

**Booklet**

**12**

**DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS**

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**Archdeacon Bob Barrett**

# **Youth Ministry - Principles, Structures, Skills, and Leadership**

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**For Youth Leaders, Vestries, Clergy, Potential Leaders, and  
other people who have a concern  
for effective youth ministry.**

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## Youth Ministry Principles, Structures, Skills & Leadership

For Youth Leaders, Vestries, Clergy, Potential Leaders,  
and other people who have a concern for effective youth ministry.

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*This series of Booklets provide practical ideas to help leaders develop their skills in a variety of ministry areas. Experimenting with them, growing your own ideas, discussion with ministry teams will help both you and others grow in skill. Good modelling, evaluation and training will inspire worshippers to worship, pray and grow in their Christian life and ministry.*

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The book's content, layout, stories, examples and questions are designed to provide inspiration, encouragement and equipping for clergy, lay leaders (and emerging leaders) of the local Church in New Zealand and Australia. It covers the  
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### ORDERING ***“The Church Beyond ... OUR LEADERSHIP”***

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## **WARNINGS for this electronic version of *Youth Ministry***

Youth Ministry is challenging!

Youth ministry is also rewarding!

Styles of youth ministry change with each new generation of young people!

**Each generation brings the need for adaptation.** There is a need for new activities, new approaches to teaching, new issues to be faced, new youth culture and language to be understood. Those working with young people need new understandings of how to handle the moral, emotional, educational and relational challenges young people face.

Some things do however remain similar – e.g. young people need positive encouraging, genuine relationships of understanding and acceptance.

My observations of successful Church Youth Ministry shows that the principles expressed in the early version of the Booklet remain valid. Sure each generation will require new ways of outworking them. Never-the-less I would encourage you to try to understand young people today – and to think carefully about the basic principles of youth ministry outlined in these pages as you look for ways to positively build a youth ministry in your church.

This booklet originally came into being as Sarah Pitman (then the Diocesan Youth Worker in Nelson) and I discussed youth ministry in the churches of our Diocese. We shared these ideas to help people think through and decide what might be appropriate in their situations. Each situation is different. Each year brings further change. Think carefully, plan and adapt – as the Lord guides and empowers.

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

As we were making the final editing touches to the first edition of this booklet Bob attended the Lutheran Conference "Reaching a New Generation". During that weekend Pastor Dick Borrud (U.S.A.) shared on the critical aspects of ministering to young people today - a talk based on his frequent Youth Leader training sessions. As he spoke Bob was really encouraged. Through his talk he illustrated in different ways, the principles we were outlining in this booklet.

We encourage you to read and reflect on the issues this booklet raises. Be careful not to just dismiss the principles "as not being relevant to your situation". Principles tend to apply in most situations - although the methods and structures need to be adapted to fit your parish, your progress to date and your opportunities. Not all the principles can be introduced at the beginning, but they can be worked towards.

You will find it helpful to discuss these ideas with others in your parish - and with others beyond your parish who may be able to help you explore what could be possible for you to do, improve or begin.

Youth ministry is an exciting, challenging, difficult AND rewarding ministry. We (Sarah and Bob) know this, from personal experience - and pray that your experience will be just as rewarding.

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## WHO IS YOUR TARGET?

When beginning, improving or evaluating your Youth Ministry it is important to decide who you are targeting (which young people you want to involve); what do you want to achieve (the long term outcomes); and what you will do to reach your target group and achieve the outcomes you believe are important for your Church's Youth Ministry.

## What exactly do you want to do?

### *DO YOU WANT:*

1. to provide a weekly entertainment package for some teenagers,
2. to tell all the young people in your community about Jesus so that they can make an informed decision about their lives,
3. to minister to young people already in the Church and introduce them to Jesus - and see them grow and develop skills that will help them remain practising Christians for the rest of their lives,
4. to involve young people in the worship and ministry of the church,
5. to do a combination of the above,
6. to provide something completely different.

*Consider carefully the purpose of your group. Only then can you decide who to target and what to do.*

## Who Are You Running The Group For?

- Christian young people?
- Churched, but not yet Christian young people?
- Non-churched young people who have some understanding of Church culture?
- Non-churched young people who have no understanding of Church culture?
- A combination of the above

You need to consider these questions. The type of young people you aim to involve will determine how your group can function.

*Consider carefully your target group - only then can you get the structures correct (to achieve your purpose for that target group).*

## How old is your target group?

Some churches talk of youth as being 11 years and older; some think of youth as college age; some include those over 18 years of age. It is important to carefully choose your age group. Your choice is affected by the type of young people in your community - their maturity, needs, background and their current interest in Christian things. It is important to remember that the wider the age group targeted, then the more difficult it is to meet all the needs. However the consequences of not having a group for a younger age group (e.g. Year 7-8) means you do not have this method of feeding in new members to your group.

## Why ask these questions?

Understanding your target group is important if you are to run a successful youth group. It is impossible to cover all types of people and all ages in the one group. Having decided your appropriate target group you can focus on running the group in a way that is relevant for those young people.

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## TODAY'S YOUTH CULTURE

**Note:** A new generation of young people is always 'just around the corner'. This booklet was originally designed with generation 'X' in mind. By the year 2000 we needed to adjust for a new generation. For the year 2010 and beyond youth ministry needs to be relevant for new generations of young people.

It is important to understand the attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle of those who are the youth you are seeking to involve.

*How would you describe your generation of young people?*

*Are there any particular belief and behavioural characteristics that are noticeable in your community because of the special features of your area?*

## THOSE WHO WROTE AND SPOKE ABOUT A PREVIOUS GENERATION SAID IT WAS:

- *"A Generation Alone"*
- *"They believed in and stood for nothing"*
- *"A generation that had no hope"*
- *"A generation that felt it has lost the ability to dream."*
- *"A generation under siege."*
- *"A hopeless generation that will amount to nothing"*
- *"A generation stuck in the past, just listen to their radio stations - it's all retro"*  
(*'retro'* meaning retrospective - getting things from the past)
- *"An experience based group"*

*Question: What phrases have you heard used to describe the generation of young people who could be in your church?*

## WHY ARE THEY LIKE THIS?

There are **many factors that shape each age group:**

*What shapes the attitudes of the young people you know?*

Previous generations have been affected by such things as:

- Both parents working. Many young people grow up having two parents working away from their home.
- They face total media saturation.
- Computer literate - they are often on the Internet.
- They are often globally aware.
- There has always been things happening (noise, music) around them - consequently many now have a fear of silence.
- Some previous generations of young people lost sight of the future, or felt there was no potential future (due to unemployment, diseases, global unrest, and economic uncertainty). Some have no hope or belief in the future - and feel their inability to change things.
- Young people continue to mature physically and sexually earlier.
- They have had to make major decisions earlier.
- They have felt that many political, economic, sports, music, religious, and community leaders have let them down. They see lots of scandal. They don't trust.
- They often suffer the loss of family structure; they need to see possible alternatives. There has been a near complete break down in the "traditional" family and the values held within it. Many grow up with only one parent, some with two fathers; others were brought up by a step parent and new partner, or a multitude of other combinations.
- There seems to be no moral glue – at least not in the ways of the past. Family breakdowns and the impact of the media have changed the moral base of society.

- Organised religion is seen by many as something for wimps, though for some a belief in the spiritual is good, as long as it is an inclusive belief. *"I believe in everything - a little bit"*
- Some do not want to follow the mistakes of previous generations (materialism etc.).
- Old fashion 'sense of responsibility' is 'out of fashion'.

*Question: What factors are shaping the young people of your community?*

## **SO WHAT DO THEY NEED?**

Young people.....

- need to be given a hope and a possible future with a life of real meaning, - but trying to avoid an escapism mentality. They need help to sense a possible future with God.
- They pick up on sexual 'stuff' earlier so need to be taught on the issues of sexuality earlier.
- They need decision making skills earlier. They look for good decision making role models and positive examples of family values (including why and how).
- Many need to see alternative family structures from those they have experienced.
- They need positive moral guidelines expressed and demonstrated by the people around them (with both reasons and examples). Good modelling is powerful.
- They need correct facts and information.
- They need love and friendships to overcome potential loneliness - relationships that build, not abuse - relationships that are provided by people who will stick with them.

*Question: What other needs are you observing?*

## **HOW DO WE MEET THESE NEEDS?**

There are some key things to consider when working with youth.

**Provide friendships** - relationship role models. Although they often seem very independent (as if they don't need anyone), they are often desperately seeking friends. They especially look for someone older with whom they can explore questions. They need a model to follow, someone to be a mentor, someone to disciple them, someone to look up to. To be this person you need to follow Christ's example and involve the young person in all aspects of your life.

**Give them your time, support and friendship.** Young people are looking for people who will spend the very precious TIME commodity with them. Activities are not as important as time and relationships.

**Show their importance.** Young people need to know that their time and energy count for something; that they can make a difference in the world; that their life has some kind of meaning. By helping others who need their help young people see the difference they are making.

Good helping **activities include:**

- Visiting the children's ward in the hospital, and playing games with the kids.
- Cleaning or painting elderly person's fence or house.
- Gardening for an elderly person.
- Child minding for a solo parent
- Taking baking to an old peoples home.
- Helping a refugee family in the community.
- Helping those who are struggling to read and write.
- Helping with a Habitat for Humanity house.

**Build trust by being trustworthy.** As trust develops youth will begin to test the relationship. Initially they will be uncertain as, in the past others could have let them down.

**Allow Young people to ask lots of questions.** They do not mind if you don't know the answer. They want to know what you think, and why. Vulnerability, honesty and realness are very important. As the relationship strengthens they will ask very personal questions. The challenge is to answer honestly, especially if you are from another generation that was more private. Privacy is a sacrifice that is necessary if you are to work with youth. Youth leaders, be prepared to sacrifice your privacy (about your actions and why you do certain things).

**Help them cope with crises** (before and during). There seems to be an inability for some young people to cope in crisis. Smaller things can push young people "off the edge" (more so than for other generations). This makes youth very vulnerable. Be very aware of crisis times like school balls and exams. Some will try and escape the present by dreaming a future that may be impossible. For example the school ball is often seen as the one chance to life in a "perfect world". The "perfect" partner will say yes, the evening will be absolutely wonderful and after the ball they'll go out, and live happily ever after. The fairy tale doesn't often work out; the teenager is devastated and can take drastic measures as a consequence. Ways to cope: call the teens the next day and talk about the ball, near the day begin to advertise a bigish event that will happen after the ball - lengthen their vision, before the ball talk about the "what if's". The same is true for exams - make sure the teenagers are given the skills to cope with the "what if it doesn't go to plan".

**Develop a vision of a possible future.** Part of this inability to cope comes from an inability to see the future as a positive place. Some live in the past and present, but fail to believe that the future will do them any good (unless that future lies in unreality). They need to be given a vision, an ability to think that things could happen, a dream - then given the tools to make it happen. Start by letting them dream, and then find a dream that is potentially possible. As a group make it happen. The first dream should be a short term one (about a month) - because the first dream must work. Second and some subsequent dreams could fail. With each dream the time frame can grow. Plant ideas and dreams in their minds. Show them that they can make a difference, that the future is worth living.

**Help them see consequences.** Many have grown up without realising the "effect" of their decisions and actions. Within youth ministry there needs to be freedom to make mistakes and live the consequential pain of their decision. This also helps them understand God as holy, awesome and just. There needs to be ownership of decisions the group makes. The consequences must be lived with. Let and help young people deal with the consequences of their decisions.

Demonstrate a Christianity which includes **experience**. Young people are looking for more than just 'head knowledge'. They want to experience the reality of living and this means they want to see the reality of the Christian faith in action.

*Working with young people may be difficult but it is worth it. When they fall in love with Jesus it is the real thing. Their spiritual awareness is very strong and they can grow and mature as Christians very fast. Relationships become fun, dynamic, challenging, always changing and very rewarding.*

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## **PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH MINISTRY.**

These principles affect what you do, how your youth group works and the role of leadership. How you apply these principles will be different in each situation.

### ***THREE CENTRAL PRINCIPLES***

- 1. THE GROUP SHOULD BE SEEN AS A CHRISTIAN GROUP** - not a social group trying to do some Christian things.
  - This means a focus on Bible Study, prayer and Christian living - this makes it possible to begin small.
  - As Christians they can do social things (which is subtly but importantly different from the social group trying to do Christian things).
  - The aim is quality not quantity - but as quality builds then quantity often comes.
- 2. TAKE A LONG TERM VIEW.**
  - Aim to make a difference in their lives FOR LIFE. In 30 years you want your young people to be mature Christians, involved in the life of the church and many will be functioning as key leaders in their church.
- 3. YOUTH MINISTRY SHOULD BE BUILT ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIPS NOT PROGRAMMES.** This is important for older youth. 18+ are less inclined to like organised programmes.

### ***NINE SURROUNDING PRINCIPLES***

- 4. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BEGIN SMALL.** You do not need 25 young people to begin. However do not be satisfied with small - unless there are only a few young people in your community.
- 5. IT IS WORTH FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF JESUS:**  
Ministering to many while pouring your life into a few.

## 6. YOUTH MINISTRY SHOULD BE BASED ON SMALL GROUPS, (CELLS).

- This enables deeper relationships to be built, with people sensing they belong, being known and having a greater opportunity to contribute (and therefore grow).
- The larger group becomes something of a celebration.
- It makes it possible to use older young people to lead younger youth under more experienced overseeing leaders - thus giving young people ministry opportunities.

## 7. DIVIDE AND MULTIPLY TO GROW.

Do the following when you can - as soon as you can. Do not leave the suggested divisions too late.

- Dividing into small groups (for small group or cell based youth ministry).
- Dividing into age groups, i.e. Year 7-8 (it is important to separate this age group from college age); Year 9-10; Year 11-13; 18 years+.
- Years 9-10 and 11-13 can have some overlap for certain things. It can be useful to separate these groups at least for some activities.
- There is a lot to gain by forming the 18 plus age group into a separate group.

## 8. YOUTH SHOULD NOT BE OVERBURDENED WITH TOO MUCH PROGRAMMING - keeping in mind principle 3.

- Priorities and **entry points** need to be looked at. If all activities are for committed Christian young people then where are the entry points for them to bring friends - e.g. some social events?
- If there is **too much activity** (especially if all of the youth are expected to attend all events) then there will be problems with parents and home work etc.
- While Bible class, youth home fellowships, social activities, ministry opportunities may exist - not all youth need be expected to always go to all activities. Young people can be encouraged to attend events appropriate for them.
- One idea is to **balance** the involvement in social, ministry, teaching etc. over a year not a week. A pattern by way of example: Term 1 concentrate on Church involvement (building the group, running a great social program etc.); term 2 more outreach; term 3 concentrate on home missions; with term 4 mostly reserved for exams! (small groups may be continuing - perhaps less often) and social events after the exams.

## 9. YOUTH CAN MINISTER TO OTHERS - to youth & adults

- 18+ age group can lead youth fellowships for the Year 11-13 level.
- Years 11-13 can for example help with Year 7-10 Bible classes, or run a Year 9 youth cell. (*But such young people need training, equipping, overseeing, encouragement, correcting and support*).
- Young people can minister to the rest of the church by contributing through music, leading prayers, being welcomers, Sunday School teaching, crèche, etc. The ministry needs to be recognised by them and by the church as significant and important.
- They can minister by contributing to others who are in need, (both to other young people and older people, e.g. by visiting, helping them etc.).

- They can reach out to other young people and invite them to share in the life of the Church and attend special activities such as camps.

## **10. YOUTH SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE A PART OF THE TOTAL CHURCH - not a group separate from the church**

- Years 7-8 and 9-10 can have a parallel program on Sunday mornings during Sunday morning service.
- Years 11-13 can, for example, have a program before the evening service so that they are then encouraged to stay on for an evening worship time. Sometimes Year 11-13 can be encouraged into the morning worshipping community - although they may need training to do so, (e.g. how to listen to the sermon). Involvement of young people in worship is helped by visual aids, good application examples, good music and skilled leadership.
- For 18+ it is best to make them fully part of the adult life of the Church - sharing in adult home groups etc. Find ways for young people to be able to contribute to the life of the Church (through drama, music etc. - see principle 8).
- It is also helped by having an informal evening service, or an extra morning service which is more informal. Both some young people and some adults often feel more "at home" in such services.

## **11. YOUTH NEED IDENTITY IN THEIR OWN CHURCH**

- With regard to other Churches this means youth groups should normally belong to one church and not be combined with other churches on a regular basis. Combined events for celebrations are to be encouraged.
- Within the church youth need identity and a sense of belonging. Perhaps by having some space that is theirs; or being able to leave signs that they are a part of the church (e.g. posters, cushions, stereo, their own notice board, etc.)
- This can be difficult and therefore in some communities – e.g. rural communities.

## **12. YOUTH MINISTRY REQUIRES STAFF TIME - AND WHERE POSSIBLE SPECIALIST YOUTH STAFF.**

- A good ratio is 50 young people per full time youth staff person.
  - This means educating the church - giving them a vision of the possibilities and the needs.
  - It means finding creative ways to finance staff (e.g. beginning part time, encouraging special gifts or grants etc.)
  - It is important that the clergy are seen to be interested and supportive of the youth ministry and the young people. Just because there is a youth leader does not mean clergy can default interest. The Vicar (or another senior staff member) needs to give time to supporting and overseeing youth staff and/or youth leaders.
  - When there are youth trainees it is important to remember they are training, not running the youth group on their own.
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# CHANGING MODELS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

*Young people have changed over the years, and so has the way we need to think about youth ministry.*

## **Youth Work In The 50's and 60's**

In the 50's and 60's the popular youth ministry model seemed to be that of a social group. Many now look at that model with horror but it had its merits. Many of these groups were very successful. Why? In the 50's Sunday School rolls were high, as they had been for many years. Young people came to youth group with a broad understanding of the Bible and many were trained in their families about Christian living (as their parents had often grown up in the Church). Youth group provided a social, yet safe environment. There the young people could debate values and identify what they could call their own.

## **Youth Work In The 70's and 80's.**

Sunday School rolls began to drop. By the 70's and 80's youth groups were finding that young people needed more than just social activities. They also needed the biblical understanding that previous generations received at Sunday School. Many youth groups then added a bible talk to their games and social programs. They also added the occasional bible study, prayer meeting and youth service to their youth group calendar. Many of these groups were successful, particularly those whose core came from families within the Church.

## **Youth Work In The 90's and Beyond.**

In the 90's and the 00's things have changed again. Sunday School rolls dropped even further with most young people coming into youth group with very little, if any, biblical understanding. They no longer receive training in biblical lifestyle from their families because their parents are often unchurched themselves. It is very important to know the kind of teenager you are targeting.

## **Now**

We need youth ministries that allow the young people to see an alternative lifestyle modelled for them - one that is based on Christ, following his example and following the guidelines for living as set in the Bible. Some young people search for "heroes" - people on whom they can model, copying their values and beliefs. We need to provide a youth ministry that is relational based - where young people can see into the lives of their leaders, see the decisions they make and understand why. Young people are then able to model their new values and identify with younger people as they serve in positions of leadership. The type of person the leader is - is more important than just what they know.

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# AN EXPERIENCE BASED JOURNEY TO SPIRITUALITY

*DISCIPLING YOUNG PEOPLE - WHAT DO THEY NEED:*

## YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO EXPERIENCE GOD AT WORK

Young people come from a generation that needs to experience something before they will believe. Many have also experimented with other Years of spiritual understanding - tarot cards, Ouija boards, new age, Hinduism, other religions, etc. This experimentation is often because they are searching for meaning, understanding and for something that is "real". It is important that our youth ministry meets this need by:

- Giving young people lots of opportunity to pray and be prayed for.
- Giving young people freedom to express what they are feeling when being prayed for (crying or laughing etc.) Allow them to talk about their prayer experiences. Give those experiences credibility.
- Getting young people to talk about their experiences with God. Peer testimonies speak volumes.
- Highlight experiences where prayer has been answered or the bible has spoken into a specific situation directly.
- Focusing on testimonies of what God has done, the relevance of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Do not expect young people to mature spiritually at the same rate as adults - some will be faster, some slower.

## BIBLE STUDY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (AND ADULTS)

Young people search for help to make their life more meaningful. The bible offers that meaning. If we are to equip young people to become disciples of Jesus we need to give them the skills to understand and use the Bible. Present the Bible in such a way that it becomes a relevant, practical document that they can understand and apply for themselves.

Earlier last century missionaries in Central and South America wanted to make the bible more relevant to the illiterate poor people they were working with. They used a very simple translation of the bible to teach these people to read and write. Slowly the people began to read it for themselves. They interpreted it through their own set of experiences and in the words found a relevance and truth, which developed a hunger to know more.

The same approach can be used to help our young people to read the bible. They need to know how to read the bible and feed themselves. (Many of our young people leave home to study or work. They cannot take their youth group leader or clergy person with them.)

## **A REFLECTION-ACTION METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY**

- Get the young people to read a passage from a number of translations (have a simple version in their language available - a youth bible).
- Have some other resources available in case they "get stuck".
- Do not tell them what the passage says - get them to tell you.
- Discuss what the original writer and readers might have thought of this passage.
- Ask the young people what relevance the passage has in general and for them personally.
- Decide on an appropriate response, individually or as a group.
- The following week follow up on the response, reread the passage and see if any new light is given.

### **Some hints for taking this kind of study**

- The leader is the guide, don't tell them the answers - they need to learn how to feed themselves.
- If they get it "wrong", ask about their experiences - does the "truth" they have discovered "ring true"? If not, what other meaning could the passage have?
- Allow the Holy Spirit to guide their thoughts, response and suggested actions.
- Study a book consecutively, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide the topics covered. Do not superimpose your agenda.
- Take it slowly.
- Cover the study in prayer. Get the young people to pray. They then are owning the study and looking to God themselves.

Through this type of 'reflection, action, reflection' method of bible study, the bible becomes alive and relevant. It's also a method where the leaders can learn just as much from and with the young people.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE NEED OPPORTUNITIES TO MINISTER IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.**

Such ministry is a part of an experience based spiritual journey. They need to experience doing ministry alongside others and for others in the life of the church.

## WORSHIP

Young people are looking for experiential worship. Many like some parts of it loud! They look for worship they can **experience using their senses**:

- **Hearing**\_ Young people like extremes in sounds - loud and quiet, many instruments and a single pure sound, opera to rap, techno to monastic chants. The more extreme, the more dramatic the effect.
  - **Smell**\_ Beeswax candles, Coffee brewing, incense all produce reactions and sensations in young people that colour the way they react to the message.
  - **Sight**\_ TV and Computers have trained young people to be able to take in visual stimuli very quickly. They can cope with lots of things happening at once. Experiment with videos, Power Point slides, costumes, and decorations. Again extremes are effective; a bare wall can say as much as a very busy one.
  - **Touch**\_ Where possible hands on involvement helps young people feel an active part in worship. Young people can be involved in most aspects of a worship service.
  - **Taste**\_ Try experimenting with different taste sensations to illustrate a message - i.e. the bitter herbs of Passover, olives when talking about Jesus and the olive tree etc.
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## STRUCTURES FOR A YOUTH GROUP

Be creative - there is no "one" structure.

Structure your youth ministry to fit your young people. As the young people change so should the group structure and programme. It is important not to have a programme which we expect the young people to accept - rather to structure the programme to fit both the needs of young people and the current opportunities. A small group approach allows for that flexibility.

### *ONE EXAMPLE as a Possible Structure of a Parish Youth Ministry*

*Note: Not everybody will attend everything!*

Also: Many possible structures will not be appropriate in some communities – e.g. rural communities and/or where College students travel a distance to College; where young people are very involved in many school and community secular activities; etc.

#### **Tuesday** - *Small Groups Bible Study*

(After school or evening). One or more small groups (4-8 young people). Each for different ages/gender.

#### **Wednesday** - *Prayer Breakfast*

For as many young people as possible - to encourage ownership of the ministry and dependence on God.

#### *Creative Ministry Groups*

Practice (after school or evening). All sorts of possibilities - band, drama, dance, clowning, public speaking, etc. Having them all on the same day limits over-commitment.

**Friday** - *Social (one week) or Outreach/Ministry event (the next week).*

Two groups - one for Year 7-8; a second for Year 9-13, perhaps on alternate weeks. Some events could be combined.

**Saturday** - For 18+ *Social or Outreach/Ministry event* - weekly or monthly or alternating each week.

**Sunday** Year 7-8 and Year 9-10. Two separate *Bible based and topic based Study* programmes during morning service.

Year 11-13 can have their own separate *Bible Study and topic based programme* during the morning services or before the evening service. They could then be encouraged to attend the evening Church.

Maybe **Sunday Afternoon**. *Leaders' meeting* once a month - for all involved in youth ministry (including prayer together, sharing, training and support).

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## WHERE IS YOUR GROUP HEADING?

As you decide what you will do, reflect on the principles and consider the following.

1. **Who** is your church's youth ministry for? Which group of young people are you aiming at?
2. What is your **aim** for the group? What is the purpose of your group?
3. What **results** do you want to see happening in each individual's life?
4. What **changes** do you need to make to your youth ministry to achieve these results?

In discussing these look **again** at sections Who is your target? And Principles of Youth Ministry.

It is important to **plan well** to ensure the results and outcomes you desire are achieved.

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# LEADERSHIP ISSUES

**Grow your own youth leaders.** It is important to be growing your own youth leaders. As youth move through the life of your group they can become youth leaders. They can be leading by the time they are in the Year 11 - e.g. leading in the ministry to Years 7, 8 or 9. It is difficult to find youth leaders from elsewhere - most churches are struggling to find youth leaders and any they produce are usually 'soaked up' in their own ministry needs.

The **qualities of good leaders** include:

This list originated as some of the suggestions from a brainstorming session. *What qualities would you add or delete?*

Patience, vision, encourager, committed to the local church, team person, positive image - role model, good at relating and being related to, energy, growing to maturity, sense of call, integrity, transparency, flexible, sense of fun - humour, aware of own limitations, not shockable, creative, lateral thinker, trustworthy, computer literate, sound sense of judgement, and has a real love for young people.

You are unlikely to find someone who meets all of these requirements. Keep the above in mind but primarily look for **FAT people**. **Faithful** - people who will be faithful to the Lord, the church, the church's leadership and the task you give them. **Available** - can set aside the appropriate time to invest in the ministry. **Teachable** - not someone who knows it all (or thinks they do) but someone who is looking to learn more about the ministry and to continue developing the skills required. Are they open to be trained?

When choosing people who could be developed as leaders keep in mind the kind of leaders you are looking for and the particular **roles and responsibilities** you want them to take on.

Prepare a draft **job description** and be prepared to help them find appropriate initial training; and a suitable supervisor.

Youth leadership is costly. It takes a lot of their time - so **free them from other ministries** in the church. Do not use up their valuable time by putting them on committees (e.g. vestry). They can ask or be asked to visit oversight meetings (e.g. vestry) when required so their expertise is contributed and their needs explored. Remember it will take staff time to oversee, assist, encourage and support those in youth leadership.

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# SKILLS FOR YOUTH LEADERS

## SKILLS BEGIN WITH LIFE STYLE CHOICES.

Help potential leaders make appropriate choices - and live out those choices. Choices touch the following:

- The example of a Christ-like life - affecting moral choices.
- Personal relationship issues - especially cross gender relationships.
- Personal finances.
- Careful legal driving (both when transporting youth and at other times) - as an example and because of the responsibility for the lives of others.
- Responsible use of alcohol.
- A sensitive understanding of today's youth.

## SKILLS YOUTH LEADERS NEED

There are ministry skills which leaders need as appropriate to their role. There are also general ministry skills which all leaders need to develop.

### *GENERAL MINISTRY SKILLS INCLUDE:*

- Prayer ministry (praying for others) see Booklet 8: *'Healing-Prayer Ministry'*.
- Relating to youth - building friendships.
- Leading discussions.
- Relating to parents.
- Personal Bible.
- Basic pastoral skills - see Booklet 4: *'People Helping Skills'*.

### *OTHER USEFUL SKILLS CAN INCLUDE:*

- Public speaking.
  - Leading Bible studies – see Booklet 5: *'Preaching a Teaching'* for hints on preparing and delivering teaching.
  - Developing worship in a group - see Booklet 9: *'Informal Worship - Designing and Leading'* and Booklet 3: *'Leading the Prayers'*
  - Strategic visioning, planning and administration.
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# YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING

Youth Leaders need **initial training**, and they need to **continue to be upskilled**. Each youth leader should be encouraged to ask God for a vision of where their ministry is going in the future. They should then think of the skills required to make that vision a reality; find others who need similar training; and search for the resource people ('experts') who can train them.

At the beginning of the year, as leaders prepare the year's youth activities, also include your training in the schedule.

Be realistic about your time commitments but try to participate in at least one training event every term - even if it is only for a couple of hours.

Training is a proactive thing. Do not wait till you need the skills – at that point it is often too late.

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## STEPS TO BEGINNING A GROUP

**Pray.** Ask God to raise up people with a vision for Youth Ministry. If this could be you - pray for confirmation that this is your calling. Submit that call to Church Leaders. Know that you are called to do this. Determine you will do it in God's strength.

**Search for** others who have a similar calling - who will work with you in developing a youth ministry. Look for people who can be trained as apprentices - who may eventually take your place. Endeavour to have at least one apprentice at the start. It would also be good to have at least one other leader from the beginning.

**Get together** the people interested in youth ministry, (potential leaders; the church staff and oversight; parents and other concerned people). Find answers to the following questions:

- How much time does everyone have for the project?
- What are the financial resources available?
- What physical resources are available - building, vehicles, equipment etc.
- What kind of group are we thinking of?
- What kind of support and assistance is each person able to offer? Do they have the skills and expertise for that?
- Who may be available to provide food, transport, prayer and advice?
- Who has the final say for this youth ministry - the Church? the vestry? the parents? the community?
- Where will we go for funding? Ideas? Suggestions? Resources? Training? Oversight?

As you answer these questions you also need to be thinking about the **target group** - see the section above (remembering the needs and opportunities of your own Church and community).

Identify the **initial group** you will work with at the beginning. Get that group together, sow the seeds of the vision, listen, adjust concepts - so that they own the ideas and will work with you.

Keep **reflecting on the principles** and the ideas of this booklet. Is your plan achievable? Does it allow for growth? Will the young people feel that they have some ownership of the group or is it all being done "for" them and not "with" them?

**Plan the groups and some activities** for the first few months. What kind of groups? When?

Draw up a **time frame** - starting from now to the day you hope to begin the youth ministry. Decide all the things you need to do before you can begin.

Work out your **initial advertising** campaign. Who do you need to tell about the group? What do they need to know? How will you tell them? Consider the young people, the parents, the school, the church members and the wider community.

Consider your **ongoing advertising**. It is good to continually inform people about what you are doing. Plan a good communication network.

As you advertise, watch for **those who become interested**. They may be prepared to consider some involvement - leading a small group, hosting events, transport, praying . . . .

**Begin** your group. Remember it is okay to begin small - but always have a plan for growth.

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## CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VESTRY AND CLERGY

It is important for the vestry of every church to **regularly consider the youth ministry** of their parish. Key roles for vestry and clergy include oversight, support, permission giving, encouraging, helping with training needs, funding and assisting with evaluation. Consider how effective you can be in these roles. Oversight structures may need to be changed to fully assist the ministry - especially if it grows.

It is recommended that at least once every year vestry and clergy take time to **evaluate** how well the youth ministry is doing. Are changes needed - so you can better encourage those involved in the youth ministry and assist in the development of the group?

If you have **youth staff** then also consider how well you are supporting them. Do they need further training, funds, resources, guidance, time . . .? How can your support of them be improved?

Remember many people complain about youth work, but few offer encouragement. Your youth workers need **plenty of encouragement** and support from their Church's leadership team.

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## RESOURCES & TRAINING

Each year new, up to date, relevant discussion material and leadership ideas are produced. Check out your local Christian bookshop. Network - ask other youth leaders what they have found to be valuable resources. Check with other Churches to see what they are using and swap ideas. Ask other Youth Groups for copies of material that they have used. This saves buying new copies. Pass on your used material, with comments on how you found it.

Many Anglican Dioceses and provincial church bodies employ staff to help churches with their youth ministry – consult them.

Look for training events that equip with general youth ministry understanding and skills and be alert for events that would be helpful. Conferences are frequently provided for Youth Leaders. Discover what both your denomination and other denominations are offering. Be aware of what Para-church bodies and international visitors are providing. Look for mailing lists that will keep you informed.

There is much to learn from others. Attend other youth events and youth worship to get ideas. Hunt out churches with successful youth ministries – especially those in similar circumstances to your church (e.g. size and/or similar types of communities). Seek permission to visit and observe. Talk to their leaders and young people. Take potential leaders with you.

Find out if youth leaders in you town, district or city get together for mutual support. See if the person in charge of your youth ministry could be invited.

Do whatever you can to encourage. Support, assist and resource those who carry the responsibility for youth ministry in your church.

Above all seek the inspiration and empowering of the Spirit of God. I know the Lord will bless you as you following his leading!

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### TITLES IN THIS ELECTRONIC SERIES:

- Number 1 "Visitor Friendly Worship"
- Number 2 "Worship - Who is it for?"
- Number 3 "Leading Worship - The Prayers"
- Number 4 "People Helping Skills"
- Number 5 "Preaching and Teaching"
- Number 6 "Stewardship - The Financial Area"
- Number 8 "Healing - Prayer Ministry"
- Number 9 "Informal Worship - Designing and Leading"
- Number 10 "Incorporation - Helping Newcomers Into Membership"
- Number 11 "Change - Introduce New Things Successfully"
- Number 12 "Youth Ministry - Principles, Structures, Skills and Leadership"
- Number 13 "Handling Hurts in the Church"
- Number 14 "Managing Conflict in the Church"
- Number 15 "Every Member Ministry – Making It Work"
- Number 16 "Criticism – How Do We Respond?"

Please note that Number 7 on Planning is not available in the Electronic Series.

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