one who enters into the experience of the local body of Christ and one who helps shape it.

What does it mean to participate in the body of Christ?

Refer to Resource 9-5 in the Student Guide.

Whatever else is true, it seems that to be a participant in the body of Christ expressed locally in your congregation, will mean several things.

You will:

1. be involved in the local church as she participates in what God is doing in a local area or setting
2. be called to love people and be loved by them
3. be part of the mission of God in the world and try and see how God is at work around you
4. take part in the disciplines and practices of the local church
5. take part in the projects of the local church
6. participate in the worship gatherings of the local church
7. share in the Eucharist of the local church
8. disciple and be disciplined within the local church
9. seek to share in the vision of the local church
10. support the leaders and other members of the local church
11. Recognise that you are part of the body of Christ formed around the world, reflecting Jesus to the world

That's quite a lot! Alongside this list—which is true for all Christian believers throughout time and space—it is important to realise though that it can be difficult for leaders to simply participate.

Allow for response. Listen particularly for 'they' and 'I' language, which often indicates distance from the congregation, or 'we' language which reflects togetherness and a sense of belonging.

When does responsibility begin and end? Can one worship alongside others without taking responsibility for what is happening?

Is it possible to be a leader and a participant?

Can you share in the life of the church as a youth minister?

It is vital to share in the life of the congregation as a youth ministry. You must. This takes discipline. It takes deliberately recognising yourself as a servant and participant first. It means empowering others to share in the responsibility for the tasks you find hard to leave behind. It means sitting amongst the congregation and entering into worship. The importance of being an authentic participant is vital for your ministry and your health. If you cannot worship alongside your sisters and brothers in Christ, then you must reflect again on your role within the church and how you can be transformed into a participant in the community as a worshipper as well as a professional.

Lecture/Discussion: Alongsideness—Unity in the Body

(10 minutes)

You may want to clarify in this section the distinction between

- *church—lower case "c"—local church, group, place*
- *Church—capital "C"—body of Christ, called to be Christian. Set apart for God's work*

You are not alone! Though at points it is tempting to be like Elijah—in 1 Kings 19: 9-18—the reality is that there are other ministers in the congregation you serve. Spending time, sharing vision, praying together, developing systems of accountability, honing one another's skills, listening to each other are all vitally important as you serve God. Not being afraid of other people's gifts and strengths is important—God calls all of his people to serve and equips them—and the place you are called to serve deserves people who are of one mind. Please don't read that as having no arguments or always being clones! Normalizing conflict is vital in the church, and learning ways to be reconciled is essential. Read Acts for the rest of the story about leadership! It is tough, and demands thought, prayer, creativity and perseverance. The one-mindedness of the Church is to have the goal and focus of Christ who will be called Lord and before whom every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue confess.

Likewise the history of the Christian church has recently been marred by a sense of mistrust and disunity, brokenness, you might say. In terms of healthy ministry relationships, Jesus' prayer for unity compels us to look to other local congregational leaders, to meet and talk and share and pray with others who also long for Christ to be glorified. Until all

the people locally are Christians there is no need for a sense of competitiveness, rather, there is every need for a sense of common ministry. Learning from others as well as teaching them, sharing with others as well as listening to them. All are vital in the Kingdom-sense of being the body of Christ.

If we allow ourselves to focus first on the Kingdom of God and second on what unites us, centering our conversations on Jesus and working together for his sake, then we are more likely to be able to meet and pray, share and worship alongside one another. Certainly there are differences. Again, thinking biblically about Paul's descriptions of the body there is a little toe and an eyelash to be considered, but in humility regarding others as better than oneself, it may be that we can work together in unity not only within our own local expression of the body of Christ, but also with others who are united in the vision of seeing Jesus as Lord of all.

Allow for response.

List the other ministers in your church by name: how can you develop unity?

List the other churches in your area, which ones do you work with?

How might you develop relationships with other leaders locally?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

In this lesson we have considered various aspects of our leadership in terms of various relationships and to the body of Christ. *List some of the expectations you might encounter within the church, how would you address them? What does it mean to "participate" within the church? How do you balance your commitments to those you love with that of the church?*

Look Ahead

Worship describes one of the primary practices within the body of Christ, the Church. However worship defines both our gathering to give praise to God and also our living out a life that also gives glory to God. In our next lesson you will be thinking about your life as an expression of worship as well as leading others in the faithful practice of giving glory to God.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Take time to write a ministry statement that responds to these questions:

- What are your hopes and expectations of your ministry? Do they differ from your church's expectations and hopes? How can you gain clarity?
- How can you improve in one area of relationship (your church, other ministers, other leaders, with your loved ones)?
- Who can you identify as a mentor or co-leader? What steps can you take to approach them for support?

Spend time this week writing down a short description of the important community celebrations/festivals that take place in your town or country. List the activities or stories that prove important in describing the community you live in.

Make a list of the various actions/activities that often take place in your worship setting. If you have a separate youth worship list those activities as well and

create a comparison chart with the traditional or adult service. How do these activities assist or impede the very guidelines for holistic ministry?

Read Resource 9-6.

Read Resource 9-7.

Write in your journal. Do you typically think of yourself as *outside* the congregation—you consider them *they* and do not think of your church as *we*? Reflect on why this has happened. How might you develop a sense of belonging? If this is not true, why do you think this has happened?

Punctuate the Finish

The importance of relationships is at the heart of Christianity: Jesus says, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: “Love your neighbor as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” To be a full participant in the life of the body of Christ is the hope of every Christian and the need of every young person we minister to.

Lesson 10

Youth Ministry Discipleship— Worship

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	An Exercise in Belonging	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 10-1
0:45	Worship as a Response to Our Culture	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 9-6
1:00	Worship-centered teaching	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 9-7 Resource 10-2
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Burns, Jim and Mark DeVries *The Youth Builder: Reach Young People, Strengthen Families and Change Lives Forever*. Gospel Light Publishing, 2001, 119-126.

This lesson was written by Jon Middendorf and you will encounter ideas, in this lesson, from his book.

Middendorf, Jon. *Worship-Centered Youth Ministry*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000.

White, James F. *Introduction to Christian Worship*, Third Edition Revised and Expanded. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980, 2000, 17-46, 131-201.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students to read their ministry statements.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will explore the nature of worship as a Christian discipline. Not only is this discipline a necessary part of a healthy Christian life, but it is also an essential part of a healthy ministry to young people.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- articulate a holistic definition of worship
- begin to weave this definition of worship through her or his ministry to, with, and among young people

Motivator

Find your voice for worship by finding yourself in the Story of God's Love for all of Creation—a story that continues to be written in and through us!

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: An Exercise in Belonging

(40 minutes)

Refer to Resource 10-1 in the Student Guide.

Students were to think about some of these topics as part of homework.

This should be a fun exercise for your class. There are no wrong answers. You may need to start the discussion yourself by giving examples. A few examples are included, but feel free to use your own.

Allow for some response. You want the students to become engaged in this activity.

I'd like to learn something about the places you grew up. I have a few questions about your home village or town or city or country. Help me to know what it is like to grow up where you grew up!

Here's my **first** question. *Are there any festivals, celebrations, customs or traditions that are unique to your area—so unique, in fact that I may never have heard of them?*

Here are a few examples:

In Alabama, people travel from miles around to go the "National Peanut Festival," where each year one lucky young lady is crowned "Miss Peanut."

Ever heard of "The Plymouth National Ice Sculpture Festival"? I hadn't either until just recently.

How about "The Hanover Tomato Festival"? Nothing says party like eating tomatoes.

What about "The Blessing of the Hunt" in Wayne, Illinois?

In Conway, Arkansas, in early May, is a festival like none you've never seen, "Toadsuck Daze". It's all about frogs and toads. Frog races, frog legs, frog show, frog clothes, and Toadsuck Daze T-shirts as far as the eye could see.

All of that fun, but you might never know about it if you hadn't grown up there or visited on that particular weekend.

Think about this—if you were quickly able to answer that question for your own town or village or area, if you intuitively know about these festivals and these traditions in your area, you have successfully identified one way in which you can know that you **belong** to your town and to the group of people who live in that area.

Second question.

Allow for some response. Again, there are no wrong answers.

Let's look at another question. *Are there any words or phrases that are unique to the people who live in your area?*

In other words, is there a language all your own, a unique set of words or phrases that someone outside your area would never know?

A water fountain is a “bubbler” in Wisconsin!

Are you living in an area where people are “fixin’” to do something?

Here’s one of my favorites. In Oklahoma City, coke is the over arching term. I can go through the drive through at McDonald’s and order an “orange coke”. That doesn’t mean they are going to blend Coca Cola and Orange, it is just an Orange drink. What do they call it where you’re from? Pop? Soda? Soft drinks?

Language is another way we can know we **belong** to a place and a people. When you use certain words and phrases that only your friends and family understand, you demonstrate the connections you have with those closest to you.

Third question.

Allow for some response. There are no wrong answers. You may need to start the discussion yourself by giving examples. A few examples are included, but feel free to use your own.

In fact, in this part of the discussion and exercise, it is very important that you use your own and not the author’s.

Here’s another one. *Is there any chapter in your town’s history, your part of the country that helps to define you as a group of people?*

Are there names, places or dates or stories in your collective memory that are important to you, but that may have gone unnoticed or unappreciated everywhere else?

For example, as one hailing from the great state of Oklahoma, I can tell you that in the 1800’s, we had a land rush. People lined up for miles at the starting line just waiting for the gunshot that would signal the race to new land and a new way of life. But before that shot was fired, some cheated and jumped across the line. These people were known as “Sooners”.

Now there are a couple of stories that are more recent, and although they are tragic, we Oklahomans hold them very closely to our hearts. First, the bombing of the Murrah Federal building on April 19, 1995. During the aftermath of that tragedy, there developed a great sense of belonging among the people of Oklahoma City, because we had to close ranks to figure out how to cope, clean up and live on after that bombing.

And then on May 3, 1999—killer tornadoes came. Again the people of Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas found a reason to lock arms and pull together. There was a sense of connectedness that allowed complete strangers to work tirelessly, side by side, as we sifted through the rubble of homes and lives.

We survived the bomb together, and we survived the tornadoes together. No, I don't yet know everyone around here by name, but I now know that we can work together, and I know that together we can survive anything life might dish out.

*What about you and your area? Is there a story, something that made news in your area that maybe we didn't know about? Maybe it was something that made national news, but only the people from your town knew the weight of all that happened. There are good chapters in these stories, and these are as important and as influential as the tragedies. These stories and events, as you remember them, talk about them and relive them—they demonstrate that you **belong**.*

Can you see what is starting to take shape? We have talked about the traditions, the unique languages and the particular, local histories. These are powerful ways in which you and your community **belong** together. You may not talk about it much and you may not celebrate it; you may not even feel or even want to feel it. But I'm telling you, if you are from a particular part of the country, a particular town or a particular part of the state, if you know these festivals and these traditions by heart, and if you know the language and words by heart, and if you know the story line by heart, you **belong**.

This is all part of your shared history, your collective memory.

Now, let's take this understanding to a whole new level. It is my sincere hope and prayer that this lesson will be a help to youth workers in and beyond this room, this country, even beyond the Church of the Nazarene. I hope every one of our sister denominations can find something here that will help win young people to the Kingdom. But in order for us to do that, I have a few questions that we all need to answer.

Do we all belong together? And if we do, how can we know?

Well, let's ask the questions we asked above? *Are there traditions and customs that we intuitively know about? We don't have to explain these customs to each other, we just know.*

Isn't it possible that someone looking in on our unique traditions and customs from the outside may have no idea what the Church is doing, no clue as to what we're

You may need to start the discussion yourself by giving examples. A few examples are included but feel free to use your own.

talking about? And by the way, those people still exist, people who don't know at all what we're all about. Is it possible that there are some traditions we hold in common that an outsider may not recognize or understand?

How about Communion? Can you imagine what might happen if someone were to watch us eat what we call the Lord's Supper? I can hear it now, "That can't be all there is!"

What about Baptism? I know that baptism happens in many different ways in our differing traditions. We are dunkers (immersion) in our tradition. I can only imagine what someone might think if she were to walk in and see a baptism for the first time!

She comes into the building to ask directions, she looks up, and there she sees someone being pushed under the water!

What about a Good Friday service, or a Maundy Thursday service, or anointing with oil? Some of the things we do in the regular rhythm of being the Church make no sense at all to those people looking in from the outside.

But we know and understand, because we already **belong**, we are part of the history.

I want to ask a question about language now. *Are there words and phrases that we inside the Church use on a regular basis that someone outside of our tradition may hear and not understand? Or is it possible that words we use inside the Church have a completely different meaning when used outside the church?*

You may need to start the discussion yourself by giving examples. A few are included but feel free to use your own.

Here's a few. *What about the phrases, "I'm saved," "washed in the blood", "the blood of the Lamb," or "born again"?*

What about the word, "grace"? Grace outside of the church might mean agility or athletic ability. Inside the church, it is the greatest gift given by our Father who gives great gifts!

When we stop long enough to think about it, our language binds us together. We love some of those words and phrases; we've grown up and lived with these words and phrases. They have become both the system and the symbols of our **belonging** together.

But I have one more question. *Do we have a shared history? Do those of us who are members of this global*

Kingdom known as the Church have any events in our shared past that bind us together? Sure we do! Don't get ahead of me. I want us to walk backwards along our shared timeline. Think fairly recently.

Make a timeline on a board or flipchart. Let the students contribute to the list. You may need to stimulate thought by working back through each century.

What are some events in our recent history that are reasons in and of themselves that we belong together?

Ideas:

Terrorism

The World Wars

The Reformation

Discovery of the New World

Nicene Councils

Constantine's rise to power and his declaration that Christianity would be the national religion.

The early Church

Pentecost

The birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Keep pushing it back, back now into the pages of the Bible.

You are catching on. The Bible is an incredible collection of shared history and collective memory of God's presence and interaction with his creation—especially humankind. The Bible and all its stories is our story—our **belonging** to someone bigger than ourselves.

The life and relationship that we have with Jesus Christ began long ago—many others have walked before us. Their lives and stories give guidance, direction, inspiration, and warning to our lives. But do we know who they were? Do we know their stories? Can we retell the story that makes us the people of God? Young people don't and won't believe they can belong to the Kingdom if we fail to show them how they fit.

Has the Church abdicated its responsibility to be different from the rest of the world? Do the people inside our churches know what it is that makes us different, what makes us the "called out people of God"? And just as importantly, can the people outside of our churches, those young people desperately searching for places to belong, those people begging for reliable, spiritual truth, can they look at us and see the kind of corporate identity and conviction we see in other faith systems and communities?

Do we know our own Story well enough to tell it?

Have we forgotten what makes us, us? So often the people around us, the people not yet aware of our

story have questions about life, about the nature of our God, about Jesus. But sadly, just as often, the people of God don't seem willing or able to respond.

Listen to these remarks. This poet seems to have nailed the picture of today's quest for answers to spiritual questions:

*We look for light, but all is darkness;
for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.
Like the blind we grope along the wall,
feeling our way like men without eyes.
At midday we stumble as if it were twilight.*

What a perfect description of all that is happening out there! What a perfect description of so many of the young people both inside and outside of your church walls! Can you name the poet? It must be someone who has been paying attention, right? It must be someone so inundated and haunted by the confusion around him or her that he or she can't help but describe it.

You might be surprised to find out that these words were taken out of the 9th and 10th verses of the 59th chapter of Isaiah. Amazing, isn't it, how much Isaiah seems to know our circumstances today? And lest we (the Church) should get too comfortable, believing that the confusion is limited to those outside of our churches, let us return to Isaiah 59 to see if there is anything else for us to learn.

The 59th chapter of the book of Isaiah begins with a stinging speech from God through the prophet, directed at the exiled people of Israel—God's chosen people. The people of Israel have been clamoring for rescue, relief from the hands of their captors. In the first eight verses of the chapter, rather than rescuing His people, God passes judgment on their ways. He accuses his people of rebelling against the rule of God for which they pray so desperately. He accuses his people of social injustice: legalistic oppression, unjust condemnation and ultimately the deep social and moral apathy that makes oppression and condemnation a reality.

His angriest words were reserved for His people who had not been the "light to the nations" that He had hoped they would be. Simply put, His people no longer looked like His people. They no longer stood out among the nations. They forgot what it meant to be the people of God. They forgot their own story. They looked like everyone else, and as a result, everyone else suffered.

Read Isaiah 59 for yourself. Is our world in a similar state of confusion? Are we, the Church in a similar state of confusion? Does social and moral apathy wear away at our distinctiveness and our peculiarity? Do we stand out anymore? How do we answer the confusion?

Here's one way.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;*

*He descended into the depths;
the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty;
from there He shall come to judge the living and the
dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Church universal,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.*

Do you recognize what you just read? It is a statement of belief. It is the Apostle's Creed—a rehearsed and refined statement of the beliefs that make us the Church. It is who we are at the core.

And it is the answer to this age of complete confusion, this age that Isaiah would call the age of "spiritual blindness".

We can answer a confused culture by saying, "This is who we are; this is what we believe." Our young people will listen to us if we're willing to see ourselves as the Body of Christ, a separate community, a peculiar race, and a people called by God to BE the people of God. You are working with a generation of people who don't mind that you have an organization that has standards or a statement of belief. They want to belong to a group that gives them an identity. And what is that identity?

We are the people of God.

Lecture/Discussion: Worship as a Response to Our Culture

(15 minutes)

The truth of the matter is this—this era, with all of its good and bad, is a perfect time for the Church to be the Church! As it has been for each generation, it is our time for us to reintroduce ourselves to the planet as the people of God, a people of WORSHIP!

WORSHIP! What a word! What a hot button! The word invokes images of the worship-style wars: slides or hymnals, drums or organs, ties or T-shirts. Fixation on these details will derail the attempts for change. In order to make our mark in society, the Church must stop “under-respecting” worship and recapture its thorough, practical and holistic meaning. In fact, the Church must fight its tendency to restrict the definition of worship to two hours on Sunday morning and one on Sunday night, or even more specifically, to the musical “praise” portions of those services.

Don’t get me wrong. I love to sing. I love the “praise and worship” times in our services. Without a doubt, the musical, audible, corporate magnification of the Father is crucial to a healthy concept of worship. But to believe that singing completely captures the depth and breadth of worship is like believing that one style of music captures the entire essence of music.

We are in danger of missing the point. I believe that the church’s place in society is at risk. Churches aren’t very often the major, society-shaping forces that they used to be, not even the really, big churches! And in many cases, why should we be? Ministers have shown themselves to be capable of unbelievably sinister and tragic sins, and in so doing have wasted places of influence and credibility, drawing skepticism and doubt instead. All over the world, caught between the proverbial rocks and hard places, churches and their ministers are being relegated to the edges of society.

The problem is not that society sees all churches, ministers and churchgoers as radicals or extremists to be avoided; society simply does not see the Church at all anymore. The only thing worse than being hated is being forgotten.

We are frighteningly close to being a non-issue, and again, our ability to influence and flavor the culture around us may be dependent on our ability to recapture a healthy, holistic and BIBLICAL definition of the word “worship”.

Resource 9-6.

This is an important point. The concept of worship that you read about for homework is the backbone for everything else in this lesson.

How does the Bible itself describe or define worship? There are several Hebrew and Greek words that can be translated as worship. In the New Testament there are four significant words that can be translated as worship. Sometimes those of us who speak English don't have all the words we need to communicate a biblical concept, and this is one of those times. Because we only have one word for worship, we miss out on the true meanings and nuances the original authors intended. Take for example, one of our most treasured and often-quoted verses in all of Scripture, Romans 12:1: "Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship."

Can this verse expand our understanding of the word worship?

For homework you read Resource 9-6. *What did you learn about Romans 12:1?*

Was there any statement that you underlined as being something that you didn't want to forget?

How will this discussion of Romans 12:1 impact your leading of worship for youth?

How might this discussion help you contribute to the worship of your congregation?

Allow for response. The responses that you hear will be an indication of who read the homework.

Push the students to think beyond surface, easy answers.

Lecture/Discussion: True North: The Direction of Worship-Centered Youth Ministry

(25 minutes)

This should be another enjoyable exercise for your class. You may not be directionally-challenged (meaning that I have trouble finding my way around, and I never seem to be able to point North for some reason), but even so, try to find a creative way to introduce this concept. Make sure that you know which direction really is North before you do this exercise.

I am directionally-challenged. I'm wondering if there are any others in this class. Let's find out. Can you point North? Do you know which direction is north? As

silly as it may sound, and as silly as you might feel doing this, I'm going to ask you to do a little experiment. In a moment, after I've finished giving you a few directions, I want you to walk to a place in the room where you can find enough space for you to spin! When you get there I want you to close your eyes, spin for ten to fifteen seconds or until I tell you to stop. You can spin as fast as you like, or as slowly as you like, as long as you keep your eyes tightly shut. When you stop, without opening your eyes, point in the direction you now feel to be North. Go ahead.

Well, how did you do? Did you get it right? Not me, given my sense of direction, and especially not after spinning for 10 seconds.

I know you're asking, "OK, what's the point? Why did you get me dizzy?" The point is this. Though you and I may have been confused and disoriented, though we may have missed when trying to identify NORTH, the reality of North remained. Its direction had not changed regardless of where we were pointing.

I thoroughly enjoy doing this little experiment with groups of people. After spinning for 10 seconds, there is some moaning and groaning, at least a little listing, and no end to the varying interpretations of North. But the point is crucial: regardless of how any of us might feel at any given time, regardless of what our opinion might be the reality of the direction of North never changes. In this age of seemingly no absolutes, we have found one—NORTH IS _____WAY (you fill in the blank by pointing). Your church could get together and vote unanimously to change the direction of North, but it won't work. It'll still be _____way. The government could write a new law, but it wouldn't change the reality of where North actually is. North is unchanging. North is reliable. The reality of North is crucial to navigation.

Youth workers, maybe you are like me. I have been trying to run the race, but I haven't always known how to navigate, how to find my direction. I haven't always known which way was the True North.

The reality of a True North gives context and meaning to where we are, where we are going, and how to get there. True North gives us a point of reference, a place to aim.

I have been describing a "true north" that can orient our ministries and help us to navigate our teens toward a repossession of our identity as the people of God. It is through authentic worship, the story, the

relationships, and the lifestyle, that we find our True North—the God of the Story, the God of our story.

Worship can be the compass by which we navigate youth ministry as we try to lead our young people back to our True North. Worship can and should guide our steps and flavor our ministries. Anything and everything we want to do for our young people can be done under the influence and leadership of authentic worship.

That being the case, I want to introduce what may be a new term to you. **Worship-centered Teaching**—How will I retell the story to the teens entrusted to my care?

Is there another way to do youth ministry? Can the Story found in the pages of the Bible really influence the way you are doing youth ministry? Yes, it can! Let's find out how.

Do you travel by plane very often? The better question is this: Have you flown often enough now to be able to completely ignore the flight attendant as she acts out her safety speech—a list of helpful, potentially life-saving tips for you and everyone else on the plane. The last time I flew, I was struck by my own ability to completely tune out this information that could, in a serious pinch, save my life!

Here was this woman at the front of the plane doing her job, and doing it respectably well. She utilized visual aids in her presentation and had a very pleasant facial expression, all keys to effective public speaking. There she was, giving us life-saving instructions. And there I was tuning into my sports section while other passengers talked amongst themselves, slept, wrestled with children or started on crossword puzzles.

The truth is, we are doing everything but listening. As I've thought about this, I've decided there must be two reasons why. First, we really don't think the plane is going down. If we had believed that to be even a remote possibility, we would have opted for a car, a boat, a train, a mule—any other form of transportation but that plane. And second, if by some horrible accident this plane were to go down in flames, we're pretty sure that putting our heads between our knees will do us absolutely no good. If I'm flying over mountain ranges, the fact that my seat is a flotation device isn't of much help to me.

When you're up front speaking to your young people, do you ever feel like a flight attendant? Do you ever

come to your meeting, visual aids in hand, only to have your audience talk, nap and look for crossword puzzles? Do you wonder why?

It's the same reasons you have for ignoring the flight attendant. First, they're not convinced that utter disaster is just an accident away. Second, if that accident does take place as it has for more and more of our teens, they are nowhere near convinced that the stuff we're dispensing is life-saving information.

Therefore, I propose that the biggest problem we have as those who minister to teens is that we don't teach the Bible the way it needs to be taught.

Call on students to contribute to the discussion? Responses will indicate who was faithful to the reading assignment.

You read Resource 9-7 for homework. *What did you highlight from the reading?*

What were those ideas that you knew would change your ministry and the lives of your youth?

Did any of you start to implement new ideas?

What was it that made you say, "I can't do this."?

Refer to Resource 10-2 in the Student Guide.

Here are some ideas that you can incorporate to begin practicing worship-centered teaching.

- Try teaching through a narrative book of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Esther, the Gospels, Acts, etc. Teaching through narrative books shows plot lines and character development. You can let the book set the teaching agenda. Let the Scripture teach the lessons it wants to teach!
- Character sketches—I would recommend that these be done on smaller scales, such as at Bible studies or in small groups. Character sketches can assist us by looking inside the biblical characters that in turn gives us insight about ourselves. But, as good as they can be, character sketches are not Scripture. In Scripture, God is the main character, and the people we read about are supporting actors and actresses. In a character sketch, the biblical character plays the leading role.
- Lectionary based teaching—The Lectionary is the work of the Church done hundreds of years ago, to organize the reading of Scripture. Traditionally, lectionaries are organized around the Christian calendar. Readings are grouped by particular themes. Most lectionaries are built on a three-year cycle: years A, B and C. The Lectionary can be the source of the sermons and the lessons on any

given Sunday. It can also be the source of the daily readings you want to provide for your teens. I have seen Lectionaries that contain stories and examples and illustrations that help in the interpretation process. Check out your local Christian bookstore. Go online, and look for lectionary-based resources there. One of my favorite websites is www.textweek.com.

- Teach through the Christian calendar—Walk your teens through all of the holidays and symbols found in the Christian calendar.
- Look for curriculum sets that walk you through books of the Bible.
- Provide your teens with Bible reading schedules.
- Ask your teens to rewrite portions of the Bible in their own words. Don't just turn them loose without direction. Let them know that you are going help them to make sure that they get it, that they get the right message across. I recommend rewriting parables, Psalms or Proverbs.
- Draw a timeline of the biblical stories and put it up in your youth room.
- Do a series of lessons on Pentecost, Lent, or Advent
- Study the historic creeds of the Church. Look in your hymnal for copies of the Apostle's and the Nicene Creed.

Allow for response.

Do you know the biblical Story well enough to help your students find their place in it?

Does your youth group see themselves as part of the continually unfolding Story? Why or why not?

Review the lessons you have taught over the past years. Have you been telling and retelling the Story? Or have you been bouncing from topic to topic? In light of what you have read, what plan do you need to implement to guide your teaching to ensure that you cover the entire Story with your students?

Do your lessons give students the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process?

What are some concrete ways that you can begin to change your teaching to reflect a Worship-centered Teaching approach?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

We have spoken about a wide and deep understanding of scripture worship. This definition of worship is crucial to your ministry. By worshipping in this way, your young people will continue the Story of God's love for His People.

Look Ahead

The next lesson will help equip you to tell this Story to those who don't yet know they can belong to God. As you immerse yourself in this Story that continues to be written in and through you and your ministry, you will find others with an appetite for truth and community.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Optional Reading: Resource 10-3

Construct a timeline of biblical history on a large wall in the place you minister to your young people, and make sure to leave a large space for the pictures that you will take of your students. Place these pictures on the wall, in the timeline of God's ever-unfolding story.

Read Nehemiah 8 and 9. Compare and contrast this passage of scripture with the Romans 9—12 passage that we studied in this lesson. Write a 2 page paper.

Read the books of Mark and Acts.

Read Resource 10-4, and Resource 10-5.

Write in your journal. Reflect on this lesson. Take a deep breath. Let the Holy Spirit fill you—empower you. What is the first step that you will take to embrace what you have learned from this lesson?

Punctuate the Finish

Craig R. Dykstra, Vision and Character. New York: Paulist, 1981, 106; quoted in Rodney Clapp, A Peculiar People. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 99.

"In worship, we see and sense who it is we are to be and how it is we are to move in order to become. Worship is an enactment of the core dynamics of the Christian life. This is why worship is its central and focusing activity. It is paradigmatic for all the rest of the Christian life . . . To grow morally means, for a Christian, to have one's whole life increasingly be conformed to the pattern of worship. To grow morally means to turn one's life into worship."

Lesson 11

Youth Ministry Discipleship— Witness and Evangelism

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Motivation for Evangelism	Small Groups	Resource 11-1
0:20	Models for Evangelism	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 11-2 Resource 11-3
0:35	Setting the Stage—Building Relationships and Overcoming Diversions	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 10-3
0:50	Methods for Relational Evangelism	Small Groups	Resource 11-4 Resource 10-4
1:10	Teaching Youth How to Share Their Faith	Lecture/Discussion	
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Rahn, Dave and Terry Linhart. *Contagious Faith*.
 Loveland, CO: Group, 2000, 13-52. (CLT Resource).

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2 students to read their homework paper.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Call on someone to read the passages.

Allow for response.

Open your Bibles to Matthew 20:28 and 1 Peter 2:24.

How did Jesus show to the world that He cares for lost people?

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand that their life and words are their Christian witness
- define personal evangelism and relational evangelism with youth
- plan evangelistic events
- teach youth how to share their faith with peers
- develop a seeker-sensitive ministry while maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of the ministry

Motivator

“Evangelism is really the outflow and the overflow of a spiritually vigorous church. It is not the cause but the result of a spiritual church.”

C. William Fisher

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Motivation for Evangelism

(15 minutes)

When youth ministers seek the proper motivation for evangelism, the scriptures offer a major source. Anchored in the message and mission of Jesus, revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, many of the writers in the New Testament constantly exhort Christians to reach out with the message of salvation. There may be other resources to help us understand the nature of evangelism in our contemporary culture, but Scripture provides the logical beginning point for understanding the importance of our Christian witness in every situation including youth ministry.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 11-1 in the Student Guide.

Bring the class together and ask for one or two insights from each group. Place the answers a board or flipchart if possible.

A number of key evangelistic insights can be found in Scripture. Perhaps some of the most important begin with the good news that God takes the first initiative to save people, including young people, from their sinful, hopeless condition. Our witness serves as a response to what God has done and is already doing in our lives. We are called to practice the Gospel by our very presence in society. Our actions as Christians often speak louder than merely talking about our faith. Evangelism must be the proclamation of the Gospel in both word and deed, providing the message of Jesus by living lives modeled after Jesus. That is not all that the Bible says, but these ideas challenge us to take seriously everything we do as ministers as part of our Christian witness.

Lecture/Discussion: Models for Evangelism

(20 minutes)

Allow for response.

What forms of personal evangelism have you seen that work well in evangelizing youth and adults?

Refer to Resource 11-2 in the Student Guide.

Depending on culture and personal context, the moment of presenting the gospel message, of evangelizing youth, may take different expressions. Historically the church has adopted several approaches that seem to parallel in the Bible.

Confrontation

This approach confronts a person with the logical direction their current life will take them—personal and spiritual destruction—and offers a frank but redemptive alternative. Sometimes confrontation arises through negative critique and challenging a young person. Sometimes young people find themselves confronted through radical healing or unexpected expression of love and care in someone's life. Confrontation may be either positive or negative, but the moment of confrontation opens the opportunity to show a redemptive alternative.

The biblical imagery that undergirds this approach rests in the apostle Paul's Damascus journey where Saul (Paul) finds himself confronted by the resurrected Christ, knocked off his feet, blind, but ultimately understands—thanks to Ananias—the full meaning of his encounter with Jesus and leads to Paul's zeal in proclaiming the gospel and testifying to his transformation. Youth ministers who use this approach should always avoid the danger of manipulating youth emotions with extreme and fearful images. Nevertheless, real confrontation allows youth to accept for themselves the claims of the gospel.

Invitation

This approach acknowledges a person's life is a journey but also invites people to allow Jesus to enter into that journey. Rather than focus on negative aspects of a young person's life, this view often includes the assertion that the Christian life provides a sense of meaning and fulfillment to what God has in mind. Ministers do encourage specific decisions but based on the strength of their relationship with the youth and the possibilities of what God might accomplish. Often young people are already active within the youth ministry but have not made a specific commitment until the youth minister engages them and gently makes them aware of the different ways Christ can become even more important to them.

Often this form of evangelism finds biblical imagery in the Emmaus Road journey more important. Christ joins travelers on the journey, opens their minds to the importance of his life from the scriptures, never pushes

and seems almost to move on until an act of hospitality by the travelers allows Jesus to be recognized, only to disappear again so the travelers—now changed—can inform others.

Specific conversion experiences may seem more elusive in this approach, often youth may merely see themselves continuing the journey, but their hearts are indeed “made warm” by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Youth ministers using this approach have to make sure that youth do not accept Christ just to meet personal needs. Jesus not only fulfills longings but also challenges young people to follow Christ instead of their personal desires. Nevertheless, this developmental approach often allows youth to embrace Jesus at a level consistent with their personal journey.

Seeker Sensitive or Strategic Exposure

Borrowing a term from Chris Folmsbee, this approach utilizes gatherings where youth can bring their friends for an engaging activity, a brief gospel invitation, an opportunity to discuss the event over food. This particular approach reflects a seeker sensitive approach that often encourages a real love for the unreached while also seeking approaches that will invite them into the church through the youth group.

Folmsbee, A New Kind of Youth Ministry, 27.

Refer to Resource 11-3 in the Student Guide. Spend a few minutes going through this resource.

The blend of friendship evangelism and event-based evangelism allows youth ministers to offer non-threatening opportunities with the hope that, on occasion, these events will result in energizing moments of deep encounter much like Moses at the burning bush. Folmsbee admits that this approach may not always prove effective since there are a number of challenges including the tendency for youth to not think about their Christian witness beyond the events themselves—discipleship can be lacking—and to actually evaluate the ministry based on the quality of these events. However, limited use of these gatherings can provide an opportunity for moments of deep awareness and commitment.

Return to Resource 11-2.

Participation

This approach begins with a person’s regular participation in a community of faith and sees salvation occurring in the midst of regular practice. Sometimes participation includes growth in one’s spiritual journey until young people suddenly come to an awareness that they have to embrace their Christian faith as part of their growth in grace.

At other times participation begins in the mission of God, serving others until the person comes to the reality they need to embrace authentic faith, or until they discover that they now possess a faith they did not know they had. The biblical imagery that undergirds this approach often begins with God's efforts to guide the children of Israel through the wilderness, the many practices and observances used to shape them into God's people. This imagery continues in the New Testament through the writers encouraging and exhorting a open yet consistent church that engages in ongoing practices "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4: 13).

Youth pastors must be careful not to assume that activity always indicates a clear sign of salvation, young people need to embrace God by faith. Nevertheless, young people often awaken to this faith under the strong relational bonds of the youth group, a consistent vision of the gospel reason for the existence of the group, and carefully designed practices that embody the Christian life.

Missional

Folmsbee, 32-33.

Chris Folmsbee notes that the future may call for a "life-dynamic" evangelism that calls us to missionally enter into the lives of non-believers—rather than attracting them to the church—and using our daily walk as the form of witness that encourages others to see God's love through us. Following Luke's account of Jesus, this approach assumes that God is at work in the lives of youth regardless of where they live and youth ministers must go and live "incarnationally" by witnessing with their lives.

Ward, God at the Mall, 17-21.

Pete Ward asserts this approach calling youth ministers to engage youth who are outside the traditional influence of the church. Ward notes that such a strategy requires not only contact, but extended contact with youth who require considerable time before they will trust someone different. Even after initial evangelism many of these youth will require extended nurture before incorporation within the church. A danger associated with this approach might be that youth ministers may be unduly influenced by the youth lifestyle. Nevertheless, youth ministers must be willing to enter into the lives of youth and spend time in their social world in order to make a difference in the lives of youth.

Ward, 55-76.

Studied in Lesson 5, Resource 4-7.

The different historic youth ministries that we looked at in Lesson 5, did not all use the same evangelistic approach. Context, cultural expectations, personal life experience all influence our evangelistic approach. The approaches may be confrontational or developmental, they may occur over long periods of time in community or in strategic moments. Even these approaches do not adequately summarize the myriad ways God uses human beings as instruments of Christ's saving actions through the Holy Spirit in the lives of youth.

Allow for response.

Which approaches have you seen at work in your context?

Why do you believe a certain approach might be more effective in light of youth culture in your setting?

How might adopting a different model change your current approach to evangelism?

Burns and DeVries, Uncommon Youth Ministry, 79.

Perhaps the best known of all approaches still relies on relational evangelism. As Jim Burns and Mark DeVries note: "Most people become Christians through influential relationships and family relationships . . . You can call it what you want—lifestyle evangelism, earning the right to be heard or relational evangelism—but good, influential and responsive evangelism is based around a relationship, with someone or a group of people who are modeling a vibrant, genuine Christian lifestyle."

Lecture/Discussion: Setting the Stage—Building Relationships and Overcoming Diversions

(15 minutes)

When engaging in relational evangelism, one must always be ready to engage youth in a personal way and, when the opportunity arises, address their life in a way that opens the door to evangelism. We must acknowledge that sound evangelism with youth begins with our ability to build relationships with young people. There are a number of key concepts to creating quality relationships so we can offer the good news of the gospel that are worth our consideration.

Refer to Resource 10-3 that was read for homework.

Allow for response and discussion.

Which of these concepts offer the best chance for developing relationships with youth in your setting? Why?

How will combining several steps improve the chance for building quality relationships?

Which relationship building concept interests you the most in building relationships?

What are specific strategies you can implement in your situation based on one of the concepts?

Building relationships proves important not only for presenting the gospel, but for living out our Christian witness based on what God calls us to be. As mentioned in Lesson 4, Andrew Root cautions that we do not just build relationships just to present an evangelistic message or to pursue our personal agendas, we build them to make a difference in every aspect of a young person's life. Sometimes those relationships merely serve as a *supportive presence* because a young person needs support. Other times those relationships will open up natural moments to *address spiritual issues and evangelize* the youth. Also, relationships do not end once we have presented the gospel; they continue as we extend opportunities to build Christlike lives and empower youth to make a difference in the lives of their friends and family. Building relationships may be the beginning of evangelism but establishing relationships reflect our witness and maintaining relationships establish our desire to work for the best in every young person.

Allow for response.

Looking back at our responses from our biblical discussion at the beginning of class; how many of these insights encourage supporting youth, particularly in areas where they are not yet fully self-reliant?

Which principles focus on empowering youth?

Which of these suggestions support the goal of living Christ-like relationships? Why?

When it comes to maintaining relationships, what do we need to add to our list to make our key concepts more comprehensive, more faithful, to the role of the youth minister as one who both supports and empowers Christ-like relationships with youth?

Hopefully relationships lead to opportunities of personal evangelism, including times of addressing youth and responding to—and overcoming—diversions away from the gospel message. David Watson notes no one can read the gospel records without noticing Jesus' care for each person. Our witness and evangelism is effective only when we prayerfully and persistently work with individuals, their experiences and personal challenges. In youth evangelism, our disciplined, respectful investment in the life of the individual often

establishes receptivity to the message we preach or share personally. This approach must also anticipate and address some of the challenges that threaten to divert the gospel message.

Reaching global youth remains a prime concern for the church, particularly as we note their personal challenges:

- loneliness
- lack of boundaries
- struggle with self-worth
- preoccupation with popular culture (music, technology)
- escapism as a solution to problems
- rising anger
- loss of meaning
- tendency to live only in the present moment
- premature callousness

yet with a real readiness for Jesus when we can overcome the diversions.

Allow for response.

How do these challenges create diversions for us that we must overcome when we share the gospel?

How can we respond to them?

How do we respond to youth diversions?

Regardless of diversions, we can move from building relationships to bringing the good news to people. There are some basic approaches that help us much like Jesus used in engaging others.

Small Groups: Methods for Relational Evangelism

(20 minutes)

As noted, diversions present a key challenge to our efforts in Christian witness. Once again, scripture provides an excellent starting point to address this issue and to assist our overall approach to relational evangelism. Jesus' engagement with the Samaritan woman takes us through Jesus' method of dealing with a seeker. His gentle approach to the needy Samaritan woman, and his responses to diversions, proves instructive.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 11-4 in the Student Guide.

Interact with the students as they work through the questions.

Once a young person has made a commitment, youth ministers must always be ready to follow-up with ongoing discipleship. The need and methods of discipleship will be discussed in some of the following lessons. Nevertheless, without a commitment to disciple a young person after they have made a decision for Christ, the evangelistic effort is not complete. This commitment to discipleship needs to involve the local church. Therefore, it is necessary that we motivate the entire congregation in our efforts to reach young people.

Lecture/Discussion: Teaching Youth How to Share Their Faith

(15 minutes)

Young people serve a key role in evangelizing their peers. Sharing faith with fellow youth will influence the entire church. Often young people respond well and invest in the congregation if we take seriously their role in reaching youth for Christ.

Allow for response.

What are some advantages in concentrating on preparing young people for reaching youth for Christ?

Youth need preparation if they are to be faithful evangelists and witnesses, both in relational and group evangelism.

Refer to Resource 11-5 in the Student Guide.

Learning to Prepare an Evangelistic Message

While often considered preparation for large group evangelism, understanding the basics of an evangelistic message prepare youth not only for speaking but also for a deeper understanding of the gospel in relational settings. There are a number of considerations when preparing an appealing evangelistic message.

First, youth must invest in prayer and personal holiness for clear insights into their own personal journey and a deeper understanding of human frailty, as well as a deeper appreciation of God's good news.

Second, youth need to learn how to understand their listeners, regardless of age. Knowledge of the intended audience remains an important factor in selecting the scripture on which to base their message.

Third, youth need to understand the heart of the gospel, the heart of the good news—salvation is in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, youth must spend time studying their Bible text, reading and re-reading and discovering questions will bring out the facts.

Fifth, youth need help constructing their message. When we construct our message we trust the Holy Spirit is the supreme evangelist; however, we must choose a message that will stay in the hearer's mind. Good beginning texts include Luke 15:11-24, John 3:1-16. Youth do need your supervision and guidance as they engage in this activity.

Sixth, it is essential youth include some application points to insure their message reaches youth.

Do you allow your youth the opportunity to preach? Not just the ones that have felt a call to preach but everyone?

How valuable would that be to both the group and the individuals? What kind of church leaders would these young people become?

Have you thought about a regular schedule where each week one of your youth gives a 5 minute sermon?

Learning to Share Personal Testimony

Youth need assistance in sharing their personal testimony with peers. Church scholars note in the early church often a person's personal testimony revealed the truth of the message. One way to train youth involves three steps:

1. My story/life before God
2. hearing God's story
3. My story/life with God

Sometimes it is better for youth to start with their contemporary testimony—where they are today—but they need to include how God is working in their lives. Sharing their own experience with the power of Jesus in their lives often provides both the method and motivation for the need to share the gospel with others.

You might start this question by sharing your own testimony.

Would anyone be willing to share their testimony?

Have any of you had experience with helping youth prepare their testimony? What helped them the most?

How often do you have the youth in your group give their testimonies to the group?

Learning to Reach the Home

It is important to value home or family-based evangelism. Family evangelism offers positive advantages and provides several important opportunities for spreading the Gospel for both you as a pastor and for the youth. The sheer informality and relaxed atmosphere of the home, not to mention the hospitality associated with the family, all help to make this form of evangelism particularly successful.

Youth may not always serve as the best evangelist in this setting but often they can create a hospitable context that allows ministers or other Christian adults to engage in evangelistic conversations. Home visits offer a powerful medium for reaching people, where we will be introduced to other people whom Christ may seek to win for Him. Bible study at home provides the entire family especially children and youth, a stable environment for Christian faith formation.

Allow for response.

Do you have a specific plan that you implement for helping youth reach their own families?

What might be included in the plan?

Are there other ideas that you have for teaching youth how to share their faith?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What idea caught your attention in this lesson?

Look Ahead

Next week we will be reviewing different approaches to teaching and nurturing those students we evangelize.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write an outline for an evangelistic message based either on Luke 15:11-24, or John 3:1-16, that you could present to youth in some setting. Be sure to name the setting and how the context influence the way you would prepare your message.

Spend time talking with at least five young people about their salvation experience both in coming to faith and also in being nurtured as Christians. Write a summary of your conversations. How important was relationship building in those conversations?

Using the material in this lesson, prepare a class session for teaching Christian youth the basic skills for evangelizing youth/others they might encounter or know closely. How would you use the format of this lesson (motivator, introduction, covering basic information, incorporating discussion and small groups, closing) in developing your lesson with youth? Bring a prepared lesson with you to the next class session.

Develop a plan for how you are going to use your youth group to teach, preach, witness, and serve others.

Complete Resource 11-6.

Write in your journal. Reflect on the first time you shared your testimony with someone. Reflect on the first time that you shared the Gospel with someone.

Punctuate the Finish

Folmsbee, 32.

“A life-dynamic approach to evangelism involves sharing the truths of God in the context of our everyday lives. It involves each of us connecting our heart and soul with the hearts and souls of those within our sphere of relations. It is faith sharing through the cycle of situations and circumstances we share with those in our world. It is an explanation of our faith both verbally and in our actions as the events of our lives unfold.”

Lesson 12

Youth Ministry Discipleship— Nurturing and Teaching

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Remembering Our Key Influencers	Small Groups	Resource 12-1
0:15	A Glance at Culture and the Development of Our Young People	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 12-2 Resource 12-3
0:45	Lessons from a Great Teacher	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 12-4 Resource 12-5
1:05	The Teacher as Midwife	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 12-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Hampton, Jim and Rick Edwards. *Worship-Centered Teaching: Guiding Youth to Discover Their Identity in Christ*. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001, 35-93.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students.

Return and collect homework.

What definitions of the church did you hear from the people that you interviewed?

Orientation

The lives of young people are being shaped by a media-driven, interactive, participatory culture. Having developed relationships with our youth, our goal is to develop a learning environment to nurture their spiritual growth. This lesson examines cultural influences and youth expectations for learning and proposes an incarnational teaching process that helps the youth leader develop effective learning environments.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand youth have a variety of different learning styles
- relate the four moments of midwifery to the teaching-learning process
- use an understanding of culture to help shape lessons
- understand how and when learning is taking place
- understand and commit themselves to the incarnational teaching process by creating participatory learning environments

Motivator

Youth ministry involves handing on the practices of our faith and not Bible verses alone.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Remembering Our Key Influencers

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 12-1 in the Student Guide.

Allow a few minutes at the end of the time for someone to share from each group.

Lecture/Discussion: A Glance at Culture and the Development of Our Young People

(30 minutes)

People we admire and with whom we have developed relationships play key influential roles in our lives. As youth workers, we want to be in a position to influence our youth. We cannot earn the right to be listened to through the classroom alone. So, how do we become key influencers in the lives of our youth?

Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton. Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Smith, 150.

Smith, 148-155.

Michael Eaton and Timothy Eaton, Directors. Christian Smith, Actor. Soul Searching Documentary/DVD Santa Barbara, CA: Revelation Studios, 2007.

Christian Smith's groundbreaking study, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, identifies issues facing the church related to integrating young people into our Christian faith. The issue revolves around the lack of involvement of adults in the lives of young people as we attempt to teach them our systems of belief. The result, according to Smith, is a very generic view of God with little demands on young people's lives. As Smith observes, "The overwhelming number of US teens engage and value religion, not for the sake of God, or the common good of a just society, or for composing through ministry and observance a distinctive community of people, but for the instrumental good it does for them." For young people, even those raised in conservative households with professions of faith, the primary purpose of God is to make youth "happy."

This was illustrated as a teenager from a small rural church described her involvement in her home church. She shared how her local church combined the children

and youth into a single program. The interviewers began to explore the importance her faith played in her life and her relationship with Jesus Christ.

When the interviewers asked her to describe the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and what that meant to her, she didn't have a response. A 17-year-old high school junior, who had grown up in the church, been taught in one system using consistent curriculum, was not able to describe the significance the death and resurrection of Jesus had on her faith. I'm not sure if I was shocked, embarrassed, or ashamed, but I definitely realized that we are failing to teach our youth the key doctrines of our faith.

Content is not enough. If it was, this young person would have gotten it. Experience is not enough either. At different times we have sacrificed content or experience, to use what we thought were more effective teaching methodologies. If there is an arm of the church that has had to respond to the "boring" complaint, it is youth ministry. In response, we have had to become more creative in how we teach. But, what is it we are teaching in these creative ways?

Youth themselves are changing. New developmental research tells us that the age span of adolescence is lengthening. Not only are children entering puberty at earlier ages but the maturation process is being delayed at the older end of the scale. This creates some issues that neither the church nor the secular world have adequately addressed.

Youth are not just different because of where they are on the maturation scale. They also learn differently because of how they are wired. Jim Burns in his book, *Uncommon Youth Ministry*, describes four learning styles that help us understand how people learn. Marlene LeFever points out that we each have a dominant or preferred learning style and asks questions to help us identify our personal preference.

Refer to Resource 12-2 in the Student Guide.

Read through the four learner styles and statements.

Allow for response.

Open your Student Guides to Resource 12-2. Read through the defined learning styles and use the questions to identify your dominant learning style.

Which of the statements best describes you?

How have you been taught in ways that most effectively match how you learn?

How does the level of maturity of your youth effect the teaching environment?

How do you see this playing out with your youth?

Learning styles and developmental issues are also coupled with the fact that young people are engaged in more destructive behavior than ever before. More youth drink, more youth experiment sexually, more youth lie and cheat in the classroom with very little apparent structure to help address these issues.

Adults are more absent from the lives of young people than ever before. Because of the freedoms that younger and younger adolescents possess, they are forced to make decisions on their own—some decisions lead them down destructive paths.

Refer to Resource 12-3 in the Student Guide.

Chap Clark. Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004, 34-37.

Chap Clark in his book, *Hurt*, gives three reasons for why an adolescent's decisions can be destructive:

1. Most of the newfound freedoms that accompany *mid*-adolescence (the term used for high-school-age youth), were originally designed for *late* adolescence (Chap's term used for college-age youth).
2. Because today adolescence lasts up to fifteen years, a mid-adolescent has a more difficult time than did previous high-school-aged youth seeing college and career as the hope of a secure and fulfilling future.
3. It has generally been assumed that high-school-aged youth have the capacity for abstract thinking. What [Clark] noticed during this study, however, is that mid-adolescents' ability to engage in abstract thought is limited to the immediate context of a discussion.

Couple these with the shift in the institutional family as a diminishing source and resource for meeting life's challenges, it adds to the complexity of our adolescent population's attempt to make discerning, healthy decisions.

Talk about the ways we view these affecting teaching-learning environment.

Allow for response.

How do you see evidence of these three variables—development, learning styles, and unbridled freedom—in today's adolescents?

What role do these issues play in our attempt to teach adolescents/teens?

What do you think are the most important aspects in teaching adolescents/teens?

What is the most difficult part of teaching our youth?

Clark is convinced that the reasons these issues are growing are that the adolescent culture has developed a “world beneath,” a sub-culture, that is isolated from adult awareness and ability to address, and adolescents are very good at living in two worlds.

Do you see any evidence of his research regarding this adolescent sub-culture?

These factors at times make teaching seem more complex than ever. Teaching has to be more than the content of our curriculum. It has to be more than controlling and engaging 7th grade boys for one hour a week. It has to be more than convincing and convicting our youth of our core set of beliefs. It’s all that, but it’s also realizing that youth learn differently depending on their personal make-up, their level of maturity—which changes daily—and their family support system.

Is family engaged in their lives? Are they struggling with the transition between concrete and abstract thinking? And regarding their learning style, are they intuitive, analytical, logical, or pragmatic?

Beginning to understand how our youth think, and weighing it with the other factors affecting their lives, can help us develop an effective teaching-learning environment. According to Clark, in order to teach, we have to be willing to enter their world.

Our understanding of the make-up of youth can also help us realize why some of them are connecting with some parts of the lesson, while others seem completely disconnected. It might not be the subject matter; it might be the way they are being taught.

Have you ever had students come up to you after a lesson, and tell you that was the best lesson they have ever been a part of, while the very next week, the same students are falling asleep on you? Or, have you ever been challenged by a group of students in your group to go deeper, complaining about how shallow your teaching is, calling for more “meat”?

How about the students who constantly are asking for more service projects or more hands-on experiences? Or, the students who want to teach the lessons, tired of not being used, and crying out for ways to be more involved in ministry? None of these are necessarily directed at what you teach, but maybe how you are teaching, and how they learn.

Lecture/Discussion: Lessons from a Great Teacher

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 12-4 in the Student Guide.

In *Starting Right*, Duffy Robbins' chapter, "Thinking Creatively," describes a holistic approach to the task of designing a Bible study that incorporates ways to address the facets we have just described.

1. Cognitive (receiving): What content, facts, and ideas do I anticipate my young people will learn in this study?
2. Affective (feeling): What sort of feelings might I anticipate this study will invoke in my youth?
3. Behavioral (doing): If the students take seriously this truth from the Bible, how might their behavior be different on a day-to-day basis?
4. Existential (being): How do I anticipate this study might impact the basic values and inner core of individual youth?

Allow for response.

How do you see these approaches to teaching the Bible addressing the various learning styles of your youth?

Refer to Resource 12-5 in the Student Guide.

Robbins from the same chapter gives us a variety of examples of the way Jesus taught that can serve as a model for us. Some that he points out are:

- Object lessons—John 4:1-42
- Relational ministry—John 1:35-51
- Problem-solving—Mark 10:17-22
- Conversation—Mark 10:27
- Questions—the gospels record over 100 questions posed by Jesus in various situations
- Lecture—Matthew 5-7; John 14-16
- Parables—John 10:1-21; 15:1-10
- Teachable moment, teaching through experience—John 4:5-26
- Contrast—Matthew 5:21-22,33-34, 38-39, 43-44
- Illustrations, examples—Matthew 26
- Simulations, symbols—John 13:1-20
- Large and small groups—as many as 5,000, or as few as three
- Modeling—Luke 18:15-17

Allow for response.

What are some other ways you can think of that Jesus used to teach?

How have you seen examples of these used as a method to teach a lesson?

Continue with Resource 12-5.

Using some of these same models, Dan Lambert in his book, *Teaching that Makes a Difference*, talks about

how Jesus might teach today's adolescent if he were here.

Lambert, 181-204.

Here is his observation on the way Jesus taught:

- He taught critical thinking
- He taught with clarity
- He used comparison and hyperbole
- He used criticism
- He taught with authority
- He taught with conviction and passion

Continue with Resource 12-5.

Here are some of Lambert's thoughts of how Jesus might teach students today:

- Jesus would teach to make disciples
- Jesus would teach obedience to God's commands
- Jesus would teach everyone, especially those who might not be welcomed by traditional churches
- Jesus would teach in a variety of settings
- Jesus would teach different groups differently
- Jesus would teach theologically
- Jesus would teach to raise expectations
- Jesus would teach to increase critical thinking
- Jesus would teach with authority and confidence
- Jesus would teach so students respond
- Jesus would teach holistically

Lambert, 195-204.

Allow for response.

What are you learning from what Robbins and Lambert are saying about the teaching styles of Jesus?

Where do you see evidence of this in some of what you teach? How can you do better?

How does that help us in preparing for teaching our youth?

One of the most effective things about the way Jesus taught was that he was living and experiencing everything he was teaching his students—his disciples. He did not just teach them to pray, he showed them how to pray. He didn't just talk about holiness; he lived holiness in front of them. He didn't just teach on living sacrificially, he lived sacrificially with and for them.

The life Jesus lived was a platform for his teaching.

Lecture/Discussion: The Teacher as Midwife

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 12-6 in the Student Guide.

In *The Godbearing Life*, Kenda Dean and Ron Foster wrote about a method of teaching they equate to midwifery. They use the birth analogy to help us understand how the learning process works in our ministry. The four moments of midwifery are shown in Resource 12-6 of your Student Guide.

Dean, 162.

Dean says, “Godbearing youth ministry involves handing on the practices of our faith and not Bible verses alone.” The concept of becoming a midwife with our youth is a commitment to the whole process, and understanding that teaching happens all the time, not just for one hour in the classroom. It involves the passing on of a baton.

Dean, 163.

She goes on to say, that “Faith is not a subject to master. Faith is a life to be lived in light of the God who saves.”

Our youth know too well that the God-problem is not a math problem to be solved, but a relationship to be lived in. Modeling that as a midwife is the key to passing on our faith.

Let us look at Resource 12-6 in more detail.

Pack your Bag

It involves a readiness at all times. I remember when we were expecting our children, the bag was always packed, sitting by the door with all the essentials that would be needed for the birthing, and the two-three days following. Be ready, be present.

How do we pack for this journey? Dean explains it as three essentials:

- They say the first essential is *unpacking*, owning up to biases and seeking redemption for baggage left over from previous experiences that we may project onto young people.
- The way this happens is by helping them improve the four basics—study of scripture, practice of prayer, the exegesis of adolescence and culture—making them ready to go. In other words, using these four sources helps us to more accurately determine where each adolescent is and avoid a one-size-fits-all mentality.
- Last, we need to recognize what is going on in adolescents’ lives. “Careful exegesis of culture and adolescence allows us to enter the world of youth to encourage faith on their ‘turf’ as well as on ours.”

Dean, 165.

Name the Pain

What is the disequilibrium that is being created throughout this process?

“The teaching process helps youth understand that life struggles are faith struggles. God uses family, social, and theological environments, in which we live, as

Dean, 165.

canvases of creativity, not determiners of destiny." In other words, these help us identify the ways in which students are relating with God and how they are growing into that relationship."

We can help them name their pain, so they can seek healing from whatever it may be.

Dean, 166.

We also get to help those who have yet to develop a confidence in God—" . . . to help those youth whose confidence in God has not yet gathered public momentum find ways to claim their growing relationship with Jesus Christ."

Breaking Water

Dean, 167.

"This is an act of discernment, for the timing and appropriateness of direct engagement in growing faith depends upon the particulars of the young person." This only happens as we know who our youth are. Helping to make their faith literal. Again, this is a call to remaining loyal through faithful presence.

Dean, 167.

"Every time we break water, a new life is called forth by God, and no two situations are the same."

Be Ready for the Catch

Dean, 169.

"Being ready for the catch means staying close, being available to youth whenever faith begins to grow." This means that it won't just happen in the classroom, and will only be experienced as we live life with them, ready for them whenever they are. "As teachers, they are confident that the struggle is worth it, and they sidle up alongside these youth to encourage them to see this struggle through."

Take some time to make sure the class is understanding the midwifery concept, and beginning to grasp that the work of the teacher is as much "caught than taught".

What are you hearing in the analogy of midwifery in relation to the spiritual development of students?

Who played the role of "midwife" for your spiritual development?

How does this affect your approach to teaching youth?

How does this affect those we recruit to teach youth?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students to respond to the question.

How does this approach to teaching, affect the traditional approach to our teaching environments?

Look Ahead

For the next lesson the students need access to the internet. You will need to meet at a place where there are computers or internet access. The students will need to bring computers if they have them.

In the next lesson we will be looking at compassion and service as a part of discipleship.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Take a copy of the curriculum you presently use, and evaluate how you think it addresses the issues covered in this lesson. Use these questions to help you evaluate not only the curriculum, but also your commitment to the holistic teaching process.

- How does the curriculum address the development, maturity, and learning styles of your youth?
- What can you do to make your teaching more experiential?
- How can you use curriculum to supplement the life you are sharing with your youth?
- How committed are you to the relationships you have with your youth, and what are the changes that need to be made to make them more of a priority?

Talk with community leaders and identify the people in your church's city/parish/neighborhood who suffer most. Who are the widows, orphans and strangers in your town? How intimately and regularly is your church involved in the lives of those who suffer? How intimately and regularly is your family involved in the lives of those who suffer? How intimately and regularly are you involved in the lives of those who suffer? Write a 2-page response.

Write in your journal. What individuals came to your mind as you studied this lesson? How will these ideas help you minister to them? How is this changing your idea of what it means to teach youth? What is the best idea you are taking from this lesson?

Punctuate the Finish

Elton Trueblood is quoted as saying, that “holy shoddy is still shoddy.” Teaching is not a shotgun approach, nor should it be reduced to the lowest common denominator, but it should be intentional in its approach.

Lesson 13

Youth Ministry Discipleship— Compassion and Service

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:15	Open Our Eyes, Open Our Ears	Small Groups	Resource 13-1 Computer access
0:35	Refuse to be Consoled	Guided Prayer/ Discussion	
0:55	A Eucharistic Life	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 13-2 Resource 13-3
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Gates, Jamie and Jon Middendorf. *Living Justice: Revolutionary Compassion in a Broken World*. Kansas City: Barefoot Ministries, 2007, 34-91.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*. Doubleday, Revised edition 1995, 11-46.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Accountability

Have all students respond. Spend time learning about those people who are hurting.

Return and collect homework.

As part of your homework you were to find, from leaders in your community, the people who suffer most in your church's city/parish/neighborhood. Who are the widows, orphans and strangers in your town? How intimately and regularly is your church involved in the lives of those who suffer? How intimately and regularly is your family involved in the lives of those who suffer? How intimately and regularly are you involved in the lives of those who suffer?

What did you discover?

Who is the one in your community that is painting the face of Jesus to people who need Him?

Orientation

Read together out loud Isaiah 58, then Luke 4.14-30.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand Jesus' witness and call to a life of compassion and service as not just an option, but a central calling for all Christians
- identify the range of social issues in their own contexts that lead to suffering in their community and the world within their reach
- identify strategies for helping youth learn to lament/mourn with those who suffer
- articulate the practices of the church catholic (universal) that their own church might employ to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world, particularly to those who suffer
- articulate at least three practical next steps for nurturing a more compassionate youth group

Motivator

It is becoming increasingly obvious to Christian youth that God's work in the world includes care for the proverbial widow, orphan and stranger (see

Deuteronomy 24: 17-18, Exodus 22:21-24; Matthew 25:31-46; James 1:27). Making disciples of all nations includes teaching the practices of compassion and service (justice). But we must guard against these acts of justice becoming a new works-righteousness; we show mercy because God first showed mercy to us.

Faithful discipleship will include discussions of the temptations to avoid. When working with idealistic young people, youth ministers will be particularly challenged by their temptations:

- to be heroic—try to save the world themselves
- to wallow in despair—"it's far too complex," "I'm only one person"
- forgetting that hope is in what God is already doing
- to allow youth to slip into the comfortable apathy of cynicism—"I can't believe that THEY could do such a thing;" not confessing our own complicity

It helps to keep the focus on what God has done and is doing in the world around us in very practical, material terms.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Open Our Eyes, Open Our Ears

(20 minutes)

Open our Eyes, Open our Ears: Listening to the depths of exploitation in our world

The pursuit of justice and reconciliation is at the heart of our Christian heritage, the foundation of our church and the life of holiness. We pursue justice when we let the oppressed go free, share our food with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into our homes, clothe the naked and satisfy the needs of the afflicted (Isaiah 58). Living a Christian life involves being able to name injustice and to confront the powers that cause injustice. More importantly, living a Christian life involves being the kind of people that live God's justice and reconciliation practically in the world.

Historically the church has responded to the bodily needs of the community around them through what have been called the "Works of Mercy"

1. Feeding the hungry
2. Giving drink to the thirsty
3. Clothing the naked
4. Harboring the harborless
5. Healing the sick
6. Releasing the captives

Refer to Resource 13-1 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group 1-2 areas to research.

Websites change so you will need to review the sites to determine if they are still valid or if others are better for this activity.

Offer initial responses to the different groups and what they anticipate each site might address.

Use these works of mercy as a lens through which to see the injustices in our world.

Reflect on the implications of having to have such websites in our world today.

Guided Prayer/Discussion: Refuse to be Consoled

(20 minutes)

Begin this section by having groups very briefly summarize findings from the group discussion.

Let the heaviness of it all hang in the air for a while.

For each group report I want you to focus more on the data, the injustices themselves and not so much on what others are doing about it at this point.

Refuse to be Consoled: Mourning with those who mourn

Remember that in the very first book of the New Testament, the story of Jesus starts with a mother in mourning. “A cry of anguish is heard in Ramah—weeping and mourning unrestrained. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted—for they are dead” (Mt 2:18, NLT).

One of the challenges that people who have grown up in privilege face is the relative inability to deal with the heaviness of suffering. We are constantly tempted to seek easy consolation and quick fixes. We have little tolerance for pain and suffering. Mourning and lament are Christian practices that help us to connect the pain of the past with a hope for the future. Our rapid-paced, consumer, youth-oriented culture makes this very difficult for us. We have to learn how to pray, how to mourn with those who mourn. Jesus’ says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Mt 5.4).

We need to spend time right now bowing before God, praying for hurting people and the needs they face.

This is an exercise in modeling prayer for your students so that they might go out and do likewise. Be creative and involve as many people in prayer as possible.

Use a combination of spontaneous prayers and prayers from your favorite prayer book. For this lesson, I recommend prayers from Brueggemann’s Prayers for a Privileged People. Draw on the range of the types of prayers:

- *praise and adoration*
- *thanksgiving*
- *confession*
- *repentance*
- *intercession*

Be sure not to neglect prayers of confession and repentance while

moving on to intercessory prayers too quickly.

Prayers of confession and repentance can help make the connections for your students between the local/global injustice and their own passive/active participation in that injustice. Transparency by the leader is perhaps the most important teaching tool in this part of the lesson.

This lesson has allowed for sufficient time to be spent in prayer. Don't hurry through this section. Allow the Holy Spirit to "meet in this place."

Lecture/Discussion: A Eucharistic Life

(25 minutes)

*Open this section with a reflection on Henri Nouwen's journey to L'Arche Daybreak community (you can read about this in his *The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey*).*

If you don't have access to this book you can use another illustration.

Refer to Resource 13-2 in the Student Guide.

Henri J. M. Nouwen, Donald McNeill and Douglas Morrison. Compassion: A reflection on the Christian Life. Doubleday. Revised edition 1995, 27.

A Eucharistic Life: Nurturing the Prophetic Imagination

*In *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life*, Henri Nouwen wrote,*

Here we see what compassion means. It is not a bending toward the under privileged from a privileged position; it is not a reaching out from on high to those who are less fortunate below; it is not a gesture of sympathy or pity for those who fail to make it in the upward pull. On the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there.

Compassion and service grow out of the heart of God and must spring up from who we are as Christians. Our actions of compassion and service are grounded in our worship of God and our calling to love one another. God calls us to pour ourselves out for other people in thanksgiving as Christ poured himself out for us on the cross. God asks us to radically reorient our lives to make possible this kind of love.

Christians are called to participate in God's justice as a response to God's grace, as a gift, as the fruit of the forgiveness we have received. We should not be so pretentious as to assume that we can end all suffering,

as if it only took our creative and communal action to bring about God's justice. But as Christians we are the Body of Christ, the hands and feet of the incarnated God who suffered on our behalf. We can be better witnesses to the justice of God already at work in the world by paying special attention to those who suffer most in our world.

God pays special attention to the poor not because there's anything virtuous in being poor, but in part because they are the ones most often called upon to forgive. We see God's grace and forgiveness no more clearly than when we are *with* those who suffer—when we are *among those who suffer*. Enmesh your life in the life of those who regularly suffer most and you cannot help but see the evil powers and principalities that oppress. When we are *with* and *among* those who suffer, we do not need extra encouragement to act to resist the oppressive habits and structures that cause suffering.

Christians who seek to participate in the justice and reconciliation of God stand in a long tradition stemming at least back to the call of Moses to liberate the Hebrew slaves. Christians in the United States have long been at the core of social movements pressing for justice, from the abolition of slavery to leadership in the USA civil rights struggle, from contemporary campaigns to end global poverty to the creation of fair trade networks and an end to exploitative labor practices, from fighting against the traffic in global prostitution to calling for an end to the international debt that is choking the poorest of the poor to death.

You don't have to (although I might encourage you to) join an international debt relief campaign to begin to participate in the justice and reconciliation to which we have been called. You can start by beginning to see and be engaged in the oppressive habits that are in your own life. Students on campus can work with the administration to get fair trade coffee in the cafeteria; you might want to research what the "fair trade" movement is all about.

Churches, high schools and local businesses can be encouraged to buy uniforms from sweatshop-free garment companies; you might want to look into the labor and environmental practices of the companies where you buy your clothes. Young people can join efforts to bring about more affordable housing and more livable wages in their neighborhoods; you might want to find out if companies you or your parents (your church) work with pay their lowest-wage

employees a living wage. We have to at least begin by making time to see those who are suffering in our community.

Call on a student to read Ephesians 4:4 and Acts 4:32.

Allow for response to the questions. Really challenge the students. There are no easy answers to some of these questions.

You may want to create some lists/ideas on flip-charts and place them around the room for some of the questions.

See Living Justice, 81-83.

Imagine a Church where the people act as one. What might it look like in your community?

See Living Justice, 83-84.

What practical steps do you need to take in your youth group to see through the eyes of Jesus and hear through his ears?

See Living Justice, 86-87.

How can we cultivate our "prophetic imagination"? How does this impact the way we live?

How does our "prophetic imagination" affect the way we worship?

What would a church that lives by God's "prophetic imagination" look like in practice beyond the walls of the church?

How can you work with your youth/church to live justice in your world both locally and globally?

How will you help the youth in your ministry develop eyes to see and ears to hear the plight of the widows, orphans and strangers in their worlds?

Are the youth in your group more sensitive and willing to see and hear than the older generation in your church? Than you?

In what ways could you see increasing the role of lament/mourning in the prayer life of your youth group/congregation?

How might the worship life of your congregation change to more faithfully witness to God's concern for the widow, orphan and stranger in our midst?

Refer to Resource 13-3 in the Student Guide.

You have been given a list of books that address many of the issues that we have looked at and prayed about in this lesson.

Remind students that they don't have to purchase books in order to read the books. Libraries and the internet are great resources.

Are you familiar with any of these books?

Did you find the information helpful?

Are there other books that the other students need to add to this list?

We need to be willing to learn more and become involved in the world we live in. If we don't care as the Body of Christ, who will? If we don't do something, who will fill the need?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What will you take with you from this lesson?

How will it change your ministry?

How will it change your life?

Look Ahead

Youth do not perform compassion and service as solitary individuals. Young people need a community that provides nurture and support in the midst of their ministry. In the next lesson you will learn how to invite youth into a shared life together via community.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

In groups or as individuals, research and summarize the realities facing those that are going hungry, thirsty, naked, etc. in our world either through websites, or through service groups within your community attempting similar efforts. You may either research the websites or visit the local ministry during the week. Write a 2-3 page summary of your findings and conclusions.

Optional assignment: Read *Irresistible Revolution* by Shane Claiborne, or a similar text on youth efforts to live with compassion and justice from your cultural setting, and write a 3 page reflection paper on how your youth ministry can be participating in this "irresistible revolution" of the upside-down kingdom of God such that it will be "on earth as it is in heaven."

Write in your journal. How did you respond to this lesson? Is it just one more thing to think about or is it something that you know you have to do something about?

Punctuate the Finish

Read Jeremiah 7:5-7.

Hear the promise of God to the people of God for their faithfulness, in the words of the prophet Jeremiah.

Lesson 14

Youth Ministry Discipleship— Community and Belonging

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:15	Biblical Theological Foundations for Christian Community	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 14-1
0:25	Games and Play as Trust-builders	Lecture/Discussion	Games book from class or other setting
0:35	Small Groups as Arenas of Belonging	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-2—14-6
1:00	Hospitality and Assimilation	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-7
1:15	Intergenerational Community	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Jon Middendorf. *Worship-Centered Youth Ministry*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000, 79-90.

Yaconelli, Mike. *The Core Realities of Youth Ministry: Nine Biblical Principles that Mark Healthy Youth Ministries*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 63-91.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's papers.

Return and collect homework papers.

Orientation

Teenagers are profoundly sensitive to and shaped by other people in their social contexts: Parents, peers, media, and hopefully for Christians, their church congregation. This lesson will point out the unique character of Christian community as built on its biblical and theological foundations. On this foundation, various practices and programs can be effective in building Christian community, such as playing games, participating in small groups and intergenerational activities, and offering hospitality.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how to effectively establish community and fellowship with and among youth
- organize and nurture different types of small groups
- develop different expressions of Christian hospitality

Motivator

Have the students quickly make out these lists—first impressions.

List the three most important or influential Sunday School **lessons** you can recall from your teen years. (Or from their earliest memory if they came into Christian faith after their teen years.)

List or describe the three most spiritually important or influential **events or experiences** from your teen years.

Describe the three **people** who had the greatest influence on your spiritual development.

*Which of these three lists was most difficult to recall?
Why?*

Which was easiest? Why?

*What do you think is the proper role of personal
Christian relationships in one's spiritual growth?*

Where should we spend most of our energy?

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Christian Community

(10 minutes)

Tony Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry, 80.

“Jesus is not just for *me*—he’s also for *us*. In fact, the Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—asserts individual spiritual growth in the context of community.”

Write these examples on a white board, chalkboard, overhead transparency, or flip chart.

What examples from the Bible can you give, that may support this assertion?

After the students have responded refer Resource 14-1 in the Student Guide which gives some examples that hopefully are part of the list that the class created.

Christians are to live in community because of the very nature of God as Trinity, which is the prime spiritual community. Reflecting the divine community, the Church is:

- The covenant people of God the Father
- The Body of Christ, the Son
- A community empowered on Pentecost and constituted by the Spirit

Lecture/Discussion: Games and Play as Trust-builders

(10 minutes)

It is said that “play is the work of children.” Inasmuch as teenagers still manifest many characteristics of childhood, it stands to reason that games and a playful atmosphere will be important as a means to healthy human development.

In addition, games and play can have a theological role in that they can be a way of keeping Sabbath. With all the pressures and stresses that teens face, taking time out of their hectic schedules to play can be a way to connect with the person God created them to be.

More directly, games function as youth ministry aids by building community, acceptance, and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, games are ideal “come-and-see” entry-level activities that are non-threatening for visitors and regular attendees alike.

Allow for response and discussion.

In what ways can games help foster and nurture a sense of community in a youth ministry?

What games have you observed or played that discriminate against players who are not particularly athletic?

What are some games that should be avoided because they tend to eliminate “losers” from the game, rather than keep everyone involved and participating?

What are some games that maximize involvement?

What do you think is the right balance between competition and cooperation in a game?

How can team competition be more effective than individual competition in building community?

What are some good ideas for keeping games safe, yet fun and challenging?

What are one or two of your favorite games for building community and having fun? What characteristics that we have discussed make them effective for this purpose?

Guided Discussion: Small Groups as Arenas for Belonging

(25 minutes)

One of the most effective practices for helping teens feel a sense of belonging is using small groups. Participation in small groups helps socialize students into Christian faith. Peers have a strong influence in building not only self identity, but also a strong faith. With at least one adult leader to guide and facilitate, small groups can be a major element of a strong youth ministry.

Refer to Resource 14-2 in the Student Guide.

Short-term groups can be used effectively to carry out some tasks of the youth ministry program, such as planning and carrying out social events, or road trips. Small groups can also be used during a lesson or Bible study to involve more people in discussion or to study lengthy scripture passages within a brief period of time as a “divide and conquer” strategy.

Allow time for responses.

Brainstorm several examples of each type of task-oriented, short-term groups described.

In brainstorming sessions have participants keep answers short without a lot of explanation. As the leader your only response should be “Thank you. Is there another

idea?" If you say "Good idea," etc. it imposes your judgment on the idea and quickly kills the generation of more ideas. In brainstorming there are no good or bad ideas.

Refer to Resource 14-3 in the Student Guide.

Burnes and DeVries, 96-98.

Allow for response.

Long-term groups, comprised of the same members who meet regularly, are another means of small group ministry. Regardless of their chosen *task*—studying the Bible, providing support, encouragement, and accountability, or developing discipleship and leadership—the real benefit of long-term groups is found in the *process* of meeting. The mere experience of being together with other Christian teens will allow relationships to form and grow, which in turn has a powerful effect on fostering a sense of belonging, acceptance, and community.

Jim Burns and Mike DeVries, in *Uncommon Youth Ministry* observe that there are several reasons for developing small groups in youth ministry under the C.A.R.E outline.

C = Connect. Burns and DeVries note that small groups provide a place where young people can consistently relate to a few people, forming the basis for true community.

A = Accountability. Small groups provide a place where young people may be held lovingly accountable as they seek to apply spiritual truths. Small groups provide an environment where honesty and transparency make spiritual growth possible.

R = Relevancy. Burns and DeVries believe small groups serve as a place that students can struggle with and learn the relevancy of the Bible in their lives. Small groups allow for "in-depth questions, doubts and struggles, showing how the Bible is a current today as the day it was written."

E= Encouragement. Small groups provide a setting where people can see close up where God is at work in lives of young people and offer both affirmation and encouragement for what God is doing. This form of encouragement leads to deep change in youth

Which of these reasons seem most important in your setting?

What are some of strategies for introducing small groups in your ministry context?

All youth groups do not "arrive" at this level of CARE immediately. Burns and DeVries note that healthy small groups often go through different levels of

Refer to Resource 14-4 in the Student Guide.

intimacy and growth as youth begin to learn about one another.

1. History-giving: Learning each others' stories as young people open up to each other
2. Sense of Warmth and Affection: Caring and valuing each other as people
3. Deeper Sharing: Feeling safe enough to be vulnerable and honest
4. Depth: Seeing the group as family and having a sense of belonging

Burnes and DeVries, 97.

DeVries notes two common mistakes:

- either skipping the first two levels and pushing too quickly for deep sharing—often a threatening approach
- just staying within the first two levels without ever seeking to take the group “deeper” into intimacy

It is important to note that leading a small group requires different “skills” for each level the group experiences. Early small group leaders may be more directive and focus on reducing anxiety until people begin to know each other. Later the leader may have to learn to “let go” of leadership but still monitor the level of intimacy and self-disclosure (particularly among young people). Creating a safe, dynamic, and open atmosphere assists groups. Learning how to ask questions, listen carefully, and tolerate silence may help the group move to deeper levels of understanding in following God.

Refer to Resource 14-5 in the Student Guide.

Among the marks of a healthy small group are accountability and encouragement. Spiritual formation authority Richard Foster describes a “formula” for safe accountability and affirmation in a small group:

- Encouragement—as often as possible
- Advice—once in a great while
- Correction—only when absolutely necessary
- Judgment—*never*

Foster, Celebration of Discipline.

Allow for response.

Describe your understandings of each of the four actions.

Explain what you think Foster meant to have happen whenever the four actions occurred in a small group.

Refer to Resource 14-6 in the Student Guide.

Lead the class in a discussion of this resource. If there is not enough time, students can read this later.

Guided Discussion: Hospitality and Assimilation

(15 minutes)

This section is based on Uncommon Youth Ministry, pages 91-94.

See Sally Morgenthaler's comments on page 85 of Postmodern Youth Ministry by Tony Jones.

Refer to Resource 14-7 in the Student Guide. Have the students read through this resource before responding to the questions.

Allow for response.

Hospitality and belonging are not only good Christian practices in and of themselves; they also serve as the initial phases of evangelism. Relationship is the new front door to evangelism and missional ministry.

What language do you use to refer to visitors? (Guests, strangers, new people, prospects, friends?)

How long—or how many visits—does it take for your church and church-ed teens to accept a guest as “one of us?”

Who, if anyone, greets teenagers who come to your church or youth meetings?

How are guests connected/introduced to individuals and groups?

What practices and customs might tend to make guests feel isolated, or unwelcome?

What practices or customs can make guests feel included and welcomed?

How can your ministry gather necessary contact information without being intrusive or embarrassing?

How can you follow up with notes, letters, phone calls, or personal visits to first time guests?

What systems and procedures do you have in place to follow up for second, third, or fourth time guests?

How often do you think teens in your church should have a personal contact from a youth minister?

How can you keep accurate records of when and how often any teen in your church has a personal contact with a youth minister?

What people and resources do you have readily available to follow-up and shepherd new Christians?

Creating a community that proves warm and acceptable often requires a caring, guiding attitude and thoughtful context. When youth experience a well led small group setting that includes belonging, hospitality and acceptance, they experience a level of community that helps them respond to others as well.

Are there areas in your ministry where improvement might occur?

Guided Discussion: Intergenerational Community

(10 minutes)

Beyond small group experiences in the youth group, youth leaders must ask some crucial questions about the role of youth in the larger life of the church. How do we understand our ministry with young people in light of the total community of faith? We must understand that church remains larger than our specific age-level ministry.

Allow for response. Seek honesty.

If all the teens at your church were to be absent for one week, could you still “have church?”

What do your responses say about the degree to which teens are integrated into the life of your church?

Youth need to be part of a larger community of faith. Young people need to have direct interaction with other adults and even with youth and children younger than themselves.

Divide your class into groups of 2-3 students. Refer to Resource 14-8 in the Student Guide. Give each group three minutes to brainstorm ways that teens can develop intergenerational relationships and minister together in the designated areas.

After three minutes have a representative from each group report his or her group list. Compile a master list on a chalkboard, whiteboard, overhead transparency, or flip chart. Ask a volunteer to create an electronic document with this list to distribute to all class members for their files.

Burns and DeVries, The Youth Builder, 99.

“The degree to which students will stay in the church, get involved, and make significant life decisions for Christ is directly dependent on their sense of belonging to the community.”

Tony Jones, Postmodern Youth Ministry, 105.

“Our primary responsibility is to build Christ-centered community among the [youth] in our ministries.”

These statements highlight how important it is for a youth ministry to build and practice Christian community. Youth ministers should be aware of how teenagers are supremely sensitive to finding and knowing their place in a variety of social settings—at home, at school, on sports teams, in their neighborhoods, and the larger world. Building Christian community shares many of the same dynamics as other forms of community: acceptance, participation, sense of belonging, peer influence, cooperation, encouragement, tolerance, honesty, friendship, and so on. Therefore, youth ministers would do well to know and practice effective ways of providing opportunities for all these things to occur.

Dean and Foster, 125.

However, Christian community has a distinct “flavor” and unique elements that go beyond a generic “best friends forever” atmosphere that might be encountered in other settings. Christian community views friendships as disciple-making relationships, not necessarily private and intimate relationships based on shared interests and/or personalities. As Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster note in *The Godbearing Life*, “Spiritual friends are people who pull us toward God.” They go on to say that Christian unity comes not from attraction, but from the union Jesus seeks with each person. Support, encouragement, vulnerability and all the other element of friendships are good, but not enough, in and of themselves. Christians seek communion, more than mere community for community’s sake. A circle of Christian friends is rooted in God’s friendship with us.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

What was the most unsettling aspect of this lesson?

What was the most encouraging aspect of this lesson?

Look Ahead

Normally “creating space” for community, either as a youth group or within the larger life of the church, means “giving up” other activities. Can you name two-three things that you can personally give up as a youth leader to give time to building community? Are there at least two-three things your youth group can give up so they can interact with others in the church? Think about it.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Develop a plan for developing a stronger sense of community within your youth group. Identify one or two specific areas where you might strengthen and suggest strategies that might be developed to help youth gain a stronger sense of community

Identify two to three possible opportunities for youth to intersect with other members of your church. Begin with natural connections but also explore new possibilities for intersections. Write a one-page paper.

Write in your journal. Reflect on Resource 14-7. How well do you measure up? Where can you improve?

Punctuate the Finish

The Godbearing Life, 27.

“Significant relationships with other Christians matter because they teach us something about what *God* is like—the one who can love us in spite of ourselves and who loves us passionately enough to suffer willingly on our behalf.”

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Lesson 15

Ministry Discipleship— Simplicity and Retreat

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Framing the Discussion— Top 10 List	Small Groups	
0:15	Practices of Simplicity	Guided Discussion	Resource 15-1
0:35	Meditative and Contemplative Exercises	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 15-2
0:50	Be Still and Know	Class Activity	
1:10	Bringing it Together	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 15-3
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dean, Kenda Creasy and Foster, Ron. *The Godbearing Life*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998, Chapter 12, "Sacred Spacemaking."

Hardy, Douglas S. (2008) "Lectio Divina: A Practice for Reconnecting to God's Word." In *Preachers Magazine*. (Lent/Easter 2009)
www.preachersmagazine.org

Class Preparation

Prior to the beginning of class have the following on a power point to be shown to the class or on a flipchart to be revealed at the appropriate time.

*Be still, and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am . . .
Be still and know . . .
Be still . . .
Be . . .*

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their plans for developing a stronger sense of community with their youth group.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Foster, Celebration of Discipline, 15.

Youth ministry is constantly on the go. Richard Foster points out in his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, "In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds. . . . If we hope to move beyond the superficialities of our culture, including our religious culture, we must be willing to go down into the recreating silences."

This lesson is about creating space and time for contemplation. We will not only examine the spiritual practice of renewal, retreat and renovation, we will actually "put into practice" these concepts and ideas. We will also suggest ideas and activities designed to create stillness and listening in the lives of youth. Finally we will provide resources for planning and implementing a contemplative retreat for youth.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- discover methods for Sabbath and renewal in our personal life
- uncover ways in which renovation and Sabbath can benefit our youth ministry
- understand and effectively lead youth in simplicity and retreat
- "put into practice" these concepts by experiencing specific periods of simplicity and silence

Motivator

The biblical concepts and practices of Sabbath, rest and renewal, are needed in today's hurried lifestyle. Many youth pastors rush from one activity to the next

with very little time to rest or reflect. Our youth's lives for the most part are also hurried and rushed. Unfortunately much of what we do in youth ministry can add to the hustle and bustle of their lives. The practices of Sabbath and rest must be intergraded into our programming. However, it will not be enough to simply teach these practices to our students, the practices must be a part of the fabric of our life as well.

The word "dehabituation" will appear in the lesson—it is a relatively new word. One way to look at it is as the opposite of forming or developing new habits, it is the breaking and reformation of existing habits.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Framing the Discussion—Top 10 List

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students.

In your group make a list of the top 10 things that happen on retreats.

Allow 3-5 minutes for the discussion. After the discussion ask for feedback.

What were your group's top 3 items?

Make a list on a board, flipchart or power point.

Guided Discussion: Practices of Simplicity

(20 minutes)

Use this guided discussion to help your students understand the importance of rest, renewal and Sabbath within their programming and planning for youth.

From over scheduling to late nights to lack of rest and more hurry and rush, many of our retreats end up looking more like “advances.” Discipleship fails due to distraction or exhaustion. Even when retreats themselves do not appear this busy, the constant pressure of the world often competes for our attention, particularly when we are trying to focus on God’s presence and direction in our lives

Write the word “Dehabituation” on the board or on a PowerPoint slide.

How would you define the word Dehabituation?

Possible responses:

- *Habit or rhythm breaking*
- *respite*
- *re-creation*
- *break, routine buster*
- *time-out*
- *pause, breather*

In most churches if one asks rhetorically “What would our lives and/or retreats look like if we intentionally planned and programmed for Sabbath, rest, and renewal?” I suspect they would still look like our retreats.

Refer to Resource 15-1 in the Student Guide.

“Unless we consciously decide to live otherwise, we may drift aimlessly with the currents of daily routine rather than deliberately choosing to live as part of God’s kingdom.

Dean & Foster, 185-186.

The practices of dehabituation reprogram our frequencies, reduce the clutter of background noise and redirect our heart to the composer of a cosmic melody.”

Allow for response.

Do you agree with the authors?

What types or kinds of things do we do each day that would be considered "routine?"

What is it about routine tasks that cause us to "drift aimlessly?"

What does the quote have to say to us about this topic of rest and recreation in our retreat planning and preparation? Our weekly programming? Our personal lives?

What would it look like for you to "reprogram your frequencies, reduce the clutter of your life and redirect your heart?"

Consider the three phrases the authors used—reprogram, reduce clutter, redirect the heart—are they all the same?

What is distinct about each? What does it mean to reprogram?

What types/kinds of things can we do to reduce the clutter in our lives?

In your experience how does one redirect the heart?

Lecture/Discussion: Meditative and Contemplative Exercises

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 15-2 in the Student Guide. Look only at the list of Psalms at this time.

There is a long tradition of meditative and contemplative worship within Christianity. The Bible in general and the Psalms in particular are rich with illustrations and references to this tradition. Psalm 4:4, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 63:6, Psalm 77:12, Psalm 119:15, Psalm 119:27, Psalm 119:48, Psalm 119:78, Psalm 119:148, Psalm 143:5, Psalm 145:5 are great examples from scripture.

Historically many Christian writers have used the terms "meditation" and "contemplation" interchangeably. In one sense both terms speak to the same goal, removing daily distractions so one can focus on God and rest, and receive God's holy love. As Marjorie Thompson writes, "Such communion with God is an end of itself, not a means to another end, however good. We do not enter the prayer of rest in order to become better servants of God; that is a natural side effect. The sole purpose of contemplation is to adore and enjoy God, which glorifies divine love."

Thompson, Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life, 48.

One way to understand the difference between these two approaches rests in the object of the prayer.

Meditation seeks to encounter God through Christian images, scripture, music, even the beauty of God's creation. The goal remains to use resources God provides to focus our attention away from other distractions and ultimately allow this image to provide a bridge to our encounter with God. The image may be created through words, reading specific scripture or singing a favorite hymn, it may be revealed in a symbol like the cross, or appear like an Easter sunrise to sharpen our attention away from other competing distractions. As we actively focus our attention we become aware of the source of the image, God.

Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home, 147.

Richard Foster calls this action "sanctifying the imagination" so we come to God with both mind and heart set apart for love.

If meditation describes an active or focusing, process, then the practice of contemplation, or contemplative prayer, reflects a more passive or receptive process that relies on relationship. One of the best human analogies occur when we are content to just "be" with someone we love, a husband with wife, or parent with child, resting in a relationship. Thompson states:

In contemplation we move from communicating with God through speech to communing with God through the gaze of love. Words fall away, and the most palpable reality is being present to the lover of our souls. When we let go of all effort to speak or even to listen, simply becoming quiet before God, the Spirit is free to work healing mysteries in us: releasing us from bondage, energizing new life patterns, restoring our soul's beauty. Here we allow ourselves to be loved by God into wholeness.

Thompson, 48.

In contemplative prayer we are not escaping our sense of personhood, not stripping away our personal sense of self. Instead we are becoming fully aware of God's presence, fully embraced in our relationship with God.

Obviously both prayer practices work together, focusing to remove distractions, resting to receive God's presence and love. Not surprisingly they have been combined in one of the best known practices of "praying scripture" known as *Lectio Divina* or Divine Reading used as both an individual and community practice. Often this approach begins with reading scripture, moving to meditating over the text and even using the scripture to spark a prayer conversation with God, then resting to receive God's presence. There are a number of excellent resources both in print and online that use the *Lectio Divina* as the centerpiece of both meditative and contemplative prayer.

King 2006, 147-150; Zirlott, 2003, 167.

Zirlott, 168-69.

Refer again to Resource 15-2.

Read the handout together, going over any questions or comments your class members may have.

For the next 5 minutes I want each of you to engage in one of the practices. Be alone with God, engaged with God. If you need to go to a corner, go. If you need to look out the window, do so. If you need to walk or read out loud, do it. Do whatever you need to do to be fully with God, having totally shut out the rest of the class.

Class Activity: Be Still and Know

(20 minutes)

Allow about 3 minutes for this activity.

Read Psalm 46 aloud to the class.

Allow for response.

Reflect for a few moments on this passage of scripture. As you reflect, make a list of words or phrases that come to mind as the scripture is read.

What did you hear?

What words or phrases stand out?

How is God described?

What responses from us are asked for?

Use a timer or alarm so that you can participate with the class.

Prior to this time you were to prepare a power point or flipchart with the following words.

Be still, and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am . . .

Be still and know . . .

Be still . . .

Be . . .

Do NOT read it aloud (the idea here is silence).

As a group we are going to practice 10 minutes of stillness and silence. Put away all books, paper and pens. Sit up straight in your chairs, feet on the floor, arms resting in your laps. Beginning now and for the next 10 minutes I would ask that no one in the class speak. I am going to share a thought with you. After you have read the thought—you are to read it to yourself—you may close your eyes or simply sit still until our time for silence is over.

After the 10 minutes lead a discussion.

Allow for response.

“What was it like? What did you think?”

What thoughts went through your mind?

Did you hear anything? Was the silence uncomfortable for you?”

Lecture Discussion: Bringing it Together

(15 minutes)

We began this lesson with typical “retreat” activities. The key question remains whether many of these activities distract us from God, deepen our attention upon God, or help us fully receive God’s love and refreshment. When planning a retreat we often have specific planning questions that include location, resources, and the nature of the people attending. Obviously not all retreats accomplish the same purposes. However, if the goal is dehabituating, if it is creating an opportunity to listen to God, then often this purpose will shape other planning questions.

Refer to Resource 15-3 in the Student Guide. Look over the resource with the class.

How would our retreat planning be different if we kept in mind the need for simplicity?

What things would be different?

What things would be the same?

How would our schedule be affected?

Would some locations be more conducive to rest and renewal than others?

Who should be a part of such a retreat?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Rest and renewal must be regular part of the culture and fabric of our personal lives if it is ever going to be a part of the culture and fabric of our youth groups.

Call on several students.

What specific areas of your life do you need to consider changing in order to create time for such times of rest, meditation, contemplation, and continued renewal?

Look Ahead

Discipling youth to listen to God in the midst of distractions proves to be a practice youth pastors use to guide young people on their spiritual journey. This form of guidance or shepherding describes a major responsibility of youth ministry. In the next lesson we will take a closer look at accomplishing this task.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

PERSONAL RETREAT: Although your first thoughts may be that you could never do this, I would like to encourage each of you to take an afternoon away from your work. Get away from the noise, hurry and crowds. Take your Bible and if possible go to a fairly secluded place—your “tent of meeting.” Spend some time reflecting on your relationship with God. Don’t take any work with you. See the mini-retreat as an opportunity to simply spend time with God. Use this time to not only learn about your relationship with God, but also to learn about what it means to practice rest, retreat and renewal.

Take these four categories: (1) directing/mentoring, (2) care/counseling, (3) leading and (4) empowering; then try to describe two activities that youth ministers often perform under each category. Give a brief explanation why you decided to place each under the particular category.

Read Resource 15-4.

Read Resource 15-5.

Write in your journal. Reflect on your retreat.

Punctuate the Finish

Share a time when you have benefited from a retreat or renewal time.

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Lesson 16

Youth Ministry Shepherding— Offering Direction

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Listening	Class Activity	
0:15	Discovering and Practicing Wisdom with Youth	Small Groups	Resource 15-4 Resource 16-1
0:25	Challenging Youth Through Spiritual Direction	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 16-2 Resource 16-3
1:00	The Strong Guide—Guiding with Courage	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 16-4— 16-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

White, David F. *Practicing Discernment with Youth*.
Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005, 89-199.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Would anyone like to share something from your retreat experience?

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will present the nature of spiritual direction as a way to guide and teach youth how to recognize God's work in their life and in the world.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the nature of spiritual direction
- identify strategies within spiritual direction for guiding youth through discernment and critical thinking
- understand how to use spiritual direction as movement toward accountability and discipline
- begin to plan ways to creatively incorporate and develop skills in youth programming that is associated with spiritual direction

Motivator

Burns, 259.

In *Uncommon Youth Ministry*, Jim Burns tells us that youth workers today are encountering a "generation of crisis" riddled with pain, abandonment and deep insecurities about themselves and this world. Knowing how to care for youth in ways that will help them lead healthy lives into adulthood will require careful guidance rooted in spiritual direction that is neither weak nor overbearing. Rather, spiritual direction rooted in mutual trust can empower youth to learn to recognize God in the current landscape of their lives.

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Listening

(10 minutes)

Only allow about a minute for them to respond.

On one side of a piece of paper write words that express how you feel when you are talking to someone that isn't listening to you.

Again allow only about a minute.

On the other side of the paper, write words that express how you feel when you share something with someone and you feel they truly listened.

Write two lists, on a flip chart, board or power point.

What words did you use for the first list?

What words were on your second list?

Are there other words that should be included on either list?

When students come to us for counsel they will find themselves feeling what you expressed. So the question is which side of the paper will they find themselves on when talking to you?

What would students express in terms of what they find in you when they seek you out?

What keeps us from truly listening to those we serve?

Small Groups: Discovering and Practicing Wisdom with Youth

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to the homework Resource 15-4 and Resource 16-1 in the Student Guide.

The author summarizes our task with the following words: It takes great discipline to guide others to slow down . . . It also takes discipline to recognize the movements of God in the lives of others, and careful and patient guidance that allows the young person to discover the truths for themselves, rather than always relying on others for easy answers . . . It takes great restraint and patience to sit and listen to another person without offering advice by discerning when to speak and when to be silent.

Lecture/Discussion: Challenging Youth through Spiritual Direction

(35 minutes)

Spiritual Direction as Presence

The greatest gift we can offer those we lead is the ministry of presence and a deep desire to simply listen to them. Even the smallest child appreciates being taken seriously and many people do children and youth a disservice by not acknowledging the value that their presence and insights might offer us personally, and the ways they might positively help to shape society, faith congregations, societal organizations, movements, culture, and many involvements.

As Chap Clark points out in his book *Hurt*, many young people feel that there is no one they can trust because they have experienced abandonment in so many ways by the time they reach the teen years. Clark goes on to say, "We as adults who care have a long way to penetrate the layers of protection that keep us from being one more disappointment in a world filled with them. But I am convinced that we are welcome there, if we mean it. And they need us to mean it."

Clark, Hurt, 70.

When young people sense that we genuinely care there is the possibility that they will trust us enough to share their joys, sorrows, dreams and faith journey with us. When this occurs they are learning to begin to let others speak into their lives, which is a highly developed skill all persons need, and it develops throughout a lifetime. When we are invited to share in a young person's journey, the ways we are present and listen will be crucial to our ability to guide them in what they are experiencing.

Spiritual Direction as Decision Making

One of the most common behaviors we will observe in adolescents is a desire and passion to live out their faith. This quality in youth can be quite attractive and contagious. They are wired for high emotions and for expressing their faith. I witness this passion, energy and desire constantly among young adults.

Share your own story/example if possible.

A student reflecting on her personal growth during college expressed her growth in the following way, "When I arrived at college my whole life was centered on making sure I expressed who I was and what my life was all about. It seems like everything I did was an expression of letting others know who I was. I did that

by boldly stating all the time what I liked and who I wanted to be associated with. Even the clothes I wore or the way I talked was a way of letting others be able to easily identify the type of person I wanted to become. I thought there were so many certainties about life and faith. Now that I'm in my last year of college, I'm at the other end of the spectrum. Rather than always associating myself with a group or idea, it seems I now spend a lot of time telling others who I'm not, more cautious to associate myself with a particular group or way of thinking. I don't want to be lumped with any group, or be identified by my clothes or music. Essentially, I do not want to be boxed in and worse yet, judged as being a part of any category which all seems flawed in some way. Besides, I'm more complex than that. There is a lot that I don't know and still have to learn."

What a drastic difference between these two ways of being. In a matter of four years a person may shift radically because of life experiences and learning. Semblances of these two ways of thinking and being can also be found in a room full of early and middle adolescents. Though everyone's experiences are unique, we can and do have the universal experience being ushered into seasons of questioning, confusion, fear, anger, etc. How we learn to respond, process and receive these experiences in healthy ways requires a choice to grow beyond what is familiar.

When persons begin to seek answers to difficult questions, they begin to move beyond the concrete and experience intellectual and psychological development. Dr. Brad Kelle points out that there are two "Christian Virtues" to be aware of as we guide young persons.

- Moral Courage requires a willingness to establish, defend and enact one's moral vision and belief.
- Epistemic Humility is the ability to recognize one's finitude and fallibility as well as a willingness to review, reexamine and alter one's convictions in dialogue with others.

Development passes through predictable, sequential stages similar to physical maturation. Persons can move through 3 stages with varying changes regarding moral courage and epistemic humility.

Understanding the Movement Toward Critical Commitment

Early and many middle adolescents live with a dualistic understanding of the world where everything is seen in

Refer to Resource 16-2 in the Student Guide.

Dr. Brad Kelle, Professor at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.

Continue with Resource 16-2.

terms of black or white, good or bad, right or wrong. These young people are often convinced that there is one correct answer to every question. They may in fact choose to recognize a diversity of opinions, but diversity is assumed to be illegitimate and is explained away by appeal to sin, stubbornness, sloppy scholarship, stupidity, etc. In their minds, diversity of opinion is something to be overcome. These young people may even express a disdain for the language of "interpretation."

Adolescents in the stage of plurality may accept diversity as a part of life but in a despairing way. The youth may perceive all knowledge and values, including one's authority, as contextual and relativistic. Diversity is no longer a problem to overcome; rather diversity represents simply the way things are in their minds. It is common in this stage for the person to scorn the old dualistic self. In this stage of development, relativism and moral ambiguity reign in many areas of life and thought and the person now experiences epistemic humility, the ability to acknowledge one's own social conditioning and potential for error. In this stage, moral courage may also largely be absent.

Plurality is the most critical stage of development because a person can choose to live with an understanding and acceptance of plurality without making any real commitment toward moral courage.

The final stage of development is when a person begins making new and more cautious commitments in the midst of complexity. The person now acknowledges the need for continuous ethical reflection with a spirit of epistemic humility as they now realize that commitment is an ongoing, unfolding activity through which we can express our faith. In this stage the person experiences both epistemic humility and moral courage in both their intellectual and moral reflection and decision-making.

As we consider these stages we should point out that persons can move through to the final stage in one area of their life, while remaining in the pluralistic stage in other areas.

Decision making arises particularly during moments of transition. People are able to move from one stage to another only when the previous stage no longer "works" for them. Youth experience these transitions as emotionally difficult, and resistance to growth can be common. However, youth choosing to experience

cognitive dissonance begins to see the necessity of orienting oneself in a pluralistic world through some form of personal faith commitment.

Kelle points out that the need for moral courage is recognized because, if we're going to be Christian, we have to believe some things. Ambiguity and complexity demand epistemic humility, but Christian faith and love also demand moral courage. So, cognitive dissonance, though painful, is the key to growth. The key to learning is to be able to make decisions even while understanding the complexity of issues, and knowing that perhaps later our stance may change but that this is where we currently stand.

Allow for response.

Can you give examples of youth in the dualistic stage? In the pluralistic stage? In the "Commitments within pluralism" stage?

What are the largest issues of society today that throw youth into cognitive dissonance?

Spiritual Direction as Discernment

If one of the greatest gifts we can offer youth is our presence and an attentive listening then one of the greatest tools as spiritual guides is our ability to use questions to guide the process of discernment. The questions asked are discerning questions; questions that are revealing and that lead the other person to discover for themselves the landscape, the longings, the motivations, and the Spirit guiding them in a direction. This will take time to learn since we are so accustomed to offering youth answers. But this work becomes easier the more we are familiar with this work in our lives.

As youth begin to take seriously the role of reflection and awareness, they are empowered to make better and wiser decisions in their life. Though sometimes helpful, it is not enough to simply teach them simple lessons that will help them get through the next week. As youth leaders we must teach them life-transforming truths they can grow into and that help them develop discerning skills they can use into adulthood. Today's youth seem to face more choices as they face more opportunities than ever before. Many cultures are moving at such a fast pace that it is growing difficult to slow down long enough to reflect on our lives, much less the growing choices we all face.

The choices we make can have impacting consequences for our life as well as the lives of others.

As we grow older many of us find ourselves in either good or difficult situations resulting from earlier choices. Though we may learn to make the best of whatever circumstances we encounter we hopefully also learn to make better choices. The process of learning to choose well is simply the process of discernment. And discernment in many ways is the process of practicing wisdom. Discernment is partnering with God as we search for and practice wisdom in every area of our lives. As youth leaders, teaching discernment is valuable because it empowers youth by teaching them that they have the potential to solve issues and problems in their own life.

The verb "*to discern*" comes from the Latin verb "*discernere*," which means "to separate, to distinguish accurately one object from another." Discernment involves the ability to differentiate and thus involves critical thinking. To think critically means that we are able to consider all the factors with an open mind, and to ask questions about the implications of a situation and about a decision. While we may already be biased, it involves an openness to weigh all the options. It involves analyzing, interpreting and evaluating all of the information, as well as our own reaction to things. Critical thinking ultimately leads us to reflect on the possible motivations behind every person involved in any given situation.

Critical thinking does not only involve rational thinking but also involves the heart as we participate in honest discussions about our own desires, motives and interests that influence our decisions. The ability to be honest with ourselves and with others about the reasons behind the choices we make is critical to our growth as healthy persons. One of the greatest benefits of critical thinking is that it teaches us to move beyond our self and self-interests as we begin to understand the world and others in a new way. What a radical difference to watch someone grow to learn to incorporate the needs of others into their decision process.

Refer to Resource 16-3 in the Student Guide. Briefly look at this resource but the students can look at it more thoroughly later.

Today many congregational ministries consist of "spoon feeding" people with truths without adequately engaging their critical thinking skills. The church in this era will need to find ways to seek discernment so that all can seek ways of understanding sociocultural influence in life—the ethnic traditions, religious traditions, economic and political forces.

David White suggests that discernment should not only be practiced at an individual level, but that it can serve to challenge faith communities by incorporating discerning practices that impact both youth and adults to learn to understand one another and therefore to learn from one another. Remembering Clark's statement that youth often feel abandoned, it's not difficult to see just how healing the act of listening might be when youth and adults practice hearing one another.

In his book, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, White argues for discernment as a four-fold process which consists of:

- **Listening**—Loving God with our hearts by appreciating youth and their stories
- **Understanding**—Loving God with our minds by exploring with young people their context and the issues they face
- **Remembering/Dreaming**—Loving God with our souls by bringing youth into conversation with scripture and history of the church—remembering—and also bring youth into God's vision for how the world should be—dreaming.
- **Acting**—Loving God with our strength by guiding youth to take Christian action in addressing the issues their lives

This process can be practiced by congregations as a whole and does not need to be experienced at an individual level. White also argues that we only harm youth by marginalizing them into groups and fostering distance from the whole faith community. When this happens youth experience firsthand participation in the movement of God among people of God.

The tools of spiritual direction and discernment guide us to hear more fully the voice of the Spirit that guides and directs our steps and calls us to become the persons and communities God is calling us to become. True spiritual direction is about trusting that God is at work in the whole life of the other person and that our role in their life remains part of a greater set of influences and voices God is using.

There are times when we will need to move out of the way in order for the Holy Spirit to move. We also are freed from believing that we are the only voice in the life of the student. We let go and yet remain present to the movements of growth in their life that even they might be surprised by our awareness.

Allow for response.

Who were the people that helped you to learn to practice discernment in your life?

What was the most difficult element of discernment when you were learning to think critically as a young person?

Lecture/Discussion: The Strong Guide—Guiding with Courage

(25 minutes)

Allow for response.

What are other factors to consider, or situations where you anticipate you might need to use discipline or accountability in your work with youth?

What are your biggest questions or fears about incorporating discipline and accountability in your work with youth?

White, 1991, 190.

David White writes, "Through careful reflection we begin to understand the attachments we form to ideas, relationships, images, possessions, or structures that may be less than ultimate—and the defenses we utilize to defend these attachments." Because our attachments—to things, people, or past experiences—can be pervasive and so subtle to ourselves, we really do need others to help us recognize and name our internal longings, attachments and issues that hinder us from growing.

Walking alongside youth as they grow, mature and develop creates opportunities to recognize and help them move beyond unhealthy behaviors due to a lack of reflection and critical thinking. The task of direction is to guide students to become increasingly self-aware while at the same time increasing their awareness of how their choices impact others.

As mentioned, some youth are better equipped to receive direction, while others struggle to hear or apply the hope and freedom of the message of Christ. And sometimes, a person may be so caught up in their life and world, they are completely unaware of how their behavior is affecting others and it requires firm but loving guidance to direct, discipline or hold them accountable to the values of the faith community.

Jim Burns and Mark DeVries gently remind us not to be too quick to judge self-absorption; "what appears to be an incredibly self-centered attitude is typically a lack of confidence combined with intense feelings of

Burns, 260.

confusion.” Though many youth find confidence in expressing their beliefs and asserting moral courage, Burns points out that “most teenagers will at one time or another compromise their beliefs and values. They need understanding, accountability and guidance in order to make good decisions the next time around.”

So, how can we encourage them in their journey? There are a number of key considerations, specific questions and general activities that may assist our guidance. Blending these elements provide a holistic approach that gives us the courage to know we can provide faithful direction in the lives of youth. Determining the right “blend” often requires our understanding of youth context and practicing discernment in developing our own approach to spiritual direction.

Refer to Resource 16-4 in the Student Guide. Allow a couple of minutes for the students to look over this resource.

Briefly look over Resource 16-4.

Allow for response.

Was there anything that caught your attention?

What might be the most important information that you gathered from this resource?

Is there something that you might change to meet the needs of your group?

How will this resource help you with your youth group?

Refer to Resource 16-5 in the Student Guide. Allow students a minute to read this resource.

Look at Resource 16-5.

Allow for response.

How do you think that the youth in your group would respond to these questions?

Is there one that you would hesitate to ask?

Is there a question that you have used that is not on the list?

Refer to Resource 16-6 in the Student Guide. Allow a couple of minutes for the students to read through this resource.

Look at Resource 16-6.

Allow for response.

Have you tried any of these activities?

What were the results?

What other things have you tried?

What impact do you think it would have on the group as a whole to engage in specific activities designed to help them gain spiritual direction?

Remember that journeying with youth day in and day out can lead us down avenues with them that we would never have expected, where discipline and accountability must be present. Nevertheless offering direction will also prove to be a wonderful experience as together we discover again and again the grace and mercy of God in and among us.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What is the definition of spiritual direction?

Name the various elements involved in this process that can be incorporated into individual and corporate youth ministry practices.

Look Ahead

For the next lesson the students will need some props for a role play activity. You will need to bring several things that might be used by the students for this activity.

As you reflect and consider the importance of pastoral care and spiritual direction for youth, who are people that could potentially assist you in these tasks? What are ways you could begin to prepare them to effectively offer pastoral care or spiritual direction to youth?

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Identify some current popular media resources used by youth today (magazines, music, video or internet). Choose 2-3 items and describe the message you believe they are sending youth. What do these messages implicitly say about our responsibility to encourage discernment? How do these messages affect young people's relationships with their parents, school, work, home, church? Write a 2-page paper.

Choose one activity you created in a previous lesson. Examine the activity using the following questions: Are there elements of discernment in the activity? If so, what are they? If not, what elements might you incorporate to help youth begin to develop critical thinking and discernment skills through that activity? Write a 1-page paper.

Do your own study of how listening can impact youth and adults in your faith community by creating a survey that youth and adults can use to interview one another. Once the study is done, debrief the experience with the youth, and then debrief the experience with the adults that participated. What did the two groups discover about one another?

Read Resource 16-7.

Write in your journal. Does incorporating spiritual direction come naturally to you in your preparations and programming? Why do you think that is true? What impact will this lesson have on your future work?

Punctuate the Finish

For many years, preacher and author Frederick Beuchner has long practiced the discipline of “paying attention” by writing and preaching about his own life. In the following excerpt from one of his memoirs he beautifully describes the richness of this discipline:

“By examining as closely and candidly as I could the life that had come to seem to me in many ways a kind of trap or dead-end street, I discovered that it really wasn’t that at all. I discovered that if you keep your eye peeled to it and your ears open, if you really pay attention to it, even such a limited and limiting life as the one I was living opened up onto extraordinary vistas. There is no event so commonplace but that God is present within it, always hidden, always leaving you room to recognize him, but all the more fascinatingly because of that, all the more compellingly and hauntingly. It came to seem to me that if I were called upon to state in a few words the essence of everything I was trying to say both as a novelist and as a preacher, it would have to be something like this: Listen to your life! See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness; touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

“Listen to Your Life,” 87.

Lesson 17

Youth Ministry Shepherding— Providing Care

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Who Cares?	Lecture	Resource 17-1
0:10	Anything Can Happen to Teenagers!	Role Play/Discussion	Resource 17-2 Props
0:35	Why Care?	Lecture	Resource 17-3
0:50	Please Care!	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 17-4 Resource 16-7 Resource 17-5
1:10	Care Bear	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 17-6— 17-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Students that have been involved with the Modular Course of Study should have previously taken Bruce Petersen's Shepherding God's People.

Modular Course of Study. Bruce L. Petersen. *Shepherding God's People*. Nazarene Publishing House, 2003.

Parrott III, Les, *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*. Zondervan, 2000, 15-46.

Van Pelt, Rich, and Jim Hancock, *The Youthworker's Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis*. Zondervan, 2005, 33-100.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students.

Return and collect homework.

What did you learn from your research of popular media and the message they are sending?

Orientation

*You may want to ask how many students took the module titled *Shepherding God's People*, written by Bruce L. Petersen.*

Effective youth ministry practices are built on the concrete mix of discipleship and shepherding. It is often the love expressed and felt in the midst of adolescent growing pains that solidifies the impetus for a life committed to Christ. Just as Wesleyan theology embraces a life of personal holiness as the intense response to the mercies of God, the disciplines of young Christ-followers often flow out of gratitude for a faith community where hurts are healed and challenges overcome by the presence of caring mentors and friends. Youth workers care because Christ has done so for us, and in doing so bids those freed from that which would destroy them to "go and sin no more."

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- establish a personal identification with the struggles of adolescence
- know the biblical basis of spiritual care and understand how the principles of effective caring relate to shepherding young people
- identify strategies for reaching out to students with immediate issues and with deep hurts, and connect them to contemporary problems facing today's youth
- plan for ways to enact various means and methods of spiritual care in youth ministry in their own ministry contexts
- begin to articulate a philosophy of spiritual care that flows out of experiences, commitments, and passions

Motivator

The biblical view of the nature of humanity affirms the unity of body, spirit, and soul. Physical, social, and psychological issues intertwine with spirituality. Being there when young people need us in the midst of life's problems opens opportunities for addressing eternal needs. As Jesus lived among us and in doing so we experienced the glory of the Father, effective caring connects teens not only to us and each other but most importantly to the Christ we want them to serve. This lesson, on this sub-unit on youth ministry practices focused on shepherding, appropriately begins with spiritual care, the heart of Christian nurture.

Lesson Body

Lecture: Who Cares?

(5 minutes)

Refer to Resource 17-1 in the Student Guide.

Petersen, 18.

In *Foundations of Pastoral Care*, Bruce Petersen notes pastoral theologian Thomas Oden's definition, "Pastoral care is analogous to a physician's care of the body. It is **pastoral** because it pertains to the (traditional) offices, tasks, and duties of a pastor. It is **care** because it has charge of . . . and is deliberately attentive to . . . the spiritual growth and destiny of persons. Pastoral care is appropriately called the care of souls." Historically, pastoral care encompassed four major responsibilities:

- Healing: overcome impairment and moving toward wholeness
- Sustaining: helping hurting persons endure and transcend their circumstance
- Reconciling: restoring broken relationships, both personal and communal
- Guiding: helping people to make wise choices and pursue mature lifestyles

Petersen, 18.

However, these four responsibilities need not be left to professional ministers. Often members of the congregation find themselves in situations where they offer counsel to other people, including youth. Petersen continues "while care is an important responsibility for a pastor, pastoral care refers to the compassionate shepherding concern that any Christian can give to another person." Thus many youth ministers often use the term **spiritual care**, not only as an expression of the common responsibility of professionals and lay ministers to provide care but also to emphasize the relationship between a youth's physical, social, and psychological well-being to their growth as disciples and to frame our love for students as an outgrowth of our own life in Christ.

Recognizing that youth are often the most vulnerable of all sheep, the significance of spiritual care is unlimited and the significance of care in youth ministry is unlimited. Often these moments of vulnerability include awkward or painful moments in the lives of youth. These situations may appear at any moment. May all we do demonstrate how much we care!

Role Play/Discussion: Anything Can Happen to Teenagers!

(25 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 17-2 in the Student Guide.

While the groups are preparing, you can set up a “judges” table for yourself to give your comments.

After each groups enactment give your “judgments” of how well they performed. Make it humorous but also thought provoking. The intent is that the students will identify with the struggles youth continue to face.

Possible responses—poor self-esteem, lack of confidence in your identity, clumsiness, parental conflict or lack of support, fear of rejection

Encourage students to be open and honest during this discussion time.

In your group you will have 6 minutes to prepare your game show performance. Each group will then have 2 minutes to share your selection. You may use any of the props that I have brought along or anything else you find.

I will serve as the “host” of the show and the “judge” for how realistic your situation is!

All of us have no doubt had those moments when we thought we were going to die from embarrassment, when there seemed to be no tomorrow, when you would have just as soon skipped adolescence and gone straight to middle age! Even though we can laugh now, it was painful then. Understanding our own past helps us to be ready to receive the struggles of youth today.

Was there anything about just being a teenager during your “anything can happen” moment that made it even more difficult or embarrassing?

Is there anyone who, in the midst of the specific situation you shared, had a person who was on your side, who reached out to you, or who continued to like you even when embarrassing things happened? Tell us about them. If not, what would it have taken for someone to encourage or console you at that moment?

Most of us get over embarrassing moments without long-range damage. But what about those “anything can happen moments” that were painful or difficult to handle? Would a couple of you share what one of those may have been?

As you look back on that, was there someone who was there to comfort you in that instance? If not, what would it have taken for someone to be a “champion” in your life in those moments?

We are probably all aware of the difficulties some teenagers face.

- Some are the results of poor choices made by the teenager—addictions, disorders, personal conflicts,

violence, unmarried pregnancy, even incarceration.

- Some are tragedies that flow out of the actions of others—physical injuries, divorce or other family issues, poverty, victimization.
- Still others come from situations that no one could control or anticipate—health-related issues, handicaps, family illness or death, psychological illness.

Behind every challenging circumstance is a need and an opportunity for someone to respond.

Can youth workers miss these opportunities? Sure can. How? Some make the assumption that young people would rather not share their problems. Some don't commit the time to be present and available to teenagers in a way that builds rapport and trust. And still others are afraid or uncomfortable with talking about the struggles in their own life. They were too painful!

More than pizza and fun programs, even more than compelling sermons and praise rallies, the deepest need for many adolescents from their youth workers is spiritual care. What is spiritual care and how does it shape effective youth ministry? That's what we will explore next.

Lecture/Discussion: Why Care?

(15 minutes)

Integrate personal examples when ever possible.

Refer to Resource 17-3 in the Student Guide.

The Biblical Basis of Spiritual Care

What is **spiritual care**? *Pastoral care* forms a familiar biblical and historical basis for responsive and restorative ministry offered by Christ-followers, though in recent years the term often has been associated more specifically with clergy or the specialized work of counseling. Since we understand that professional and lay youth workers share equally in caring for the needs of young people, many prefer to use *spiritual care* both to identify the role more broadly and to emphasize the importance of connecting youth whose needs may be physical, social, or psychological to the source of all care, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Caring youth workers also recognize how developmental realities in adolescence lend themselves to linking life lessons learned through struggle and pain to what God may be doing in our lives to disciple us and help us grow. Though spiritual openness is never a prerequisite for spiritual care, the opportunity for

commitment and growth is always woven into the fabric of reaching out with the love of Christ.

Dean and Foster, 12.

The English word *pastor* is derived from the Latin word meaning “to feed” or literally “to pasture.” The image is that of a shepherd who brings the flock to graze where nourishment is plentiful. This is seen even more clearly in the Spanish expression of the familiar opening phrase of Psalm 23 *Jehovah es mi pastor*—The Lord is my shepherd. From Jacob to Moses to David, shepherding framed Israel’s understanding of the leadership, protection, and discipline of God. This is woven throughout the Old Testament narrative.

The prophets saw it that way, too. Isaiah described God as one who “leads his flock like a shepherd, gently” (40:11), and Ezekiel and Jeremiah contrasted poor leaders as those who saw the sheep only as a means for personal gain and did not care for them. They did not strengthen, heal, or bind up the weak and their lack of care had scattered and caused Israel to wander from God. Unmistakably the expectation was that those who lead should do so out of a heart of love that shows its depth in caring for the most vulnerable of God’s creatures.

Jesus assumed the identity of the caring shepherd as his own, and references to the metaphor abound in the gospels. John chapter 10 expresses—

- the intimacy—“the sheep listen to his voice . . . he calls his own sheep by name”
- the commitment—“the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”

that the shepherd feels for his flock.

The provision of the Good Shepherd was “life to the fullest” (Jn 10:10). Matthew 9:36 illustrates Christ’s compassion for the hurting by describing them as “like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus’ commission for His followers to make disciples was accompanied by the promise that He would be with them until the end of the age. Peter affirmed that those who live out Jesus’ model of caring for the flock could be assured that “when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory” (1 Pet 5:4). He assured his readers that those who led with humility toward each other could cast all of our cares on Him, knowing that his humble sacrifice on our behalf assures us He cares for us in the same way (v. 5-7).

Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster further amplify the perspective of the caring shepherd as the basis for pastoral care in *The God-bearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*.

The word *pastor* began to 'morph' into something much larger than . . . professional identity . . . less than a noun and more as a verb . . . I was not a pastor as much as someone who pastored. And what I pastored was people, not a church, and my charge had less to do with the oversight of program as the oversight of souls.

They went on to discover that, youth ministry focuses on relationships not because of who teenagers are but who God is. God is a relationship . . . Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . and significant relationships with other Christians matter because they teach us something about what God is like . . . the One who can love us passionately enough to suffer willingly on our behalf.

Dean and Foster, 13.

Youth workers care for young people as a reflection of the nature of God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 echoes this divine relationship of God's essence and our care for each other in a way that applies to us all: "Praise be to the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

The intersection of personal struggles and God's grace provides an avenue of reaching others with the same compassion that we ourselves have experienced. We look back at our distresses as stepping stones to a deeper understanding of the hurts of teenagers. We know that growth and spiritual strength comes not in spite of but because of the burdens that we bear.

Jesus was described in Hebrews 4:15 as one who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He has encountered them himself. As we grow in faith and trust in He who provides for us, we regard our current sufferings as reference points for feeling *alongside* of those around us. In the same way that Paul was comforted by Titus who had been comforted by the Corinthians (2 Cor 7:6-7), together we form a community of wounded healers whose care for each other flows out of Christ's love and back into comfort for ourselves in times of need, and in doing so find rest for our own souls (Mt 11:28-29).

Paul understood his role as a leader as being one to prepare others to serve so that the church may become stronger (Eph 4:12). Shepherding and spiritual care is never confined to the pastoral position. Every

believer is a minister and every youth worker has the opportunity to “pastor” young people, protecting and providing for their well-being. Though some may think it appropriate to entrust spiritual care to those professionally trained to do so, both the Bible and historical tradition tell us otherwise.

Pastoral care is simply spiritual care shown in the name of Jesus, and is carried out by any compassionate relationship that focuses the needs of the person receiving our personal care toward the One whose love reaches to the deepest hurts with profound healing and grace. Those who do not serve in pastoral occupations can serve effectively to care for and shepherd young people; those who are pastor-leaders have the duty to train and empower others to share in the mission of compassion and care.

It is easy to look at the miracles that characterized Jesus’ ministry to those who were sick, sorrowful, or oppressed and lose sight of the fact that these acts of kindness and healing were not ends in themselves. Time after time His physical interventions were followed by instructions to follow a life of faith and to leave their life of sin behind. Nothing was more important than their relationship to the Father, and Christ’s presence brought that divine encounter down to where they could see it and touch it. He spoke out against those who would expect signs and wonders for self-serving purposes and miss the true reason for what had taken place. If faith did not follow, the opportunity for wholeness became only a random act of kindness, a good thing for the short term but without eternal benefit (Lk 17:11-19). The same is true for Christ-followers.

Understanding that the focal point of life is a human’s relationship with God relates all other aspects of life to it. Though certainly not every problem is a spiritual one, a person’s faith is a link to their greatest resource, both directly and communally. To those in pain, Jesus offered rest and relief, knowing that a response of gratitude to the mercy of God laid the foundation for spiritual stamina and growth. As we care for the hurts of young people, we must never lose sight of the “bottom line” of spiritual care—a heart that finds its rest and its strength in Christ.

Allow for response.

What aspects of caring do you find appealing to you personally?

Which ones create fear of anxiety in you?

Which ones do you believe you are good at?

In what ways can we develop a caring team to help us in areas in which we may feel inadequate?

Lecture/Discussion: Please Care!

(20 minutes)

Share your own story if possible.

“What can I possibly do?” that was my first thought as I walked out of the senior pastor’s office. I was serving in my first summer youth ministry experience, hardly out of youth group myself, when I was asked to visit the hospital room of a teenager injured in an accident who was related to someone in our church. Realizing that I had never been hospitalized myself and had only visited a hospital when visiting one of my own family members, I hardly felt equipped to respond to this need. Maybe it was seeing him connected to all those tubes as I entered the room that made me quickly sense that “connection” was just what Bill needed—knowing that another person was present and available to console, encourage, and care for him. Frequent stops to visit over the next several weeks led his family into involvement in the church and eventually to a commitment to Christ.

How Care Impacts the Lives of Youth

As we commit ourselves to caring for young people, it will become evident that some of the struggles they face come out of the same context as those affecting adults. Severe or chronic illness or injury, death of a loved one, family conflict, or loneliness and isolation that may accompany relocation to a new home, community, or situation are just a few of the common circumstances that can bring a sense of crisis into the lives of young and old alike. Even peer pressure and self-esteem issues are often present in adult experience as they are in teenagers’ lives. The difference is how an adolescent is able to process them at their stage of development and experience. There are also, however, challenges related specifically to their stage of life for which those who work with youth will be wise to have awareness and sensitivity.

As noted in earlier lessons, Erik Erikson’s study of human development defined the primary task of adolescence as *identity vs. role diffusion* (failure to clarify identity). The gap between sexual maturity and being able to sustain oneself financially and socially widened as the economic and educational climates began to change in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth century, resulting in a period of life defined by researcher G. Stanley Hall in 1904 as *adolescence*, or the “time between” (*Latin*) characterized by “storm and stress.”

Physical changes such as bone and muscle growth and primary and secondary sexual characteristics create fluctuations in appetite and energy, and differences within or across genders can bring on adjustment difficulties and antagonism. Mental and emotional transitions move young teenagers from concrete to abstract thought and older ones to mid-lobe thinking that enhances idealism, passion, and romance. Moods can fluctuate with body changes, and a lack of control or acting on impulse are common to many youth. Socially, teenagers moving from parental oversight to a peer focus of relationships, in the natural progression toward adulthood, search for the answers to three questions related to three essential needs:

Refer to Resource 17-4 in the Student Guide.

- Who am I?—Identity
- Do I matter?—Belonging
- Am I competent?—Autonomy

Les Parrott in *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*, identified common paths adolescents take in their search for identity:

- testing and clarifying family relationships
- questioning and sometimes rebelling against authority
- seeking status among some of their peers and excluding others
- seeking the opinions of mentoring adults outside of their parents
- fashioning some of their perspectives from both the immediacy of role models and more distant yet still powerful cultural “idols” and icons
- and experimenting with “grown-up” behavior

Parrott, 16-19.

As changes and struggles occur, youth handle them by

1. holding them in
2. acting them out
3. working them through

Parrott, 22-24.

For the preferred third option, nothing is more vital than significant adults who help young people make the transition healthy and whole. The best conditions for growth occur when youth feel accepted unconditionally, that they are with someone trustworthy and real, and that they are deeply understood. This combination of warmth, genuineness, and empathy, according to Parrot, are the essential traits of those who can effectively work in partnership

with the Holy Spirit to help sustain and guide youth through turbulent times.

Refer to Resource 16-7 in the Student Guide.

Allow for response.

For homework you read Resource 16-7. It discussed ways that adults “miss it” in caring for young people.

Have you had any experiences where adults have made one of these mistakes?

Have you found yourself making one of these mistakes?

What are the challenges in dealing with the Issues of Care?

The primary aspect to providing care in crisis is to create a place of safety in which students can feel loved and confident of the person with whom they can share their problems. Teenagers need a youth worker who will listen to their story, help them dig deep to understand what is really going on, allow for them to express their feelings, help them find appropriate outside help if needed, and be assured that hope lies in the healing and restoring work of the Holy Spirit. Van Pelt and Hancock provide several questions that should be addressed when youth workers become aware of situations that cry out for caring in the life of a teenager:

Refer to Resource 17-5 in the Student Guide.

- What is the perceived problem? What is the identified problem (the core issue behind the immediate situation)?
- What are the positive and negative outcomes that can result if it persists? What is desirable? What will it take to move toward that outcome?
- What resources are available to reaching the desired outcome? What are the roadblocks?
- Who else should be involved (family, school, church, professional help)?
- What are the steps that must be taken? What ongoing support and feedback is needed?
- What is the timetable?

Van Pelt and Hancock, The Youthworker's Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis, 71-73.

Pastoral counseling is an area where professional youth workers can equip themselves should they have opportunity, interest, and prevalent need in their ministry setting. A variety of models for pastoral counseling exist, yet most of them revolve around the same principles and steps:

- Establish relationship and rapport
- Explore and define the problem
- Establish and structure goals
- Encourage them to work toward attaining their goals
- Evaluate and follow-up as needed

This needs to be strongly emphasized.

There are legal concerns involved in attempting to counsel youth. The lack of specific training and experience may set up a misunderstanding of what a youth workers can and cannot do. Legal issues such as the duty to report, duty to warn, needs for documentation, and conflicts of interest are just a few of the barriers to adequately providing this level of care. The best thing a youth worker can do if the problem being faced requires extensive work or extended attention is to refer the teenager to a professional. We'll look at ways to do that in the next section.

What are some of the advantages that youth workers have when dealing with adolescent issues in a church-related setting?

What areas of struggle do you believe your experiences, training, and personal gifts equip you best for?

Which ones do you feel inadequate to address?

Lecture/Discussion: Care Bear

(15 minutes)

Whether simply being present and available or making sure that professional help is needed, youth workers who care about students will commit themselves in the pattern of Jesus to *incarnational* approaches, “dwelling among” the teenagers they care for, being transparent and vulnerable, and most important to connecting them to the divine resources of grace and truth that reside in our Heavenly Father (John 1). In any crisis that an adolescent may face, patient and persistent **listening** does makes a difference.

Parrott, 35.

Active listening remains the most important tool in the caring youth workers belt. Fully engaging your attention and focus in listening to what teenagers both say and feel unearths hidden emotions and issues, helps take away fear, facilitates true learning, and ultimately helps a person to be their own counselor. It involves two basic ingredients:

- Reflection: responding to the emotional content of what is being said (and not being said) and “hearing” what is being felt
- Clarification: asking questions in the process to gather additional information that together can be explored more thoroughly, and expressing a clear desire to understand

As youth workers actively listen to a teenager in the midst of their problems, being fully attentive, communicating non-verbal openness, and responding appropriately is key. It is important for those who listen not to believe or state that they “know how you feel” but to essentially “feel how you feel” by accessing their own experiences and emotions and allowing them to put yourself in the teenager’s place in order to make the journey of healing together.

Some things to avoid include interrupting, judging too hastily, giving advice prematurely or excessively, or making references unduly to your own experience and subtly diverting the focus of what they are feeling. Good listeners will listen with the whole person, with acceptance, with their own limitations unpacked, with an interest in the “story behind the story,” and with God’s help.

Refer to Resource 17-6 in the Student Guide.

Reflect on these questions personally and also ask someone close to you to offer a personal evaluation of your ability. You need to explore how you can be more caring and listen when others give you suggestions about how you can improve.

Active listening describes a specific skill that caring people develop with practice. Some people might be more attentive to people than others due to their natural disposition or due to formational influences when they were young. However, we all need to cultivate basic listening skills.

Refer to Resource 17-7 in the Student Guide. Spend time looking at the situations and discuss the questions.

What might you listen for in each of the situations?

What anxieties or fears might keep you from listening well?

What situations would require you to seek help from other professionals?

Refer to Resource 17-8 in the Student Guide. If you have time you can look through this together otherwise allow the student to look at it later.

Being honest about our own fears and limitations is healthy. This resource does address some of the challenges.

However prepared you may try to be for counseling situations there are frequent times when you find yourself “counseling in the halls.” Young people don’t always know about making a formal appointment. Or the idea of privately sitting down with someone, and will often just blurt out what’s on their mind and mustered the courage to ask someone they trust. Youth workers should be ready to seize those

opportunities to care. In such situations, youth workers can affirm them for asking and work to uncover what they may really be searching for. It is also possible to connect what they discover with applicable biblical truth in natural terms, guiding them to do their own thinking. Sometimes they will pull from within themselves the help they need, and other times they will sense a more extended conversation would be a good thing. In either case, being “rehearsed” in good listening skills can be a real advantage to caring in the few minutes that young people may give you to do so!

As part of your homework assignment for this lesson is information dealing with confidentiality and community resources. These are two areas that need careful, serious consideration in your ministry.

Remember, in the midst of pain, God is often up to something good! As New Testament Christians did, “We also rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us!” (Rom 5: 3-5).

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

What is the definition of Pastoral Care?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we begin to explore youth leadership. As you think about the upcoming lesson begin to identify young people in your ministry that reflect potential leadership? Perhaps they exhibit qualities of good pastoral care or have the ability to rally other students to them. How would you cultivate their leadership skills? What structures do you have in place to identify and promote leadership among youth?

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Identify local agencies that can support you in providing care to youth. Using the large categories of family relationships, personal health, as well as social challenges. The possible list should include school counselors, a drug and alcohol abuse agency, crisis-pregnancy program, family mediation and legal service, area social worker, poison control center, child protection services, crisis center or telephone line, recovery support group, Christian counseling services, psychiatric hospitals with specialized units for adolescents, hospital emergency special care units, adolescent stress unit, eating disorder treatment program and support group, and community health center. The entry should include the name, a possible contact person, address, and phone number.

Read Resource 17-9.

Complete Resource 17-10.

Write in your journal. Reflect on a person that reached out to you as a teen. What was it that drew you to this person? Identify the person in your group that most needs someone to care.

Punctuate the Finish

Years later as a seasoned youth pastor, I got the call that the father of two of our teenagers had been killed in an automobile crash. Though my efforts to care for them were more theologically and practically seasoned, the fundamental principle remained the same. The ministry of presence in the midst of struggle, heartache, and tragedy makes a difference—just being there. It stretches beyond the hospital or funeral home into a shared conversation about the problem of pain and the nature of God. It connects another person to the source of all comfort. It stands alongside to make sure the flow is constant, and is faithful to check up at key intervals. Though my contribution was only one of a host of other care-givers, the wonderful result was that two adolescents went on to thrive within a loving community. One whose pastoral leadership today models the spirit of 1 Corinthians 1:3-4.

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Lesson 18

Youth Ministry Shepherding— Equipping Leaders

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 18-1
0:10	Identifying and Recruiting Volunteer Youth Leaders	Lecture/Small Group Discussion	Resources 18-2—18-6
0:40	Leadership Commitment and Training	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 18-7
1:05	Empowering and Encouraging the Youth Leader	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 18-8
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

You will not have time to read all the books listed, but there are some excellent books on leadership.

Bowling, John C. *Grace-Full Leadership*. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000.

Chow, Dan. *No More Lone Rangers: How to Build a Team-Centered Youth Ministry*. Flagship Church Resources, 2002.

Crabtree, Jack. *Better Safe than Sued: Keeping your Students and Ministry Alive*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/ Youth Specialties, 2008, 65-74.

As part of the Modular Course of Study program, students should have previously taken the module titled Leading the People of God.

Fairbanks, E. LeBron. *Leading the People of God*. Modular Course of Study, 2003.

Fairbanks, E. LeBron, and Stan Toler. *Learning to Be Last: Leadership for Congregational Transformation*. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2008.

Holderness, Ginny Ward with Robert S. Hay. *Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 104-147.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on students to respond.

Return and collect homework.

Did you have difficulty finding the resources/agencies that are available in your community?

Is there one area that you could not find a resource?

Orientation

This lesson gives a general introduction to the theoretical and practical Christological/Biblical model of shepherding and equipping leaders.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the importance of deliberately preparing for succession in ministry
- be able to identify, recruit, and equip adult youth leaders
- have a greater appreciation for the Ministry of Shepherding

Motivator

The congregation that expects an individual or a few persons to carry out the work of the ministry is a congregation which will not accomplish much for God.

Call on someone to read Ephesians 4:10-16.

Refer to Resource 18-1 in the Student Guide.

Allow students to respond to the questions.

*God's PROVISION—verse 11
God's PLAN—verse 12
God's PURPOSE—verse 13
God's PROTECTION—verse 14
God's PARTNERSHIP—verses 15,
16*

Lesson Body

Lecture/Small Groups: Identifying and Recruiting Volunteer Youth Leaders

(30 minutes)

Dan Chow, No More Lone Rangers: How to Build a Team-Centered Youth Ministry, Flagship Church Resources, 2002.

*Exodus 17
John 1, 35 ff; Luke 10
1 Corinthians 12-13*

Refer to Resource 18-2 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students to work on the resource or you can do this as a class guided discussion.

Holderness and Hay, 138-140.

Setting a Biblical Foundation

Identifying and recruiting volunteer youth leaders can be a daunting consideration in a number of different regards. However, despite this reality, Dan Chow notes that youth ministers must develop volunteers as team-members to overcome the temptation to do everything on their own. Moses relied on Aaron, Hur and Joshua. Jesus' called twelve really different disciples, and later seventy, to extend his ministry. The New Testament church teaches us that everyone has gifts and roles in the body of Christ, so we should expect youth ministry to be a collective effort.

Kenneth O. Gangel gives Four Images of Ministry from four sections of the New Testament as he lays the theological base for church volunteers.

Secrets to Identifying and Recruiting leaders

Dale Carnegie was a master at identifying potential leaders. Once asked by a reporter how he had managed to hire forty-three millionaires, Carnegie responded that the men had not been millionaires when they started working for him. They had become millionaires as a result. The reporter next wanted to know how he had developed these men to become such valuable leaders. Carnegie replied, "Men are developed the same way gold is mined. Several tons of dirt must be moved to get an ounce of gold. But you don't go in the mine looking for dirt," he added. "You go in looking for gold." That's exactly the way to develop positive, successful people. Look for the gold, not the dirt; the good not the bad. The more positive qualities you look for, the more you are going to find.

Holderness and Hay note that parents may be involved with the ministry. However, many parents may not always be leaders since youth need to develop

relationships with other significant adults. Chris Folmsbee observes that people tend to volunteer their time due to four contributing influences:

1. A sense of calling and opportunity to make a difference
2. A chance to do something they do well
3. Being encouraged and empowered along the way
4. Serving with like-minded people with a real sense of community.

Chris Folmsbee, A New Kind of Youth Ministry. Zondervan, 2007, 102-103.

Refer to Resource 18-3 in the Student Guide.

If you feel that there will not be enough time to cover all the material in this lesson this resource can be left to the students to read on their own without time being spent in class going over the information.

Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster. The God Bearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.

Discerning Gifts and Graces

Part of recruitment must include self-assessment. Many adults remain interested in working with youth but they must also be able to identify key gifts and graces that they offer to a youth ministry. Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster offer a series of helpful questions to help adults and youth leaders discern one's disposition and ability to work with youth.

1. Can I model for youth the meaning of a happy, healthy and whole adulthood?
2. To what extent have I been able to forgive my own parents, and reflect their positive attributes and not react to my negative experiences?
3. How do I deal with "loss," learning to let go and speak of my experiences openly?
4. What is my theology of friendship and is it reflected in healthy and faithful friends?
5. Do I find time for solitude, feeling comfortable with myself in these moments?
6. Do I maintain adequate boundaries with other people, keeping them neither too distant nor too close for my personal needs?
7. Have I realized and accepted that I can't save every young person?
8. Do I focus on experiences of gratitude and cultivate a sense of being grateful?
9. Can I accept not doing everything right, do I learn from my mistakes?
10. Am I able to maintain a sense of integrity, even when I am called to make difficult decisions that may demand sacrifice?

These questions help adults in self-assessment but there are other means of identifying and cultivating adult leaders.

Things to consider when recruiting Volunteer Youth Leaders

1. Give volunteers the options of short, medium, and long-term periods of ministry service.

Refer to Resource 18-4 in the Student guide.

Again this resource can be left for the students to read later. Similar information is included in the

module Providing Christian Education for All Ages, *Lesson 19.*

2. Identify the different areas of responsibility that volunteers can commit to, e.g. Adult chaperons on field trips, Bible Quiz Ministry Coaches, and Study Partners.
3. Allow for potential volunteers to meet informally with current volunteers to share experiences and ideas.
4. Always give as much detailed information as possible to help potential volunteers with their decision-making.
5. Use statistics and other vital information to inform volunteers of needs and the results others have had.

Allow for response.

What additional things have you found helpful in your context?

This topic is very important to cover and spend time discussing. Many churches, because of insurance, must have formal policies.

One Important Consideration

In almost all settings around the world youth ministers need to also screen adult workers to insure the safety of youth from adult predators. Often the open, loving, nature of local congregations find themselves susceptible to adults who may do harm. In some countries churches may find themselves liable for a lawsuit for failing to put policies in place to both prevent abuse and to investigate any allegations by young people that they have suffered abuse. Jack Crabtree suggest the following minimum steps for screening:

Refer to Resource 18-5 in the Student Guide.

1. Have a written application
2. Do a criminal background checks
3. Ask for references—particularly paid staff
4. Have a personal interview
5. Use a team to decide who serves the ministry

Jack Crabtree. Better Safe than Sued: Keeping your Students and Ministry Alive. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties 2008, 65-74.

In addition you should regularly have educational sessions on the seriousness and signs of abuse in young people as well as develop strict policies for investigating and reporting abuse. In many places you have a legal responsibility to report abuse allegations to local authorities. It is your responsibility to know the laws in your local community and state.

As noted, failure to maintain strong policies may result in civil or even criminal litigation. However, the motivation should not just be avoiding a lawsuit. For youth ministry to be faithful to Christ, we must have a setting where youth know they have a gracious, "safe sanctuary" from youth predators. Youth ministers are strongly encouraged to investigate their responsibilities and the resources available to their local ministry.

Allow for response.

What guidelines do you have for screening, educating, investigating and preventing abuse in your context?

Press the students with the importance of knowing this information.

Have you investigated your responsibilities as well as resources available in your context?

You may want to check in advance of this lesson if you do not already know the laws in your community.

See also: Joy Thornburg Melton Safe Sanctuaries For Youth: Reducing The Risk Of Abuse In Youth Ministries Discipleship Resources, 2003.

Keeping it Positive, Developing a Profile

Ultimately positive qualities must align with the overall goal of ministry. Developing a ministry match includes discovering the unique gifts in leaders and also providing the basics of what is required in ministry. Often called “job descriptions,” one is actually providing a form of ministry profile that provides the skeleton on which the ministry often becomes the flesh as the Holy Spirit gives life.

Refer to Resource 18-6 in the Student Guide.

Have students return to their previous groups and complete the resource.

Lecture/Discussion: Leadership Commitment and Training

(25 minutes)

Commitment and training often operate as two inseparable realities. Although commitment is a personal attitude, leaders who are trained are likely to be more committed than those who are not.

Pastor Leith Anderson states, “Working with volunteers in the church involves three basic responsibilities:

- motivating people
- guiding them into the right ministry
- supporting and supervising them as they minister.”

Berkley, 275.

In addition, adult leaders often have to fulfill specific roles very similar to the youth minister. Holderness and Hay indicate these roles include being a significant adult friend to youth, serving as an advocate for youth and partner and “guarantor”—someone who provides a

Holderness and Hay, 105-110.

sense of security—with youth, as well as being a role model and advocate for youth. Each of these roles proves crucial with youth but often require “coaching” with new adult leaders.

Training requires working positively to build a sense of commitment and motivation toward the ministry. Both tasks require disciplined engagement to encourage volunteers while resisting the temptation to manipulate for our own desires, rather than God’s direction! There are some basic steps that we can take to accomplish both tasks.

Refer to Resource 18-7 in the Student Guide.

Training for Commitment

Gangel recommends three stages for volunteer training:

1. Preparation
 - Set the climate
 - Define the task
 - Provide some model of the ministry
 - Motivate volunteers
2. Implementation
 - Institute training
 - Institute leadership
 - Continually improve
 - Drive out fear
 - Break down barriers between staff areas
 - Remove barriers to “pride” of workmanship
 - Institute a vigorous program of education and retraining
 - Take action to accomplish the transformation
3. Evaluation
 - Staff inclusion
 - Short accounts
 - Sound teaching
 - Model mentoring
 - Loving confrontation
 - Pastoral care

Commitment remains crucial for everyone; it is “basic to the nature of how we are as Christians.” This commitment ultimately includes young people, adults, leaders, parents, church and lead pastor.

Holderness and Hay, 26-28.

Holderness and Hay encourage that we see adult leaders as “team members” in the ministry. When we create opportunities for them to share in leadership and decision-making their commitment grows. As people know clearly what they are supposed to do, as we show them how to be leaders, and as they

Holderness and Hay, 104

experience joy in accomplishments as they use their God-given gifts, adults become key contributors. Our responsibility is to motivate them toward ministry rather than manipulating them to achieve our goals.

Motivation versus Manipulation

Fred Smith, Sr. offers eight means for motivating volunteers to be committed to service.

1. Establish a friendly atmosphere
Lead with integrity and friendliness.
2. Enjoy people's uniqueness
Share in their excitement and show appreciation for what they do.
3. Know a person's capabilities
Evaluate their skills, potential capacities, level of commitment, ability to be motivated, discipline, and intensity.
4. Know how much responsibility a person can take
Good leaders know if their people work best when given assignments that detail what is to be done or when given responsibility that leaves the initiative up to them.
5. Look for mutual benefits
We should look for individuals who want to develop skills from which the church can also benefit.
6. Be honest about your goals
Articulate goals with honesty and clarity.
7. Give a person a reputation to uphold
Workers appreciate public recognition and compliments and work hard to uphold their good reputation.
8. Enjoy working, and let it show
Good leaders enjoy their work and allow and encourage others to do the same.

*Berkley, Leadership Handbook.
Motivation versus Manipulation,
280-281.*

Allow for response.

Which areas of training does your church or ministry do well?

Where are they challenged to provide better training?

How do you motivate volunteers in your ministry?

Where do you see the greatest temptation for manipulation?

What guidelines can you set to avoid this danger?

Maxwell, 1995, 94.

John Maxwell says we must ask for commitment. He also writes, "In his book *The One Minute Manager*, Ken Blanchard says, 'There's a difference between interest and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, you do it only when it is convenient. When you are committed to something, you accept no excuses.' "

Lecture/Discussion: Empowering and Encouraging the Youth Leader

(20 minutes)

What it means to empower others

Motivation and Training serve only if volunteers are empowered to do their ministry and receive continual encouragement along their ministry. Too many volunteers—and ministers—are set in a position but not given the authority or ongoing encouragement to see their ministry flourish. Burnout often comes from the struggle that rises when one sets out to accomplish what one has been trained to do—but not given the power or encouragement to do. Holderness and Hay observe that team-based ministry and open communication help overcome burnout. We need to cultivate our ability to empower people and also constantly remind them of their value to our ministry. Jim Burns and Mark DeVries remind us that any effective ministry to a wide variety of young people must be done in the context of a team.

Here are some guidelines:

Refer to Resource 18-8 in the Student Guide.

Empowering others to their potential

"People under the influence of an empowering person are like paper in the hands of a talented artist. No matter what they're made of, they can become treasures."

1. Evaluate them
 - Knowledge
 - Skill
 - Desire
2. Model for them
3. Give them permission to succeed
 - Expect it
 - Verbalize it
 - Reinforce it
4. Transfer authority to them
5. Publicly show your confidence in them
6. Supply them with feedback
7. Release them to continue on their own

John Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence*, 185-194.

Practical applications for encouraging the youth leader

Mark H. Senter III in Berkley, 304-306.

1. "Paying" volunteers
Reward with public or private affirmation. Hand-written notes of appreciation, personal compliments that identify specific actions, pictures of volunteers in action posted in a prominent place, acknowledgement made in worship services of specific volunteer activities, gifts of gratitude, and appreciation dinners all serve as means of "paying" volunteers.
2. Observing volunteers in action
The observer should always look for strengths upon which to build. Resources that the volunteer might use to complement his or her skills may be a further means of supporting the volunteer.
3. Helping volunteers develop
Tom Peters suggests that we:
 Educate
 Sponsor
 Coach
 Counsel
 Confront
4. Creating volunteer communities
Spiritual leaders should:
 - Use scripture to teach the importance of loving, caring ministry teams.
 - Draw upon church life to illustrate the viability of supportive volunteer groups.
 - Feature people who are part of encouragement teams by allowing them to testify in public services.
 - Stimulate the development of new teams by putting people with similar passions together in ministry.
 - Demonstrate the importance of mutual support by being part of a small group that provides strength and encouragement for each other.

Compare the two lists.

Allow for response.

What do you find valuable in either approach?

What one thing could you implement in your ministry this week, this month or within the next year?

Reflect on places you can both provide empowerment as well as demonstrate encouragement as a part of your ministry.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Considering where you are currently in ministry, write two sentences describing how this lesson has challenged you to develop a plan for equipping youth leaders.

Look Ahead

There are youth under your charge who you also need to empower for leadership. Empowerment gives a way for God to teach, use, and develop youth with leadership potential. This is a vital part of your shepherding and will be addressed in the next lesson.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Prepare an outline for a weekend Youth Leaders Training Seminar. This outline must reflect a proposed—Date, Venue, Theme, Schedule, Topics and any other thing which will add to the depth of your outline.

Write down the names of three young people who also need empowerment. Using the principles in this lesson how might they be applied to those youth as well?

Listen to Tim Green, *Opening Chapel Talk*. This can be found on the Clergy Education web site.
www.nazarenepastor.org/ModCos/guides/supplements/tabid/79/default.aspx

Write in your journal. Give God thanks for some person who invested in your training and development, then prayerfully note the name of one adult who you will deliberately mentor as a youth leader.

Punctuate the Finish

“Real leadership is not about what I do best. It is about discovering what volunteers and parents do best—and helping them find ways to contribute.”

Chris Folmsbee

Lesson 19

Youth Ministry Shepherding— Empowering Youth

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Inviting Youth to Leadership	Lecture/Discussion	
0:10	Helping Youth to Discern their Leadership Gifts and Temperaments	Guided Discussion	Resource 19-1
0:20	Organizing a Youth Leadership Team	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 19-2
0:35	Establishing a Covenant of Standards	Guided Discussion	Resource 19-3
0:50	Encouraging a Youth Leadership Team to Live with Integrity	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 19-4
1:00	Empowering a Youth Leadership Team to Take Initiative	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 19-5
1:10	Encouraging, Supporting, and Nurturing the Youth Leadership Team	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 19-6 Resource 19-7
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Holderness, Ginny Ward with Robert S. Hay. *Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 52-103.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their training outlines with each other.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will help the student to develop a sense of some of the practical aspects of empowering youth for ministry.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- articulate the importance of deliberately exposing to and preparing youth for leadership
- teach, guide, and counsel youth leaders for effective team ministry

Motivator

Ephesians 4:13

Holderness and Hay, 50

When we equip, empower, and nurture youth as leaders we move a little closer to the goal of the priesthood of all believers, a body of Christ working together “until all of us come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” Holderness and Hay believe this approach leads to a “youth-owned” youth ministry with adult-youth partnerships. They encourage youth ministers to hold onto what this vision of God might do through their ministry. Empowering youth as leaders opens the door to seeing their influence expressed throughout the congregation and insures a longer, more faithful, youth ministry.

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Inviting Youth to Leadership

(5 minutes)

Clinton, J. Robert. The Making of a Leader, 14.

J. Robert Clinton defines leadership as “a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group.”

One of the initial steps to empowering youth is getting them to respond to the call of God. This is a sensitive process and requires much care in ensuring that we do not use guilt, coercion, or any other means which does not respect the right of the potential young leader.

Youth should be invited and challenged to leadership in several areas:

- The need for Godly leaders
- The privilege to represent Christ
- The opportunity to serve others in the ways of Christ
- The blessing of influencing others to become all that God wants to make them

Allow for response.

Which of these particular invitations or challenges proved most important to your own call?

How were those aspects nurtured as you entered ministry?

Guided Discussion: Helping Youth to Discern their Leadership Gifts and Temperaments

(10 minutes)

Holderness and Hay, 32.

Any attempt at discerning one’s gifting and temperament can be a confusing thing for most persons. It would be helpful for the young leader to be guided through this process. Thankfully, there is a large pool of material which may be used when helping a person through this. Holderness and Hay encourage youth ministers to “use your God-given imagination and discover images [from scripture] that relate to young people and to youth ministry.” They offer several passages that relate to themes of caring, reaching out, acceptance, invitation, community, challenge and leadership.

- John 4: 3-30—Jesus and Woman at the Well
- John 1: 35-42—Calling Andrew and Simon Peter

- Luke 15—Parables of Prodigal Son and Lost Sheep
- John 15: 1-5—Jesus the True Vine
- Mark 4: 35-41—Jesus Calms the Storm
- 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26—The Body of Christ

Refer to Resource 19-1 in the Student Guide.

The list in Resource 19-1 is one example of the use of Bible characters whose leadership styles and temperaments have left lasting lessons for our benefit.

Leadership Lore in Scripture

Allow for response and discussion of the questions.

1. Closeness with a few—Jesus
What are some of the benefits and challenges of this kind of leadership?
2. Wanting to lead—Isaiah
Was your response to God's call to ministry/leadership similar to Isaiah's?
3. Enthusiasm covers a multitude of [mis-steps]—Peter
Do you think it is good to err on the side of passion?
4. Don't play God—Joseph
Comment on Joseph's words in Genesis 50: 19.
5. The strength of vulnerability—Hosea
Is your strength more on the side of being impressive?
6. Women can play too—Deborah
What is your personal position on women being in leadership in the Church?
7. Champion of the weak—Amos
How important to you is ministry to the poor, the hungry, the powerless, the widows, the orphans, and the oppressed?
8. A touch of organization—Nehemiah
How organized are you generally?
9. A bit of drama—Elijah
Is the use of the dramatic in ministry appealing to you?
10. Integrity—Abimelech
Comment on Abimelech's words to God in Genesis 20: 5.
11. Confidence is contagious—Paul
Do you think self-confidence is healthy, and if so, when does it become unhealthy?

Griffin, Em. *Getting Together: A Guide for Good Groups*, 213-229.

12. Best when service is greatest—Jesus
Are you prepared to wash the feet of those you serve?

Lecture/Discussion: Organizing a Youth Leadership Team

(15 minutes)

In some cultures the community or family metaphor may be a better way to communicate the concept of a group of people working toward common goals.

Holderness and Hay, 38-39

Refer to Resource 19-2 in the Student Guide.

Discuss this resource with the class.

The concept of team leadership is very quickly becoming the accepted approach in most organizations including the church. The synergy which team leadership produces allows for the maximization of resources. This is an important element since many youth ministries may not have a large pool of human resources from which to pull leaders. Holderness and Hay note that youth who partner with adults in leadership usually take ownership of the ministry.

In order for the synergy to be realized, the leaders will have to be made aware of some key elements.

Evaluate and summarize the different traits and qualities for a sound youth ministry.

Are there cultural issues at stake where you engage ministry?

Would specific traits or qualities prove more helpful, harmful, in your setting?

Are there other traits or qualities that should be included?

Guided Discussion: Establishing a Covenant of Standards

(15 minutes)

One way of establishing a sound foundation for youth leadership emerges through the use of covenants. Covenantal language is important in both the Old Testament and New Testament. John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan tradition, employed a covenant with the Methodist people each year and called his ministers to make covenantal commitments before they served the movement. One of the earliest forms of youth ministry in the United States, Christian Endeavor societies, also created covenants or a "pledge" to guide their actions.

For the sake of the Kingdom of God, a youth leadership team needs to hold each other accountable for their leadership. Establishing the covenant must include specific opportunities and challenges that this leadership team will face. However, the covenant should also reflect God's intent for the leadership team.

The covenant will serve as the guiding chart of the Youth Leadership Team.

1. The covenant should reflect the standards of Scripture.
2. Each team member must be prepared to commit to the tenets of the covenant.
3. Encourage each team member to appreciate the value of the covenant as a means of bonding and strengthening the team.
4. Each team member should have a copy of the covenant in digital and hard-copy forms.
5. The team should remind itself of the covenant by repeating/reading the covenant in unison at meetings.

Have the students construct a Covenant of Standards using 1 Timothy 4:12 as the foundation.

Refer to Resource 19-3 in the Student Guide.

Lecture/Discussion: Encouraging a Youth Leadership Team to Live with Integrity

(10 minutes)

Leadership which flows from the inside out is not only biblical but it also emphasizes the need for us to BECOME before we PERFORM. Leadership performance without character leads to tyranny and chaos.

Refer to Resource 19-4 in the Student Guide.

The bestselling author, Stephen R. Covey, gives eight characteristics of Principle-Centered Leaders.

1. They are Continually Learning
2. They are Service-Oriented
3. They Radiate Positive Energy
4. They Believe in Other People
5. They Lead Balanced Lives
6. They See Life as an Adventure
7. They are Synergistic
8. They Exercise for Self-Renewal

Covey, Principled-Centered Leadership, 33-39.

How do these principles reflect a Christian perspective in your culture?

Allow for response.

Would you change them?

Would you add additional pastoral roles from scripture?

Using these traits how might you, working as a team, engage practices that insure your group as a whole is cultivating these principles?

Chris Folmsbee, A New Kind of Youth Ministry, 103.

While character development remains crucial we must not allow our search for integrity to shift our focus away from community. Chris Folmsbee notes “if we are focusing on ourselves there is not much chance we’ll be glorifying God.” A leadership team must be motivated by a heart to reach out and empower others to pursue Christlikeness.

Lecture/Discussion: Empowering a Youth Leadership Team to take Initiative

(10 minutes)

Initiative is an ability every person, leader or not, should aspire to have. Initiative allows a leader to be fresh and effective. Thinking ‘outside of the box’ is part of the *modus operandi* of this kind of leader. While initiative respects tradition, it is not afraid to go beyond tradition to be effective. Initiative also makes the leader dependable when tough decisions have to be made.

Refer to Resource 19-5 in the Student Guide.

John Maxwell, in his book *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, titled the tenth chapter, “Initiative: You Won’t Leave Home Without It.”

Qualities of leaders who show initiative:

1. They know what they want.
It’s the only way to recognize opportunity when it comes.
2. They push themselves to act.
Initiators don’t wait for other people to motivate them.
3. They take more risks.
Good leaders are willing to take risks because they recognize there is a risk for not initiating too.
4. They make more mistakes.
Initiators make things happen, but they also make a lot of mistakes.

Allow for response.

Which of these traits proves to be the most difficult for most leadership teams and why?

Are there good reasons for not always following these guidelines?

Does context influence the speed or direction of showing initiative?

How can we demonstrate a Christian perspective on the need to demonstrate initiative?

To improve your initiative, do the following:

1. Change your mind-set.
Recognize that the problem comes from the inside, not from others. Once found, address it.
2. Don't wait for opportunity to knock.
Opportunity is everywhere. Where do you see needs? Who is looking for expertise you have? What unreached group of people is practically dying for what you have to offer?
3. Take the next step.
Someone once quipped; everyone has a great idea in the shower. But only a few people step out, dry off, and do something about it.

Maxwell, 69-73.

Remember that taking initiative is not the same as doing everything ourselves. Chris Folmsbee notes "doing all the work ourselves might make us look busy and feel satisfied, but it certainly doesn't help our ministry become more effective in fostering spiritual progress." The goal always remains to cultivate personal initiative among team members, encouraging them in their tasks but also reminding them to reach out to others as a community.

Chris Folmsbee, 105.

Lecture/Discussion: Encouraging, Supporting, and Nurturing the Youth Leadership Team

(15 minutes)

A major part of the responsibility carried by the pastoral leadership of a church is the task of encouraging, supporting, and nurturing volunteers. It will demand much effort, great skill, and deliberate action of every pastor. Because volunteers are people, their wants and needs cannot be disregarded.

Often adult and youth leadership develop in a similar fashion depending both on the adults readiness to hand over ministry and young people's readiness to receive leadership roles. Holderness and Hay note that there may be stages to shared ministry.

Refer to Resource 19-6 in the Student Guide. Ask students to evaluate the level of adult or youth involvement or readiness at this time in their group.

Often a youth minister has to invite both adults and youth into casting a vision for the ministry. Sharing responsibilities for ministry must include the ability to "dream" together about the future of our ministry.

John Maxwell, in his book *Developing the Leaders Around You*, writes about the qualities of a dream-team coach.

Refer to Resource 19-7 in the Student Guide.

A Dream-Team Coach

1. Chooses players well
2. Constantly communicates the game plan
 - Tell them what you expect of them
 - Give them an opportunity to perform
 - Let them know how they're getting along
 - Instruct and empower them when they need it
 - Reward them according to their contribution
3. Takes the time to huddle
 - Focus
 - An opportunity to listen
 - An opportunity to make personnel changes
 - An opportunity to make play changes
 - An opportunity to rest
4. Knows what his or her players prefer
5. Excels in problem solving
 - Problem-solving issues with players
 - Problem-solving issues with preparation
 - Problem-solving issues with the game
6. Provides support needed for success
7. Commands the respect of the players
 - Trustworthiness
 - A caring attitude
 - The ability to make hard decisions
8. Does not treat everyone the same
9. Continues to win
 - Work on specific skills
 - Make a change
 - Reward the unrewarded
 - Transfer the burden
 - Above all, don't dwell on yesterday's victory
10. Understands the levels of the players
 - Players who need direction
 - Players who need coaching
 - Players who need support
 - Players to whom you delegate

Maxwell, 152-168.

Allow for response.

Are there other qualities needed?

How well are you doing as a good coach?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

Which area of the lesson do you feel is the most challenging for you?

Look Ahead

Maxwell, 224.

Ultimately our leadership efforts in ministry for your youth and for ourselves, must include a vision that carries us forward for the “long-term.” Our preparation as youth ministers should yield a desire and ability to stay in the ministry for a number of years. Key considerations arise that challenge our ability to remain in youth ministry. Attitudes, habits, and practices should surface that will provide sustainable, “long-term” youth ministry. That is the challenge we will consider in the next lesson.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Interview a pastor on his or her strategy for empowering youth for ministry. Write a report on the interview and indicate the similarities and differences to the material presented in this lesson. The report must not include names of persons or the name of the church.

In preparation for the last lesson write a short plan on how you might take key insights from this course and teach it to other youth ministers in your region. Which lessons would be most important for your colleagues?

Write at least two goals that you would set for yourself for the next five years of youth ministry and two goals for the next ten years of youth ministry.

Interview the person who has been in youth ministry longer than anyone else you know—this could be a phone interview. Ask them to give key insights into youth leadership for the “long-term.” What do they think are important issues you should consider if you are to remain in youth ministry?

Bring your journal with you to the next lesson. The instructor will be evaluating your faithfulness to the

journaling assignment. The individual entries will not be the focus, but your participation on a regular basis with journaling.

Write in your journal. As you look at your ministry and life, are the youth in your circle of influence mirroring you? Is it the face of Jesus?

Punctuate the Finish

Henri Nouwen, 88.

The Christian leaders of the future have to be theologians, persons who know the heart of God and are trained—through prayer, study, and careful analysis—to manifest the divine event of God’s saving work in the midst of the many seemingly random events of their time.

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Lesson 20

Youth Ministry Craft—The Legacy of Long-Term Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Entering Ministry	Class Activity	Resource 20-1 Journals
0:20	Evaluating Long-Term Ministry	Guided Discussion	Resource 20-2
0:35	Personal Considerations	Lecture	Resource 20-3
0:50	Professional Factors	Lecture	Resource 20-4
1:10	The Spiritual Life	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 20-5 Resource 20-6
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Olsen, Ginny, Diane Elliot and Mike York. *Youth Ministry Management Tools: Everything You Need to Successfully Manage and Administrate Your Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties 2001, 161-259.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students.

What did you find out from your interview with a “long-term” youth pastor?

Return and collect homework.

Is there a common response/concept that you heard?

Orientation

It takes more than enthusiasm to work with youth. In fact, there are many facets to a well-balanced youth ministry. In this lesson we will explore how to work with youth over the “long haul” to create effective change in youth, their families and the church.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- determine the key issues of youth ministry to facilitate a long-term legacy in students, families and church communities

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

Motivator

“The closer you get to Jesus, the less you know. When I was 20, I knew everything about Jesus. I swaggered into high schools afraid of no one’s arguments. The Bible was true. Jesus was God, and we all needed him. I still believe those things, but the swagger is more like a limp now. I know Jesus, but I don’t know much about him. I love the Bible—it’s even more true to me today than it was 40 years ago—but the truth I see now is much more complicated and mysterious. Jesus is very real to me, but he’s also very elusive. Sometimes I wonder if I’m following him, or if he’s following me. Life has left its scars on me. My soul is thick and leathery, faded and torn, knocked around a lot. I’m not as sure about things as I used to be.

“Yet here’s the amazing part, the one absolute I cannot shake: Jesus.

“As many times as I have disappointed him, as often as I have run from him, he hasn’t given up on me.

Yaconelli, Mike. Getting Fired for the Glory of God. Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties/Zondervan, 2008, 132-133.

Every time I turn around, he's there. Every time I run from him, he's there. I don't know as much about Jesus as I used to, but I do know one truth for sure: He's closer."

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Entering Ministry

(15 minutes)

Allow for response. Keeps this discussion short.

What originally motivated you to become involved in youth ministry?

Has this motivation changed since you have been involved?

Do you think your motivation will change five years from now? Ten years? Why?

Refer to Resource 20-1 in the Student Guide.

As a class you are to work on Resource 20-1. While you are discussing this resource I will be looking at your journals. I will not be reading individual entries but will be evaluating your faithfulness to the journaling assignment.

You may want to appoint a leader for this activity. They may want to write responses on a board or flip chart.

Guided Discussion: Evaluating Long-Term Ministry

(15 minutes)

Allow for response.

How do you stay in youth ministry for the long term?

It is critical to ask yourself the hard questions in life and ministry. Honest self-evaluation is typically not considered to be important enough to prioritize. Some questions we must ask ourselves are:

Refer to Resource 20-2 in the Student Guide.

- Why do you do what you do?
- Were you called by God to your tasks or by someone else? Yourself?
- Do you take good care of yourself?
- Are you too busy? Tired? Worn out?
- Approaching Burnout? First sign of burnout is finding yourself scanning the employment ads in the newspaper and thinking when you see the many help wanted ads, "You know that wouldn't be so bad."
- Are you at a point where you don't know if you could or should go further than you've gone right now?

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity. New York: HarperCollins, 2001, 28.

C.S. Lewis once stated: "The most progressive person is the one that turns back soonest when they are lost." Too often, self-evaluation gets elbowed aside in the crunch of a frenetic schedule, yet it's in busy lives that self-evaluation is most important.

Allow for response.

What are some obstacles that keep us from consistent self-evaluation of our ministry?

What are some issues or categories that require regular evaluation?

Why does it help to know in advance, areas that we should be evaluating on a regular basis?

Make a list where the class can see the responses.

Lets list categories or issues that need constant evaluation to insure long-term youth ministry.

As we continue with the rest of this lesson we will come back to this list to determine if we are covering the needs of this class.

Lecture: Personal Considerations

(20 minutes)

Preparing for long term ministry includes a serious look at our personal lives and close relationships. A personal awareness, of our own self-awareness, church relationships, and family relationships help determine the quality of our ministry.

Refer to Resource 20-3 in the Student Guide.

Taking Care of Yourself

Often long term ministry begins with self-care. Success doesn't necessarily mean charging ahead, it may mean down-shifting to find a place where our gifts are being used and to recover our passion. For instance: A great youth worker is flexible and adaptable in many areas of their life while remaining fixed to the Cornerstone of their salvation.

Where are some areas that require personal awareness, flexibility and adaptability?

Understanding Youth Culture—One really has to work at it. Why? Because as you age, your psycho/social maturity should move beyond adolescence. Then it's easy to lose touch with the culture. How do you stay in touch with adolescent culture? Primarily though incarnational, relationally oriented ministry that keeps you in touch with youth and their social context.

Establishing Relationships within the Church—It is an easy thing to sense isolation from your peers. After all, who in your adult small group has ever climbed to the roof of a gas station with 50 people for

a picture except when they were in a fraternity in college? Often we need people who identify with our purpose and ministry to support us and to serve as close friends during difficult times. In addition managing conflict remains the key to long-term youth ministry. Famed Baseball manager Casey Stengel said the secret of management entails keeping the five guys who hate you away from the five guys who are undecided.

This strategy often describes exactly how most of us manage the ugly stuff so that we can get other things done. However, it is not the best way. Walk toward the pain; face conflict and do not ignore it. Conflict is teaching you about a potential “blind-spot” you may have or teaching you to be empathetic to others point of view. Open yourself to others’ input and point of view.

Possessing a Correct Focus—Often your personal attitude determines how circumstances influence your life. Maybe you don’t do everything in youth ministry anymore. In fact, the more you do, the less others will do—not the opposite. This stems from the law of diminishing returns, working harder and harder and accomplishing less and less. Be flexible enough to change your focus on what is important to the ministry. Will you be able to stay with your commitment, or will it stress you out? Will other commitments grow and consume your free time? Can you be objective and maintain focus, or do you keep tacking things on or succumb to the tyranny of the urgent? Can you stay student focused? Too many times youth ministry becomes more about the adults than the students. Resist that temptation.

Maintaining Energy and Freshness—How well are you taking care of yourself? Are you exercising? Eating well? Sleeping too little or too much? Get away from your ministry to gain insight, to gain “room to breathe.” Step outside your denominational fences. Your friends in other denominations or para-church ministries will do things differently than you do. Find out why and adapt, if needed. Enrich yourself through varied experiences. When your entire life is the church and a certain group of people, you lose depth and dimension in your life. Keep yourself balanced.

Continuing your Education and Career Goals in Ministry—We remain life-long learners and need ongoing development. Seminars outside of youth ministry, child development classes, finishing your ordination, attend Nazarene Theological Seminary. Talk

to a counselor or educator who specializes in adolescence and explore youth through their eyes. It can be amazing to hear what a high school teacher or counselor hears every day.

Establishing an Inner Locus rather than an External Locus of Control—When you are driven by *those around you* (expectations, criticism, dominant opinions, etc.) and not *what you know* to be Christian, Spirit-filled, Bible-centered and kingdom-motivated, you will lose your focus and your way in ministry.

Taking Care of Your Family

We must constantly re-learn how to be a better spouse. Take care of your marriage. Your marriage is God's representation of wholeness to the world. Treat it as such. You need to decide to give more time to your family rather than ministry. Len Kagler notes, "Maintaining an 'emotional connection' to one's spouse is essential if a marriage would thrive and grow. One of the key variables in determining whether a couple will divorce is the extent to which the wife feels a quality emotional connection with the husband."

Kagler, Len. The Youth Ministry Survival Guide. Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties/Zondervan 2008, 103.

When a life is out of balance, a ministry is out of balance. How can we say we love others when we ignore or marginalize those closest to us—our family? How do we youth pastor our own children? Carefully. We must lose our "parent eye" and treat our children the same as others. Too often youth workers put the church and youth group ahead of their spouse, children and extended family. The wounding that occurs when this happens can be irreparable. Don't let it happen in your family and ministry.

Allow for response. You might want to put check marks beside the issues that have been touched upon.

How have we done so far with our list of issues?

Which of these areas on Resource 20-3 proves most challenging for your long-term ministry?

Can you name three strategies you are—or will—employ that address personal concerns?

Lecture: Professional Factors

(20 minutes)

While personal factors influence our long-term ministry, professional factors prove equally important.

Church/staff Relationships

Respect the Senior Pastor—Show humility and seek the Pastor's counsel. Work on communication with

Refer to Resource 20-4 in the Student Guide.

pastor and staff. What if you are older or have been at your church longer than your senior pastor? He or she could be intimidated. In fact, members of the church might relate to you more than the Senior Pastor. Seek to help the church recognize pastoral authority. Remember, the Senior Pastor must be understood as a real congregational leader, while you must find alternative ways to express leadership where appropriate.

This could cause problems when the Pastor sees himself or herself as leading the youth ministry in spite of you being the designated youth worker. However, give the position the honor due the position. Be humble in the relationship; don't surrender to pettiness, disillusion and back-biting. Prove your integrity and credibility by your actions and reactions to those around you. Learn to discipline your responses and reactions to youth, their parents, church members and the Pastor. Let people know how you want to work and what you value, as well as, what you want to accomplish. And get that information from them as well. In any relationship, take the high road, be a Kingdom builder.

Be a team player with other staff people—Lend support to the entire church team. A youth ministry that exists only for its own benefit is a shallow and unproductive ministry. Act professionally, think of how you're perceived in the congregation:

- Are you always goofy, funny?
- Are you often dressed inappropriately?
- Are you always late or leaving early?
- Do you play video games or appear distracted during staff meetings?

The more you perform in a professional manner, the more credibility you'll bring to your ministry throughout the church and community.

Organization

Being organized remains a critical component of effective ministry. Keep on top of your schedule. It's difficult to be organized in ministry and private life, but it's crucial. Take a moment and write down the condition of the following areas: Computer, files, library, desk. Would you be embarrassed if someone you respected walked into your office right now? Learn to manage clutter and interruptions professionally.

Learn to prioritize your schedule and not have your schedule prioritize your life. A chronically disorganized

Olsen, Ginny, Diane Elliot and Mike York. Youth Ministry Management Tools. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2001, 15-68.

person is less able to perceive a downward trend. The mark of a good ministry strategy is that it specifically defines what we're not going to do as well as what we're going to do. Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Learn how to say "no" with respect and conviction. Simply adding more to your schedule doesn't make you a better pastor. In fact, saying "no" to things will probably make you a better pastor.

Do the "right thing" by people. Be attentive and caring to those around you. You need to remember and respond appropriately to key events:

- Birthdays, anniversaries, key dates
- Appointments
- Special events
- Are you up-to-date on thank you notes, correspondence?

Form a Leadership Team

This is the surest hedge against the "Messiah complex." The more valuable ministry is, the more it has to be a shared ministry. Simply stop doing ministry by yourself. That is a recipe for disaster in so many ways.

Olsen, 161-187.

Stewardship

We need to learn to take care of personal and ministry finances as well as caring for people in our ministry. This task remains an essential aspect in the life of a youth pastor. Someone who lacks integrity in finances and structure will not be respected enough to be listened to about God's plan for a young person's life.

Keep personal and ministry finances separate.

You need to model good personal stewardship while avoiding any appearance of misusing funds directed for youth ministry. Often temptation surfaces when money becomes accessible. Take care to maintain good records and have other church members available to hold you accountable.

Develop your yearly budget carefully. Ask a business person in your congregation to look it over. Even if you have a few pennies to work with, when you show wisdom and integrity you'll probably be trusted with more. Never handle cash. Ask parents in the youth ministry to collect, count, and submit any cash given to the ministry. Appoint a treasurer if you don't have one on the youth council, to handle the financial

Olsen, 95-124.

transactions. In addition be careful about spending your own money on ministry.

Understand that as a paid youth worker that you're never going to make a lot of money so:

Save, save, save

And invest for retirement

Field, Doug. Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/ Youth Specialties 2002, 255-59, Olsen et al. Youth Ministry Management Tools, 245-252.

When you accept a new assignment, be realistic! Check the facts of the financial arrangements as well as the job description. It might be best to have all arrangements in writing and, when appropriate, ask the Church treasurer to sign or initial it.

Do Ministry Carefully

Don't take unnecessary risks just to be the "fun" person in the group. Jack Crabtree notes the real problem:

"(W)hen youth leaders get honest, you will hear many stories with bad choices and foolish actions. The only difference that most of them haven't had the tragic results of [a fatal] cave story. Many youth leaders have had potentially deadly close calls and have lived to tell about it (by God's grace and mercy). 'Those cave explorers weren't bad people. They were trying to help kids have a positive adventure and personal growth experience. They had enthusiasm and energy. They were right in there with the kids sharing the experience. There was only one problem—they didn't know what they were doing. They lacked wisdom and experience. They were careless and didn't take safety concerns seriously. Sadly they (and the boys who died) paid for it.'"

Crabtree, Jack. Better Safe Than Sued. Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties/ Zondervan 2008, 29.

Youth ministers need to be the adult in all situations and not succumb to being liked for the sake of temporary thrills that could cost someone his or her life. Think safety, make appropriate plans, and carry notarized permission slips with you at all times.

Olsen, 199-226.

Allow for response.

Have we covered more on our list of issues?

Which of these ideas from Resource 20-4 proves most challenging for your long-term ministry?

Can you name three strategies you are—or will—employ that address personal concerns?

Lecture/Discussion: Spiritual Life

(10 minutes)

Ultimately your inner spiritual life is the strength of your life and ministry. As previous lessons have noted, you need to maintain a close relationship with God.

Stay in God's Word. The Bible remains a crucial resource for ongoing growth. Even John Wesley, the spiritual "grandfather" of our tradition, considered himself "A man of one book." We would do well to heed God's direction through scripture.

We also need to remain transparent and accountable with youth, parents, youth sponsors, and pastoral staff. The greatest defense against burnout is a group of people that you can be honest with, share, confide, celebrate and cry with. Become accountable for successes and failures, professionally and personally. Give people permission to be honest, to point out blind spots in your life and attitudes. Burnout is most easily seen by others, so be open to what counsel they offer—it could save your ministry.

In all, we must remain honest before God and others about our spiritual state.

Refer to Resource 20-5 in the Student Guide. Either read it yourself or call on one of the students.

Refer to Resource 20-6 in the Student Guide.

Rule of Devotional Life

Remember to establish a personal plan, a rule of devotional life, that guides your spiritual walk:

- Develop a plan to read and study the Bible. Prioritize a time alone with God every day.
- Consider taking personal retreats that could be one or several days. We hear God speak more clearly when the noise around us diminishes. So plan at least one time a year to retreat in silence, solitude, meditation and scripture.
- Evaluate your life and ministry by spirituality and not by a secular, consumerist basis (success/growth). "More, bigger, best" is not the standard of success in the church. True success in ministry is faithfulness to God and scripture.

Doug Fields writes, "Without spiritual health, you won't make it in youth ministry. Don't misunderstand: you

Fields, 64.

don't need the knowledge of a Bible scholar or the spiritual disciplines of a monk, but you do need a heart that's tender toward God and open to his leadings. You need to be in love with Jesus."

How can you begin to accomplish a Rule of Devotional Life?

What have you tried that has worked for you?

Are you still doing it? Why?

What hasn't worked? Can you identify why not?

Is there someone who you can partner with who will hold you accountable?

Allow a minute for the class to write something down.

Take a minute and write down one very specific thing that you will begin tomorrow in your spiritual relationship with God. Make this a covenant between you and God.

How did we do with our list?

Is there something else that we need to help each other learn?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Allow a couple of minutes for the students to write.

This is the last lesson of this module. Make a list of the five most valuable things that you have gained from this module.

Write a master list on a power point or flip chart.

What is on your list?

Is there something you wish we would have covered in this module?

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write in your journal. Why are you in Youth Ministry? What is your passion in life? Do the answers to the two questions fit together?

Punctuate the Finish

Mike Yaconelli, Getting Fired for the Glory of God, 119.

“The call of God is difficult to explain but impossible to ignore. It’s the nagging, conscious awareness asking you to do something. The asking comes not from words, but from deep within, as though a voice had been planted inside and now is beginning to speak. This voice, the calling voice, has many ways of speaking—your passion for young people, the unique parts of you that seem to attract young people, the sense of joy and fulfillment that overflows into your soul when you’re with young people. It’s the great YES of your life that fills you with a sense of belonging, the warmth of being home.”

Close in a time of prayer for each of the students.

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