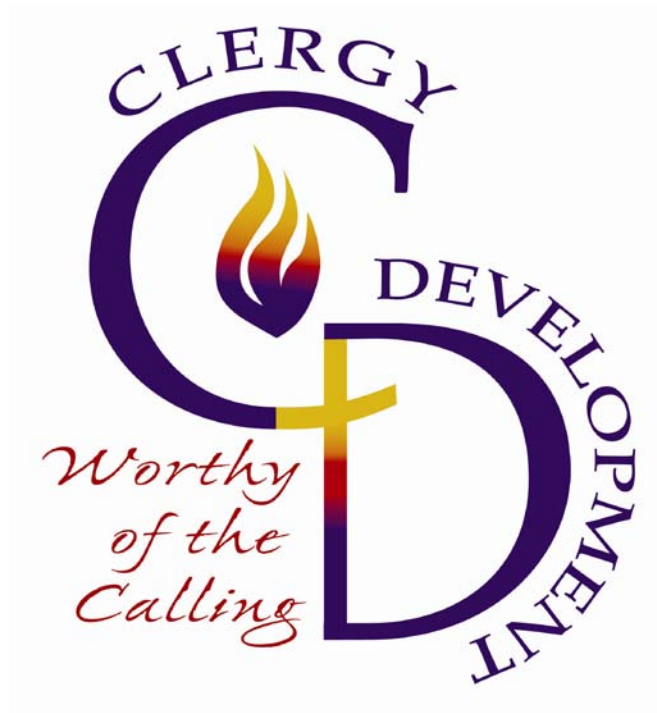

Student Guide

Developing Youth Ministry



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (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, all of the 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 blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:7-9, NRSV).

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.

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.

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Syllabus

Developing Youth Ministry

Educational Institution, Setting, or Educational Provider:

Location of the Course:

Course Dates:

Name of the Instructor:

Instructor's Address, Telephone, and E-mail Address:

Module Vision Statement:

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.

Educational Assumptions

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experiences to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the instructor and the reading assignments but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason that so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.

4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.

Outcome Statements

This module contributes to the development of the following abilities as defined in the *U.S. Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*.

OUTCOME STATEMENTS

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

Recommended Reading

While there is no assigned textbook for this module there are excellent books that would be an asset to your personal library. The following are the books available at the present time that are recommended by the writers of this module.

Burns, Jim with Mark DeVries. *Uncommon Youth Ministry: Your Onramp to Launching an Extraordinary Youth Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2008. Originally Published (2001) Jim Burns and Mark DeVries. *The Youth Builder*. Ventura CA: Gospel Light.

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.

Hampton, Jim and Rick Edwards. *Worship-Centered Teaching*. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Middendorf, Jon. *Worship-Centered Youth Ministry*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000.

Recommended resources

Barefoot Ministries of Nazarene Publishing House <http://www.barefootministries.com>
Toll free 866.355.9933.

Big Picture Training: <http://www.bigpicturetraining.org>

NYI Global Ministry: <http://www.nyitoday.org/>

Course Requirements

- 1. Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is small-group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing, the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one or two lessons are missed, the learning leader will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If three or more lessons are missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.

Small-Group Work. Nothing is more important in this course than small-group work. The class members will be assigned to groups of two to four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for explorations and discussion.

2. Assignments

Journaling: The only on-going assignment for this module is your journal. It is to be used regularly, if not daily. On at least one occasion during the term, the instructor will check the journals. In each lesson a journal assignment is included.

The journal should become the student's friend and treasury of insights, devotions, and ideas. Here the integration of theory and practice occurs. The spiritual life nature of the journal helps guard against the course of study being merely academic as you are repeatedly called upon to apply the principles studied to your own heart and your own ministry situation.

This journal is not a diary, not a catchall. It is, rather, a guided journal or a focused journal in which the educational experience and its implications are selected for reflection and writing.

The framers of this curriculum are concerned about the way students fall into learning "about" the Bible or "about" the spiritual life rather than learning—that is, coming to know and internalize the Bible and spiritual principles. The journaling experience ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in the course of study. Be faithful with all journaling assignments.

Daily Work: This module has regular homework assignments. It is called daily work because even though the class may only meet once a week, the student should be working on the module on a "daily" basis. Sometimes the homework assignments are quite heavy. The assignments are important. Even if homework is not discussed in class every session, the work is to be handed in. This gives the instructor regular information about the student's progress in the course. The normal time for homework to be handed in is at the beginning of each class session. **All** assignments are to be completed.

Course Outline and Schedule

The class will meet for 30 hours according to the following schedule:

Session Date	Session Time	
		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 Belonging
		15. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Simplicity and Retreat
		16. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Pastoral Care
		17. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Offering Direction
		18. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Equipping Leaders
		19. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Empowering Youth
		20. Youth Ministry Craft—The Legacy of Long-term Ministry

Course Evaluation

The instructor, the course itself, and the student's progress will be evaluated. These evaluations will be made in several ways.

The progress of students will be evaluated with an eye for enhancing the learning experience by:

1. Carefully observing the small-group work, noting the competence of reports, the balance of discussion, the quality of the relationships, the cooperation level, and the achievement of assigned tasks
2. Careful reading of homework assignments
3. Journal checks

The evaluation of the course materials and the teacher will be evaluated by frequently asking and discussing the effectiveness and relevance of a certain method, experience, story, lecture, or other activity.

Some evaluation cannot be made during the class itself. Some objectives will not be measurable for years to come. If students encounter the transforming power of God at deeper levels than ever before, learn devotional skills and practice them with discipline, and incorporate the best of this course into their own ministries, the fruit of

this educational endeavor could go on for a long time. In truth, that is what we expect.

Additional Information

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the instructor to see what can be done to help.

Instructor's Availability

Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.

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 course you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, write papers, and take exams. 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 course work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritually formative 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 as 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, 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 course 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 that 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 course work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration, weaving together faith development with 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

Due This Lesson

None

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

Cycle of Practical Theology

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.

4 Cs Interviews

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?

Social World Interviews

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.

Interviewing Parents

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.

Journal

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?

Definition

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.

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

—Dean Blevins

Approaches to Ministry

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.

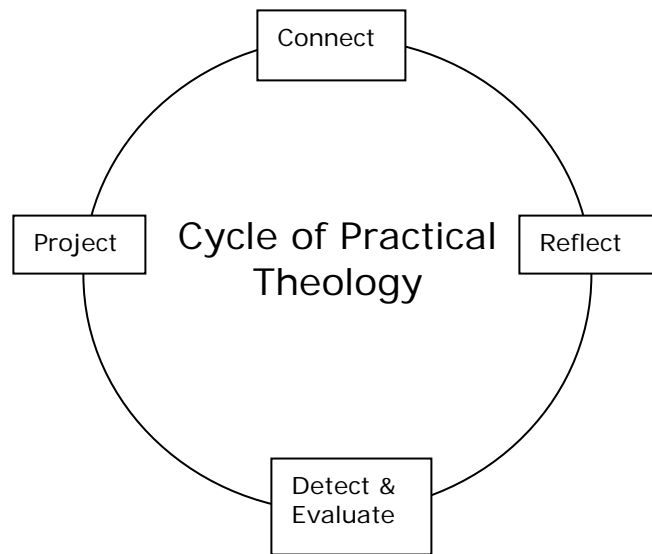
- The second approach involves gathering a basic understanding of the different competencies needed for a comprehensive understanding of ministry. This approach actually provides a basic framework, or a “map,” for organizing the different aspects of ministry into a coherent plan.

Architecture of Theology

Biblical Theology	Historical Theology	Systematic Theology	Philosophical Theology	Pastoral Theology	Practical Theology
Drawing from Scripture theological truths	Historical development of faith and theology	Systematic thought on Scripture and Church Creeds	Engages with other areas of intellectual thought	Reflection upon ministerial practices in church	Dialog between Christian practice and other social/cultural disciplines

Cycle of Practical Theology

- **Connect:** Naming and connecting every-day experiences that are part of our ministry. (How well do we see what is really happening?)
- **Reflect:** Taking a step back to probe our assumptions, selecting those aspects of the experience that prove to be most important (How well do we understand the various influences that shape our experiences and what we value about them?)
- **Detect and Evaluation:** Bringing the “big ideas” that surface from our reflection into direct dialog with scripture, Christian doctrine, and the history of the church. (How do the contents of the Christian faith critique or affirm our ministry actions?)
- **Project:** Beginning to imagine and implement new ministry strategies based on a more faithful vision of ministry. (How well do we learn from our experience as we plan the next ministry activities?).



Major Categories of Ministerial Education¹

□ **Content**—Knowledge of the content of the Old and New Testaments, the theology of the Christian faith, and the history and mission of the Church is essential for ministry. Knowledge of how to interpret Scripture, the doctrine of holiness and our Wesleyan distinctives, and the history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene must be included in these courses.

□ **Competency**—Skills in oral and written communication; management and leadership; finance; and analytical thinking are also essential for ministry. In addition to general education in these areas courses providing skills in preaching, pastoral care and counseling, biblical exegesis, worship, effective evangelism, biblical stewardship of life resources, Christian education and church administration must be included. Completion from a validated course of study requires the partnering of the educational provider and a local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development.

□ **Character**—Personal growth in character, ethics, spirituality, and personal and family relationship is vital for the ministry. Courses addressing the areas of Christian ethics, spiritual formation, human development, the person of the minister, and marriage and family dynamics must be included.

□ **Context**—The minister must understand both the historical and contemporary context and interpret the worldview and social environment of the culture where the Church witnesses. Courses that address the concerns of anthropology and sociology, cross-cultural communication, missions, and social studies must be included.

Key Questions:

- 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 Christ-likeness?
- 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?

Overview of the Module

Context of Youth Ministry

1. Introduction to Youth Ministry
2. Cultural and Social Contexts for Youth Ministry
3. Psychological and Developmental Influences in Youth Ministry

Content of Youth Ministry

4. Biblical and Theological Foundations of Youth Ministry
5. History of Youth Ministry
6. Philosophical Foundations of Youth Ministry

Character of the Youth Minister

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

Competency for Youth Ministry

10. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Worship
11. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Witness and Evangelism
12. Youth Ministry Discipleship—Nurture 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—Providing Care
18. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Equipping Leaders
19. Youth Ministry Shepherding—Empowering Youth
20. Youth Ministry Craft—The Legacy of Long-Term Ministry

LASTS Cultural Guide

L.A.S.T.S.: *Exploring & Explaining* Youth Culture

Ever wanted to help someone understand your world? Ever felt like you needed to be a “cultural guidebook” for someone so they could better understand what is meaningful for your generation? Here is your chance. You are about to become both a “cultural anthropologist” and cross-cultural guide to help other people take your world seriously. Think about the five categories that often describe the “lasting” aspects of a culture (what gives the culture enduring meaning): Language, Actions (and Actors), Space, Time and Symbols. How a given group of people uses these categories tells a lot about what is lasting and enduring about their culture.

L anguage

Language communicates key thoughts and ideas. Sometimes we use code language or “slang” (a type of insider language) that is important for our friends. At other times language communicates central concepts and values (like “security,” “compassion,” “friendship”) that are meaningful to our lives. Can you identify either code language or valued concepts that are important in your world?

A ctions

Actions (and the people who perform the actions) often tell us what is meaningful in what we “do” in our day-to-day lives. They may involve a simple process (shaking hands) or complex activities (playing sports). Some actions have a “ritual” quality (a particular way of greeting someone), other actions help us just get through the day. Often we associate different types of activity with different people (sports/athletes, academics/intellecuals, relationships/dates, etc.) What are some key activities you engage in daily or at specific times of the week and with whom?

S pace

We often associate certain aspects of our lives with particular spaces. We have buildings dedicated to education, to religion, to sports, to business, to legal activities, etc. Sometimes we divide up a building into social, private, and even “safe” spaces. Think about your week, where are some key “spaces” that you spend time inhabiting and why? Where are the places your friends get together? Where do you spend most of your time each day or during key times of the day?

T ime

If space identifies our physical presence, time identifies both our needs and desires. Often time identifies how we “order” and prioritize our activities and relationships. Sometimes the most important things in our lives are not necessarily the things we spend the most time doing, so “timing” is important as well. How do youth around you spend most of their time? What are some key moments or times that are especially important?

S ymbols

Every culture has certain “concrete” images/symbols that convey meaning, whether an art-form or commercial product. There are certain images that do not need explaining; instead they ignite our passion and imagination. Advertisers understand this as well as governments and churches. If you could bring three or four images/symbols that are meaningful to your youth culture what might they be?

LASTS Journal

Take a couple of minutes to identify key components of your culture under each domain strictly from memory. Feel free to include anything you like from the profound to the ridiculous (you can change it later). Then keep an eye out during the day for new entries for each category and add them when you have the chance. You will be surprised at what you “notice” each day.

LANGUAGE:

ACTIONS (and actors):

SPACE:

TIME:

SYMBOLS:

LASTS Intersections

Obviously there are moments when these five domains intersect. Think it through and see what is important. Do certain actions occur at certain times? Are key symbols associated with selected spaces? Try to sift through and identify what is crucial about your culture if you tried to explain it to someone else.

	Language	Action	Space	Time	Symbols
Language	LASTS				
Action		LASTS			
Space			LASTS		
Time				LASTS	
Symbols					LASTS

Lesson 2: Cultural and Social Contexts for Youth Ministry

Due This Lesson

Paper on Practical Theology
Paper on 4 Cs interviews
Paper on social world interviews
Paper from parent interviews
Completed Resources 1-7, 1-8, 1-9
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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.

Suggested Reading

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.

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>.

Small Groups

In your group discuss the following questions in regard to the dictionary definitions of culture. You may refer to Resource 1-7 if it would be helpful to you.

What do these definitions have in common? (See definitions below)

How do they help you identify key components of your culture or the culture your youth live within?

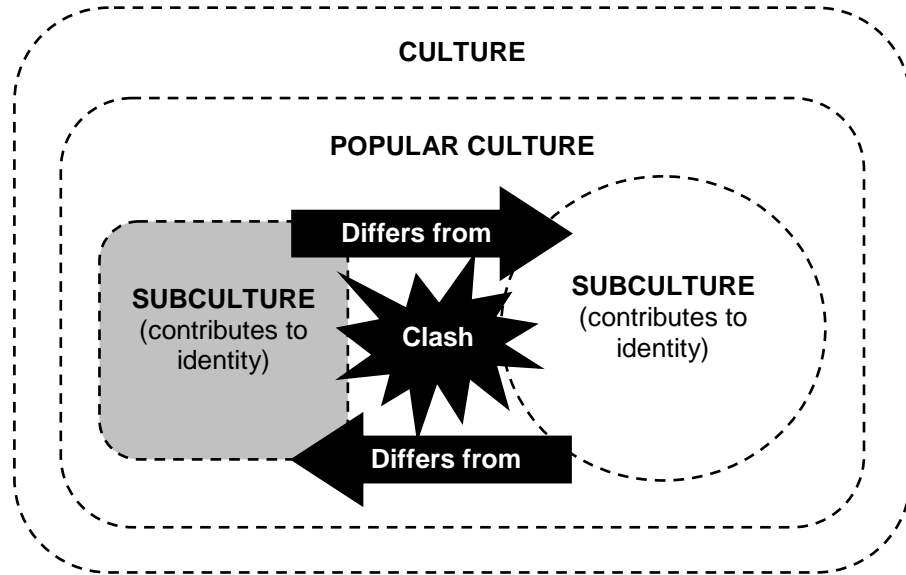
Can you expand your list? How would you describe the beliefs, social forms, symbols and signs of your own cultural context?

What is important within your culture?

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary,² culture is described as:

- The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations
- The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group
- The characteristic features of everyday existence

Youth Ministry and Subculture



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).

Contextualization

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 group. 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.”³

Building Partnerships

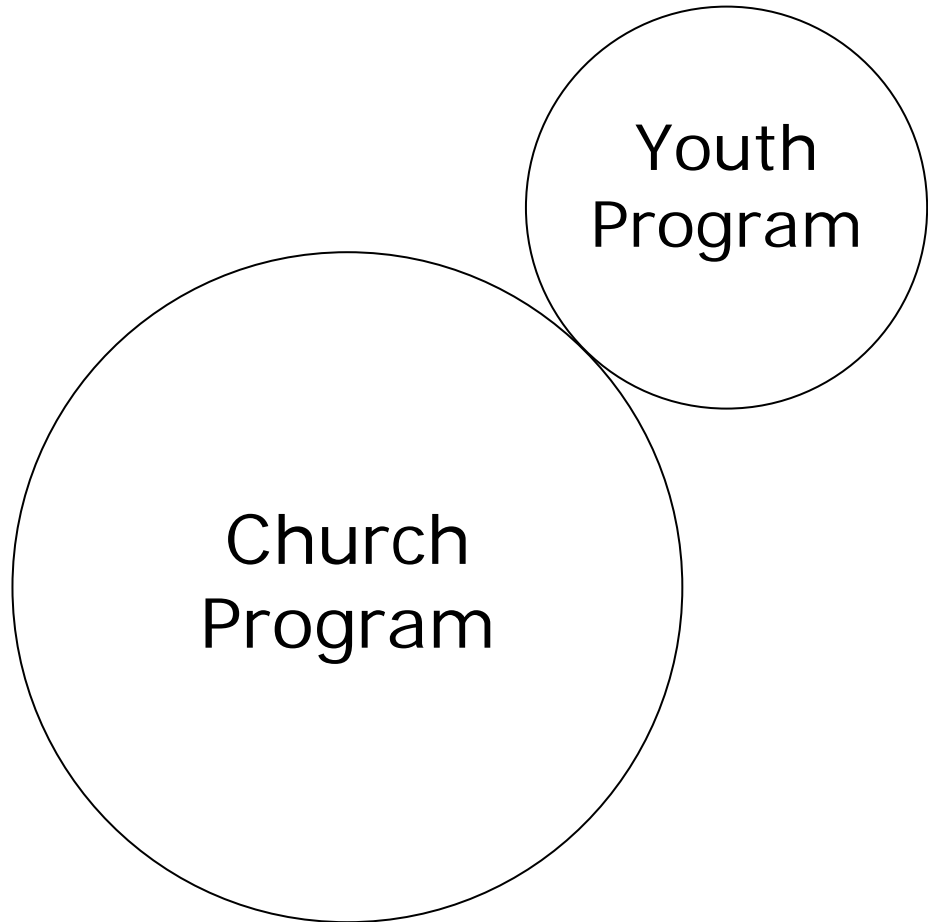
Eugene Roehlkepartain suggests the following (paraphrased) guidelines for building partnerships between congregations and neighborhoods:⁴

- **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.

Working with Families of Youth⁵

- **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.

One Eared Mickey Mouse Youth Ministry



Ask 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?

Practical Tips for Building an Intergenerational Youth Ministry

Worship

Worship together instead of separating into age level worship services.
Include youth as regular leaders in corporate worship (prayer, scripture, music).
Plan a special "youth service" for Sunday night.
Preach about the family of God.
Pray for greater unity and cohesion in the church family.
Enlist families to pray for other families.
Design a worship service that includes elements appealing to youth as well as to adults
Deliberately consider children and youth when preparing a sermon.
Periodically, encourage families to sit together or encourage youth to sit with adults.
Ahead of time, enlist young and old to share their testimonies; model faith that way.

Education and Discipleship

Hold a church life brainstorming session where people of all ages can exchange ideas.
Organize small groups around family units, not age levels.
Teach lessons and hold seminars on the theological nature of the church family.
Offer counseling and training sessions for parents.
Allow youth to hold positions on boards and committees.
Hold an occasional Sunday School class for all ages; mix up families into small groups.
Equip families to develop a shared devotional life.
Develop an inclusive mission statement that honors church as family.
Seasonally, design a curriculum that all ages study at the same time in their age groups.
Encourage skilled members to conduct "how-to" workshops for all age groups.

Fellowship

Spend time outdoors in recreation; take an all-guys camping trip.
Take a youth out to lunch for the purpose of getting to know him or her.
Spend time with youth in your home or their homes with family.
Design church activities for inclusion of youth.
Hold regular family inclusive events such as float trips or barbeques.
Hold quarterly dinners for families with youth.
Encourage congregation members to attend sporting events of youth.
Encourage families to visit each other's homes for dinner groups.
Design and implement a mentoring program that is gospel-centered and relationship-based.
Plan a progressive dinner, moving from home to home with each course.
Invite youth to participate in intergenerational sports teams (softball, flag football).
Hold an all-church Thanksgiving or Easter feast.
Take advantage of holidays to bring church families together for fun and food.
When seeking financial aid for youth, use the opportunity to connect donors with youth.
Take members of the congregation to a team-building ropes challenge course.
When youth do fundraisers, do something that directly benefits the congregation.
When youth do fundraisers, do something that requires collaboration with adults.
When youth do fundraisers, do all-church projects instead of individual sales.
Send youth to visit with the elderly, helping them to write cards to family members.
Remember that recreation and games are about play, not "winning."

Mission and Evangelism

Organize a work day that focuses on inclusion more than task completion.
Extend compassionate ministry to those among the congregation who are in need.
Organize an easily affordable mission trip. Open it up to the whole congregation.
Walk through the community singing Christmas carols.
Form an intergenerational care team to welcome and follow up with visitors of all ages.
Hold an all church block party and open it up to the surrounding neighborhood.
Enlist all ages to participate in missions and building offerings.

Youth Assets

Search Institute⁶ 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. They include

Support Assets	Empowerment Assets	Boundaries and Expectations Assets	Constructive Use of Time Assets
Family Support	Community values youth	Family boundaries	Creative Activities
Positive Family Communication	Youth seen as resources	School boundaries	Youth Programs
Other Adult Relationships	Service to others	Neighborhood boundaries	Religious Community
Caring Neighborhood	Safety (youth feel safe)	Adult Role Models	Time at Home
Caring School Climate		Positive Peer Influence	
Parent Involvement in schooling		High Expectations	

Internal assets incorporate internal strengths, commitments, and values that provide guidance and direction for youth. These external and internal assets are seen as the product of socialization through systems such as neighborhoods, congregations, families, youth groups, and schools.

Commitment to Learning Assets	Positive Values Assets	Social Competencies Assets	Positive Identity Assets
Achievement motivation	Caring	Planning and decision making	Personal power
School engagement	Equality and social justice	Interpersonal competence	Self-esteem
Homework	Integrity	Cultural competence	Sense of purpose
Bonding to school	Honesty	Resistance skills	Positive view of personal future
Reading for pleasure	Responsibility	Peaceful conflict resolution	
	Restraint		

Road Trip! To Intergenerational Ministry

The Starting Point: Your church right now



Which of these two descriptions does your church most resemble?

“Professional Program Church”—In this church, children’s church takes place on Sunday morning and youth worship takes place on Sunday night. Program directors design seasonal celebrations and special events for each age group. Adult leaders model careful leadership for the young who will become the “Church of tomorrow”. The church provides “something for everyone”: specialized, professional activities.

“Faith Family Church”—In this church, worship brings all age levels together. It is designed to help children, youth and adults all find something relevant to their lives. Seasonal celebrations and special events serve as “family” gatherings for all generations. Children and youth are both seen *and* heard. They share with adults in ministry as ushers, teachers, nursery workers, greeters, pray-ers and scripture readers. When students graduate from high school, they realize they are already the “Church of today.”

No matter where your church appears on the spectrum between these two extremes, you can begin a new journey toward intergenerational (church as family) ministry today!

Checking the Compass: Directions in Scripture

The Bible makes it clear: the Church is one. One body (Eph 4:3-6), one priesthood (2 Pet 2:9), one family (Mt 12:46-49). While Jesus valued the domestic family (Mt 19:18-19), He also knew that it alone could not bring salvation (Jn 3:5-6). The Church is the living embodiment of Christ’s presence on earth (Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4). The world sees and meets Jesus through the Church as it loves one another (Jn 13:34-35). In fact, there is no better way to see and meet Jesus than through the Church.



The Church is not a place, but a people . . . a people who welcome and celebrate children (Mk 10:13-16) . . . a people who seek “the faith of a child” (Mt 18:3-5). In a world of class, age and gender barriers, it is the Church who refuses to place one group in prominence over another (Gal 3:28). To the contrary, the Church encourages and expects its members to share in work and witness regardless of age (Acts 2:17-21)! Young people need the nurture of the Church, but they also “set an example” for the Church (1 Tim 4:12). The Church lives and shares life together, loving and serving each other. Sounds a lot like family, doesn’t it?

On our “road trip” to intergenerational ministry, scripture points to these destinations:

1. Young people are fully the Church of today, not just the Church of tomorrow
2. The Church understands that it is God’s “first family of faith”
3. The Church commits to restructuring its life in order to come together as one.

Mapping the Route: Steps for a new direction



Step One: Check your current course

Ask some hard questions. Do some critical thinking. Take a fresh look at your ministry to children, youth and adults.

- When does your whole church gather together?
- During those gatherings, do different age levels interact or group separately?
- During corporate worship, how often do children or youth lead from the platform?
- During corporate worship, are children treated as “guests”?
- Does your corporate worship structure intentionally appeal to all age levels?
- Does your church ever feel like a collection of small groups, independent from one another?
- How often do your children and youth minister to the congregation?
- How often do your children and youth minister alongside adults?
- Is your idea of children’s ministry closer to “childcare” or a “training ground for ministry”?
- Do your adults promote the idea that “God is love” or “God is cranky”?
- What percentage of budgeted funds is spent for specific children and youth ministry?
- What percentage of calendared events and emphases are “all-ages friendly”?
- At what level may children and youth participate in the work of decision-making committees?
- When all ages come together, is the energy and mess more stressful or joyful?
- Is “family ministry” understood as something you should do, or something you already are?

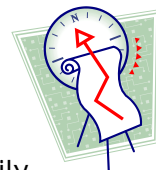
Step Two: Compare maps with your leaders

Every leader in your church holds a set of assumptions about age-level ministry and the “Church as family” vision. They see things you do not, just as you see some things they do not. As you “compare maps,” you will help each other to more clearly see the route to healthy intergenerational ministry.

- Prayerfully ask God to prepare the way as you speak with your church leaders
- Listen to leaders answer the same questions you asked yourself in Step One above
- Search for and affirm the hearts of others to nurture Christians of all ages
- Build consensus to try one new way of coming together as God’s family
- Agree that the road trip toward “Church as family” will be sensitive . . . not sudden.

Step Three: Re-chart your course

The road trip to “Church as family” is a paradigm shift, not just another program to add into the mix. You can’t just take any old tree, slap wax fruit on it, and call it an apple tree. The fruit of intergenerational ministry only grows when congregations re-imagine themselves as “the whole family of God.”



- Affirm and amplify those ministries that already live in the direction of “Church as family.” Many activities (Sunday School, service projects, afterglows, etc.) can be “tweaked” to bring all ages together
- Corporate worship is the core gathering of God’s family each week. Make sure it purposefully involves and engages Christians of all ages as participants and as leaders
- Open up the “power centers” in your church to include children and youth. Invite and encourage them to help make decisions that affect the whole congregation. Expect them to be sensitive to adults, just as adults are sensitive to them. Ask them to help incorporate new ideas. Let them see the fruit of their labors. Give them the opportunity to evaluate the new things you try.
- Look for ways to live together, instead of separately. So many of us strive for the “professional program” model of ministry. After all, that’s what the “successful” churches do! Perhaps the most successful churches are those that turn seasonal celebrations and departmental ministries into occasions for “family reunion” instead of the “Christian cafeteria.”
- Have fun! When the whole church family comes together, do things everyone can enjoy. Often, we adults just sit around and talk. Instead, plan time for some energetic singing, a mixer game, a creative project, or a directed spontaneous drama. As the smiling and laughing grows, so will the faith family.
- Adopt a symbol. Pictures teach what words often cannot. Prominently display the image of a lion and lamb together, or the image of a family holding hands. Talk about why the images are featured in the church. Talk about what it means to be a faith family where opposites can get along.
- Keep dreaming. There is no “one way” sign to intergenerational ministry. Prepare yourself for moderate successes and moderate failures along the way. Keep trying. As Eugene Peterson put it in the title of his book, you are seeking “A Long Obedience in the Same Direction.”

Step Four: Anticipate roadblocks and hazards



Be ready. Whenever something new is attempted, objections are many and opposition increases.

Cost—Surprisingly, cost is not a primary roadblock. The “Church as family” vision depends upon linking together Christians of all ages, not buying lots of stuff or entertaining them. Game or art supplies are often helpful . . . so are light refreshments.

Calm—When age levels come together, the energy level increases. This can be a good thing. Hopefully, higher energy serves as an indication of higher personal engagement.

Calendar—This is tougher. Try to reduce the frequency of territorial disputes over dates and resources by combining some (but not all) age-level activities into multi-age activities. This may mean less convenience, but it may also mean more community building.

Confusion—Some will fear the “dumbing down” of content, while others will fear teaching “over the heads” of young people. Neither need be. When you bring a new baby into the home, you don’t quit teaching your eight-year-old. You teach on both levels. In the same way, children and adults can learn together.

Quality—Some will voice concern that excellence in ministry may decrease. Try to redefine the word “excellence”. Is Christian excellence merely being “sharp, slick and professional”? Can Christian excellence also include loving one

another as God's family? Some events and occasions that seem awkward or difficult may bring the best opportunity for affirmation and love.

Step Five: Look for special roadside attractions



To one degree or another, every Christian leader takes the road trip toward the "church as family" vision. Intuitively, every Christian leader creates special activities along the way to that destination. Your colleagues in ministry have already designed intergenerational ministry events that can serve as "roadside attractions" for you on your journey.

Family Sunday School—Once a quarter, gather your parents and children together for a time of listening and discussion on any Christian topic. Serve a light "snack" breakfast.

Graduation Banquet—When anyone graduates from a school, gather together for a celebratory meal and a time of testimony. Ask members to share a testimony of faith affirmation for the one who has graduated.

Hanging of the Greens—On the first Sunday in Advent, have a service with singing and decorating the church for the holy-days.

Helping Hand—When young people babysit or mow grass or rake leaves for older members, encourage the older members to take just a moment to hug and pray for them.

Service Project—Invite young people to join the adults for a service project or mission trip, or vice versa. Bring the adults as "co-participants" instead of as "behavior managers."

Turkey Bowl—Once a year, pit your adults versus your youth in a November flag football game. Start with a hot dog tailgate party, keep it fun, and make some great memories. If you don't like flag football, pick a recreational sport everyone can enjoy.

Vacation Bible School—Any time the church does children's ministry, the youth can serve alongside the adults.

Worship Service—Make sure every age group gets "platform time." Affirm the priesthood of all believers by allowing others to read scripture, to pray, to make announcements, to take offering, to greet, and so on.



The creators of this document would gladly dialogue further with you about intergenerational ministry:

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Lesson 3: Psychological and Developmental Influences in Youth Ministry

Due This Lesson

1-page paper
2-3 page paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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.

Early Adolescence

Key Descriptor—Concrete Ages—11-14

Developmental Issue		Implication(s)
Physical Development	Onset of Puberty	Sensitivity to various levels of development within any group of young persons
Identity Formation	Embedded in family/beginning exploration	Reinforce Christian family values Provide safe environments to explore identity and doubt
Relational/Social	Unisex groups/growing self awareness	Positive relationships Modeling vital Prohibit teasing of any kind
Cognition/Thinking	Concrete	Teaching must be linear and concrete
Moral	Preconventional/Conventional	Understand that young persons may act "good" or "bad" to please authorities

Adolescence Begins in Biology and Ends in Culture⁷

	Onset of Puberty	Cultural/Adulthood Marker
1900	Average age of female puberty was 14.5	16—no more organized school for most children
1970-1980	Average age—13	18-20—High school/college graduation expected
2000	Average age—12	Mid 20's

Kolberg's Moral Stages

Kolberg's theory specifies six stages of moral development, arranged in three levels.

Level I: Preconventional/Premoral

Moral values reside in external, quasi-physical events. The child is responsive to rules and evaluative labels, in terms of the physical power of those who impose the rules.

Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation

Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble-avoiding set.
Objective responsibility.

Stage 2: Naively egoistic orientation

Right action is that which is instrumental in satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'.

Level II: Conventional/Role Conformity

Moral values reside in performing the right role, in maintaining the conventional order and expectancies of others as a value in its own right.

Stage 3: Good-boy/good-girl orientation

Orientation to approval, to pleasing and helping others. Action is evaluated in terms of intentions.

Stage 4: Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation

Orientation to "duty" and showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order. Differentiates actions out of a sense of obligation from actions for "nice" motives.

Level III: Postconventional/Self-Accepted Moral Principles

Morality is defined in terms of conformity to shared standards, or rights. The standards conformed to are internal, and are based on an inner process of thought concerning right and wrong.

Stage 5: Contractual/legalistic orientation

Norms of right and wrong are defined in terms of laws or institutionalized rules which seem to have a rational basis. When conflict arises between individual needs and law, though sympathetic to the former, the individual believes the latter must prevail.

Stage 6: The morality of individual principles of conscience

Orientation not only toward existing social rules, but also toward the conscience as a directing agent, mutual trust and respect, and principles of moral choice involving logical universalities and consistency.

Middle Adolescence

Key Descriptor—Self-Protection Ages—14-18

Developmental Issue		Implication(s)
Physical Development	Puberty in full process and conclusion	Males gaining considerable size and physical strength and significant physical attraction between sexes
Identity Formation	Exploration	Provide safe environment to explore identity and allow for doubt
Relational/Social	Heterosexual groups/ egocentricity	Be careful to treat "clusters" with respect and do not condemn this natural grouping. Modeling of positive relationships vital Prohibit teasing of any kind
Cognition/Thinking	Abstract	Teaching can now focus on more abstract theological issues
Moral	Conventional	Ability to conceptualize a society's need for law and order based upon fulfilling one's "duty"

Identity Formation⁸

Researcher James Marcia's theory

Label	Identity Moratoriums	Identity. Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion	Identity Achievement
Crisis	Present	Absent	Absent	Present
Commitment	Absent	Present	Absent	Present

Late Adolescence/Emerging Adulthood

**Key Descriptor—Abstract
Ages—18-25**

Developmental Issue		Implication(s)
Physical Development	Completion of physical maturation	None
Identity Formation	Completion of sifting of alternatives and commitment	Provide support and reassurance in face of questions and doubt
Relational/Social	Pairing	Modeling of healthy relationships vital
Cognition/Thinking	Abstract/Late formal operations	Adult-like ability
Moral	Conventional/Post-conventional	Values concepts like “liberty” and theoretical ability toward Universal ethics

Emerging Adults

Jeffery Arnett's five characteristics of emerging adults:⁹

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's Definition of Adulthood¹⁰

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

Small Groups

Take time in your group to brainstorm how we as youth workers can be more creative to design developmentally appropriate transitions for our young people.

- *Are there ceremonies that we could create akin to rites of passage in our churches/ministries to facilitate these transitions?*
- *What might those look like?*
- *How would they be beneficial to not only the individuals going through the ceremony but also to the congregation in informing them that these are people in process who deserve our love, respect, and partnership?*
- *Are there roles that the early, middle, and late adolescent ought to play in our congregations in which they are not currently involved?*

Consistent Ministry—Biblical Considerations

When one turns to scripture for the motivation and direction for youth ministry, there are a number of considerations. *First*, scripture provides the basic narrative of God's gracious salvation for all of creation: beginning in the Old Testament with the creation and calling of the nation of Israel, focusing through the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as savior and Lord, continuing through the power of the Holy Spirit with the calling of the Church and culminating with Christ's return and the transformation of all creation at the end of the age. The Bible portrays the truth of God in a storied fashion, a magnificent narrative of God working in the lives of people through the centuries and, through Jesus Christ, providing the basic means for our salvation.¹¹

The narrative power of scripture relates directly to the way youth understand their own lives as stories.¹² Through the reading of scripture, youth can discover humanities' basic tendency toward sin and its consequences for people and nations. Young people will also discover God's continuing love and Christ's redeeming power in the face of our sinfulness, and our ability to receive salvation by grace through faith. Youth are challenged to live lives shaped by the message and example of Jesus, and to participate with God's ongoing missional work in transforming the world, seeking to bring about "*Shalom*" (a Hebrew word that describes total peace or a restoration of wholeness) among people and throughout creation. Participating with God's mission, discerning how Christ might shape whatever we do in life, allows us to discover our true meaning for life.

Second, with this large backdrop in mind, the crucial need to teach and live out of God's story revealed in scripture, we turn to particular passages that give direction to ministry with youth. Obviously, like all people in the world, young people need an opportunity to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus and to learn to live within the Christian story so they can manifest holiness of heart and life. But do young people have a role to play within the Gospels? Youth ministers often turn to 1 Timothy 4:12, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young," as motivation for ministry both to and with young people. However the passage seems to have less influence after reading commentaries that argue that Timothy must have been between thirty and thirty-five years of age when receiving this letter, based on when Timothy joined Paul and when Paul wrote the letter.¹³ In some cultures, and historical periods, thirty-five years of age was considered young, particularly for leadership. However, for youth pastors working with adolescents half this age, such a claim can be difficult. Other youth ministers turn to a "young" Jesus of Luke 2:52 as he "increased in wisdom and in stature (or years), and in divine and human favor." However, once again, Jesus' ministry begins much later when he is about thirty years of age (Lk 3:23).

So where do we turn to validate the role of youth in scripture? Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster argue that the beginning point might be Mary, the mother of Jesus as the "God bearer."¹⁴ Based on marriage custom in Jesus' day, Mary may well have been around fourteen-sixteen years of age, yet she was given the special role to bear the Son of God.¹⁵ In addition, one might read about Samuel's anointing of David in 1 Samuel 16. David was not only the youngest (v. 11), but also the eighth son. In a culture which values the number seven, David was outside the expected order, a

marginal son, whom Samuel anoints and who ultimately changes the destiny of Israel.¹⁶ David, like Joseph, Jeremiah¹⁷ and even Samuel himself as a child, all seem like unlikely candidates to be given their callings so early in life. David and Mary—and even Timothy, who comes from a Jewish/Gentile intermarriage—represent younger people on the edges of the social order, not those expected to be used of God to lead. Paul embraced an even younger Timothy as part of his ministry and, as Dean and Foster note, Paul also saw Timothy as an “agent” (not object) of God’s mission: “a young man transformed by the Gospel who can convey this transforming good news to others.”¹⁸ This view reminds us that God is vitally involved with people that society might not consider “mature” enough or “ready” to represent the Kingdom of God, persons that often include many of the young people in our world, regardless of culture.

Adults tend to view youth as “in-between” childhood and adulthood, unable to take responsibility, not quite ready. Yet God reaches into the lives of these young people and calls them forward, like David, Mary, and Timothy. Youth ministers must prepare youth not only to accept the gospel but also to embrace God’s call on their lives even when society says they might not be ready. It may well be our job to be the Samuels, Elizabeths and Pauls of this world—understanding the marvelous ways God was also at work in our lives and then guiding, empowering, and serving as advocates for young people as they awaken to what God might do through them.

The Bible reminds us that young people need to hear and embrace God’s love in their lives just like any other person. The Bible also reminds us that God may well use these young people to spread the “Good News” to their contemporaries and to the world at large. Ultimately Youth Ministry, if it is biblical, must accept its role in discipleship to both share and nurture young people in Christlikeness and also accept its role as shepherd and advocate as young people also share God’s grace through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 4: Biblical and Theological Foundations of Youth Ministry

Due This Lesson

Interview paper
Scripture, doctrine, theology paper
Reading Resource 3-9
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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?

It is God's Ministry

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.

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.

Small Groups

In your group discuss your homework assignment. What did you identify as a key scripture and an important doctrine that guides your ministry with youth. Read the scripture passage and the one-paragraph summary of your theological motivation for youth ministry. Discuss the following questions.

As you review your scriptures and your key beliefs, how are your statements about youth ministry:

- Consistent? (How do these statements draw directly from your understanding of the total message of the Bible and the solid doctrines of the Church?)
- Coherent? (How do the statements relate to each other and to what you currently do in youth ministry? Are they reasonable?)
- Pertinent? (How do the statements speak directly to the lives of young people today?)

Creeds¹⁹

The Apostles' Creed

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 Hades; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Church universal; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man,
and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried,
and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father,
and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy universal and apostolic church;
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Agreed Statement of Belief Church of the Nazarene

These are the beliefs Nazarenes hold to be true:

- We believe in one God-the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.
- We believe that man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore, inclined to evil, and that continually.
- We believe that the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.
- We believe that the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.
- We believe that believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.
- We believe that our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

Church of the Nazarene, available online [accessed 12/15/2008]
<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/administration/visitorcenter/beliefs/display.aspx>

A Sample Youth Ministry Credo

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

Youth Ministry is essentially a part of the description of the ministry of the Church—what the Church is called to be at its best when it models holiness of heart and life and pursues God's mission to redeem creation. The doctrine of the Church is normally considered to be a part of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit but this understanding should not ignore the rest of the Trinity's expression in the Community of Faith. The Church—and therefore youth ministry—was called into being by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), but the purpose of that creation was to reveal the Father's grace as expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Youth ministry finds its identity in God's redemptive activity through Jesus Christ—incarnated in the world today via the Holy Spirit's working through the communities of faith. No youth ministry—parish or parachurch—may be seen as separate from the Church universal or from the biblical account of authentic Christianity. Therefore all youth ministry is connected to all other forms of ministry expressed by the Church at large and should function cooperatively with other congregational ministries and held accountable to biblical standards.

Youth ministries (be they particular programs or persons such as youth workers, parents, youth themselves, or other ministers) do not save youth—only Christ saves. God calls people in youth ministry to witness to the biblical story of Jesus Christ and by allowing the Holy Spirit to work through their actions to communicate grace—what John Wesley understood as becoming a Means of Grace. Relationships between youth ministers and youth remain important as they model the relational love found between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Such love never manipulates or coerces youth into relationships for some other goal that serves the youth minister, but not young people. Instead, youth ministers allow God's love to flow through them to disciple youth, teaching them the basics of the faith, nurturing devotional practices, and empowering them for God's mission to the world.

What gives youth ministry its distinctiveness is its acknowledgement that ministry must learn to address people throughout their developmental lives, including the period commonly known as youth or adolescence. Youth ministry seeks to redemptively address those contextual issues facing youth while encouraging youth to continue to grow in grace and thus "come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph 4: 13-14). The goal being an ongoing growth into a life of holiness of heart and life and a missional heart to participate with God's redemptive plan for the whole world.

The call of the youth minister then is no different from any other ministerial calling (i.e. ordination). The Church recognizes that all members are in some way ministers—the priesthood of believers—INCLUDING YOUTH THEMSELVES. Just as God used young people strategically in the Bible (David, Mary and Timothy for instance), and through the history of the church, the Holy Spirit continues to empower and guide young people today to follow God's mission to redemptively engage the world and build up the body of Christ, the Church. Young people can live out the Kingdom of God, modeling holiness of heart and life, to the best of their ability when the congregation disciples and empowers youth as members of the same Kingdom of God. The Church, however, also recognizes that some people are called of God to exercise a particular form of leadership within the faith community through their reception and demonstration of certain unique "gifts and graces" bestowed by God. Thus youth ministers are also called of God, but this calling must be acknowledged by the community of faith as they perform ministry. This is why we have ordination requirements including academic preparation and ministry experience.

Core Values of the Church of the Nazarene (abbreviated)²⁰

We Are a Christian People

As members of the Church Universal, we join with all true believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in affirming the historic Trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith. We value our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage and believe it to be a way of understanding the faith that is true to Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.

We Are a Holiness People

God, who is holy, calls us to a life of holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit seeks to do in us a second work of grace, called by various terms including "entire sanctification" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit"—cleansing us from all sin, renewing us in the image of God, empowering us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and producing in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

We Are a Missional People

We are a sent people, responding to the call of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into all the world, witnessing to the Lordship of Christ and participating with God in the building of the Church and the extension of His kingdom (Matthew 28: 19-20; 2 Corinthians 6: 1). Our mission (a) begins in worship, (b) ministers to the world in evangelism and compassion, (c) encourages believers toward Christian maturity through discipleship, and (d) prepares women and men for Christian service through Christian higher education.

Cycles of Youth Ministry²¹

Please note that some dates represent when youth movements first began, though these institutions may have flourish much later.

Cycle 1—Tom Sawyer and the British Invasion (1824-1875)

Factors that caused this cycle to start in North America:

1. The Enlightenment—created an intellectual climate in which theology was no longer the queen of the sciences. As a result, religious convictions were rejected by many.
2. Westward Expansion of North America—as people moved west, away from the protecting environments of their families, schools, and small towns, concerns were expressed about the undisciplined frontier environment and the damage which it might inflict upon young people.
3. The beginnings of the Industrial Revolution—altered the patterns of people's lives and the way they earned a living. Factories started to replace family-run shops.
4. Slavery—this issue divided brother against brother and raised serious considerations on the role of Christianity in the United States.

Movements to Reach Young People

1. The American Sunday School Union (1785/1830)—started out by trying to place a Sunday School in about 4,500 new locations in Mississippi, then spread to the rest of the South. The Sunday School became the most widely spread agency for working with youth. However, they soon fell into a rut. It had organized more new Sunday Schools than it had adequate leadership.
2. Young Men's and Women's Christian Association. The YMCA (London 1844/USA 1851) & YWCA (London 1855/USA 1858) tried to fill a void that young people faced. The culture still saw them as either children or adults; the adolescent phenomenon did not exist yet. The purpose of these parachurch agencies was to help young people retain their Christian commitments after they had moved into the urban jungles where jobs were available. This led to a huge revival that swept the United States between 1857-1859.
3. Other Influences—all of the following movements took strong root during this time: singing schools, (1717) which were the forerunner of the gospel music tradition, young people's missionary societies (circa 1790's) and temperance unions which opposed the use of alcohol (circa 1820's).

Crisis that Stopped the Cycle

1. Civil War (1861-1865)—over 600,000 soldiers died, half of them teenagers.
2. The birth and support by taxation of the Public High School (1875)—helped to completely change the nation's definition of youth. The discovery of adolescence, both from a legal perspective and an educational point of view, meant that youth work would have to change.

It should be noted, oddly enough, that the various agencies and grassroots movements of the first cycle still existed at the end of the 20th century. Singing schools have become church choirs. Temperance unions have been succeeded by Students Against Drunk Driving societies. Young people's missionary societies now are agencies like Youth with a Mission and Teen Mission. Sunday Schools have become places for students to socialize and learn in the church. Only the YMCA and YWCA have lost their original focus.

Cycle 2—The Period of Accountability (1881-1925)

Factors that Caused This Cycle to Start

1. Expansion from Rural to Urban—cities became the focal point for the first time. By 1920, 73% of people had non-agriculture related jobs. This was due in large part to the Industrial Revolution which was in full swing. Mechanization of farm equipment and the assembly line made it possible to carry out tasks with machines that were once performed solely by human labor. This had a direct impact on young people. Prior to this, most young people were employed in factories to tend simple machines. However, as industrial equipment became more automated and efficient, this type of labor was unnecessary. But another big factor was the immigration of 25 million people from 1900-1920.
2. Education becomes the norm—as recently as 1900, only 6.4% of the American population graduated from high school. By 1940, however, over 50% of the population graduated from high school, and by 1956, it was over 60%. With the rise in public schools, more students than ever attended school through college.

Thus, there were two primary issues at work that contributed to the emergence of adolescence as a distinct stage in the life cycle: industrial revolution and prolonged education. The former displaced young people from the work force, and the latter provided an institutional context in which they were given a new social role and set of psychological tasks.

Movements to Reach Young People

1. Francis E. Clark and the Society for Christian Endeavor (1881)—was built on the idea of accountability. Students had to sign a pledge to be present at every meeting, and at least once a month to give an accounting of their spiritual progress. Though each society was under the authority of the host church and pastor, the international conventions, regional conferences, and area-wide rallies brought an interdenominational flavor to the movement.
2. Denominational Youth Societies (circa 1890)—Fearing a loss of denominational distinctives and a diffusion of denominational loyalty, yet seeing the benefits from the Society, each religious body formed its own youth society and began producing appropriate literature. Denominational allegiance became primary. Into this setting stepped the professional youth workers. These were usually denominational youth workers who traveled from site to site to oversee and give guidance to the local ministry. As a result, the local society took on much more of a denominational feel than that of a local church movement. Soon, however, these Christian movements began to lose their influence over middle-class young people.
3. Youth Associations (circa 1910)—groups like Boy and Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H Clubs, and Boys Club of America had little to do with the church but

shared an ethic based on a Judeo-Christian heritage. These groups emphasized wholesome activities designed to build character in boys and girls. Since these groups required free time and discretionary moneys in order to participate, the youth movements of the second cycle remained solidly middle-class.

Crisis that Stopped the Cycle

1. While youth movements remained largely static in what they did, the public high schools made radical changes. By the 1929-1930 school year, nearly 5 million students were enrolled in secondary schools.
2. The curriculum changed as well. There was less emphasis placed on religion, and more on socially relevant courses. Science, and specifically evolution, increasingly began to take its place in the curriculum. The school, rather than the church, had now become the focal point of the community.
3. Scopes Monkey Trial (1925)—William Jennings Bryan and the belief in the authority of the Bible became a laughingstock to the general public. Science became the new religion of society.

Cycle 3—Reaching Youth for Christ (1935-1987)

Factors Which Caused This Cycle to Start

1. The Depression (1929-1941)—caused young people to move from thinking about fun to thinking about survival. At the height of the depression, more than 250,000 teenagers were living on the road in America.
2. Public Schooling—more and more students stayed in school longer, due to the scarcity of jobs. Religion was also being systematically removed from the classroom. The dual movements of students out of the home and into the high school while religious instruction was being removed from the public school left a vacuum of religious and moral instruction.
3. World War II (1939-1945)—the impact of war on youth ministry was twofold: First, the leaders were now asked to serve in the war. As a result, new leaders had to be found, or as often happened, the youth ministry simply ceased to exist. Second, the war created a crusade spirit. As the former leaders of youth ministry returned home, they carried with them the idea that they had saved the world politically and militarily. Now they would endeavor to save it spiritually.

Movements to Reach Young People

1. Youth for Christ Associations (circa 1940)—Though many independent associations began during the depression and war years, as WWII came to a close, America was ready to celebrate. Ten years of depression followed by six years of war had put a damper on the nation. All that was needed was an excuse to enjoy life and a bit of organizational “know-how.” YFC provided both. Jack Wyrzten and Billy Graham were the folk most responsible for the Saturday night rallies which became their primary method to reach youth. Interestingly enough, some YFC’s still follow this same model. In the 1960’s Campus Life (a branch of YFC) adopted a two-part approach to reaching teens—Insight and Impact. Insight meetings were for discipleship purposes, and the Impact meetings were avenues for evangelism.

2. Young Life (1941)—Jim Rayburn was the founder. He started with mass rallies similar to YFC, but soon scrapped them in favor of a club and camp-based strategy. Soon Youth for Christ (under the name Campus Life) and many other groups adopted this same model.
3. Fellowship of Christian Athletes (1954)—started with the idea of impacting athletes at all levels of participation. Huddles became the doorway to get students to attend conferences and camps where the Gospel is presented.
4. Campus Crusade and Student Venture (1966)—Campus Crusade started with college ministries and moved to high school ministries as well. The high school arm was called Student Venture. Bill Bright was the founder and remained president until just about a year before his death. Their primary emphasis was on discipleship through small groups.
5. Denominational Clubs—denominations again felt the need to maintain their identity and loyalty among students by creating programs that rivaled anything the parachurch organizations were doing.

Crisis that Stopped The Cycle

1. The Rise of the Professional Youth Worker—as servicemen returned from the war, they wanted to make a difference, and as a result, went into the ministry. Thousands of people went into professional youth ministry. This was largely in response to the Baby Boom. The problem was that the professional youth pastor made the volunteer youth worker either obsolete or a second-class citizen.
2. The Professionalization of Youth Ministry—youth ministry changed from a movement to a profession. As a result, it lost much of its early vision, and its leaders became complacent and satisfied. Organization often brings an end to creative and innovative ideas as everybody follows the accepted norm.
3. Youth Specialties/Group (1968/1974)—were instrumental in helping local churches adopt the ideas of Young Life, YFC, Campus Crusade and the other clubs. YS initiated national and local training such as NYWC and The Core, as well as extended efforts through publishing. Group began primarily through publishing efforts yet quickly developed local and national Children & Youth Conventions as well as WorkCamps.

It would be easy to say that these factors breathed new life into the local youth group. Actually the opposite is true. While the bulk of the youth population in the nation is found in urban settings or in communities which have little contact with Christian youth works, the vast majority of youth ministry is taking place in groups of 30 people or less located in upper-middle class suburban settings. The Youth Specialties/Group phenomenon has merely allowed an increasing number of youth ministers to communicate more effectively to an ever-decreasing population. It is the last gasp before the death of the third cycle.

Cycle 4—“Emerging” Youth Ministry (1990-???)

Factors Which Caused This Cycle to Start

1. Influence of postmodernism: Postmodernism may be a difficult term to define but the concept describes both certain contemporary perspectives and cultural tendencies. Due to rapid technological changes and many different cultural

influences, young people have a greater tolerance for ambiguity, multiple interpretations of a given situation, and openness to new ideas.

2. Loss of influence by the church/parachurch in reaching students in North American context. This loss will mean that youth ministers will begin to look for other models of youth ministry and to explore how their own church's youth ministry might serve as the primary means of reaching the community much like parachurch ministries did in the last cycle.

What will this cycle look like? Here are some suggestions.

1. *Non-Anglo American Leadership*—as North America continues to become more diverse culturally, and as ministry grows globally, there will be a need for leaders from those cultures to stand up and create ministry which caters to their ethnic group.
2. *International Character*—minority cultures will begin to see the need to provide structured ministry to their youth that is distinctive to their culture.
3. *Urban Precedence*—if we are to reach students, we will have to go where they are, which is the city. Urban/Suburban links will be vital in breeding new strategies for youth ministry.
4. *Group Evangelism*—the massive rallies and even one-on-one evangelism hasn't worked too well. This cycle of youth ministry will focus on the need to work in small groups to evangelize. Why? Because of the community aspect.
5. *Student Prayer and Worship*—A sense of revival has been associated with each past cycle. This one will be no different. Student-led movements like See You at the Pole, and a renewed emphasis upon genuine worship will lead the way for the new revival to come.
6. *Women in Key Roles*—30-50% of seminary graduates are women. Women now account for one-third of youth ministry leadership positions in the local church in North America.
7. *Lay Leadership*—The youth ministries which will have the greatest impact in the coming revolution will be those which successfully recruit and equip lay people to bear the primary responsibility for reaching the current generation of students.
8. *Resistance from the Church*—the youth ministry will have to become a place that reaches out to the world, and not just taking care of our own. This will make parents nervous. The innovative approaches the youth ministry has to take will be sociologically uncomfortable and probably theologically vulnerable. This will make church leaders nervous.
9. *Parachurch-Style Church Ministries*—For church-based youth ministries to be effective in reaching students during this third cycle, the youth group will have to be reinvented. It will be intimate though not always small, participative though not always structured, and diversified with certain parts of the ministry appealing to one student but not another.
10. *Professional Redefined*—the professional will become the trainer of the adults who actually do the hands-on ministry.

Nazarene Youth International Charter and Ministry Plan (Abbreviated)

A full copy of the Charter and Ministry Plans is available online (accessed 01/05/2009) at <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/nyi/resources/charter/display.aspx> It is also available in multiple languages at this site.

Nazarene Youth International Charter

***"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 Timothy 4:12***

I. Our Mission

The mission of Nazarene Youth International is to call our generation to a dynamic life in Christ.

II. Our Members

Membership in Nazarene Youth International includes all persons participating in Nazarene youth ministry who choose to embrace our stated vision and values.

III. Our Vision

The Church of the Nazarene believes that young people are an integral part of the Church. Nazarene Youth International exists to lead young people into a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ and to facilitate their growth as disciples for Christian service.

IV. Our Values

We value **Young People**—significant in the kingdom of God.

We value the **Bible**—God's unchanging truth for our lives.

We value **Prayer**—vital interactive communication with our heavenly father.

We value the **Church**—a global holiness community of faith, diverse in culture but one in Christ.

We value **Worship**—life-changing encounters with an intimate God.

We value **Discipleship**—a lifestyle of becoming like Christ.

We value **Community**—building relationships that help bind us together and to God.

We value **Ministry**—extending God's grace to our world.

We value **Witness**—sharing God's love in word and deed.

We value **Holiness**—a work of grace whereby God, through the working of His Holy Spirit, enables us to live a life representing Christ in who we are and in everything we do.

These values are important dimensions of the holy life and are to be reflected in the life and ministry of NYI at every level of the church. (Please refer to the Articles of Faith in the Manual, Church of the Nazarene for more information on these values.) In reflecting these values, we acknowledge the following Guiding Principles.

V. Our Guiding Principles

NYI exists for youth.

Nazarene Youth International exists to attract, equip, and empower young people for service in the kingdom of God and to facilitate their integration into the Church of the Nazarene.

NYI focuses on Christ.

Christ is central to who we are, the Bible is our authoritative source for all we do, and holiness our pattern for life.

NYI is built on relational ministry to youth in the local church.

Effective ministry to young people in the local church is critical to the health and vibrancy of NYI. Relationships and incarnational ministry form the foundation for Nazarene youth ministry, guiding young people toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

NYI develops and mentors young leaders.

NYI provides opportunities for emerging leaders to develop and utilize their gifts within an environment of nurture and support, assuring strong leadership for the Church of the Nazarene. Leadership training, accountability, and mechanisms for evaluation and modification of ministry are vital functions of NYI.

NYI is empowered to lead.

Relevant youth ministry requires that responsibility for ministry and organizational decisions reside with NYI leadership and the appropriate governing bodies at every level. A sense of belonging and ownership, a passion for service, and input in decision-making are key ingredients for the empowerment of young people through NYI.

NYI embraces unity and diversity in Christ.

NYI is committed to understanding and celebrating differences and diversity in language, color, race, culture, socioeconomic class, and gender. Our differences do not diminish unity but enhance our potential and effectiveness. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways must always be a high priority.

NYI creates networks and partnerships.

A climate of cooperation characterizes our relationships at every level of NYI. Networking within the church enhances the development and deployment of young people for service; NYI actively participates in such cooperative endeavors.

VI. Our Ministry Framework

The Nazarene Youth International Charter provides the foundation for organizing, planning, and implementing youth ministry at every level of the Church of the Nazarene. Standard ministry plans are provided that local, district, and regional NYI groups are encouraged to adapt in response to youth ministry needs in their own ministry situation. Ministry plans at every level must be consistent with the NYI Charter and the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene.

LOCAL MINISTRY PLAN

I. Membership and Ministry Focus

Section 1—Composition and Accountability

1. Local NYI membership consists of those who affiliate themselves with an NYI group by participating in its ministries and joining the local group.
2. The local NYI maintains an accurate roster of all active members.
3. The local NYI is accountable to its membership, the local church board, and the pastor.

4. The local NYI reports monthly to the church board and to the annual church meeting.

Section 2—Ministry Focus

1. The traditional ministry focus of the local NYI is to youth ages 12 and older, college/university students, and young adults. A local NYI Council may modify the ministry focus as seen fit with the approval of the pastor and local church board.
2. For the purposes of representation and programming, the local NYI council establishes age divisions in response to local youth ministry needs.

II. Leadership

Section 1—Officers

1. The officers of the local NYI are a president and up to three persons elected by the annual NYI meeting with assigned ministry responsibilities according to local church needs. These officers serve on the Executive Committee.
2. Local NYI officers must be members of the local church who's NYI they serve, active in local youth ministry, and leaders in personal example and service.
3. In churches not having an organized NYI (no local NYI Council), the pastor, with church board approval, may appoint the NYI president so that the church may begin to reach young people for Christ and respond to their spiritual growth needs.

Section 2—Elections

1. Officers are elected annually by the members of the local NYI at the annual meeting and serve until their successors are elected and assume their ministry roles.
2. A nominating committee nominates the officers for NYI. A Nominating Committee is appointed by the pastor and consists of NYI members, as well as the pastor and the NYI president. All nominees are to be approved by the pastor and church board. Persons nominated as local NYI president must have reached their 15th birthday at the time of their election.
3. Officers are elected by majority vote of the NYI members present at the annual NYI meeting. When there is only one nominee for a position, a "yes" and "no" ballot is used, with approval by two-thirds majority vote. Only those who are also members of the local Church of the Nazarene may vote for the president.
4. An incumbent officer may be reelected by a "yes" or "no" vote when such vote is recommended by the NYI Council to the nominating committee, approved by the pastor and church board, and approved by two-thirds majority vote at the annual NYI meeting.
5. A vacancy occurs when an officer moves his/her membership from the church, resigns, or is removed from office by two-thirds majority vote of the council due to neglect of duties or inappropriate conduct. Should a vacancy occur among officers, the NYI Council fills the vacancy by two-thirds majority vote if there is one nominee or by majority vote if two or more nominees. If the vacancy occurs in the office of NYI president, the pastor, youth pastor, or his/her designee chairs the meeting for election.

Section 3—Responsibilities

1. The responsibilities of the NYI president include:
 - a. Chairing the NYI Council to cast a vision for youth ministry in the church.
 - b. Facilitating the development of youth ministry and working with the NYI Council to define the ministry focus in response to the needs of their young people.

- c. Serving on the church board and submitting a monthly report to the board. A local church board may establish prior to the annual election a minimum age for the NYI president to serve on the church board; should the president be younger, alternate representation for NYI on the church board may be appointed by the NYI Council, subject to the approval of the board.
 - d. Submitting an annual report of ministry and finances to the annual church meeting.
 - e. Recommending the budget for the local NYI, as approved by the NYI Council, to the church board.
 - f. Serving as an *ex officio* member of the Sunday School Ministries Board to coordinate youth Sunday School in the church.
 - g. Serving as a delegate to the District NYI Convention and the District Assembly. Should the president be unable to attend, a representative elected by the NYI Council and approved by pastor and the church board may provide alternate representation.
2. The responsibilities of other NYI officers include:
- a. Developing and designating leaders for various local NYI ministries.
 - b. Being role models and spiritual guides for youth both within and outside the church.
 - c. Defining and assigning titles and youth ministry responsibilities in response to local church needs.
 - d. Distributing the following responsibilities to insure accountability and effectiveness:
 - (1) Keeping a correct record of all meetings of the NYI Council and attending to all matters of correspondence for the local NYI.
 - (2) Disbursing, receiving, and keeping records of NYI funds according to church board policy.
 - (3) Compiling an annual financial report of all moneys raised and disbursed to submit to the annual church meeting.
 - (4) Working with the NYI president to create an annual budget to present to the council and to the church board for approval.
 - e. Cooperating with the president in every way possible to facilitate the local NYI ministry.
 - f. Carrying out other ministries as assigned by the NYI Council.

Section 4—Paid Staff

1. When a youth pastor is employed in a church, the pastor, in consultation with the church board and NYI Council, assigns the responsibility for NYI to the youth pastor. In that case, the youth pastor carries out some of the duties otherwise designated to a local NYI president. However, the importance of the NYI president remains, in providing vital lay leadership, support, and representation for local youth ministry. The pastor, youth pastor and NYI Council work together to define the roles and responsibilities of the two positions and how they work together for the benefit of the church's youth ministry.
2. A youth pastor may not serve as the NYI president.
3. The youth pastor serves *ex officio* on the NYI Council, the Executive Committee, and the NYI Nominating Committee.
4. The youth pastor may serve as the pastor's designee for NYI-related responsibilities.
5. If a church has multiple paid staff that minister to specific age divisions within NYI, it may develop officers for each age division under staff leadership and determine from among those officers how NYI is to be represented on the church board.

III. Council

Section 1—Composition

1. The Local NYI Council is composed of the NYI officers, other elected or appointed youth member-at-large and ministry leaders as deemed necessary, and the pastor and/or youth pastor, who collectively cast the vision for local youth ministry.
2. NYI Council members must be members of the local Nazarene Youth International. Local church membership is strongly encouraged and NYI Council members should be expected to become church members.

Section 2—Elections

1. A NYI Nominating Committee nominates local NYI members to be elected to the NYI Council.
2. The NYI membership then elects the members of the NYI Council from submitted nominations by majority vote at the annual NYI meeting.
3. A vacancy occurs when a council member moves his/her membership from the local NYI, resigns, or is removed from office by two-thirds majority vote of the council due to neglect of duties or inappropriate conduct. Should a vacancy occur among council members, the NYI Council fills the vacancy by two-thirds majority vote if there is one nominee or by majority vote if two or more nominees.
4. If a church has fewer than seven NYI members, the pastor may appoint the members of the NYI Council so that youth ministry may be developed and young people are reached for Christ.

Section 3—Responsibilities

1. The NYI Council is responsible for planning and organizing the total ministry for youth within the local church and, through its officers and directors, initiates and directs ministries and activities to reach young people for Christ and to respond to their spiritual growth needs, in harmony with local church leadership.
2. The NYI Council defines the ministry focus of the local NYI in response to local youth ministry needs, and develops and assigns titles and job descriptions for ministry directors.
3. The NYI Council gives leadership to the youth area of the Sunday School by promoting growth in enrollment and attendance for youth, nominating and providing training for youth Sunday School teachers and leaders, and recommending curriculum and resources to be used, in cooperation with the Sunday School Ministries Board.
4. The NYI Council cooperates with the District NYI Council in promoting district, regional, and global NYI ministries to young people of the church.
5. The NYI Council establishes and communicates the process for submitting revisions to the local ministry plan.

Section 4—Committees

1. The NYI Executive Committee consists of elected NYI officers and the pastor or youth pastor. The Executive Committee may conduct the business of the NYI Council when necessary. All actions of the Executive Committee are communicated to the remaining members of the council and are subject to the approval of the entire council at its next meeting.
2. The NYI Council may establish specific ministry or age division committees in response to youth ministry needs.

Section 5—Paid Staff

1. The pastor designates the responsibilities of a youth pastor, in consultation with the

- church board and the NYI Council.
2. The NYI Council and youth pastor work in cooperation and harmony with each other.
 3. If a church has multiple paid staff who minister to specific age divisions within NYI, it may develop NYI councils or committees for each of these age divisions under staff leadership. The church may decide whether a coordinating council for the various groups is used.

IV. Meetings

Section 1—Local NYI Meetings

1. A variety of local NYI gatherings help provide effective ministry to young people.
2. The local NYI group participates in district, regional, and global NYI gatherings that further enhance youth ministry in the church.

Section 2—NYI Council Meetings

1. The NYI Council meets regularly to fulfill the mission and vision of NYI.
2. Meetings of the council may be scheduled or called by the president or pastor.

Section 3—Annual Meeting

1. The annual meeting of the local NYI is held within sixty days of the District NYI Convention and in harmony with the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene.
2. NYI officers and council members and delegates to the District NYI Convention are elected at the annual NYI meeting.
3. The NYI local ministry plan may be revised by two-thirds majority vote at the NYI annual meeting.

V. Ministries

Section 1—Evangelism

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

Section 2—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.

Section 3—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.

Lesson 5: History of Youth Ministry

Due This Lesson

Rewrite of statement
Local history
Reading Hartke
Reading Resource 4-7
Reading Resource 4-8
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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.

Lesson 6: Philosophical Foundations of Youth Ministry

Due This Lesson

Review of local ministry
Plan for youth ministry
Reading Resource 6-10
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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.

Small Groups

In your group discuss the following questions.

Why should the church have youth ministry?

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

Youth Ministry Philosophy

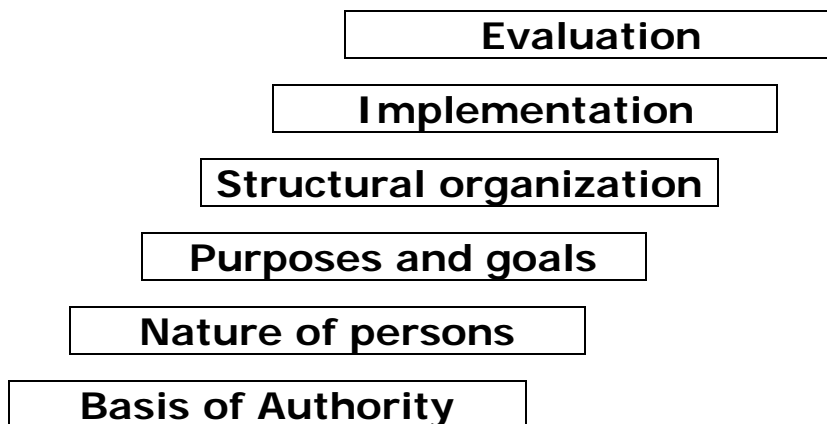
A youth ministry *philosophy* is an abstract conceptualization, in written form, of the basic values upon which a youth ministry model and program are built. Basic values are the ideas, values, and commitments that shape and mold a youth ministry. They reflect what is important, including:

- A theological perspective of ministry
- A view of what is real (metaphysics)
- A view of knowledge (epistemology)
- A theological and philosophical view of person
- A view of learning and the nature of teaching
- Leadership roles
- A rationale for youth ministry
- A delineation for basic components of ministry
- The basic interrelationship of components to each other
- The place of youth ministry in the whole church's ministry
- A commitment to proper evaluation.

In sum, a philosophy answers the questions, "*why* have a youth ministry" and "*what* is youth ministry all about?"²²

DeJong's Ladder of Philosophical Elements²³

1. **Basis of Authority.** What is the basis of authority for the ministry philosophy?
2. **Nature of persons.** What does it mean to be human, and how does this understanding shape a ministry philosophy?
3. **Purposes and goals.** This is the all-important question of destination. Where should this faith journey take us?
4. **Structural organization.** Regardless of our context, which path is most likely to take us where we need to go? What supplies will we need to take on the journey?
5. **Implementation.** How can we use the resources God has provided (both people and materials) to pursue this goal?
6. **Evaluation.** Understanding that we need to regularly look at where we are, where we are headed, and whether we are still on the right path to get there. Are the goals we've established actually being seen in our ministry practices?



Foundational Ministry Concepts²⁴

- **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?

From Philosophy to Model

Philosophy of Youth Ministry answers:

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

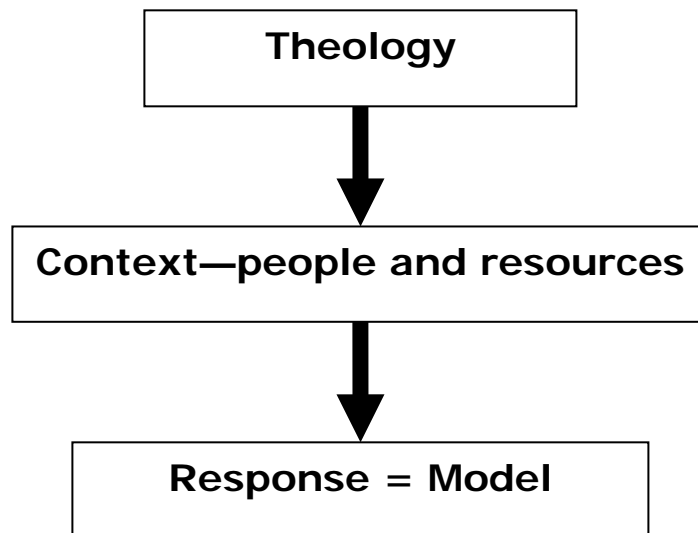
Model of Youth Ministry answers:

- **WHAT** should a youth ministry look like?

Program for Youth Ministry answers:

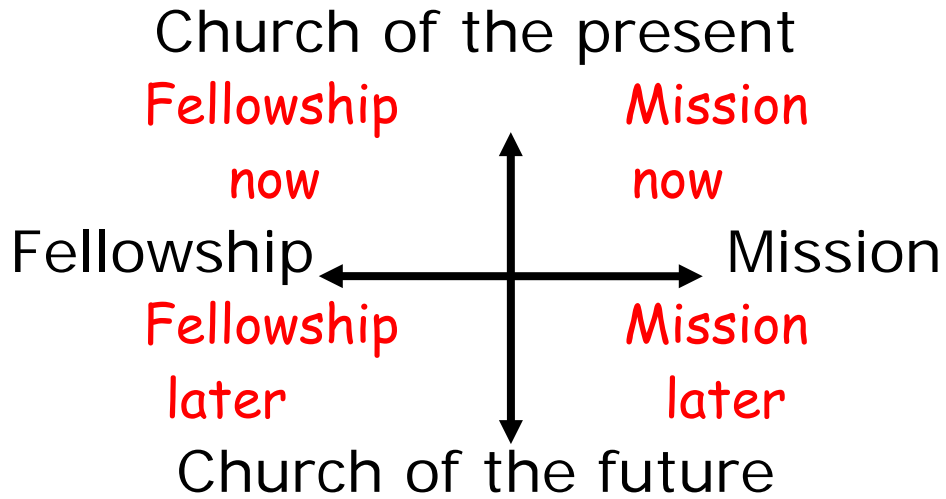
- **HOW** will our youth ministry operate?

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



Two Axes of Youth Ministry²⁵

DEVELOPED
POPULATION
LATENT



FELLOWSHIP/MISSION

Models of Youth Ministry

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

Scripture purposes

- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Fellowship
- Worship

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

The primary ministry focus in the approach is to teach youth to appreciate and engage in different spiritual formation disciplines as individuals and as groups.

3. Incarnational-Relational—Andrew Root's framework

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.

Choosing a Model of Ministry²⁶

Knowing the right questions to ask can help you decide which ministry model is appropriate for your context.

1. Does the church have a distinctive philosophy of ministry that must be reflected in the youth ministry?
2. Is the church willing to hire and capable of employing a youth pastor, and will it provide a budget sufficient to support the model?
3. How well developed are the communication skills of the youth worker, especially in front of large groups?
4. How competent are the organizational skills of the youth worker?
5. How adept is the youth worker at meeting and gaining a hearing from non-Christian youth?
6. What kind of vision does the church have for ministering to the community immediately surrounding the church building?
7. How strong are the family ties within the church, especially as they relate to spiritual nurture?
8. To what extent are mature and talented adults available to implement the model selected?
9. Are the youth presently in the youth group sufficiently eager to make the changes necessary to implement a model that would have a significant spiritual impact on their lives?
10. What kind of facilities and resources does the church have that would enhance or weaken the model chosen?
11. Does the model chosen emerge from your personal philosophy of ministry?

What the Acacia Tree has to Teach Us²⁷

This exercise is intended to help you begin to reflect on your own faith journey and the ways you seek God in the midst of your present circumstances.

The acacia tree is mentioned in the Bible in the books of Exodus and Isaiah. Exodus 25 describes how the wood was used to build the Ark of the Covenant and it is mentioned in Isaiah as a sign of the Messianic restoration in Israel. An amazing fact about Acacia trees is that they can survive decades of drought, dryness and famine because they have deep roots that dig into the earth until they find the water source. Roots of an acacia tree discovered in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana measured 220 feet underground, which is the equivalent of an 18 story building! This is a powerful image of life reaching beyond itself for nourishment and growth. This image challenges us to think about the many ways we seek strength and nourishment for our own journey. Take a few moments to write about your present journey and the sources of nourishment in your life using the following questions as a guide:

- *In what climate or landscape do you currently find yourself and what factors are making it easy or difficult for you to maneuver in that climate or landscape?*
- *When outside forces affect you, what among the following are the first few things you abandon: work, rest, play, worship, relationships or ministry?*
- *Up to this point has there been a time when you experienced great growth in your life? If so, what among the following were the common factors: Brokenness, surrender, mentors, suffering, renewed commitment to Christ, a desire to grow, experiencing a reality check?*
- *In times of spiritual drought, what is your water source? Where do you find your daily spiritual nourishment?*

The Sacred “No”

A common struggle for many ministers is the ability to set good boundaries in the sense of being able to say “no” to new opportunities when we are already at our work’s capacity with current tasks. But we are going to have to say “no” to some things if we want to create quality work. We may even discover this through the painful experience of having to say “no” after we’ve already said “yes.” Every minister will be confronted again and again with many opportunities for service. Often these opportunities are presented by others but sometimes we are the ones that create more tasks and projects for ourselves. Certainly we all encounter seasonal times that are unusually busy, when all we can do is move forward as best we can. But even during these times there is opportunity to discern how to best spend our time and energy, what to set aside, or when rest is called for before we can move forward. What I want to suggest is that there is one thing we can always say yes to that helps us discern healthy boundaries for our lives—saying yes to Sabbath.

No other practice ushers me into a spirit of humility and calls me to attentiveness as the practice of Sabbath keeping. Of all the practices we are invited into, it is the call to honor the Sabbath that most challenges our perceptions of order and self-sufficiency. Honoring the Sabbath is an invitation to embrace our limitedness because on this day we set aside all of our daily striving and acknowledge the Holy One who is unlimited in power, love and provision for us. In celebrating the Sabbath we are reminded that we are not God, that there is a need to cease from our normal routine and to rest and feast on God. Sabbath rest reflects God’s intention for a rhythmic life of work and rest as reflected in the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work.” (Ex 20:10). Just as we are invited to participate in creation throughout the week, there is a day when we rest from that creation. As author Abraham Heschel points out, the day is already holy because God has made it so and on the Sabbath we are simply called to become aware of the holiness around us and to participate in it. As we honor the Sabbath, God re-creates within us new life. When we are able to cease from all of our doing, the Sabbath becomes a sacred “no” to those things that run too close to defining our identity or success no matter how life-giving they are. Since a minister’s work day falls on the community’s Sabbath, we must find creative ways to celebrate and keep a Sabbath day of rest outside of the church Sabbath in order that we also might fully enter into the Sabbath rest to which we are all called.

Sabbath keeping is not only about setting aside one day to rest and seek God, but about allowing the Sabbath practice to affect all of our days. If we can rightly practice Sabbath from week to week, I am convinced that the lessons learned in our rhythmic ceasing will eventually make their way into our daily life. So, as we participate in Sabbath practices, as we learn to cease from our striving, meet in community, reflect on God’s word, we are renewed and taught ways to discern how we might invite God into all areas of our life and how we might create more space in order to invite more of God into our daily routines.

Another way we learn to develop a healthy sense of discernment is through our relationships with others. One of the most helpful realizations in my own journey has been the reality that some people have built in boundaries that often help them (and

sometimes force them) to live in a more balanced life of work and personal life. These built in boundaries sometimes take the form of families, relationships, friendships, community service, professional development, education, personal development or other obligations. It can be particularly difficult for a single person in ministry to develop a life outside of work, especially when you really enjoy the work you feel called to and find it to be life-giving. It can also be a challenge if those we work alongside do not have the same expectations or extend the same grace to single people that they do to those who are married. They may not realize it but this expectation is unrealistic and it will be important to find your voice and the courage to create some boundaries that help you maintain a balanced life. Finding the courage to point this out is helpful because it informs everyone of this unhealthy expectation on singles and also becomes an opportunity to remind others of the need for self-care. And we are short on good, healthy models that reflect the ability to say "no" when necessary. Even when someone has chosen to not participate in an invitation I offer, though it is a disappointment to not be able to gain from their insight, it has always been a gift to me to have strong models that reflect wisdom and strong discernment when it comes to knowing their limits.

Developing a Healthy and Balanced Life of Work, Rest, Play, Relationships and Renewal

What does a balanced life look like to you? In the midst of our increasingly busy lives the concept of balance may seem like a dream. But a more careful analysis of our habits might reveal that there are numerous ways to bring a healthier sense of balance into our lives. Balance is a lifelong process and does not mean that every area of our life—our work, relationships, rest, play—is always given an equal amount of time. Rather, balance is the careful work of knowing when any of those areas need our most focused attention.

Nor is a balanced life easy or without a sense of pain. Balancing all the areas of our lives requires that we learn to say “no” to things we love in order to make room for other things or relationships that nourish us in different ways. Saying no may be so difficult in fact that at first it may be painful and feel like a loss. But as we work on prioritizing all areas of our lives balance begins to make sense, honors our relationships and all things that make us whole beings.

Ministry may not feel much like work because it can be very energizing to help others. However, the reality is that ministry always requires a giving of ourselves and thus always means a sacrifice of our time, energy, resources, relationships, etc. If it is true that ministry is a constant giving then the reality is that we must learn how to be replenished. If we desire to live full lives of vitality and strength, then creating healthy habits and a holistic way of living is how we take care of our bodies and relationships so that we can live to the fullest.

The greatest gift you can give to those that follow you is to lead a faithful life that is balanced and centered on life in Christ. Those we lead watch the way we live and order our lives, and it is deeply ingrained in their memory. I will never forget the student a few years back who came searching for me because he really needed counsel, and he approached me apologetically saying, “I know you’re really busy but, I really need to talk to you.” I sank as I heard these words. In my great enthusiasm to be faithful in all the good work I was a part of, it was increasingly apparent that I had not created enough space to actually be available to those that simply needed a ministry of presence. Regardless of what we preach about balance and wholeness, if we are not striving toward that end, those we lead will be the first to recognize this dissonance in us.

There are various elements that make up a healthy, balanced life—meaningful work, rest for our mind and bodies, play, relationships, and renewal.

Meaningful work gives us a sense of purpose and place in God’s kingdom because we are invited to participate in the co-creation of our workplace and the relationships within that setting. In *Living Faith Day by Day*, Debra Farrington suggests that recognizing God at the center of our work opens our eyes not only to the needs of those we are in relationship with but also leads us to careful consideration of how we use our resources, products and tools necessary for our work, the way others are treated, the systems we set up, etc.

Ministry is a great call and responsibility and even the most meaningful work can lead to fatigue if we do not take time out to rest so that the natural process of renewal for our bodies and our minds can take place. Though we all have varying degrees of need for rest we should not underestimate our need for regular rest. When we do finally rest we participate in the practice of trusting that we can let go of even our most meaningful work understanding that with renewed energy comes renewed vision for the tasks at hand. The ability to know when, where, how and with whom we might find rest given our make up is how we practice discernment in this area.

Play is another important aspect of our lives. While many might challenge the notion that the youth minister needs to include more play into their lives, the reality is that in youth ministry the lines between work and play can get blurred. There is a need in all the wonderful work we do to discern between work play and personal life play. And play can look very different depending on the person. For some play can be listening to music, or exercise, gardening, reading a book. The act is not important as the end goal—to find rejuvenation for your mind, body and spirit.

A helpful consideration might be to include those in your life with whom play would be a welcome joy and practice and might even serve to nurture that relationship. Another consideration might be to discern the type of play. Sometimes after a long week at work I love to go kayaking early in the morning in a quiet bay. Often times I have to share the water with strangers who play going 40 miles an hour on their jet ski. It has been helpful for me to remember that while these practices are very different, both activities have the same goal—good play that gives us rest from our work and strengthens us for the ongoing journey.

The following lessons will bring more focused attention to relationships with those we minister alongside, but it's necessary to point out the importance of relationships that we will seek to help us maintain balance. All relationships are a gift and play a wonderful role in our development. Though we would never encourage using our friendships in consumptive ways, relationships can be a great source of rest, play, renewal and learning for us. Understanding the roles that various relationships in our life play, helps us know who to turn to when we're in need. Qualities that are helpful for our journey include:

- Spiritual Friendships—those friendships that encourage us and with whom we can pray. This may be a small group or prayer partner.
- Playful Relationships—those friends that are easy to be with. They help us laugh and bring joy into our life
- Close friendships—those friends that know our story and with whom we can share joy, pain and sorrow. These persons often recognize our fatigue before we do.
- Mentoring Relationships—those persons who have walked the journey ahead of us and who help us see who we really are; help us identify our strengths and weaknesses and continually point us to God.
- Committed Relationships—those persons in our life with whom we have a committed relationships because whether they are family or not, we have committed to walk the journey closely with them. These relationships are often the most difficult to sustain but also can be the greatest source of growth.

A special word needs to be offered to women in ministry who find themselves in the midst of a mostly male staff. It's helpful to seek out mentors with other women in your ministry context. However, I also encourage women to consider finding other female youth workers or pastors in the community to gather with on a regular basis.

Participating in a group such as this offers the potential for finding support, sharing ideas, problem solving and establishing friendships outside of the work place.

Women often struggle to give the illusion of effortless perfection in their work and home. But need other women in their lives who can speak the truth about the various myths in our society that affect our perception and expectations of these various roles. They also need to surround themselves with other women who will encourage and support their call to ministry. In a world still predominantly male this encouragement and support will be life-giving especially as they encounter others who see their ambition and call as either ungodly or as temporary. I cannot underestimate the importance that these relationships play in the life of women and encourage them to begin to develop and maintain this network of support as best as they are able.

Finally, there are numerous ways to find renewal but the most common is simply rest. Rest is essential to the Christian minister because the work we do can be such an emptying process. It is in these moments that we must intentionally call to mind those things or relationships that are life-giving. What I mean by life-giving is something or someone that helps restore your energy and brings joy into your life. Throughout our days there are numerous things that either deplete or rejuvenate our energy for life and work. Some of these things may always be a part of our lives but knowing whether they deplete or rejuvenate help us better discern our involvement in them.

There are also certain personality traits that may affect how well we are able to create balance. The following are a few personality traits. See if you recognize yourself in any of them:

- Those that struggle to say no
- Those that are self-sacrificing
- Those that need a lot of affirmation
- Those that feel they need to prove themselves (for whatever reasons)
- Those that are perfectionists or have high expectations of themselves and others
- Those with a strong goal orientation

While these personality traits might actually be very helpful in our work they also might help contribute to eventual burn-out. As many have discovered, our greatest strengths can often be our greatest weakness. The more we are able to know ourselves, the better able we are to discern right action for ourselves and those we serve.

Lesson 7: The Youth Minister's Relationship with God

Due This Lesson

4-page paper
Resource 6-9
Resource 6-10
Resource 6-11
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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?

Spiritual Disciplines

The spiritual disciplines bring abundant life in the following ways:

- They establish our true identity in God's love and grace
- They lead us into right relationship with God and with our neighbors
- They teach us how to dwell in the presence of God
- They give us rest and strength for the journey
- They help us understand how to more fully participate in the Kingdom of God

Spiritual Practices Worksheet²⁸

Consider for a moment the various spiritual practices that have shaped your own faith journey. Below is a list of a few of the classic spiritual disciplines. Take a moment to consider the five most prevalent spiritual disciplines in your life.

Attending Church

Journaling

Meditation

Tithing

Scripture Reading

Spiritual Reading

Prayer

Sabbath

Retreat

Solitude

Silence

Fasting

What are your top 5 spiritual practices and disciplines?

The Five Categories of Spiritual Disciplines²⁹

Spiritual Disciplines are those practices and disciplines that call us to and help us live into our relationship with God and neighbors.

We can put the spiritual disciplines into five categories that help us remain balanced:

Word-Oriented Practices

- ⊕ Prayer
- ⊕ Scripture
- ⊕ Spiritual Reading

Sacramental Oriented Practices. These practices are world-embracing practices that help ground us in our bodily realities.

- ⊕ Baptism
- ⊕ The Lord's Supper
- ⊕ Art
- ⊕ Icons
- ⊕ Film
- ⊕ Marriage & Family
- ⊕ Academic Study
- ⊕ Nature
- ⊕ Athletics

Ascetic Practices. These practices are world-denying rather than world-affirming. These practices warn us from getting caught or trapped by anything that's not God. These are sacrificial practices that keep in mind the greatest commandments—to love God and neighbor.

- ⊕ Tithing
- ⊕ Fasting
- ⊕ Living simply
- ⊕ Sabbath/rest
- ⊕ Marriage and parenting
- ⊕ Celibacy
- ⊕ Exercising
- ⊕ Studying and writing

Connecting Practices. The ways we connect to others.

- ⊕ Spiritual friendship
- ⊕ Spiritual direction/mentoring
- ⊕ Small groups
- ⊕ Corporate worship
- ⊕ Ecumenism
- ⊕ Being in creation and so, in nature we become witnesses to an earth that cries out for reconciliation with God.

Serving Practices

- ⊕ Almsgiving/hospitality
- ⊕ Social justice
- ⊕ Evangelism
- ⊕ Building up the body of Christ
- ⊕ Caring for creation

Daily Prayers

A morning prayer is a simple prayer of remembering and acknowledging that every day is gift as is all of life and that we offer to God all that the day will bring.

MORNING PRAYER

O God who brought me from the rest of last night to the new light of this day,
bring me in the new light of this day to the guiding light of the eternal.
Lead me O God on the journey of justice. Guide me O God, on the pathways of peace.
Renew me O God, by the wellspring of grace today, tonight and forever.
Celtic Prayers from Iona, J. Philip Newell

An afternoon prayer, perhaps the most difficult time to remember to pause, can be an opportunity to return to rest and praise of God in the midst of our work.

AFTERNOON PRAYER

Life be in my speech
Truth in what I say
The love Christ Jesus gave
Be filling every heart for me.
The love Christ Jesus gave
Be filling me for everyone.
Celtic Prayers from Iona, J. Philip Newell

An evening prayer invites us to rest after all that has happened throughout the day and to remember once again that life is gift and we submit our lives back to God even in our sleep.

EVENING PRAYER

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your
eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Book of Common Prayer

Group Lectio Process

1. Prepare

Take a moment to come fully into the present. Sit comfortably alert, close your eyes, and breathe deeply.

2. Hear the word (that is addressed to you)

As the passage is read twice, listen for a word or phrase that captures your attention. During the one-minute silence that follows, repeat the word or phrase to yourself softly (or silently).

The leader will say something like, "Let us share our words or phrases" and will begin by sharing his or her own words. When it is your turn, speak only your word or phrase, no comments or elaboration. You may pass if you wish at any point in this process.

3. Ask, "How is my life touched by this word?"

As you hear the passage read again consider how this word connects to your life? It may be an idea, thought or image. You will have two to three minutes of silence or meditation.

The leader will say, "Let us share our reflections" and begin the process. When it is your turn, share in only one or two sentences how the word/phrase touches your life. Do not elaborate, explain or justify. You might begin with the words such as "I hear", "I see", "I sense." (Or you may pass.)

4. Ask, "Am I being invited to respond?"

Read the passage again. After the reading and during the two or three minutes of silence, consider the question, "Am I being encouraged to do something?"

The leader will say, "Let us share our invitation" and again will be the one to start the process. When it is your turn, take only one or two sentences, without elaboration, to share the invitation you believe you have heard.

Listen carefully to what the person on your right shares, you will pray for that person later, based on what you heard.

5. Pray for one another to be empowered to respond.

The leader will begin by praying for the person on the right.

When it is your turn, pray briefly for the person on your right. You may pray aloud or silently. If you pray silently, say "Amen" when you finish so the person next to you will know when to begin praying.

Rule of Life

Many persons have found it helpful to establish a Rule of Life. A Rule of Life is not a mission statement, or goals per se. Rather, a rule of life simply states a few practices that we want to guide us into a rhythm within our daily living so that we can attempt to create a centered life of spiritual discipline. Our Rule of Life may change as we enter or experience new seasons of life. I have made it a habit to usher in the New Year by going on a solo retreat at a nearby retreat center. One of the tasks during my time there is to review the Rule of Life I established the previous year. A prayerful review of this Rule of Life helps me reflect on all that has happened and where growth has occurred. It also is an opportunity for me to identify those areas in my life where I might need more balance or perhaps a new focus. If necessary, I create a new Rule of Life. There have been times when I sensed God leading me to prayerfully reflect on various areas of my life. One year I felt compelled to focus on the idea of eating as a sacred act. My commitment to focus on this area of my life began a combination of practices that year which included spiritual readings, fasting, prayer and simplicity as a way to meditate and more fully enter into a way of living that honored eating as a sacred act. Being committed to this type of focus can be transformational for us and helps us to bring all the elements of our life before God. More than anything, a rule of life helps me remember why I do what I do as I attempt to order my life around God and his ways.

Lesson 8: The Youth Minister's Relationship with Others

Due This Lesson

One-page paper, interview
One-page paper, spiritual practice
Upward Call questions
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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.

Incarnational-Relational Ministry

Philippians 2:5-11 (*The Message*)

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

Relationship with Youth

Youth abandonment:

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 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.³⁰

. . . 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.³¹

Small Groups

Authenticity

In being authentic the youth minister should not attempt to be anything but exactly who they are. The literal translation of the Greek word, “hypocrite,” means “mask wearer.” This term describes precisely the opposite meaning of being authentic. When an adult (or anyone) “puts on” an identity other than who they actually are that person is “acting” rather than being. This is what is literally meant by being a hypocrite.

There are lots of reasons why an adult youth minister might sense a temptation to fit in with the local youth culture by mimicking youth in a particular way. However, when the adult acquiesces to this temptation they, “sell out (or forfeit) their adulthood” and lose their greatest asset in their relationship with the young person.³² Wayne Rice (co-founder of Youth Specialties and founder of Understanding Your Teenager seminars) has a saying that, “A young person will gravitate toward the oldest person in the room that will take them seriously.”

Not only is it unnecessary, it is counterproductive for the adult to be anything other than an adult in the life of the young person. Most young people do not need more adolescent friends. They need adult friends and mentors who take them seriously and offer youth a perspective and outlook far beyond that of their contemporaries. A relationship built on trust, mutual respect, and equality allows the young person access to the maturity of an adult through a safe environment often guaranteed by that selfsame mature adult. For the adult to be anything but “adult” is to abandon the very characteristic that is most important to the young person in this relationship.

For this relationship to be relevant, the adult must enter (as Jesus in Philippians 2) the world of the young person. They must go where young people are, spend time with young people on “their turf” (their context) and model appropriate love, vulnerability, and understanding. Most of all, adults must listen to young persons and truly seek to hear the “words between their words” (their implicit meaning) in order to foster understanding and pastoral care. It is this sort of modeling of what an adult looks like in front of young persons that not only offers them hope but healing relationship. For this relationship to be truly authentic it must not require anything of the young person but their friendship in return. If there are conditions then further abandonment is the result.

Integrity

Closely associated with the characteristic of authenticity is the ingredient of integrity. Integrity defines that seemingly supernatural characteristic of persons that communicates “I’m for real” without anything being said. Jesus reminds his listeners in his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5—7) of the importance of keeping our word. However, Jesus’ message for us does not ask us to “prove” our sincerity through oaths or any other sort of verbal gymnastics or games. We simply allow our “Yes to be Yes, and our No to be No” (Mt 5:37). This sort of “word keeping” precisely provides evidence of one’s integrity.

But integrity is much more than simply keeping one's word. Integrity defines a way of living that seeks in all things to be whole and uncompromised. With regard to the youth minister, the implications of this way of living remain quite evident. It means that the youth minister maintains constant vigilance not only about their own conduct but also about even the appearance of impropriety to those outside of the immediate relationship. Although it may prove near impossible to always avoid doing or saying anything that will not open the possibility of misinterpretation such propriety defines the life of the person of integrity.

For example, the youth minister must be above reproach with regard to financial dealings and with relationships with young persons—especially of the opposite gender. In order to do this well, youth ministers are strongly advised to involve other mature, Christian adults in all situations that require the minister to handle money and when staying overnight with young persons. These are simple safeguards that cannot be ever ignored in doing ministry. It is the person, according to Jerry Bridges in, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, that is most vulnerable to failure that sees themselves beyond a particular sin. In maintaining integrity, we choose to always involve the counsel, presence, and help of other trusted Christian adults of integrity in important situations and decisions. Youth ministry is NOT an individual sport—nor is ministry of any sort.

The John the Baptist Mentality

Youth ministry can provide quite a boost to one's ego to enter the world of the young person successfully and establish meaningful relationships. This role seems like being a missionary to a different culture other than one's own. People effectively navigating in this "new world" can find themselves the recipient of considerable attention and becoming quite important to a young person (or group). With this adulation the reality of ministry takes hold, calling youth leaders to closely pattern themselves after John the Baptist.

In Mark 1 we encounter John the Baptist. He bursts onto the scene with a prophetic message and a crazy diet and attire to back it up. People were swarming to him from the "whole Judean countryside." He was gaining significant popularity and prominence and could have been perhaps the first mega-church pastor. However, John never lost sight of who he was. He never confused his role and the role of the one true Savior—Jesus Christ. John the Baptist demonstrated this type of attitude in John 1 when it is recorded that John the Baptist encounters Jesus he says of him, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" and a few verses later some of John's own disciples follow Jesus. It is also why in John chapter 3, when asked by his own disciples about Jesus, that John says, "He must become greater; I must become less."

It is precisely this sort of mentality that must be that of the youth minister. We must ALWAYS point young people—and all people—to Jesus and NOT to ourselves. This is a very real temptation for anyone that becomes the focus of the attention of others. In fact John is asked by the "priests and Levites" (Jn 1:19) about his credentials. They wonder if he is "the Christ" or even "Elijah" he denies both. The point here is simple, John does not see himself as more than he actually is (in fact he does not even grasp all that he is) and properly points all who follow him to one that is "greater" and one whose thongs of his sandals he is "not worthy to untie." John displays such humility and clarity of purpose and identity! May all of us involved in this critical ministry with the lives of young people maintain such understanding as John the Baptist.

Parental Influence

" . . .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 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."³³

The Youth Culture Constant

By Walt Mueller

I think my neighbor got concerned when he saw what I was reading in my hammock last July. I was using my summer months to revisit some of the newsworthy events of my youth. My reading list included books about the civil rights movement, hippie counter-culture, the war in Vietnam and the assassination of a popular young president. My goal was to better understand the culture of my 1960s era “wonder years.” At least, that’s how I explained it to the guy next door when he spotted me laying there with a copy of *Helter Skelter* in my hands—not exactly a book you want to see your neighbor reading!

With my filters looking for ways that youth culture, humanity, and our world have and have not changed over the last 40 years, I came away from my reading convinced that even though much of what we see around us looks different, there really isn’t that much that’s changed. Sure, the volume and tone have been turned up on the problems, pressures, challenges, choices and expectations kids face in today’s world. But the fact remains that everything “new” is at its root a manifestation of something that’s been gnawing away at us from deep down inside for a long, long time. My journey through *Helter Skelter* really drove this home.

Just in case you aren’t one of the millions who have read the best-selling true crime story of all-time, *Helter Skelter* is Vincent Bugliosi’s book about Charles Manson, the Manson family and the gruesome Tate/LaBianca murders that began their long-running grip on the nation and world in the summer of 1969. Manson, a throw-away kid who grew up in the midst of horrible family brokenness, had somehow managed to attract and influence a growing number of similarly disaffected teens who eagerly joined his commune “family.” Bugliosi—the lead prosecuting attorney in the case—takes readers deep into the backgrounds of the Manson family members, how that created their willingness to follow their sick and twisted “messiah,” and how he so easily influenced them to forsake societal standards and commit murder. As I read, it became more and more clear to me that what drove the Manson kids is really no different than what’s driving kids today: a yearning for significance, purpose in life and that evasive “something more.” They were lost and hungry for a redeemer who would open the way to heaven. Charlie was their Jesus, and *Helter Skelter* was their murder-fueled Armageddon that would usher in the heaven they so desperately wanted.

How could these kids be so gullible? First, as with every person and thing in our post-Genesis 3:6 world, they were lost and broken. And second, they each felt horribly alone. In his book *Hurt*, Chap Clark describes the debilitating thread of “systemic abandonment” that runs through today’s youth culture. As people involved in youth ministry, we’ve all seen what happens to kids when they’re abandoned, forgotten and left alone with their aching spiritual hunger and thirst. They’ll grab onto anything and everything that promises (albeit falsely) to fill their hunger, quench their thirst and ultimately redeem. Theologian N.T. Wright says that “we should expect that in the quest for spiritual life many people will embrace options that are, to put it no more strongly for the moment, less than what would actually be best for them. People who have been without water for a long time will drink anything, even if it’s polluted. People kept without food for long periods will eat anything they can find, from grass to uncooked meat” (*Simply Christian*, 25).

Glimpses of the potent and explosive mix of systemic abandonment coupled with the deep yearning of fallen humanity came through loud and clear in the lives of those young Manson followers, as well as with each and every one of our kids today.

While it's important for us to keep up with rapidly changing trends that influence our kids, it's even more foundational and necessary for those of us who love and minister to kids to know that spiritual yearning is a cultural constant that touches every life across all times and places. Biblical history, world history and our own personal histories all offer irrefutable proof.

David spoke of his soul panting and thirsting for God (Psalm 42). A rich young ruler who seemingly had it all came to Jesus in search of something he knew was missing (Matthew 19). The yearning of the people Paul encountered in Athens led them to erect an altar "to an unknown God" (Acts 17). Augustine wrote in his Confessions, "I carried about me a cut and bleeding soul, that could not bear to be carried by me, and where I could put it, I could not discover. Not in pleasant groves, not in games and singing, nor in the fragrant corners of a garden. Not in the company of a dinner table, not in the delights of the bed, not even in my books and poetry. It floundered in a void and fell back on me. I remained a haunted spot, which gave me not rest, from which I could not escape. For where could my heart feel from my own heart?"

Blaise Pascal spoke of a "god-shaped vacuum" that longs to be filled. C.S. Lewis said we all experience "a longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off." G.K. Chesterton wrote, "We all feel the riddle of the earth without anyone to point it out. The mystery of life is the plainest part of it." Or, as 16-year-old Sarah said to me in so many words, "I have everything but have nothing. I want something, but I'm not sure what it is." You and I know what Sarah and her yearning peers want. And so we pray for them and guide them, hoping that the rest and redemption that can only be experienced by entering into God's story will someday grip them with that divine grip that never lets up.

In today's youth culture, you don't need to look hard to see and hear these universal echoes of yearning written, sung, read and portrayed in music, TV, books and film. The fact that the emptiness can never be filled by the so-called redeemers of fame, fortune, sex, power and influence has been evident in the lives of girls named Paris, Britney and Lindsay—and their high-profile "train wreck" stories are proof of their continued yearning. The yearning runs so deep and wide that the cries can be seen and heard everywhere in popular culture.

What significance does this constant cultural reality of spiritual craving have as we love and minister to our kids? How should we respond to the reality as we spend time with the kids God places in our paths? Here are some ideas to consider as you ponder how the reality of spiritual yearning should shape your relationships with the kids you know and love.

First, *always* keep this fact in the front of your mind: behind every set of eyes we meet is a heart that, as Solomon says, has eternity etched into its very being (Ecclesiastes 3:11). No kid we meet is alone in being alone. And that reality, above all others, is what's driving how they spend their time and money in the quest to satisfy the God-shaped hole in their soul. It will continue to do so until, as Augustine said, "our restless hearts find their rest in Thee." Every kid is hungry.

Don't ever fall into the trap of believing that just because the hunger is hidden on the outside, that it doesn't exist on the inside. John Stott reminds us that even when they're running away from God, they know they "have no other resting-place, no other home" (*The Contemporary Christian*, 39). They *all* long for and need God.

Second, no kid is unredeemable. Over the years I've seen many Christians (including myself—shame on me) fall into the trap of believing that, "Jesus isn't for that kid. He's too far gone." My heart recently broke while having a conversation with a Christian friend. As we were standing and talking, a kid with black clothes and long dyed jet-black hair walked past us. My friend proudly told me how he had convinced his son to avoid talking to or spending time with the kid. I discovered my friend didn't know the different-looking boy's name or anything about his story. All he knew was that based on what the kid looked like, he was too far gone. How sad. The spiritual bigotry and "God-in-my-image" theology of the prophet Jonah lives on in us all in some, way, shape or form.

I will never forget the challenging words an edgy-looking teenage girl spoke to me after telling me her sad story: "You talk to adults in the church all the time, don't you? Well, every time you speak to a group of adults would you do me a favor? Tell them, please, that the people who look the hardest on the outside—like me—are the people who are the softest and neediest on the inside." Looks, past and present behaviors, bad habits, etc., none of these things disqualify a person from being gripped and transformed by God's love, mercy and grace. If you don't believe me, spend some time reading the biblical story about what happened to a guy named Saul. God extends His life-giving embrace where *He* chooses—not us.

Third, assume a posture of looking and listening, *then* addressing. When the apostle Paul went into the pagan city of Athens, he took the time to open his ears and eyes *before* opening his mouth. We must do the same. Because all humans have been created for a relationship with their Creator, the unredeemed long to fill the God-shaped hole in their soul. Consequently, their lives will always be marked by "spiritual hunger pains" of some type. G.K. Chesterton said that even "the man who knocks at the door of the brothel is looking for God" (quoted by Richard Mouw in *Distorted Truth*, 1). Paul knew this was the case with the Athenians. During his walk through their city, he went to great lengths to look for evidence of their desire to know the one true God.

Popular culture is filled with examples that overtly address the emerging generation's spiritual hunger. We must look for signs of spiritual longing similar to the inscription to "the unknown God." If you read what they read (their books and magazines), watch what they watch (their movies, television, Web sites, etc.), and listen to what they listen to (their music), you will see and hear their yearning for restored fellowship with the Creator. Once found, seen and heard, take the time to talk with them about these signs of the universal human hunger for transcendence. Talking about the yearnings in their culture will help kids experience the restoration to who they were meant to be.

Last summer I cut down a couple evergreen trees in front of our house. I had deliberately waited until mid-summer so I wouldn't disturb any nesting birds while playing Paul Bunyan. As I was cleaning up branches and sawdust from the road, I made the horrible discovery that I had, in fact, disturbed a Mourning Dove's nest. There on the street sat two little baby doves, not yet big enough to fly or take care of themselves. Not very happy with myself and not sure what to do, I decided to

simply put the little birds in the woods. That afternoon, I stepped outside to admire my lumberjacking handiwork and to once again see how different our front yard looked without those familiar trees. One of my son's friends was visiting and he had parked his motorcycle in front of where one of the trees had been only hours before. There on the seat of his bike sat a Mourning Dove—just sitting there looking for the tree that had once been home. I went out and looked around three more times that day, first thing the next morning, again the following morning and then again the next day. Each and every time, one or two Mourning Doves were sitting on or near the tree stump wondering—I think—"whatever happened to my nest and my brood?" I don't know much about Doves, their instincts or their brains. I know from watching our feeders that they travel in pairs which, I think, mate for life. I don't know how smart they are. What I do know is that I'd been watching some confused doves consumed by looking for what once was.

I can't help but think about students and their longing for what once was and what should be. Day after day they show up—lost, longing and hungry for Heaven. Let's not miss this universal, sobering and motivating cultural reality as we live out our callings to point them home.

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Lesson 9: The Youth Minister's Relationship within the Body of Christ

Due This Lesson

Philosophy of team youth ministry
Interview report
1-page paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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 the congregation *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?

Small Groups

In your group discuss the following questions.

What do you think it means to be 'the body of Christ'?

What does it mean in your setting to be called to be a youth minister within the church?

What are your expectations of youth ministry?

Who is your example of a minister? What marks them out as an example?

Small Groups

In your group discuss the following questions.

If your youth ministry and church culture is highly relational, think about potential weaknesses.

If your youth ministry and church culture is more structured, think about potential weaknesses.

In either setting, what are the top three expectations of your ministry? Are the expectations you selected the most reasonable expectations?

In either setting, how does busy-ness impact your life?

Matthew 22:37-39

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

Guidelines for Holistic Ministry³⁴

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.
12. Invest in relationships: it is vital to realize 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.

What Does it Mean to Participate in the Body of Christ?

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

Worship—Romans 12:1

WORSHIP IS ABOUT THE STORY

Without question, this is one of the most influential verses in all of Scripture. But too often we don't look closely enough, and we cheat ourselves out of the enormous truth found in these words. For example, look at the first word, "Therefore." It's obvious that this word is referring back to something that was said or written earlier. But what is it referring to? What has been said to bring God's great mercy into view? What has been said that would merit our giving ourselves over as living sacrifices? Take a good look, and you will see what it is that has moved Paul to make such a statement.

This statement refers back to Romans 9, 10 and 11, in which Paul walks through God's stormy relationship with His chosen people, Israel. In chapter 9, Paul begins by celebrating God's choosing of Israel to be THE people of God. In Abraham, God's family is begun. It is continued through Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca and all who would follow. Paul mentions Jacob, Esau and then Moses. God's love and devotion to His people is the common thread that runs through this entire story despite Israel's best efforts to rebel and frustrate the God of the promise, the God of the covenant.

Throughout the rest of chapter 9, and through all of chapters 10 and 11, Paul writes of a God who refuses to give up on His people—a God who time and again redraws the circle of kingdom citizenship in such a way as to always include his wandering, chosen people. Nowhere else is God the "God of the second chance" like He is with the people of Israel. Finally, God redraws the boundaries of His kingdom in such a way as to include all who would call on the name of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles. And STILL, God demonstrates the eternal "soft spot" He has for His original choice. "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people" (Rom 10:21).

In chapter 11, Paul, a self-proclaimed Jew among Jews, still hopes and prays and strains and yearns for the redemption of his people. You can almost hear the hope in his voice! And yet, as Paul and God wait for Israel's hearts to soften, God in His mercy has made room for the rest of us to belong with those who have come to be known as "God's chosen people."

It is this mercy that moves Paul to these lengths. It is this unimaginable, unmerited mercy, seen in God's dealing with Israel and with all other people that is worthy of an ultimate response from each of us. Paul, awash in this amazement, says finally in Romans 12:1: "Therefore, I urge you . . ."

True worship arises because God has called and continues to call His people, the Church. As an echo, the Church's worship directed to God is a response to His gifts.³⁵ Crucial to worship then, is the Church's ability to remember and recognize God's gifts throughout history. The stories of God's faithfulness and love are the inspiration and fuel powering true, worshipful responses. But those stories are not just God's stories. They are the stories of the Church as well—they are OUR stories. The Bible records God's intention to seek and find and call out to us, the Church.

Not until we as members of the Church rediscover our story, the story of the dynamic relationship between God and His people, can we properly respond to God and His

gifts; without our story we cannot be living sacrifices; without our story we cannot worship.

Can we be honest? Much of what is now called worship, isn't. At least not the way Paul is trying to describe it in Romans 12. Much of what we call worship is more self-centered than it is God-centered. Listen to some "praise" choruses and you'll hear "Thank you, God, for what you've done for me. Thank you God for rescuing me. Thank you God for helping and healing me." Please don't misunderstand—those are songs that need to be sung. We need to sing our gratitude! But those songs must not overbalance the songs that understand God to be the God of the Bible—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—even if my life never shows the evidence that God came to my rescue. Worship cannot be self-centered. God is not the ultimate vending machine. While God the eternal Father does seek to comfort His children, He is still God and still worthy of worship even if our "needs" aren't met.

What seems to be moving Paul to tears in Romans 12 is not so much what God has done for Paul, but what God has done for mankind as can be discovered in God's salvation history as recorded in the pages of the Bible. Each of us has some idea of God's graciousness to us, but our perspective is hopelessly and helplessly limited.

Remember this is our story, our shared experience, our shared history. It is what connects us to God and us to each other. It's foundational to who we are as a people. And if today's young people are going to feel like they belong to God and with us, they are going to have to own this story for themselves. We want them to look at their Bibles and say with us, "This is our shared history."

It is in the story that God can be seen for who He is, and for all that He has done for all of us. That being the case, I'm not sure you can worship the way Paul describes it if you don't know your Bible—if you don't know our story.

Youth workers, you have to teach our story; you have to tell and retell our story, or else your students will not truly know Him. If you don't tell the story, they won't know how to be people of worship; they won't know how to respond! Worship is about the story. It's about understanding and responding to all that God has done throughout the chapters of our history.

WORSHIP IS NOT A RELIGIOUS EXERCISE, IT IS A RELATIONSHIP

Next, note Paul's emphasis on the nature of the sacrifices we are to make. They are now to be "living" sacrifices as opposed to the "dead" sacrifices of the Old Testament. The lives of believers are the only sacrifices desired by God, the only sacrifices worthy of God. For it is not just in the dying, but in the living in relationship with Him, that we become acceptable sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

What does it mean to be a "living sacrifice?" Primarily, it means that we are continually giving our lives to God in order for Him to use us as He pleases. When we do this, our lives are no longer our own to control. We no longer decide our future. Instead, we rely totally on God to lead us and guide us. We trust implicitly in His wisdom, and follow His will as He reveals it to us.

Closely associated with giving our lives to God is the idea that, as a sacrifice, we give God the totality of our lives. When a sacrifice is made, it is an all-or-nothing transaction. I'm reminded of an old story about the chicken and the pig. The farmer decided he wanted to have eggs and ham for breakfast. While the chicken was all up

for it, the pig was a little more reluctant. When the chicken questioned him as to the reason for his hesitancy, the pig replied, "There is a little bit of difference in our sacrifices. What you are asked to give is something small. I'm being asked to give my all!"

Too many Christians want to be a living sacrifice, but only on their terms. They are willing to give a little, as long as it doesn't require too much. But the sacrifice God calls us to give is our all.

How can we give our all, not knowing what the future holds? The answer lies in the relationship. In what has been since the beginning of time a dynamic and living "relationship," God has sought each of us out, interacting with us, building a heritage, a Story that continues to this day. It is a Story that continues to be written through our lives as we live in relationship with this God of relationship.

WORSHIP IS A LIFESTYLE

Paul says, "This is your spiritual worship". It is crucial at this point to recognize that the act of giving ourselves over completely as living sacrifices is equated with the Greek word "latreia," translated as "worship".³⁶

In the original Greek, "latreia" carried the connotation of service or religious homage. So with this definition in mind, Paul writes that believers truly worship when their lives are lived entirely in grateful response to God's nature, to His purpose, and to His good gifts that He gives to His people.

Eugene Peterson captures the essence of this lifestyle of "true worship" in his paraphrase of this same verse:

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going to work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him.*³⁷

The implications are clear: the "repossession" of our story enables believers to recapture a way of life that has been dormant since the earliest days of the Church. The proper response to God will necessarily result in a particular, sacrificial way of life. True worship—the recovery and repossession of the Story, our story—is a distinctive and peculiar way of life. Listen to the words of Craig Dykstra:

*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.*³⁸

Has there ever been a better or more strategic time to re-introduce to the world our peculiarity as the Church? In this age of tolerance and diversity, minority groups are singing their stories to the top of their lungs, reintroducing their unique beliefs and perspectives, demanding to be heard, accepted, and respected. It is time for the Church to re-embrace its minority status! With our story, our characteristic language of love, forgiveness and acceptance, and our peculiarity as a people firmly in hand, we can recapture our God-given identity, while enjoying the blessing and protection of the era of tolerance and diversity.

I think the church was at its strongest and most attractive when the people inside understood themselves as a functioning minority, and when the people looking on from the outside saw a peculiar and distinctive people.

Look at this snapshot of our ancestors—the earliest Church:

Everyone around was in awe. All those wonders and signs done by the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold everything they owned and pooled their resources, so that each person's need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the temple, followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw and every day their number grew, as God added those who were saved (Acts 2: 42-47, The Message).

Does this sound like the kind of church you would like to be? Do you think this kind of church would be attractive to your young people? These people understood themselves as a peculiar, distinctive people.

The climate is right, the time is right for a rebirth of an Acts 2 Church. We can be that kind of church, we can again be the people of God, but it will not be until we completely repossess our story! If we properly define worship the way Paul is begging us to, we will have the answers to the three dilemmas confronting so many in our culture and society: moral relativism, spiritual hunger and the desire to belong. Living life in worship, day in and day out with consistency, we experience the absolute truth of a loving God. Our spiritual hunger is not filled by a religion, but by relationships with God and each other in the Church. And since we are all looking for a place to belong, God has invited us to belong to His family.

That's worth celebrating.

Worship-Centered Teaching

WORSHIP-CENTERED TEACHING—retells the biblical story.

Look at the example from the 8th chapter of the book of Acts. God is talking to Philip and he says in so many words, "I want you to go to this place where someone is about to pass by and I want you to talk to him." So Philip went where God wanted him to go, and sure enough, an Ethiopian Eunuch man passed by. Now before we go any further, let's wipe that smirk off of your face. I have studied that word "Eunuch", and it turns out that there are several meanings. For the purposes of this discussion, let's say that this eunuch is an official in the government, a worker in someone's Royal Cabinet.

So our character in this story is a member of the royal cabinet of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians. He is the treasurer, the check-writer if you will. Philip walks up and sees this man reading the book of Isaiah the Prophet. And the Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Notice that this Ethiopian Eunuch is exhibiting some pretty youth-like tendencies. He is curious, and he has some sense that there is something here in the book of Isaiah that is worth reading, but he doesn't understand at all what he is reading. There is reason to believe that this man was a well-read, cosmopolitan, all-around pretty smart guy. It should be no surprise to us that such a man, being in the spiritual headquarters of the Jews, would want to familiarize himself with the Jewish faith.

I recognize also in this young man the same thing that Philip recognized as he approached and heard the man reading—a spiritual curiosity. He happened to be reading a classic. He was reading this passage of Scripture from the prophet Isaiah: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendents? For his life was taken from the earth" (Acts 8:32-33).

Philip ran up, heard the Scripture being read, and he said to the man, "Do you know what you are reading?" The Ethiopian man responded, "How can I unless someone explains it to me. Tell me please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

Now here is the crucial point, found in verse 35: "Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Did you catch it? Look at it again. "Then Philip *began with that very passage of Scripture* and told him the good news of Jesus" (emphasis mine). I want that to sink in. I want that to wrap around your mind. How can you make the case for Christ the way God wants the case to be made for Christ without the Old Testament? I don't pretend to know how long they traveled together or what he said, but I'm telling you he had to at some point retell the entire Story (which is also our story) in order to make Christ's death make sense!

Apparently this was a long chariot ride. Philip seems to have had time to work all the way through the Story and into the rituals and ceremonies whereby persons are initiated into the Story. And Philip made the case so well that the Ethiopian man

jumped at the first opportunity to be baptized. "As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the Eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And Philip said 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The official answered 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' He ordered the chariot to stop and then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away and the eunuch didn't see him again, but he went on his way, rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).

Do you know when you teach and preach the story as it is intended to be taught and preached, it changes hearts and minds and lives. You can have someone walk into your ministry confused, beat up, burnt out, bedraggled, and they can leave your ministry—if you have been faithful to transmit the story of God—rejoicing, even if you disappear!

The Bible has great transformational power. But you already knew that, right? Then why is it that you and I have had a tendency to rob the story of its power?

Allow me to step on your toes a little bit. And as I do this, please know that my own toes are eternally scarred. Here's a question: How do you teach the Bible?

Please understand that I am not here to bash topical teaching. My primary concern with topical teaching is that most youth workers move from topic to topic, without any real sense of direction or purpose. Too often, youth workers simply return to their pet topics time after time, because that is what they feel comfortable teaching. And as a result, the young people under their care do not receive the full Story of God, but only those bits-and-pieces that the youth worker feels are important. In the end, without a real plan to guide them, most youth workers cheat their students out of really discovering what God's Story is all about.

The method is what I term the "Preventative Medicine" approach to teaching scripture. I did a little bit of checking to see how the ancient Israelites taught their children. Without many of the wonders of technology that more and more of us have at our disposal to transmit Biblical truth, how did the ancient Israelites teach faith to their children?

They told stories. They told them in a particular order so as to build their children from the inside out.

I haven't always done that in my youth ministry.

Let's talk about the Story of the Bible. Make a timeline—use the back of this page or some other means. Let that timeline represent the storyline in the Bible. Take a few moments to put Creation at the beginning and the Second Coming at the end. Now, I would like for you to answer the following question: If it were your responsibility to tell the Story of God to someone who had never heard it before, what stories would you believe to be the most crucial? We want to completely cover what it means to be the People of God. Which biblical stories are the non-negotiables? Go ahead, take a few minutes, and write these on the timeline. Do your best to try to keep the stories in order. No fair looking in your Bible to complete the exercise—do it from memory.

Done? Okay. Here are some of the stories that I considered to be the most important. Check to see how well your list matches mine.

The fall—Sin bursts on to the scene.
Noah
Abraham—Our father of faith. The original recipient of the promise. The father of Israel. Abraham is so very important. I want my teens to sense that we together are the people of God, and that our people in so many ways, begin with an old man who dared to trust God.
Isaac
Jacob
Joseph
Moses
The Exodus—God rescues his people.
Sinai—The Ten Commandments—God shows his people how they can continue to be the distinctive, peculiar people of God.
Israel demands a king
King David
Israel has good kings and bad kings.
Exile—Israel suffers the consequences of wandering away from God.
Restoration.
The birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
Pentecost—The birthplace of the Church, and the giving of the Holy Spirit
Paul's ministry in the early Church.

This is the end of Biblical time. But now your timeline should show a gap between the end of Biblical time and the Second Coming. Do you know what belongs in that space?

We do. That is where we live now, you and I, as we minister to our young people. Why is that so important? Let me tell you something. Your people won't truly belong the way God wants them to belong, and the way that they want to belong, until they know that they belong on this timeline right here with the likes of Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ, all members of the family of God. If we'll do this thing right, we can show them how they can be a part of God's Story—the story that continues to be written through us by God.

Several of us were together struggling with this very issue. We could tell that we were on to something, but we couldn't figure out how to talk about it. We were in a fifth grade boys Sunday school classroom in a church in Olathe, Kansas. And there we were, pulling our collective hair out when someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Look at the wall". On this particular wall was a timeline. It was one of those little Sunday school curriculum, flannel-graph-looking, cartoonish timelines, but it had all the highlights. Creation, Fall, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, The Exile, Jesus, Pentecost and a picture of the Second Coming at the far end.

Taped in the space between Pentecost and the Second Coming, there it was—a Polaroid snapshot of the fifth grade boys in that class. It had been there all along, but until then, we had been too blind to see the simple and yet crucial truth hanging on the wall.

That brilliant teacher is on her way to giving boys the gift of belonging in the biblical Story. And as we discover our places in the Story, we find our own identity and the kind of responsibility that comes along with being a part of that biblical story—the kind of identity and belonging and responsibility that will preserve our tradition for years.

Are you with me? It matters that Moses follows Abraham. It matters that Christ is an expression of all that has gone before. It matters that Pentecost follows the Ascension of Christ. It all matters. But I didn't always teach like it mattered. Because I had no overall sense of what the Story was about, I had a hard time giving my teens an overarching sense of all that God has been doing in and through history. And believe me, God is definitely up to something.

Worship-Centered Teaching means that you tell the story of God in such a way that it demonstrates two things: first that God is up to something; second that we can help!

WORSHIP-CENTERED TEACHING—is more active than passive.

The Dead Poet's Society is one of my favorite movies. In the movie, Mr. Keating (played by Robin Williams), a popular English teacher at a private high school in the Northeastern part of the USA, jumps up on his desk and asks his class, "Why do I stand up here?"

"To feel taller?" one of his students replies.

Keating answers, "No! I stand on my desk to remind myself that we must constantly look at things in a different way. See, the world looks very different from up here. You don't believe me? Come see for yourselves. Come on. Just when you think you know something, you have to look at it in a different way. Even though it may seem silly or wrong, you must try."

This clip makes an incredible point. In order for our students to truly see what God has in store for them, for them to understand what it means to participate in His Story, we need to help them gain a new perspective. We must move them from being passive observers to being actively involved in the teaching and learning process.

Mr. Keating could have made his point without climbing up on his desk. These students were used to the lecture style of teaching. They were getting it everywhere else! And Mr. Keating could have stopped with jumping up on his own desk. Already he was out of the ordinary and above average. But it wasn't enough for Mr. Keating to tell them, and it wasn't enough for Mr. Keating to show them; he wanted his students to see for themselves. So what did he do? He invited the entire class, one at a time, to jump up on his desk and take a fresh look at the classroom. He wanted them to be participants in the learning process, not just spectators.

Worship-Centered Teaching is in its essence more active than passive. The traditional lecture style is a passive form of teaching and learning. And you know, from painful experience, that the lecture style is not always the best way to get your point across. And here's proof. Look at the lists provided below. These are from a study done by Edgar Dale.³⁹

Cone of Experience by Edgar Dale

In order from the least degree of learning to the highest degree of learning

- 10—Verbal symbols; words
- 9—Visual symbols; maps, drawings, charts, etc.
- 8—Recordings, radio, still pictures
- 7—Motion pictures, television
- 6—Exhibits
- 5—Study trips

- 4—Demonstrations
- 3—Dramatic presentations: plays, musicals, etc.
- 2—Contrived experiences: games, simulations, role-plays
- 1—Direct, purposeful, personal experiences

Cone of Experiential Learning Triangle by Edgar Dale

- 5% - 10% Verbal or written
- 25% - Media
- 40% - 60% Role-play
- 80% - 90% Experience

Edgar Dale's work is of monumental importance to us who teach. When we look at these diagrams we discover that when we try to teach by only expressing our point verbally or by writing it on a board or a piece of paper, we are making a minimal impact. In fact, for every one hundred words that we speak or write, our teens are only catching ten if we're lucky. Only ten of our words are making any impact at all.

And so we try to get a little creative. Some teachers go out and buy visual aids and helps. We do this in order to up the ante, to try and capture their attention. But even then our young people are only picking up a whopping twenty-five out of every hundred words.

Now, we get serious. We get them up and out of their seats to do a little role-playing, and still they take home only forty to sixty percent of the things we are trying to say.

Now look at that bottom line in the table. When we can actually figure out a way for our young people to experience the truth of the lesson in a hands-on way, then they take home eighty to ninety percent of the lesson we're trying to get across.

It is not enough to say, "As Christians, you should go and feed the poor." Instead, after you teach that lesson, go and serve. Go and help to feed the poor! I know it sounds simple, but we act as if it is nearly impossible.

Sometimes the best thing you can do for your people is to cancel your regularly scheduled activities so that you can give your youth an opportunity to experience the truth of a lesson. You'll be amazed at what you can teach and what your young people can learn.

WORSHIP-CENTERED TEACHING—is more we-oriented, than I-oriented.

The focus of Worship-Centered Teaching is not on the individual but on the community. It is this kind of emphasis that will tie our students to the traditions of the church and the depth of the scripture.

As we've said before, in order to belong a young person is willing to bend his or her own individual beliefs to match those of the group. That being the case, this is the perfect time to say, "Here is a place to belong and here is how we believe." This doesn't mean that we seek to take advantage of this desperate desire to belong and so create students who appropriate our beliefs but fail to live them out. What it does mean is that we can provide a place where students can feel welcomed and accepted. And when the students make the choice to enter our groups, we can then stand up and say, "This is who we are and this is how we believe." Worship-Centered Teaching does not apologize for having distinctive beliefs.

Here's what I mean. We need to get better at saying, "This is who we are without apology." We need to be better at saying, "These are the foundational things that we believe as a community of faith." It is not our job at this point to try and prove that other beliefs are wrong. Instead, we simply say, "This is who we are. And while we definitely want you to belong with us, we want you to know, before you make that decision, that this is who we are."

I know that this sounds a little harsh, but it demonstrates a commitment to our core convictions, an attitude that will be attractive to the student who is searching for a legitimate place to call his or her spiritual home.

Another aspect of being more "we-oriented than I-oriented" is in how we assist our teens with their devotional life. We all know that a regular devotional time is essential to the development of faith. And because we know this, I want to help us think how we can best assist our students in doing their devotions.

It could be that some of you, in an effort to provide devotional material for your students, have created your own booklets and sheets that your students can use. I also have created similar things for my students. Not too long ago, I created what I thought were the coolest things I had ever seen, an artistic and technical marvel, and from my own limited hands. These were the perfect devotional sheets; the perfect tool to develop saints. See if what I describe sounds familiar to you.

I placed our logo in the top right-hand corner of the page. Then I provided my students a place to write in the date and the Scripture reference for the passage they had chosen to read on that particular day. Then I carved out creative space on that same page, room enough for my students to answer the following questions: "What does this Scripture mean to you?" and "How can I apply this to my life?"

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? I was so pleased with what I had created. But I have to tell you that I was wrong. The pages asked the wrong questions. The design, while stunning, was wrong.

I missed it. I was asking my young people questions they had no business answering, putting them in places of authority and experience before they were ready to be there. Now don't misunderstand me. My heart was right. I wanted to get my kids into the Bible, and I wanted them to pray, so I sought to help them by giving them resources for recording their scripture insights and prayers. I was trying to do the right thing, but I wasn't doing anything that even resembled Worship-Centered Teaching.

The disciplines I recommended to my students were totally I-oriented. Basically what I was doing was giving the sheets to my students and saying, "You tell me what you want to read. What's your favorite verse? John 3:16? OK, you can read it every day if you want. Now, what does it mean? No, really, I want you to tell me what it means. Don't worry about what others think. This is just between you and God."

Let's be painfully honest with one another. Our young people often aren't equipped to be the final authority on the interpretation of Scripture, and we do them a great disservice when we look at them and ask, "What does that Scripture mean to you?" as if Scripture is open to any and every teenage interpretation! It is possible to misinterpret the Bible. And in fact, the young people entrusted to our care may be more prone to misinterpret scripture because they simply don't have the wisdom to always interpret it correctly.

Youth worker, it's your responsibility to open the Scriptures for your young people and tell them what these passages are trying to get across. It's your responsibility to guide and shape and even correct them when they have misinterpreted Scripture.

In the sheets I designed for the students, I asked another question. I asked, "How do you apply this to your life?" This question totally and completely misses the point of the priority of Scripture. We don't apply Scripture to our lives; we apply our lives to Scripture. The Bible and its unmistakable truths were here before we got here, and the Bible those unmistakable truths will be here after we're gone. The Bible, as the written record of God's activity in and through mankind, is the primary source of all we know to be true about God, redemption, humanity, and everything else that we consider important.

We apply our lives to Scripture. We don't apply Scripture to our lives like we would an acquired skill, like the learning of a new language or time-management skills. We live out, or "perform" the eternal truths of the Bible. It's not as if our lives are primary and the Bible is somehow secondary. The Bible and the things of God—those eternal truths—are primary. Our lives are secondary.

Here's how it can be different. If we are serious about wanting to give our kids devotional material, and we are serious about wanting it to be more we-oriented than I-oriented, then here is how we do it. We say, "On this particular date, I want you to read this passage of Scripture." In this way we help our teens to know what to read, and everybody is on the same page. With this method, we can help our students to systematically work through a book of the Bible, or through a particular thought process within the Bible.

Now when we say to our group, "Teens, read this scripture", then we must understand that it's also our responsibility to tell them what it means. You might now be saying, "But Jon, how can I ever be the final authority on the interpretation of Scripture?" Great question. The truth is none of us will ever get to the place where we can be, in and of ourselves, the final authority on Scripture. However, in order to do our best when asked the tough questions by our teens, we must spend time daily and weekly, studying the Scriptures.

I have some reliable books that I reference. I have some people that I reference: people who are smarter than I am, who have studied longer and harder than I have, who are reliable sources of information. When I draw a target on a particular passage, I don't leave that passage until I can make a good faith estimate as to the point that passage of Scripture is trying to make. By the time a passage gets to my students, I have lived with it long enough to be able to identify, with conviction, the truth that is being communicated.

Scripture is one of God's greatest tools, and with it God seeks to speak truth into our lives. With it He shapes our perspective, giving us a new pair of glasses through which we can properly see Him, ourselves, and our roles as His people on this planet.

I mentioned earlier that we are living in an age where so many believe themselves to be the final authority on the truth of things. As youth workers, we have a unique and "peculiar" responsibility to guide young minds and hearts through Scripture—to connect them to a truth that is greater than themselves.

On the next devotional handouts, after helping my young people to understand the point of a particular Scripture, I now ask them this question: "This being the eternal truth, how will you live out or perform this truth as you live your life this week?"

I hope you can see that this is more than just semantics. I want young people to see the things of God as primary. I want them to understand that Scripture helps us to recognize both God and a Godly way of life in the world. I want them to practice rather than just apply. Rodney Clapp, an author, understands this idea when he writes: "Perform this truth—if need be, conform your life, change the way you live your life so as to include this crucial lesson."⁴⁰

Now I know that some of you are reading this and saying to yourself, "Well, that's great for you, but I just don't have the time to do all of these things." I need to be honest with you. What I'm asking you to do is going to take more of you, more time, more energy, more effort. In fact, it may require that you stop doing some of the things you are now doing, so you can have the time and energy resources to do it. Only as we model Worship-Centered Teaching for our students, and provide opportunities for them to join us, will they come to understand and find their place in God's Story.

Lesson 10: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Worship

Due This Lesson

Ministry statement
Community celebrations/festivals
Actions/activities in worship
Reading Resource 9-6
Reading Resource 9-7
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- articulate a holistic definition of worship
 - begin to weave this definition of worship through her or his ministry to, with, and among young people

Homework Assignments

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.

Read 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?

My Hometown

CUSTOMS TRADITIONS OR FESTIVALS UNIQUE TO MY HOME AREA

WORDS OR PHRASES UNIQUE TO MY HOME AREA

CHAPTERS IN OUR HISTORY, STORIES UNIQUE TO MY HOME AREA

CUSTOMS TRADITIONS OR FESTIVALS UNIQUE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

WORDS OR PHRASES UNIQUE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

CHAPTERS IN OUR HISTORY, STORIES UNIQUE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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.

Practicing Worship

Perhaps the best way to understand the true meaning of worship rests in practicing it in the middle of a worshiping community. In this sense the term “practicing” does not mean a rehearsal of what we do, or a strategy to become masters at worship. Instead the term ‘practicing’ means that we give ourselves over to the structures and forms that guide our worship until we are shaped and conditioned to experience and respond to God with our whole heart. We do not master worship; instead we allow worship to bring us into a posture of obedience where we serve God.

However, worship, which James White defines as attributing worth or respect to God,⁴¹ often comes in many styles and shapes throughout the world. White notes that worship can be used to describe both personal devotion and common worship, the gathering of people as a Christian assembly. White notes “we usually treat the act of assembly as merely a mechanical necessity, but coming together in Christ’s name is itself an important part of common worship.”⁴² These gatherings, however, can be quite diverse. From the early history of the church there have been at least nine different “classical” liturgical traditions and as many versions of Protestant worship.⁴³ Regardless of the different approaches to the worship of God, one thing remains clear, worship should bring us into the presence of God and also awaken us to God’s love so that we can respond with our whole lives.⁴⁴

What were some of the key elements, of a particularly powerful worship experience, that allowed you to enter into God’s presence? Why were these elements so important?

In order to “practice” worship we need to keep in mind some key elements that most worship services share, no matter how formal or informal. The elements may look different in various cultural contexts, but they remain crucial for sound worship leadership with young people.

First, worship incorporates a basic sense of “space.” While worship might happen anywhere, often we are called to fashion a space that people find helpful to their worship experience. This space may be a church sanctuary, a classroom, a meeting hall or outdoors. The key challenge is to arrange the space so that the focus is on God. This space might include special altars and furniture, or religious symbols and artwork, or music played and sung. The goal remains to structure this “sacred space” so that young people know they are in a place that signals a sense of reverence and expectation that God will do something.

Second, almost all worship has a sense of timing, rhythm, or flow. Whether an open praise service or a formal, liturgical, worship setting, almost all worship tries to bring people through a series of actions into the presence of God. While small changes might be made, the overall flow remains important. Robert Webber⁴⁵ has studied both “free church” worship and liturgical worship. Free church worship describes congregations that like to keep a portion of the worship service spontaneous and open. The term liturgical often describes congregations that have a set, often printed, worship structure that they follow in a regular pattern. Regardless of the level of spontaneity and freedom included, some blended worship services try to incorporate both. Webber notes that historically almost all congregations still follow some basic

structure aimed to help people actually enter into worship. The four basic acts, from the beginning to the end of the worship service, that provide a rhythm or flow to worship include the following:

Four Basic Acts that Structure Worship

1. **Entering into God's Presence:** Actions such as singing and praying designed to invite people into God's presence
2. **Hearing God's Word:** Actions such as hearing scripture read and proclaimed so that we hear Christ's message for us as we rest in God's message
3. **Responding/Celebrating with Thanksgiving:** God's word invites our response, be it at an altar or through the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Responses can include times of commitment but they also express moments of giving thanks to God for what we have heard and for the chance to be in the presence of God.
4. **Sending:** Finally worship includes some form of dismissal so that we can be called to love and serve God's world. The final act of gathered worship includes the command to live out our worship throughout the week.⁴⁶

Finally almost all worship requires dedicated, authentic leadership. Youth ministers learn early that the goal of leading worship revolves around getting young people to focus on God, not on the worship leader. Nevertheless, sound, spiritually grounded leadership remains a key concern. One does not have to be unduly outgoing to be a good worship leader. Instead a good worship leader recognizes that they must focus more on the rhythm of worship than on their personal abilities. Quiet, reflective people may serve as strong leaders as long as these adults . . . or young people . . . can direct the worshippers' attention toward God.

Regardless of our role in worship we need to remember that the focus must be on God. We can have a beautiful worship setting, great technology, excellent music, powerful preaching and dynamic leadership and still miss the goal of worship. If people do not enter the presence of God and if they are not inspired to then live out worship in their daily lives we have failed to understand the basic purpose and rhythm of worship.

Key Concepts for Building Relationships

1. **Consistency builds friendships:** Relationships often begin informally with consistent communication. Communicating both with youth and promoting the efforts of young people to adults reveal a steady interest in their lives. For instance, basic practices like circulating a regular monthly news-letter, or general correspondence through church publications, may appear impersonal; however, these actions remind young people that you want to stay in regular communication with everyone on a consistent basis.
2. **Demonstrate hospitality:** Invite people to your home, or a general meeting place if more appropriate, for a meal, beverage, or just sharing. In some cultural settings, you might meet them for a cola or coffee. You do not have to force these opportunities but a lot can happen over coffee and conversation.
3. **Cultivate common interests:** Discovering a similar interest or hobby creates real opportunities to build relationships. Interests may include an indoor hobby like stamp collecting, or outdoor games like football, golf, and tennis. At times, we must be willing just to invest ourselves in a young person's personal passions. However, taking time to discover and share mutual interests provides positive topics you both enjoy.
4. **Develop a care-giving mindset:** In our contemporary society we see a number of hurting young people. Youth face family problems, broken marriages, health issues, feelings of rejection, times of failure, interpersonal pain, and the challenges go on. Simple providing Christian care and guidance when the opportunity arises in these situations sets the stage for building bridges to evangelism. Care-giving service often brings a necessary change in attitude and behavior that allow young people to open their lives to the gospel.
5. **Develop practical service:** Youth may also build relationships through compassionate service. There are a number of lonely or hurting people, including from the elderly to children, who will appreciate young people calling and spending time with them. Young couples in need of baby sitters will be delighted to hear from a church offering help. All these efforts will create opportunities for relationships that may lead to witness and evangelism. Youth may be either the agents, or the recipients, of the gospel through these encounters.

Key Principles for Relational Evangelism

Read John 4:1-42. List methods Jesus used to win the Samaritan woman.

Establish natural contacts: The best opportunities for evangelism occur naturally in ordinary settings. If we are learning to live and walk in the spirit, things will just happen in our everyday life: at a local school cafeteria, in a coffee shop, during casual talk within our neighborhood, or other settings. Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman in a common daily setting and built appropriate bridges to talk with her.

Cultivate interest/eagerness: When we make initial contact we need to develop an engaging conversation that sparks ongoing curiosity, at times through stimulating or intriguing statements. Jesus neither quoted text to the Samaritan woman nor uncovered the gospel before she was ready for it. Her curiosity aroused when it was presented beyond her present experience. A relevant concept of need was presented in Jesus' dealing with the individual. We need to get a person to a stage where he or she asks questions or requires our help. Until they get to this stage it is unlikely that they will listen to us when we try to share with them the good news of Jesus. "Reality, integrity, and testimony can make people curious about Christ."

- First, **reality**, in a post modern society, many people appear hungry for something real. Young people often ask is it real? Where is the evidence for what you are saying? Our life will show the truth if only we live what we say to make evidence for what we are saying.
- Second, **integrity**, often personal evangelism requires modeling consistent wisdom, discernment, faith, and initiative that must flow out of our lives.
- Third, **personal testimony**, can make people curious to know more. Paul spoke several times of his personal encounter with the risen Christ; such a testimony carries its own authority and conviction.

Engage life issues: Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman brought out gently the disappointments of her life. Jesus showed concern for those issues that mattered most to her. In personal evangelism, touching core personal problems remains a necessary task in leading a person toward a commitment to Christ.

Re-direct Diversions: In personal evangelism bringing the person back to spiritual issues is important. Especially young people can divert the conversation and that can lead an evangelist astray from the main focus.

Engage personal commitment: The caliber of an evangelist rests in their ability to bring people to a personal commitment. Jesus came face to face with the reality of the Samaritan women. There is always urgency when helping individuals to find Christ. One approach may begin with giving our own testimony and inviting the young person to also open his or her own life to Jesus. Often we can use a simple strategy once we have reached the level where young people are ready to hear the gospel. The "ABC" of evangelism includes.

- **Admit and Accept:** Admit that our life does not match God's intent and accept that, even when we have failed God, God loves us enough to reach beyond our limitations
- **Believe:** That God has provided a means for our salvation through Jesus Christ. We do not need anything else other than to believe this strong enough to put our trust in this fact.
- **Confess:** The final stage is to put our belief on the line by confessing to God not only where we are but, more importantly, our trust in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately we must bring a person to pray and commit, often using a phrase like; "admit your need of Christ, believe that Christ has died for you." Often the moment of personal commitment may appear quite different depending the young person's personal context. Nevertheless, we must be ready to respond and encourage a commitment. Often scripture provides resources that speak of God's response to different circumstances.

Lesson 11: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Witness and Evangelism

Due This Lesson

Read Resource 10-3 (optional)
Timeline
Paper
Reading Mark and Acts
Reading Resource 10-4
Reading Resource 10-5
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- 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

Homework Assignments

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 influences 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.

Read 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.

Small Groups

How would you summarize the evangelistic practices in the book of Mark and the book of Acts?

List some of the methods and messages used to evangelize people. Remember that the book of Mark, like the rest of the gospels, serves as a resource for evangelism.

Someone in the group read Matthew 20:28.

Someone else read 1 Peter 2:24.

How do these two passages help summarize the evangelistic message of the gospel?

How do these two passages summarize the message and mission of evangelism to and with young people today?

What difference do they make with youth today?

Models for Evangelism

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.

Invitation

This approach acknowledges a person's life is a journey but also invites people to allow Jesus to enter into that journey.

Seeker Sensitive or Strategic Exposure

This approach utilizes gatherings where youth bring their friends for an engaging activity, a brief gospel invitation, an opportunity to discuss the event over food.

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.

Missional

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.

Seeker Sensitive Evangelism

Seeker sensitive ministry can make great evangelistic impact—always seeking to understand the church as a place where people bring others to the devotion to Christ.

Seeker Sensitive Themes

Coming along side: Today's youth are looking for a different kind of approach where music and drama is their language. In the same token they like to receive the Gospel in this postmodern world. Therefore church must come along side youth in this mission assuring them of moral and spiritual support. And sometimes physical protection.

Contemporary worship style: This approach often uses an innovative worship style appealing to the young seekers, rather than more traditional or liturgical approaches. The intent remains to have a vibrant, grounded, worship with a seeker sensitive outlook.

Connecting the world of unbelievers: Seeker sensitive approaches believe it is extremely important to connect with the world of the unbeliever in order to bridge the life of the church to their world. There are nine aspects worth our consideration in developing this form of ministry

1. Seeker sensitive churches place ministry to lost people at the top of their priority list.
2. Are biblically sound and culturally relevant.
3. There is a clear path from being lost to being found and to growing in Christ.
4. It is important to have friends who are lost and then give an opportunity to bring those friends to church where they hear the Gospel.
5. Value lost people expressed in evangelism training regularly.
6. Pursue excellence to honor God and to reflect His character.
7. Organize for the result sought—goal is to make the Gospel biblically and culturally relevant.
8. To care authentically for lost people,
9. Willing to give up old solutions and grasp new ways of doing evangelism.

Small Groups

In your group share your lists of Jesus' methods from the reading of John 4: 1-42.

How did your lists compare with the ideas presented in Resource 10-4?

Read: Romans 3:23, 6:23; Isaiah 59:1, 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18

Discuss when a specific text might match a particular issue youth struggle with and how a minister might use this scripture to encourage a personal commitment.

Based on these texts: what type of specific issue might a young person be facing?
How best can we use this scripture in bringing a young person to respond to Christ?

What is the best way someone can ask youth to pray specifically to make a commitment to Christ?

Teaching Youth How to Share Their Faith

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.

First, youth must invest in prayer and personal holiness

Second, youth need to learn how to understand their listeners

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

Fifth, youth need help constructing their message

Sixth, it is essential youth include some application points to insure their message reaches youth

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

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.

Planning Evangelistic Events⁴⁷

Relational, one on one, evangelism may be the most effective form of evangelism with youth. There are times when evangelistic strategies may focus on a larger group of young people. Often called “mass evangelism” or “event evangelism” these approaches rely on getting the gospel message to groups of youth and trusting God to be at work.

Christian Concerts: Burns and DeVries claim “music draws students more than any other activity.” The greatest challenge may be determining the style of music and whether you want to focus on a specific segment of youth.

Special Speakers: Often you need a well-known personality—sports hero, musician or entertainer—to draw non-believers. One must be cautious that personality does not obscure the message, but committed Christian speakers who are focused on the Gospel can influence young people.

Special Events: Using community-wide events may be an entertaining and exciting way to attract unbelieving youth. Often the events can be low cost or in-house fun gatherings. Such group events open the door to simple proclamations.

Camps and Retreats: Gives youth a change and opportunity to get away from their everyday context. In such settings non-Christians are free to explore the Gospel in a supportive environment. Ministers should invite members of the youth group to help plan these events.

Other Strategies may include

Internet Evangelism: Changes in technology allow youth groups to also evangelize by engaging one another over the internet. While non-traditional by most standards there are a number of creative ways of developing and posting details on a web site to present the Gospel. Particular attention must be given to developing, designing, drafting proper content. However, this approach may open up your ministry to young people who might not otherwise have access to the Gospel.

Sports Evangelism: Sports evangelism provides another approach. This strategy may be one of the best ways to gather youth in order to communicate the Gospel. An international phenomena, camps in India utilize elite sports personalities to ignite young people. The key to this ministry remains reaching young people, children and adults through a favorite sport and by sharing God’s love.

Compassion Evangelism: The Gospel needs to be two-fold, Bible and work. Natural calamities, famine, war, tsunami, provide some of many situations where young people can take active part in responding to the needs by voluntarily involvement. We must remain diligent to serve in such situations only to compel people to accept Christ, rather we need to serve to show the love of Christ. Often youth demonstrate incredible gifts and graces in these events when they have the resources to support their efforts. At times unbelieving youth accompanying this type of ministry discover God’s love for them in the middle of their ministry to others. Such trips require special

planning and a ministry team to accomplish the goals. However, responding to various needs—be they emotional, economics, education or just creating caring relationships—provide incredible opportunities for youth.

Mission trips: Mission trips differ place to place when you begin to think globally. In Sri Lanka, a mission trip means being with Tsunami victims to provide trauma care and counseling, in Bangladesh it is responding to natural calamities, in India to reach a rural community with medical assistance, awareness, and women empowerment. In every setting, youth can demonstrate compassion to those in need while also spreading the Gospel.

Youth Congress: Mass gatherings like a youth congress still serve a strategic influence. Resulting in tremendous responses among young people. For example, in South Asia youth congress gathers thousands of young people coming together and committing their lives to Christ. Youth participating in such events return to their churches where they impact young people in their setting. Often these gatherings have international implications, as in South Asia, bringing young people from different cultures to prove Christian uniqueness in the midst of their diversity. Youth leaders need to be empowered and released for such tasks; as well as churches participating and designating resources for support of the events.

Youth Mission Sunday: In some settings youth-oriented evangelistic service directed toward young people may be very effective, particularly when youth themselves are encouraged to invite their friends. Choosing the appropriate title, inviting the right preacher, planning adequate and appropriate materials, requires careful planning.

Which of these strategies most appeals to you? Is it the best strategy for your youth group?

Which of these strategies would be the most challenging for you? Would the effort make a difference in your youth group or the youth of your community?

How many different events can you, your youth group, and your church support/manage in a single year?

Are the events that you are currently doing, making a difference in the lives of the youth that come under your leadership?

Lesson 12: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Nurturing and Teaching

Due This Lesson

Outline
Interview summary
Lesson plan
Ministry plan
Completing Resource 11-6
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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 an incarnational teaching process by creating participatory learning environments

Homework Assignments

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 it address the development, maturity, and learning styles of your students?
- What can you do to make your teaching more experiential?
- How can you use curriculum to supplement the life you are sharing with your students?
- How committed are you to the relationships you have with your students, and what are the changes that need to be made to make them more prominent in your time with them?

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 youth 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?

Small Groups

In your groups answer the following questions:

1. Write down the titles/topics of the three most influential sermons you've ever heard in your life.
2. Write down the names of the three most influential people in your lives.
3. Which was easier to come up with? Why do you think that is?
4. Talk with the members in your group about who the key influencers have been in your life, and what was significant about your relationship with them.

Learning Styles⁴⁸

Intuitive people learn from experiences. They relate to people easily and are usually very relational. They love small groups and the opportunity to share ideas. Intuitive people tend to be sensitive to feelings and to other people. They are feelers.

Analytical learners are listeners. They make careful observations before making a judgment. These people like to view things from different perspectives and are always looking for the deeper meaning of things. They seek facts and ask what the experts think. They are observers.

Logical learners look for logical analysis of ideas. They are excited about systematic planning and act only upon an intellectual understanding of the situation. They are very practical-minded; usually they want to know how things work and if they relate to real life situations. They ask, how does this work? They are thinkers.

Pragmatic learners do not lead a dull life; they influence people and events through action. They are dynamic learners with the ability to get things done and are not afraid to take a risk. You'll find that they prefer the trial-and-error method, which sometimes can come across as being pushy. Their favorite question is, What can this become? They are doers.

Statements for discovering our dominant learning style:⁴⁹

As I was talking with my friends, I came up with some new ideas—Intuitive

I read several experts and came up with a conclusion—Analytical

I experimented with something I heard about, then kept what worked and threw out what didn't work—Logical

I put myself into a challenging situation and learned as I went along—Pragmatic

Decision Making

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.

Chap Clark in his book, *Hurt*, gives three reasons for this:⁵⁰

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."

Designing a Bible Study⁵¹

1. Cognitive (receiving): What content, facts, and ideas do I anticipate youth will learn in this study?
2. Affective (feeling): What sort of feelings might I anticipate this study will invoke in youth?
3. Behavioral (doing): If the youth take seriously this truth from the Bible, how might their behavior be different on a daily basis?
4. Existential (being): How do I anticipate this study might impact the basic values and inner core of the individual youth?

Lessons from the Great Teacher

Ways Jesus taught⁵²

- 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

Observations on the way Jesus taught⁵³

- 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

How Jesus might teach students today⁵⁴

- 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

The Teacher as Midwife⁵⁵

Pack your Bag	Name the Pain	Break Water	Be Ready for the Catch
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study of Scripture• Practice of Prayer• Exegesis of adolescence• Exegesis of culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen closely for signs of labor• Interpret the discomfort• Reassure the one who is struggling• Identify helpful strategies for managing the awkwardness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naturally• With minor assistance• With decisive intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wait expectantly• Stay close to the ball• Remind the youth of your presence and readiness• Make opportunities for faith to grow

Lesson 13: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Compassion and Service

Due This Lesson

Evaluation of curriculum and teaching
Response paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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?

Small Groups

Research your assigned topic. Note the injustices in the world. Offer an initial response to the sites. What did you expect to find? What did you find? What is the implication of the need for such websites in our world today?

Feed the hungry: Fair trade and the globalization of food

- Bread for the World: www.bread.org
- Hunger Web: <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/academic/hungerweb/>

Give drink to the thirsty: Lack of access to clean drinking water

- UNDP Report - Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis: http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/pdfs/report/HDR_2006_Overview.pdf
- Healing Waters International: <http://www.healingwatersintl.org/>
- Blood: Water Mission: <http://www.bloodwatermission.com/>
- Water Footprint: <http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/home>

Clothe the naked: Sweatshops and the global garment industries

- Sweatshop Watch: <http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/>
- National Labor Committee: <http://www.nlcnet.org/>
- Global Exchange: <http://www.globalexchange.org/index.html>

Harbor the harborless: Homelessness in the United States

- National Coalition for the Homeless: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>
- National Alliance to End Homelessness: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/>
- U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) government site: <http://www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm>

Heal the sick: The unequal distribution of global health care to those who can pay for it

- Heart to Heart International: <http://pulse.hearttoheart.org/>
- Mercy Ships: www.mercyships.org
- Partners in Health: www.pih.org
- UNICEF publications, including The State of the World's Children report: <http://www.unicef.org/publications/index.html>

Release the captives: The modern global slave trade

- Free the Slaves: www.freetheslaves.net
- Anti-slavery International: www.antislavery.org
- International Justice Mission: www.ijm.org
- Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000: Trafficking in Persons Report 2007: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/>

A Eucharistic Life

In *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life*, Henri Nouwen wrote,⁵⁶
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.

Social Issues

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- Bouma-Prediger, Steven and Brian J. Walsh. *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.
- de Villiers, Marq. *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource*. Mariner Books, 2001.
- Farmer, Paul. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor*. University of California Press, 2004.
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- Irwin, Alexander C., Joyce Millen and Dorothy Fallows. *Global AIDS: Myths and Facts, Tools for Fighting the AIDS Pandemic*. South End Press, 2003.
- Mortenson, Greg and David Oliver Retin. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace—One School at a Time*. Viking, 2006.
- Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Harper Perennial, 2007.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*. South End Press, 2002.

Lesson 14: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Community and Belonging

Due This Lesson

Research report or book report
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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 students 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?

Individual Spiritual Growth in the Context of Community

Genesis 17: God establishes covenant with Abram/Abraham to be his God and the God of Abram's descendants.

Exodus 19—24: Covenant people formed by God at Mt. Sinai and guided by practical ways of life that lies behind the Ten Commandments and The Law.

Jeremiah 29: God promises to bring Jewish exiles home from Babylon to Palestine, as his covenant people (not a promise for individual prosperity).

Luke 6: Jesus selects a group of 12 men to be his closest followers.

Acts 2: The Holy Spirit comes upon a group of believers, forming them into a faith community, who devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, prayer, and sharing of material goods.

Romans 12: We are all members of the body of Christ—a living sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 12: Paul's explanations of Christian believers as members of the Body of Christ

Small Groups as Arenas for Belonging

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.

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 have a powerful effect on fostering a sense of belonging, acceptance, and community.

C.A.R.E.⁵⁷

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

Levels of Intimacy and Growth⁵⁸

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

Formula for Safe Small Groups⁵⁹

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*

Good Discussions Flow from Good Questions

Flow:

- Start with general questions that are non-threatening and call for little or no self-disclosure. *What is your favorite movie?*
- Move to general, but more serious questions that call for analytical thinking and moderate levels of self-disclosure. *Why did Jesus say this? How would the world be different if more people followed Paul's advice?*
- End with personal questions that call for self-evaluation and voluntary self-disclosure. *What do you think of God's invitation? What changes might you make in your life to show your love for God?*

Stimulate Thinking:

- Ask questions that call for a review of the facts or questions that measure your group's knowledge. *According to Mark 10:45, why did Jesus come to earth?*
- Ask broad, open-ended questions. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. *What do you think it means to live a holy life? versus Should Christians live a holy life?*
- Ask people to "unpack" their thinking. *How did you arrive at your answer? Why do you believe that?*
- Ask follow-up questions for clarification or more information. *Is this what you mean? Can you elaborate? Tell us more. Can you give an example?*
- Ask your group to analyze an idea. *How does this compare with _____? Why do you think that is true?*
- Ask what consequences an idea or action might have. *What if everyone did that? What would happen if we followed that to its logical conclusion? If you did this would it lead to the kind of life you want to live?*
- Promote active listening. *Michael, could you summarize Nick's point? Janelle, what do you think about Abby's comment?*
- Take issue with some statements or opinions, acting as "devil's advocate."
- Keep pointing people back to the passage to make sure they are making accurate observations, not jumping to conclusions that are unsupported by scripture.

Getting Personal:

- Ask for people's opinions.
- Ask for people's feelings.
- Withhold judgment. Respond in a non-evaluative fashion. Say, *Thanks for sharing* rather than *Good answer* or *No, that's not right*.
- If the person exhibits faulty thinking or shaky theology, use analytical questions above instead of direct disagreement or correction.

Facilitating Community Through Group Discussion

GOOD GROUP LEADERS

- Encourage participation
- Invite everyone to talk
- Facilitate discussion
- Stimulate new questions
- Ask clear, interesting questions
- Affirm the significance of each person's opinion, experience, values, or faith

BAD GROUP LEADERS

- Discourage participation
- Threaten timid persons
- Monopolize or dominate the conversation
- Assume there is only one valid answer
- Ask loaded or complicated questions
- Affirm that only the leader's opinion matters

GOOD DISCUSSIONS START WITH A GOOD ENVIRONMENT

Seating

- Circular, semi-circular, or horseshoe are best arrangements
- Level
- Comfort + Attention = Participation

Confidentiality

- Degree depends on purpose
- What is said in group, stays in group
- Exceptions for health and safety

Respect, Trust, and Acceptance

- There is no such thing as a dumb question
- All opinions and ideas are worthwhile (although not all are equally valid). You can disagree with an opinion, but respect the person. Avoid sarcasm, put-downs, etc.
- Listening is as important as speaking, so only one person should speak at a time.

Flexibility

- Leaders should guide the discussion to keep it on topic
- People have priority over plans
- Exceptions should not become the rule

Participation and "Pass"

- Participation is a major goal of discussion
- Leaders should invite, encourage, direct participation
- No one should be forced to share

Lesson 15: Youth Ministry Discipleship—Simplicity and Retreat

Due This Lesson

Plan
Paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

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 of discipling: (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.

Dehabituation Simplicity

“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.

The practices of dehabituation reprogram our frequencies, reduce the clutter of background noise and redirect our heart to the composer of a cosmic melody.”⁶⁰

Meditative and Contemplative Exercises

The tradition of meditative and contemplative worship within Christianity begins with the Bible. Examples include: 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

Practical exercises include:

1. Talking to God: Set aside time(s) each day for prayer. (minimum 10 minutes)
2. Listening to God: Spend time each day in silence (minimum 10 minutes)
3. Read daily from the Bible as well as devotional classics
4. Observe a weekly Sabbath
5. Practice *Lectio Divina* in your devotional time
<http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org> and Douglas S. Hardy. (2008) "*Lectio Divina: A Practice for Reconnecting to God's Word*" In *Preacher's Magazine*. (Lent/Easter 2009) www.preachersmagazine.org
6. Keep a prayer journal
7. Rewrite a psalm in your own words
8. Take a walk
9. Turn off your car radio
10. Exercise without music, TV or other distractions
11. Take an overnight personal retreat to a place with no TV or telephone
12. Fast technology for 24 hours

Create your own list

Retreat Planning Overview

This overview, while not exhaustive, provides a series of questions designed to aid in the planning and promotion of a retreat with youth.

1. What are you trying to accomplish? (Curricular outcomes)
2. Where will you go? (Location)
3. How will you get there? (Transportation)
4. How much will it cost? (Budget and Finance)
5. Who will be a part? (Target group)
6. What will you do? (To accomplish your curricular outcomes)
7. How will you tell people about it? (Promotion/Publicity)
8. Before and After (Report to the congregation)
9. How will you know if you did what you set out to do? (Evaluation)

A Personal Story of Spiritual Direction

"The glory of God is the human being fully alive."
Irenaeus of Lyons, 2nd century

I well remember meeting with a Spiritual Director for the first time several years ago and the disappointment I felt over what I had anticipated and what actually transpired in our first meetings. What I had hoped for was insight and advice about a particular area of my life. Despite the wonderful ways I was blessed to be ministering to others I felt a spiritually emptiness in my life.

After a few moments of chatting I began to talk about the darkness and emptiness I was feeling, offering as much information as I thought would be useful. I distinctly remember expecting him to find a concrete reason for my problem. Perhaps it was not something I was telling him but something I wasn't telling him and he would be able to find the missing link. The spiritual director listened very intently, sometimes asking for clarification, but mostly listening. Eventually he would ask the vaguely familiar question I was dreading, "Where do you think God is during this quiet time in your life?" It seemed obvious to me at the time that I did not know the answer since I felt God to be distant. I continued to try and express my frustration, ignoring his question and even offering ideas for ways I could be more faithful. I think I believed that the answer to my "problem" was caused by my lack of faithfulness in spiritual disciplines and practices. I was longing for a solution, something I could "do" to fix my relationship with God. He had no such answer for me.

He reminded me of my "belovedness," a language by Henri Nouwen that I was quite familiar with. I knew the concept but could not find a way to appropriate that belovedness in my life. Finally he offered a suggestion. I was relieved. I knew that directors sometime give their directees assignments and I suspected that such assignments must usually lead to amazing revelations and deep spiritual awakenings. He asked if I was familiar with a certain monastery located several hours away. I grew even more excited by the romance of being instructed to make a journey to a monastery. My mind raced in those few moments wondering what Christian saint he would instruct me to read. Perhaps Julian of Norwich or Augustine? Perhaps he would simply give me a couple of Bible verses to meditate on? Whatever the assignment I was sure that hidden there in that chosen text selected just for me would be the answer to the spiritual emptiness I was experiencing. I waited with great anticipation for further instruction.

"I'd like for you to stay there for 2-3 days minimum. There are beautiful grounds there. Find a bench overlooking the ocean and just sit there."

I waited for more instruction but he sat back silent. Certain that more instruction would follow I broke in suggesting that the prayer time and journaling would probably do me good. He smiled, shook his head and said,

"Just go."

With a little embarrassment I asked, "But what will I do there?"

"You'll sit."

"For what purpose?"

"To sit."

"But what will I learn?"

"Sitting."

In this example, what do you think was occurring in the life of the directee? What is your assessment of the nature of the struggle?

What do you believe the spiritual director was hoping the directee would discover by his question and his assignment?

I trusted this spiritual director enough to know that he lived a deeply spiritual life of joy, truth and wisdom so I left trusting. But I also walked away feeling a little unsure about the process. And thus began my journey with Spiritual Direction. I did in fact go to the monastery and "sat." It was uncomfortable. And I don't remember when it happened or how but somehow I learned to sit, leading to moments of rest and peace as I felt invited once again to trust in God's presence, whether or not I felt it. Perhaps it was a string of events—a sermon here, a whispered prayer there, opening my eyes to God at work in the lives of others, whispering a prayer of gratitude. The events themselves were not the key as much as learning to open my heart and mind to looking for ways that God might be present. Common questions we returned to again and again during those times regardless of what was happening at the time included, "Why do you think that happened?" "Where do you sense God in all that is happening?" "How are you inviting God into your processing?" "What do you imagine God would desire for you to know in this situation?" Again, no matter how much I longed to dwell in a situation, hurt, problem, or even just the details of my own life, the director's task was to always draw me back toward God, and thus, inviting me to a greater awareness of God.

Through spiritual direction I have learned much about my tendencies, habits and patterns of thinking that keep me from experiencing God's presence at work in my life and in the world, as well as my participation in his redemptive ways. Anytime we close ourselves to the hard work of reflection about what we experience and the ways it affects our beliefs and actions, we inhibit true growth and the freedom of being in Christ all we were created to be.

But that's where spiritual direction can help because it is rooted in a shared journey where one person helps another pay attention and recognize the ways God may be speaking in their life. In *Sacred Journey*, Tony Jones (2005) summarizes the task of a spiritual director as one who helps the other person listen, discern, interpret and receive God's voice in their life. If there is a running theme woven in the task of spiritual direction it is the hope that the other will come to know their belovedness, and be able to appropriate that belovedness in their daily life. In order to appropriate God's belovedness in our lives most of us need to recognize the many factors that affect our ability to hear God, or to act in ways that reflect this reality. I believe that appropriating our belovedness is the work of a lifetime because our experiences carry such weight in the fabric of who we are. And the longer we go without naming and reflecting these forces that may be at work, the more power they have to shield us from this reality.

Through spiritual direction we learn to open our mind and hearts to seek, know and understand ourselves, and God. Persons seeking spiritual direction are persons simply seeking spiritual formation. But spiritual formation involves the patient work of slowing down so that we can pay attention to all that is happening in our lives. We must learn to exegete our experiences and recognize that our life struggles affect our faith journey. Through spiritual direction we learn to trust in the wisdom and experience others share with us as they listen and help us discern the movements of our lives. We also learn to articulate our journey which involves the process of

identifying and naming those things that may be affecting our ability to recognize God. As David White warns, "What remains unconscious to us has the power to determine our behavior."⁶¹

There is just as much discipline and patience required for the person offering spiritual direction. It takes great discipline to guide others to slow down. One must be familiar with the many shortcuts we take, and our tendencies for quick results. It also takes discipline to recognize the movements of God in the lives of others, and careful and patient guidance that allows the directee to discover the truths for themselves, rather than always relying on others for easy answers. Remember that ministry is always about preparing others for life beyond the present moment. For youth workers this means in particular that we should be helping to prepare youth for the various encounters and transitions of adulthood. 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. Discernment is required to know the appropriate stories and elements to share for the benefit of the other person's journey. Remember that persons are at different stages of development and some may not be ready or willing to move beyond. The task of the spiritual director is to help the other discern when they might be ready to move beyond a certain stage which would bring a greater awareness to God's presence.

All that is described as a result of spiritual direction involves the process of critical thinking which is crucial to their emotional and intellectual maturity. Though spiritual direction may sound like a process that only the mature adult can participate in, I have great faith that youth greatly desire to be challenged to a deeper level of processing about all that is occurring in their life and God's participation in it.

Listening

Suggestions for youth ministers and adults who desire to let listening be a high priority in their ministry:

1. **Create enough space in your schedule to be available to others.** Youth struggling with various insecurities are less likely to seek you out, especially if they sense you are too busy. Youth need to know that you are available both by your invitation and your ability to create space for listening. Sometimes creating space involves simply spending leisure time with students, where they feel especially comfortable sharing in life together. There is much that can be learned about their culture and tendencies through these times, but more importantly, they sense that people value them when we're able to simply hang out with them that is not programmatic or with an agenda. However, if you have more than 12 young people in your ministry I would strongly encourage gathering others to support you by serving as mentors and guides that can help minister and be present to the various needs within the group because careful and attentive listening, guiding and following up takes time and can be quite consuming even if you're being intentionally guiding a few one-on-one.
2. **Continually discern your own spiritual growth,** motivations, insecurities and vocation because these and other factors significantly affect the way you will practice youth ministry. As ministers we must continually be aware of what is happening in our inner life so that we also experience growth and can be free to be truly present to those we are ministering to. When persons are not ministering out of a healthy center they run the risk of merely running programs for their own edification and need for affirmation. In other words, youth ministry can be the perfect storm where youth are led to easy answers and fun programming as youth workers choose to lead without adequately challenging and empowering youth.
3. **Consider seeking spiritual direction in your own life.** Ministers are never beyond personal and spiritual development and are as susceptible to distractions, misconceptions and false illusions. If we are leading others, we need to be in relationships where we can be led and where others can speak truth into our lives. Though the language of spiritual formation and direction is growing more popular, until it becomes a lifestyle we fall prey to using the language and tools simply as programming techniques rather than a lifestyle. Spiritual direction is a willingness to give ourselves to spiritual formation through mutual discernment and guidance. I believe that as youth witness the value of spiritual practices and direction in our lives, they will desire to participate in similar practices.

Lesson 16: Youth Ministry Shepherding—Offering Direction

Due This Lesson

Retreat
4 categories of discipling
Reading Resource 15-4
Reading Resource 15-5
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- 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

Homework Assignments

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. Is incorporating spiritual direction that has 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?

Small Groups

Based on the reading of Resource 15-4, discuss the following questions:

What are common factors in youth ministry programming that might conflict with the basic elements of spiritual direction?

As you consider the nature of spiritual direction in the role of a youth worker, which elements draw you to the practice of spiritual direction? What makes you nervous?

If spiritual direction is about helping others interpret the landscape of their lives, what type of spiritual direction do you think youth need at different stages of their adolescent journey (early adolescence versus late adolescence) as you consider the various stages of development? You may need to review Lesson 3.

What difficulties would you anticipate if you were to incorporate classical spiritual direction with youth? What would be the value of incorporating spiritual direction practices with youth?

Spiritual Direction as Decision Making

Dr. Brad Kelle⁶² 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.

Understanding the Movement Toward Critical Commitment

Dualism (Typically High School Years)

- The world is stripped of complexity and ambiguity
- Moral and intellectual commitments are black and white
- There is **MORAL COURAGE** but no epistemic humility

Pluralism (Typically Early College Years)

- Complexity and ambiguity are recognized
- Moral & intellectual commitments become problematized
- There is **EPISTEMIC HUMILITY** but no moral courage

Commitments within Pluralism (Later College Years)

- Tentative moral and intellectual commitments are espoused in spite of complexity and ambiguity.
- **EPISTEMIC HUMILITY AND MORAL COURAGE**

Steps to Discernment

In his book, *Discernment. The Art of Choosing Well*, Pierre Wolff suggests that all persons require adequate time, critical thinking, listening to our hearts and using our faith values, to guide us toward good discernment.

1. *We need adequate time.* Wolff suggests that the more difficult the decision, the more time is required as we consider the options. Youth often grow anxious over a situation and feel they must immediately make decisions. Encourage them to take their time to adequately discern all the variables.
2. *We need to use our head to analyze, distinguish and objectively look at the situation.* Many youth are prone to lean heavily on their emotions when making a decision. This is a great time to teach them critical thinking when making a decision, helping them recognize the advantages and disadvantages of a choice as well as the possible consequences.
3. *We need to use our hearts.* Rational is important but we cannot abandon our hearts when making a decision. Almost all of us have made a decision at some point that didn't make sense to others. In other words, when we weighed all the factors by all accounts we should have made a specific decision, but careful reflection also revealed that making that decision would mean a sacrifice in another area of our lives that we were not willing to make. Whatever the case, we balance the rational arguments with what we know about ourselves and our call as Christians.
4. *We use our faith values and Christian vocation as a guide.* Would this decision help me to be faithful to the things that God has called me to be as a person, as a Christian? How will this decision affect those close to me? Does the decision neglect my call to love others as I do myself?

Key Considerations for Spiritual Guidance

- **Ask youth questions about their choices** without judgment as you are helping them process a situation. The task is to help them see their behavior as inconsistent with who they have expressed they desire to be. Trust that young people have the ability to identify and name their own destructive behaviors when given enough space to process the situation.
- **Use as many tools as possible** (conversations, comments made, commitments voiced, personality tests, etc.) to use as reference points for helping them assess their tendencies and strengths and weaknesses. These tools help youth find and develop a language for what they are processing internally. *Youth desire for us to be honest with them* about their lives. The more mature they are becoming, the more they show signs of desiring honest feedback as they seek to be transformed in their practices. When young people sense that we truly care and are genuinely listening to them, they will be able to engage in a mutual processing and able to receive direction in the form of honest feedback, warning, caution and even discipline.
- **Communicate respect for their journey** by carefully listening and knowing when to caution them about the journey forward. These conversations involve making them aware of the dangers of certain decisions but freeing them to make the decision(s) on their own. When we give others greater responsibilities they often step up to the challenge and begin to take more seriously the implications of their decisions. When a person chooses a direction that is not the best choice, revisiting their decision-making process and helping them process the outcomes is crucial and is just as important as celebrating their good choices. We often learn more from our mistakes than our successes and as youth leaders we need to not fear the lessons that failure or missteps can play in the shaping of our lives for the good. The more we grow in our understanding of growth, the more willing they are to receive instruction in the form of honest assessment of their lives, warning, caution and discipline.
- **Direction often has an individualistic element** as every person is unique and responds to situations, instruction and challenges in their own way and time. There is no formula for guiding and directing every situation. "Wisdom, discernment, adaptation, creative planning and thoughtful preparation are needed by the mentor."⁶³
- In *Uncommon Youth Ministry* Burns and DeVries points out three **popular misconceptions people have about God**.⁶⁴ Recognizing these misconceptions in youth as they process situations will help you know how to help them critically think about their experiences and beliefs. The three misconceptions are:
 - God is demanding and unforgiving—difficult time accepting the concept of Grace
 - God is Distant and Distracted—God is too busy running the universe to care about me
 - God is Slow to Forgive—sense of shame. Remind them continually of timeless truths: Romans 8:1-2 and 1 John 1:9.

- The most difficult task of providing guidance is being able to **identify and set aside self-interest** as you enter the process of analyzing a situation. Self-interest can be quite powerful and misleading. Even as adults it is easy to rationalize our desires and confuse them for God's will. We can even be misled to believe that we are sensing "God's peace" toward a direction when what is really happening is that we are sensing a peace about finally figuring out a way to get what we want. During these times there may not be anything we can do to convince another person to choose a particular way, however, we must commit to attempt to help the other recognize the consequences of their actions, and to help them see beyond themselves in a situation.
- Providing direction involves **identifying true conviction** from self-imposed guilt or shame. Examining sin as it relates to our longings and its consequences can be something we seldom talk about in the church. We don't always know how to strike the right balance of discipline and grace. But it will be important to teach young adults how to rightly discern when God is using conviction in their lives.
- Try to include **community approaches that hold youth accountable** through regular programming. When persons participate in Communion with a proper understanding of confession and the practice of receiving the grace offered through Christ, this practice can be a rich experience with both personal and corporate reflection. Asking youth to read and reflect on passages through the process of *Lectio Divina* is a wonderful way to introduce reflective practices and mutual sharing.
- **Challenge the student to practice self discipline and discernment** with caution and accountability. The following are examples of some questions taken from the book, *Spiritual Mentoring*.⁶⁵
 - In what ways am I aware of living outside of God's will today?
 - Are there words of confrontation that God might wish to speak to me today?
 - Are there words of consolation that God might wish to speak to me?
 - Where was I anxious and afraid today?
 - What might this mean and why?
 - What is life-giving here and why?
 - What is not life-giving here and why not?
 - Whose interest is being served?
 - Who is suffering?
 - What are some reasons for this present state of affairs?
 - Can you explain some of your own attitudes?

Spiritual Direction Questions for Reflection as We Guide Youth⁶⁶

- How is your prayer life?
- How are you making space in your life for God to speak?
- Where do you sense God in this situation?
- Where do you see or feel God in all that is happening?
- How are you inviting God into your processing?
- Can you tell me why you are crying? What are you feeling?
- Why do you think that happened?
- Why do you think you responded in that way?
- In the midst of all that is confusing to you right now, what do you know to be true? What do you know to be true about the situation? About the person that has wounded you, or that you have wounded?
- What were your highs and lows this week?
- Were you faithful to follow the disciplines to which you committed yourself?

Suggested Activities for Helping Youth Make Wise Choices

As you seek to foster healthy choices to those you lead, the following are examples of ways to incorporate discernment tools into your programming:

- **Journaling exercises** can be a great way to foster reflection and processing of numerous experiences. When planning a retreat with youth, consider purchasing journals for all of them to use during your time together. Tell them they can use the journals whenever they wish, but also incorporate a few journaling exercises into the agenda. This may be a great way to prepare their hearts and minds for a session or, create space for them to adequately respond to an activity or lesson before too quickly wrapping things up with prayer. As they learn to more adequately reflect they will be better able to offer prayers of response to a message.
- Offer **specific but optional times of spiritual direction**. One of the best ways to offer optional times of intentional spiritual direction is during retreats. You can set these times up during free time and the invitation is simple—during this time they are invited to seek discernment about a specific situation in their life, ask you to partner in prayer with them about something specific, or it can be as simple as simply asking you to pray a blessing over their lives. You may be surprised at who shows up.
- **Group reflection and discussion**. *Lectio Divina* provides a great exercise that can introduce youth not only to silent reflection but also discerning God's voice in their lives as they are challenged to articulate and share with others what they hear God saying.
- Consider presenting **Wesley's small group questions of accountability** and ask students to craft their own set of questions that they would want to practice using over a series of small group meetings. Debrief the experience with them when the time period is over.
- Teach others the value of **praying the Psalms and reading the Proverbs** which brings much wisdom.
- Encourage small groups to use **activities like "God Hunt"** to help students begin to look for God in ways they normally wouldn't consider. This is a great exercise where they learn from each other. God Hunt is simply asking participants to name the places throughout the week where they noticed God in their life, or in the life of another.

Obviously there are a number of other practices. Plan to present and practice four spiritual Disciplines with the youth over the course of a year, with processing and debriefing built in to the learning.

Please Care!

What are some of the ways we “miss it” when it comes to caring for young people?

- Often we may **assume that teenagers have the same needs and perspectives** that we had at their age or even possess now. Subsequently we spend more time giving advice and less time listening to what may really be going on in their head and heart, when what they desperately need and what is most effective is someone to gently guide rather than direct.
- We may **try to solve their problems** (and often create bigger ones) rather than helping them find the resources to tackle their situation. Creasy Dean and Foster called this tendency in youth workers the “need to be needed” that may evolve into a “Messiah complex” if we are not careful. What youth need is patterned after the true Messiah, coming alongside of students to be present in the rhythms of their life, whose passion is to love them, not fix them.
- We assume **unhealthy approaches to relationships**. In an attempt to relate, youth workers are tempted to play the role of “buddy” or revert to being “cool” to gain a hearing. The most productive adult influencers, however, understand themselves as just that, are comfortable enough with who they are to put others at ease, and who serve as role models while recognizing themselves as fellow pilgrims on the journey of life.
- Youth workers may **disregard parents as a positive contributor** to caring ministry for teenagers, due to the conflicts that often accompany the “pulling away” that is natural to adolescence. As partners in prevention, according to Rich Van Pelt and Jim Hancock in *The Youth Workers Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis*, parents lend a unique perspective from their proximity and can serve as advisors that help interpret what’s happening in their student’s life and provide support in building a network of caring in your community.

Not every youth problem looks the same. Nor should we consider offering the same level of care unless we know the real nature of the problem. Issues arise from a number of situations and settings. Often they can be organized into four broad categories: family-related conflicts, personal health problems, social challenges and ordeals that require professional care. It is important for youth ministers and other caring adults to recognize the unique challenges each area presents to young people so they can envision a level of spiritual care equal to the task.

Issues of Care

Certainly not all home environments are fundamentally positive. **Family-related conflicts** are one of the four broad groups of issues that adolescents face. Teenagers and parents often collide in areas such as responsibility, school performance, and behavioral choices. Sibling relationships and life changes in parents themselves can add to the mix. Extremes in parenting styles, dysfunctional family systems, and divorced/blended/single family units can breed distrust or even rebellion. Caring youth workers will commit themselves to supporting both parents and students, and can help restore hope in troubled periods.

Another group of issues revolves around **personal health**. Teens can fall prey to emotional turmoil, from self-doubt and undue stress to depression or anger, whether surrounded by financial need or middle-to-upper income comfort. Ginny Olson in *Teenage Girls: Exploring Issues Adolescent Girls Face and Strategies to Help Them* attests that the way a female perceives their looks is one of their biggest sources of angst, even when they are developing normally. Steve Gerali in the parallel book on *Teenage Guys* agrees that males are also very body conscious and can be as uncomfortable about their bodies as their female peers. Eating disorders and self-injurious behavior such as cutting too often characterize the struggles of adolescents who lack coping skills and the ability to convey their pain in any other way.

A third category of complexity flows from **social challenges**. Relationships rule in the lives of the young, and caring adults are wise not to discount what teenagers do (or have done to them) that stunts or stains their need to belong. Young or less assertive teens may be victimized by bullying, whether physically or emotionally. Aggression as part of masculine identity development can quickly lead to violence when mixed with the wrong circumstances and the wrong friends. Challenging authority can be productive or destructive, resulting in trouble at school or with the law. Today's malaise of sexual perspectives create a confusing collection of choices, and girls and guys alike can feel pulled toward having sexual intercourse for status, security, or sensation, often before having the internal reserves to resist or redirect. Promiscuity, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases, gender identity confusion and same sex attraction, date rape, pornography and experimentation—church youth groups are not immune to the threats on healthy adolescent sexuality.

Finally, teenagers may experience **ordeals** that require **professional care**:

- Clinically defined by the American Psychiatric Association as an “uncontrollable and compulsive use, even in the face of negative health and social consequences,” **addictions** can apply to chemical substances, physical and sexual behaviors, or relationships.⁶⁷ Dependency, denial, and destructive behavior often result. The primary question related to addictions is *what pain is being numbed by the addictive behavior?* The goal of spiritual care is most often to intervene and help motivate the user to receive the help needed; a combination of medical, psychological, and peer-based assistance (recovery groups) is often necessary.
- Defined as inappropriate adolescent or adult sexual behavior with a child, **sexual abuse** can include inappropriate touching, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, sexual exploitation, or exposure to pornography (Department of Health and Human Services). Given the prevalent reluctance to disclose abuse, delayed intervention is often necessary and residual risks (reclusiveness, anger, grief, promiscuity, suicide, cyclical abuse) are prevalent Youth workers must focus on helping the teen get into treatment more than providing their own care, and what they can do best is stick by the young person no matter what.
- There is no typical **suicide** victim. It happens to young and old, rich and poor. Fortunately, there are some common warning signs which, when acted upon, can save lives. A person might be suicidal if he or she experiences drastic changes in behavior, withdraws from friends and/or social activities, loses interest in hobbies/work/school. loses interest in their personal appearance, or becomes preoccupied with death and dying. Trained professionals use an assessment

strategy to determine the risk that can be helpful to a caring youth worker. Pelt and Hancock⁶⁸ employ the acronym **SLAPP**. Does the person have:

- o **S**pecific procedures,
- o a **L**ethal method,
- o **A**ccess to the means,
- o lack of **P**roximity to the help that might prevent them from carrying it out,
- o and **P**revious threats or attempts.

When faced with a threat of suicide, youth workers must take it seriously, talk openly and allow expressions of feelings without judgment, take action to remove any means to do so, and get immediate help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Though these three issues are clearly critical, Gary Collins in *Counseling Teenagers* points out that a crisis is **any** event or series of circumstances that threatens a person's well being and interferes with his/her routine of daily living. A crisis is self-defined; it is our responsibility to pay attention, to engage the person in crisis, and to assist them in determining what course of action **they** will take on their own behalf.

Lesson 17: Youth Ministry Shepherding—Providing Care

Due This Lesson

2-page paper
1-page paper
Developing survey
Reading Resource 16-7
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- 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

Homework Assignments

Identify local agencies that can support you in providing care to youth. Use 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.

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."⁶⁹

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

Role Play

Anything Can Happen to Teenagers!

Everyone loves games and (almost) everyone loves television, so it's no wonder that game shows are so popular, no matter where in the world they are watched. Those whose contestants have a terrific time and win fabulous prizes are certainly at the top of the list, but it's interesting that games where participants struggle through painful challenges and even humiliation have been equally renowned. Since in most games there is one or more "losers" for every winner, some game shows feature the applauded and the agonized, the champs and the chumps, on the same stage.

One way to explore the spiritual care of young people is with a special edition of a little known (and soon forgotten) game show called **Anything Can Happen to Teenagers!**

First, I want you to think back on a moment in your life when you were young that you remember as embarrassing or funny (maybe looking back on it now, if not funny then). It doesn't have to be the most embarrassing but the one that first comes to your mind when you think of adolescent awkwardness or anxiety. If you have trouble remembering one of your own, think of one that happened to a friend or perhaps to someone you are aware of that you can demonstrate (without using names, of course).

Once you have shared, pick one that your group can act out on our "big stage" in two minutes or less and take the remainder of your 6 minutes to put together a brief enactment of your "anything can happen" moment with yourselves as the actors.

Why Care?

The Biblical Basis of Spiritual Care

- Old Testament Shepherding
Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, Jeremiah 23:4, Ezekiel 34:23-31, Zechariah 11:4-7
- New Testament—Jesus as Shepherd
John 10; Matthew 9:36, 1 Peter 5:4
- New Testament—The Church, the Body of Christ
2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Hebrews 4:15, 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, Matthew 11:28-29
- New Testament—Providing Leadership and Passing Leadership
Ephesians 4:12
- New Testament—Results in Personal Relationship
Luke 17:11-19

Progressions Toward Adulthood

Three questions related to three essential needs:

- Who am I?—Identity
- Do I matter?—Belonging
- Am I competent?—Autonomy

Les Parrott in *Helping the Struggling Adolescent*,⁷⁰ 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
- experimenting with “grown-up” behavior

Important Questions⁷¹

Several questions that should be addressed when youth workers become aware of situations that cry out for caring in the life of a teenager:

- 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?

Developing a Strategy of Care

Some questions we can ask ourselves in developing a strategy of caring are:

- Do I create a comfortable environment?
- Am I warm and friendly, calm and unhurried, when students want to talk with me?
- Do I concentrate on caring rather than answers?
- Do I ask open ended questions?
- Do I act as though they have a right to their feelings?
- Do I balance affirmation and challenge?
- Do I minimize conversation about myself?
- Do I avoid clichés?
- Am I open to their situation and tolerant to their responses as they work to “figure it out?”
- Do I understand my limitations regarding their situation?

Teen Situations

1. You are a sixteen-year-old living in a home where there is a beautiful public image presented by your parents, and the real dysfunctional truth of emotional abuse.
2. You are a thirteen-year-old struggling emotionally with your body image.
3. You are a high school senior who has just broken up after three years as a "steady."
4. You are a fifteen-year-old who, after being on the middle school team, did not make the high school team.
5. Raised in church, you are having spiritual doubts whether or not you are even a Christian.
6. You are a fourteen-year-old having trouble adjusting to your new blended family.
7. You are a seventeen year old boy who is making home a "living Hell" because your mom never married your father.
8. You are a fourteen-year-old dealing with anger at how your divorced dad spends no time with you.
9. You are a fifteen-year-old caught by your parents drinking with the crowd you hang out with.
10. You are struggling with temptation related to pornography.
11. You have brought home a terrible report card and your parents are upset about it.
12. You are a fifteen year old who is dealing drugs at the elementary school.
13. You are an eighteen-year-old who has just returned from hospitalization from attempts to injure yourself by cutting.
14. You are a teen leader in the group who has problems getting along with another teen on your youth council.
15. You are really confused about your sexual identity and have begun to struggle with homosexual thoughts.
16. You are so discouraged about your life that you have contemplated suicide.
17. You are a fourteen year old who was sexually abused by a member of the church.

Learning to Listen

Being a caring listener takes practice. Often we must address our own anxieties and fears as well as embrace both a listening disposition and skillful practices.

Anxieties and Fears

Often ministers have to acknowledge personal anxieties or fears that may inhibit sound listening skills.

- **Subject Matter:** Some topics are difficult for youth ministers to listen to
- **Source of Information:** Listening may be difficult if the information comes from a particular person close to the youth ministry or related to an authority figure
- **Anticipatory Dread:** Youth ministers may stop listening due to their worry of what they will have to do with information
- **Lack of Understanding:** Sometimes a youth minister may be unable to fully understand what the person is saying
- **Perspective:** Youth ministers may have trouble listening to a person who has a different point of view than they have
- **Personal Struggles:** Ministers find it hard to listen when they are struggling with their own emotional/ psychological health (depression, apathy, chronic fatigue)
- **Relationships:** Ministers cannot listen due to a fear of a significant change in the relationship, fear of being attacked by someone close to the situation.
- **Exposure:** Youth ministers have difficulty listening when dreading what they might be expected to say, particularly if they fear they might not know enough

Positive Attitudes and Practices in Listening

Personal Attitudes: Youth ministers have to “model” positive attitudes when listening

- **Attention:** Ministers focus specifically upon the person talking
- **Appreciation:** Ministers appear appreciative of the information they receive
- **Affirmation:** Ministers affirm the person talking with appropriate feedback

Supportive Practices by the Youth Minister

- **Accurate Empathy:** Ministers reflect back emotional concern consistent with the youth
- **Real Respect:** Youth Ministers take seriously the person speaking
- **Concrete:** Youth ministers pay close attention to the behaviors described in the conversation
- **Genuine communication:** Youth ministers respond as they feel, offering real appreciation or concern
- **Appropriate Self-Disclosure:** Youth ministers relate the conversation to personal experiences, but none too graphic or lengthy as to negate the original conversation
- **Confrontation when Needed:** Youth Ministers do challenge students primarily by spotting discrepancies in the conversation and noting them as they occur
- **Focus on the immediate:** Youth ministers focus on the present conversation and do not allow it to dredge up previous encounters or future concerns

Practicing Care in Youth Ministry

Careful Concerns: Discretion or Confidentiality?

A significant issue in helping teenagers address their problems is that of **confidentiality**. Young people need to know that they can trust a youth worker with their deepest hurts and feelings without that information becoming public and harmful to them. In other words, youth ministers must always practice **discretion** with information young people share. Building a solid relationship of trust that puts someone at ease is always the first step of being able to truly care, and maintaining that confidence will be what keeps the helping person available and active for fighting the battles together. Respect young people by avoiding using their struggles in general conversations with other ministers or adults. Even when we have disguised someone, it is a very small world. Learning to be discrete creates a personal discipline that allows you to better judge when you have to tell someone else or not.

However, young people must also be aware that there may be times that involving others in the struggles they are facing is the best option for resolution and growth. It is wise never to enter a conversation under the promise that “you won’t tell my parents.” Assure them that they can trust you to do what’s best in their situation, and that significant adults will only be brought in if it is appropriate to what they are facing. Keep in mind that there are some instances when you have an obligation (a legal “duty to report” as dictated by civil law) to bring their situation to a helping professional (for instance, when abuse is involved or there is danger to their own life or the life of another person). However, let youth know that you will do that in a way that is protective of them and most beneficial in the long run.

If you must break confidentiality (remember that you normally should not promise this) you might try to establish guidelines up front so youth will know in advance what you can keep discrete and what you must report. However, you may not have the opportunity so you might have to make a judgment in the moment. You might say: “We need to include others in the knowledge of the situation.” Suggest in a strong, loving but firm way and remember that such “referrals” are for the sake of youth, not your reputation.

Finding Care in the Community

The fact of the matter remains that almost all people are helped just by having another person listen and show care—as well as occasionally dispense some common sense advice. However, there are times when certain “pathologies” (chemical, emotional, biological, psychological, etc.) require extended and often professional care. Remember that true counseling therapy is work (by the patient in particular but also by the health professional), so the young person must be involved in solving their problem—you cannot solve it for them.

Weaver, Preston and Jerome note that there needs to be greater collaboration between clergy and mental health professionals. The writers observe: “A National Institute of Mental Health survey found that clergy are more likely than psychologists

or psychiatrists combined to be sought out for assistance by a person with a mental health diagnosis.”⁷² When it comes to young people, this places a burden on youth ministers to be ready to refer when the situation is difficult. How does one know when to refer a person for more extensive care? There are some basic signals that may help you make this decision.

- **Duration:** If the young person’s problem cannot be resolved in 3-6 sessions you probably should refer.
- **Depth:** What is the level of difficulty and are you competent to resolve it? In North American culture we often talk about being overwhelmed using the idea of water. Ministers may say they are “in over their heads” or “up to their neck” indicating they are too deep into the issue. In counseling, a good metaphor to consider is this: “if you feel like you are walking into the lake up to the point you cannot “see” your own feet—then refer. We do not have to wait too long to realize this issue is deeper than we can understand.
- **Duress (or Distress):** Sometimes the degree of suffering, the acuteness of pain or depth of the pain is so great it is hard to bring comfort.
- **Dependency:** Ask yourself the hard questions. How many other resources does the young person have to deal with the problem? Are you the only one or one of few people who can help this person? Also, frankly, is that person becoming dependent on you beyond the problem?
- **Danger:** To others or to themselves. Remember, in case of danger you have a “duty to report” or you may be liable (not only in a court of law but also to God for not getting appropriate intervention).

When it comes to Pastoral Care do not expect you will have the right answer, actually do not expect they really want your advice at all. Listen, ask questions. If they ask for your opinion, frame it that way: “in my opinion . . .” and ask them what they think of your opinion (never come off as having THE right answer—no matter how much you think you do).

Remember that referral does not signal personal defeat as a minister, referral reflects the broadening and sharing of care. When we refer someone, we do not stop being invested in spiritual care and support. Try to involve the young person in making the decision when appropriate. From the very beginning we can limit our own abilities, so they may want to explore other sources as well. You can be specific. Start where the person lives in the perception of his or her own problem and what help they need. Ask “What is the problem?” “Where do you think you can get more help?” Sometimes referral is a matter of education, being involved with persons to the possibilities of care. Know the resources they might be willing to go to as a supportive presence. You might have a time to offer to make a call for the person. Referral could become a gradual process of education, support and helping them find the courage.

Building a Personal Philosophy of Spiritual Care

Is there a biblical passage or verse that you think best anchors your own beliefs and practices when it comes to spiritual care for others?

From the game show activity, lecture and discussions, evaluate the biblical concept of care. Choose one of the following scriptures that you believe best expresses your own perspective on spiritual care—or choose another biblical passage that comes to mind.

Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11, 27-31; Ezekiel 34; Matthew 9:35-38 or 11:25-30; Luke 10:30-37; John 10:1-18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 1Peter 5:1-7; Hebrews 4:14-16 or 13:20-21

Compose a one-paragraph statement that uses that biblical foundation to express your philosophy of spiritual care. You may use the shepherding metaphor, another one found in the scriptures, or one that relates in a more contemporary or relevant way to you or the young people you work with from the passage you have taken as your own.

It doesn't have to be a finished product at this point, but can provide something to build on.

Lesson 18: Youth Ministry Shepherding—Equipping Leaders

Due This Lesson

Local agencies list
Reading Resource 17-9
Completing Resource 17-10
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- 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

Homework Assignments

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? Write a 1-2 page paper.

Listen to Tim Green, *Opening Chapel Talk*. This can be found on the Clergy Education web site.
www.nazarenepastor.org/clergyeducation/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.

God's PARADIGM for Effective Ministry **Ephesians 4:11-16**

Which verse or verses best address the following?

God's PROVISION

God's PLAN

God's PURPOSE

God's PROTECTION

God's PARTNERSHIP

Using the suggested titles how would you use this passage to invite youth leaders into your ministry?

Four Images of Ministry⁷³

Kenneth O. Gangel gives Four Images of Ministry from four sections of the New Testament as he lays the theological base for church volunteers.

In your small group review the descriptions of a leader, which of these descriptors tend to be the greatest strength in your setting, the greatest challenge in your setting? Why?

1. John 13:14-16

The Servant Leader

Those who carry leadership positions in the church also carry—first and foremost—the responsibility of serving those volunteers, in whatever lowly manner may be necessary.

2. 1 Peter 2:9

The holy priesthood

There exists no hierarchy of vocation—all function as priests, although clearly not all are involved in “church” work. For Christians, there exists no “secular” vocation. As we build our theology of volunteers, we must respect the sacredness of volunteers’ weekday work. Their calling to their jobs carries no less godliness or need for commitment than the pastoral vocation; within those callings the royal priesthood will minister.

3. Romans 12:4-5

The body concept

God uses the physical body as an image of the church to drive home this point: No one with this holy priesthood may consider himself or herself unessential to the ministry of the whole.

The structure suffers harm and/or inefficiency when parts of it remain inactive and do not contribute to the health and work of the whole.

4. Ephesians 4:11-16

The equipping leader

Servant leadership does not seek to force volunteers into service or to heap guilt on them so they reluctantly take their places—counting the days until the sentence of service runs out—but to equip them so they serve with competence.

A true theology of volunteers believes the work of God’s kingdom goes on even when the formal or informal programs of the church may seem inadequately staffed. As equippers, we must ensure that God’s people have an adequate knowledge of Scripture and an adequate unity in Christ so they can grow to maturity.

Discerning Gifts and Graces⁷⁴

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.
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.

Similar information is included in the module *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*, Lesson 19. The resources from this module may give you additional help and ideas.

Steps for Screening Youth Workers⁷⁵

1. Have a written application
2. Do criminal background checks
3. Ask for references—particularly paid staff—and check those references
4. Have a personal interview
5. Use a team to decide who serves the ministry

If you make **no** exceptions to these steps it reduces resistance and instills confidence with the parents and youth. Keeping youth safe is more important than the worker's feelings.

Small Groups

Use the outline⁷⁶ given to write a ministry profile for the position you hold (even if volunteer).

1. Position title.
2. Position purpose. How does the role fit into the mission of the whole church?
3. Description of function. How could the ministry be summarized?
4. Qualifications. What characteristics will be required of the minister?
5. Responsibilities. What are the specific assignments and expectations?
6. Accountability. To whom and for whom will the person in this position be accountable?
7. Committees. Does this position involve serving on any committees?
8. Goals for the year. What measurable objectives will be used to evaluate job performance?

Share with each other your ministry profile.

*What other questions would be important before you accepted a ministry position?
What would you look for as indicators of the presence of the Holy Spirit to give life to this ministry?*

Building Commitment and Motivation⁷⁷

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

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.

How to Empower Others

“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.” ⁷⁸

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

Practical applications for encouraging the youth leader⁷⁹

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.

Lesson 19: Youth Ministry Shepherding—Empowering Youth

Due This Lesson

Outline
Paper
Chapel talk
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- articulate the importance of deliberately exposing to and preparing youth for leadership
 - teach, guide, and counsel youth leaders for effective team ministry

Homework Assignments

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 participating 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?

Leadership Lore in Scripture⁸⁰

1. Closeness with a few—Jesus
2. Wanting to lead—Isaiah
3. Enthusiasm covers a multitude of [mis-steps]—Peter
4. Don't play God—Joseph
5. The strength of vulnerability—Hosea
6. Women can play too—Deborah
7. Champion of the weak—Amos
8. A touch of organization—Nehemiah
9. A bit of drama—Elijah
10. Integrity—Abimelech
11. Confidence is contagious—Paul
12. Best when service is greatest—Jesus

Organizing a Youth Leadership Team

In his book, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, John Maxwell gives four (4) C's for Forming a Dream Team of Leaders.⁸¹

1. Common goal
The goal/s must be clear and kept as the focus of all that is done.
2. Cooperation
Each team member must be prepared to share the work.
3. Communication
There must be agreed channels of communication and these must be kept open.
4. Commitment
This is the glue which keeps the team together even in difficult circumstances.

Dan Reiland says the five traits of a winning team are:⁸²

1. Cooperation.
This is the art of persons with differing opinions coming together in agreement for the sake of a greater cause.
2. Communication.
Churches are destroyed when people do not talk to each other and damaged when communication is poor.
3. Change-oriented.
Growth means change. Nothing growing stays the same.
4. Contribution.
Winning teams all have members who make equal contributions in effort. They all give their best.
5. Commitment.
Commitment is necessary for your own spiritual growth as well as the growth of your church.

Maxwell also gives ten Qualities of a Dream Team.⁸³

1. The team members care for one another.
2. The team members know what is important.
3. The team members communicate with one another.
4. The team members grow together.
5. There is a team fit; an attitude of partnership and trust.
6. The team members place their individual rights beneath the best interest of the team.
7. Each team member plays a special role.
8. An effective team has a good bench.
9. The team members know exactly where the team stands.
10. The team members are willing to pay the price.

Covenant of the Youth Leadership Team At the _____ Church of the Nazarene

We the members of the Youth Leadership Team of _____ Church of the Nazarene do hereby covenant that:

1. We will _____
2. We will _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

We do here affix our signatures on this _____ day of _____, in the year _____.

Signed _____

Principle-Centered Leaders⁸⁴

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

“Initiative: You Won’t Leave Home Without It”⁸⁵

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.

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.

Levels of Adult/Youth Involvement⁸⁶

Note: There are times when Adult leaders may be at one level and youth at another but usually there are general trends based on level of mutual involvement

Level	Adult Leader Involvement	Youth Leader Involvement
Zero	None	Youth are not involved; there is no real youth ministry.
One	One or Two Adults do it all	Youth don't know what's going on. Many attend because their parents make them.
Two	Adults help the adult leader or the adult youth director/minister.	Youth are coming to activities because they want to.
Three	Adults work well as a team. They take responsibilities.	Youth are involved in planning—partnership with adults.
Four	Adults are in good relationships with youth. They ask young people to help.	Youth are involved in leadership—partnering with adults.
Five	Adults are in partnership with the youth. They are supportive and encouraging of young people as leaders.	Youth are championing youth ministry.

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

Lesson 20: Youth Ministry Craft—The legacy of Long-Term Ministry

Due This Lesson

Interview
Plan
Goals
“Long-term” interview
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- determine the key issues of youth ministry to facilitate a long-term legacy in students, families and church communities

Homework Assignments

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?

Class Activity

Just Point 'em and Go

"My first ski trip was in college. It was listed as Physical Education. My thought? It looked like a lot of fun for academic credit. My first time on the slopes I stood on top of the hill and looked at the sign in front of me: 'easy black diamond.' Now that's an interesting oxymoron. Everyone takes off, I'm sort of lost. Waiting for help, one friend pushes off, looks back and says, 'Just point 'em and go.' I have to tell you, it wasn't that great of a ski run.

That experience sort of describes us in youth ministry—right? Chances are many of us looked at the need, heard God's call and just "pointed 'em and went." For good or bad we lasted in ministry. A lot of us have probably woken up in the middle of the night and thought,

"What in the world am I doing?"

"Am I too old for this?"

"Will I ever NOT feel tired?"

"What am I going to do with the rest of my life?"

"Maybe I should get a real job."

Usually these thoughts occur in the middle of the night at a junior high retreat . . . at 3:00 AM . . . scrunched around our sleeping bag . . . shaving cream extruded into one ear and toilet paper wrapped tightly around our entire body.

Surveys found that most people hate their work. They don't look forward to going to work; instead they're bored with it and weary of it. They dream of winning the Lottery, so they'll never have to work another day in their life. Of course, you'd have to actually play the Lottery to win it. ☺

Does God really care whether I'm happy in my ministry or not? Should I stay in youth ministry for the long haul or hang it up? Within the broader scheme of things: wars and rumors of wars, the AIDS pandemic, spoiled sports stars, ruined sports stars? Does God really have time to worry about me and youth work? Maybe the big question is this: Does God really care whether I'm happy in my ministry or not? Should I stay in for the long term?

An unqualified "YES!"

Discussion Questions

List the reasons many people would give for wanting to be in youth ministry.

Based on the list you have developed, which one is the most compelling to you?

Which reason seems most ridiculous to you?

What are the reasons people don't last in youth ministry for the long term?

Self Evaluation

- Why do you do what you do?
- Were you called by God to your tasks or by someone else? Or 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?

Personal Considerations

Taking Care of Yourself

- Understanding Youth Culture
- Establishing Relationships within the Church
- Possessing a Correct Focus
- Maintaining Energy and Freshness
- Continuing your Education and Career Goals in Ministry
- Establishing an Inner Locus rather than an External Locus of Control

Taking Care of Your Family

- When a life—family—is out of balance, a ministry is out of balance.

Professional Factors

Church/staff Relationships

- Respect the Senior Pastor
- Be a team player with other staff people

Organization

- Learn to prioritize your schedule
- Do the “right thing” by people

Form a Leadership Team

Stewardship

- Keep personal and ministry finances separate.
- Develop your yearly budget carefully.
- Understand that as a youth worker you’re never going to make a lot of money.

Do Ministry Carefully

- Don’t take unnecessary risks
- Youth ministers need to be the adult in all situations

Psalm 139: 1-18, 23-24

New Living Translation

O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up.

You know my every thought when far away.

You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest.

Every moment you know where I am.

You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.

You both precede and follow me.

You place your hand of blessing on my head.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to know!

I can never escape from your spirit!

I can never get away from your presence!

If I go up to heaven, you are there;

if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there.

If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night
but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.

To you the night shines as bright as day.

Darkness and light are both alike to you.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!

Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it.

You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

You saw me before I was born.

Every day of my life was recorded in your book.

Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God!

They are innumerable!

I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!

And when I wake up in the morning, you are still with me!

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of
everlasting life.

Rule of Devotional Life

- 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.

Endnotes

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- ⁴ Roehlkepartain 1998, 149-154.
- ⁵ Roehlkepartain, 130-141.
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- ⁸ John Santrock, *Adolenscence: An Introduction*, 335.
- ⁹ Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*, 8.
- ¹⁰ Arnett, 15.
- ¹¹ Green, "Participating in the Story of God," 23-28; Steele, *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation*, 15-53.
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- ¹³ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus*, 106-107, 111.
- ¹⁴ Dean, *The Godbearing Life*, 43-53.
- ¹⁵ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 1223-124.
- ¹⁶ Brueggemann *First and Second Samual*, 121-123.
- ¹⁷ Varughese, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 40.
- ¹⁸ Dean and Foster, 26.
- ¹⁹ For more information see Phillip Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, available online from Christian Classics Ethereal Library [accessed 12/15/2008]
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.i.i.html>
- ²⁰ A full treatment of the Core Values is 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>
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- ²⁵ Taken from: Mark Senter. *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, xvi.
- ²⁶ Questions 1-10 taken from Richard Dunn and Mark H. Senter III (eds.). *Reaching a Generation for Christ*. Chicago: Moody, 1997, 213.
- ²⁷ Copyright © 2001 Kathy A. Miles and Charles F. Peters II
- ²⁸ The Spiritual Practices Worksheet was developed by Dr. Doug Hardy and used in "The Personal & Spiritual Development of the Minister" Course at Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2006.
- ²⁹ The Five Categories for Spiritual Practices has been developed by Dr. Doug Hardy. Personal & Spiritual Development of the Minister Course. Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2006.
- ³⁰ Clark, Chap. *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*, 47, emphasis added by author of this lesson.

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- ³¹ David Elkind, *Ties that Stress: The New Family Imbalance*.
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- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 29
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 35-9
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- ⁵⁷ Jim Burns and Mike DeVries. *Uncommon Youth Ministry*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2008, 96-98.
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- ⁶⁷ Leshner, 191.
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- ⁷³ Berkley, Leadership Handbook. *Four Images of Ministry*, 267-271.
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- ⁷⁵ Jack Crabtree. *Better Safe than Sued: Keeping your Students and Ministry Alive*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan/ Youth Specialties 2008, 65-74.
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- ⁷⁹ Mark H. Senter III in Berkley, 304-306.
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- ⁸³ Maxwell, *Developing Leaders Around You*, 137-149.
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