

HANDBOOK FOR MINISTRIES WITH OLDER ADOLESCENTS in the Episcopal Church

*Compiled and edited by
Sheryl A. Kujawa*



This resource is a publication of
the Ministries with Young People Cluster,
of the Service, Education, and Witness Unit
of the Episcopal Church Center



The Ministries with Young People Cluster works with children, youth, and young adults in the Episcopal Church and the networks that support them.

© 1996 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society PECUSA.

*The Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017*

Printed in the United States of America

All photographs taken by Patricia Aboussie at the Episcopal Youth Event, 1996

Contents

Part I		Part III	
Introduction to Ministries with Older Adolescents		Building Blocks for Youth Ministries	
Why We Do Youth Ministries?	3	Ten Commandments for Youth Leaders	35
Characteristics of Relational Youth Ministry	4	Fitting Youth Ministries into the Congregation's Total Ministry	37
Theological Principles of Relational Youth Ministry	6	Youth Advisors Say Yes: How to Enlist, Train, Support	40
What Does This Mean for Youth Ministry?	8	The Fine Art of Contact Work	43
Characteristics of Young People	9	Beginnings: How to Start a Youth Group	45
Young Adolescents (approximately ages 10–15)	10	Suggestions for Meetings	48
Older Adolescents (approximately ages 16–19)	13	In Search of the Small Group	50
Part II		Part IV	
Effective Planning		Study and Worship	
The Five-Step Process	19	Leading Bible Study	55
Using the Five-Step Process for a Quarterly or Long-Term Program	21	Sample Bible Studies	58
Using the Five-Step Process for a Weekend Retreat or Lock-In	23	Exploring Prayer and Worship	60
Using the Five-Step Process for a Single-Session Program	25	Planning a Worship Service with Young People	63
Retreat/Event Evaluation Form	27	The Disciplines of Meditation, Prayer, and Journaling	65
Planning Elements	28	Part V	
Mix and Match	29	Community	
Planning Sheet	30	Building Community Among Youth	71
Monthly Planning Calendar	31	Recreation and Re-Creation	74
		Games	76
		A Music Note for Youth Groups	86

Drama in Youth Ministry	88
A Recipe for a Christian Community Adventure: Lock-Ins, Retreats, and Conferences	91
Ideas for Lock-Ins, Retreats, and Conferences	94
Small and Special: Ideas for Small Congregations	97
Life Is a Series of Hellos and Goodbyes	100
Sharing and Eating Food as Stewards of God's Creation	104

Part VI
Service, Mission and Social Action

Service in Youth Ministries	109
Taking Risks Through a Mission Project	113
Doing Social Justice	116
Social Action Projects	118
Youth Ministries in the Global Community	122
Surprised with Joy: Evangelism	124

Part VII
Places to Find Support

The Youth Ministries Adventure	129
What to Check Out in the Local Congregation	131
What to Check Out in the Diocese	132
What to Check Out in the Province	133
What to Check Out at the Episcopal Church Center	134
Map of the Episcopal Church	135

Part VIII
Resources

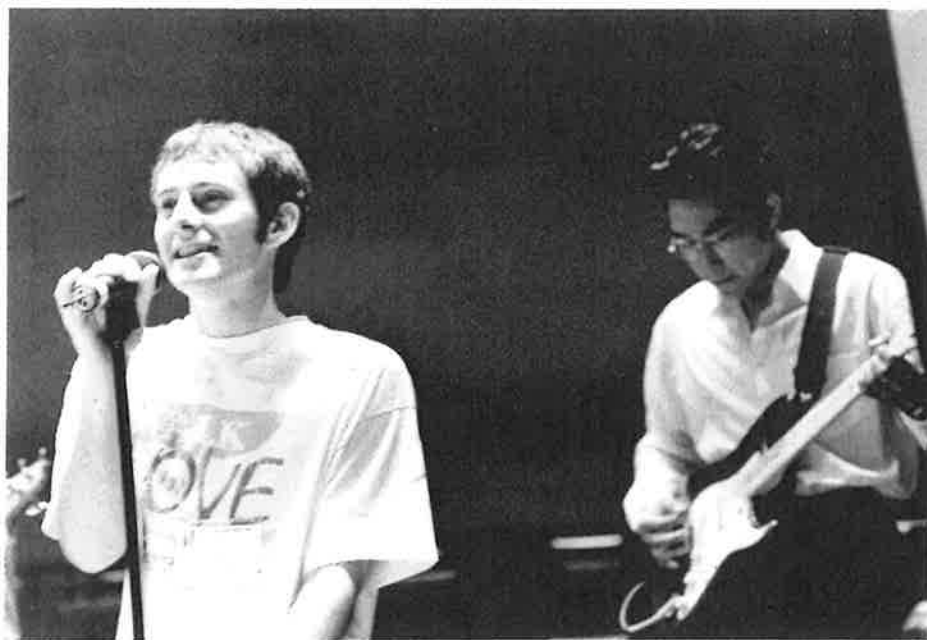
How to Select Resources	139
Additional Resources	140
Notes	143

This *Handbook for Ministries with Older Adolescents* has three goals:

- a. To utilize existing research in developing a comprehensive understanding of older adolescence (ages 16–19) and for developing guidelines for ministries with older adolescents.
- b. To develop training designs for use by congregational, diocesan, provincial and national, youth ministries that equip local leaders with the knowledge and skills to improve effectiveness with older adolescents.
- c. To design and implement effective models of older adolescents for use in a variety of settings.

This handbook has been prepared under the auspices of the Youth Ministries Office, Ministries with Young People Cluster, of the Episcopal Church Center. It has been edited from a variety of sources. You may copy any material from it, provided you include a complete reference on the top page. None of the materials in this handbook may be reprinted for profit.

Our thanks go to the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. for graciously allowing us to edit and adapt portions of their materials for this resource.



Part I

Introduction to Ministries with Older Adolescents



Why We Do Youth Ministries?

Why do we do youth ministries? Perhaps the simplest answer is because young people are part of the Episcopal Church and we are called to minister with them. Youth ministries is one part of the ministry of the whole church. Ministries with older adolescents means the church's involvement with young people between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. Youth ministries is the ministry of, with, and to young people and the adults engaged in ministry with them.

It would be great if there were a specific verse or chapter in the Bible that said, "You will do youth ministries!" There is not just one place but many places in Scripture to which we can turn to get a biblical basis for youth ministries. The call of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-10) reminds us that we are not to say "I am only a youth"; God called Jeremiah despite his youth. Paul also reminds Timothy not to let anyone despise his youth, but to set a good example for all people (1 Tim. 4:12). Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to him (Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17).

We do youth ministries in order to lay the groundwork for young people to have a faith in Jesus Christ that is their own. In the Episcopal Church we baptize infants and, as a congregation, promise to teach them about Jesus and God's love for them until they can make their own statement of faith. In confirmation, young people make their own statement of faith. Youth ministries is the special ministry of the church that provides young people the opportunities to work out their questions, their commitments, and their opportunities to grow in faith. This call to ministry is not predictable;

it is an adventure. In accepting Christ's call to discipleship, we begin a lifelong journey of hope. Youth ministries includes:

- Service projects, such as young people raking leaves for older adults
- Singing in the choir
- Social action projects with young people
- Young people teaching vacation Bible school
- Parents and young people attending classes on human sexuality
- Diocesan, provincial, and national youth events
- A community center for young people sponsored by a congregation
- Youth evangelism efforts and peer counseling
- Young people walking to fight hunger
- Acolyte groups
- Senior high retreats
- Young people planning "Youth Sunday" in a congregation
- Education in peace and justice
- Christian education programs for youth
- Episcopal camps and conference centers
- Episcopal schools
- Preparation for rites of initiation
- Bible study, service, worship, recreation, community organizing, and much, much, more!

Characteristics of Relational Youth Ministry

Young people and adults in the Episcopal Church have worked together to identify the elements that characterize relational youth ministry in our denomination. They describe our style of youth ministry. The characteristics of relational youth ministry in the Episcopal Church are:

1. Youth are members of the Body of Christ with particular gifts; they are part of the Church today and tomorrow.
2. A major purpose of youth ministry is to help youth share their gifts and participate fully in the Church, beginning at the local level.
3. Diversity of persons, culture, ideas, and theology within the Church and within youth ministry is good and to be affirmed; no one pattern of ministry ought to be mandated.
4. Small gatherings of young people within a congregation, essentially Christian peer groups, are an appropriate part of youth ministry and support youth participation in worship, study and service.
5. As an inherent part of congregational ministry, youth programs are not expected to carry the Gospel alone.
6. Because there is a sacramental focus in the Episcopal Church, the written word is not to be regarded as the sole channel of grace nor is Bible study the chief activity of Christian youth.
7. There is an openness to other sources of revelation, and the continuing action of the Holy Spirit; questioning and struggle in life and faith are affirmed; dogmatism and "canned answers" are distrusted.
8. Interpersonal relationships are a channel of grace and an important context within which faith is shared, transmitted, discovered, and tested.
9. Full growth (intellectual, physical, psychosocial, moral, spiritual) of the individual in community is an appropriate goal of youth ministry.
10. It is desirable for youth to assume responsibility for their own lives and to enter into mutual relationships with adults insofar as their gifts and situation in life will permit.
11. The Incarnation is a sign that all of life is appropriately taken seriously, discussed, and celebrated by a Christian; there is not a sharp distinction between sacred and secular.¹

Working within context of relational youth ministry assumes that "Ministry is not defined by age; young people are called to the same ministry as all other members of the Body of Christ,"² and is rooted in the definition of lay ministry found in the Catechism.³

A few years after the first publication of the characteristics of relational youth ministry in the Episcopal Church, a group of representative young people and adults developed what became known as the "Basic Principles of Relational Ministry."⁴ The principles of relational ministry witness to a subtle shift in the focus of youth ministry over the past two decades from a program oriented ministry to a ministry rooted in relationships. The emphasis has been shifting in many places from a ministry "to and for" young people toward a ministry "with and by" young people as well. This relational approach to youth ministry is rooted in the Incarnation. It comes from the perspective of our identity in Christ: that is, who we are and whose we are as children of God and

members of the Body of Christ. It recognizes the possibilities and limits of what it means to be human, created in the image of God. It pays attention to the related issues and concerns of identity, such as meaning, alienation, brokenness, reconciliation, sexuality, values, decision making, failure, accomplishment, development and faith.

Such a youth ministry recognizes the common mission and ministry of all baptized persons, regardless of age. This means that "program" grows out of our encounter with that mission and ministry and is therefore determined by the lives who are the focus of youth ministry — young people — where they "live and move and have their being." It is in the

midst of our living and relating to one another that we come to face what it means to share and participate in the mission and ministry of the baptized. Christian formation is seen as growing out of "intentional relational experiences."

Relational ministry is by its very nature ongoing. It is not something that can be turned on or off or programmed in a predictable way. It is by definition dynamic, in process, a living out of human relationships in the context of a faith and belief in a compassionate, loving God.

What follows are four basic theological principles of relational youth ministry. While they focus on youth ministries, these principles are broadly applicable to all areas of ministry.



Theological Principles of Relational Youth Ministry

The following theological principles are to be integrated into all aspects of youth ministries programming:

1. In Relational Youth Ministry there is infinite respect for the individual.

The doctrine of Creation affirms the goodness, value and worth of humanity; and in the Incarnation God has chosen to be joined to humanity in the fullest and most profound way. This expression of God's love for us calls us beyond ourselves to acknowledge and respect the worth and dignity of others, as the foundation of all relationships.

2. In Relational Youth Ministry honesty with self and others is essential.

The life and ministry of Jesus presents a radical example of being in honest relationship with self and others. This carries an insistence upon openly seeking the truth, by engaging with others in the full range of life's joys and sorrows, issues, questions, and conflicts.

3. In Relational Youth Ministry there is a common responsibility for what happens.

Christ called the disciples into an intimate relationship of friendship and ministry. Paul's image of the body of Christ presents an understanding of community which affirms and seeks to nurture the gifts of each person for the benefit and well-being of the whole. This understanding calls us beyond arbitrary divisions between people and toward shared leadership, decision-making and ministry.

Adults who work with young people are frequently confronted with questions for other adults and church leaders concerning, "How do we get young people involved in the church?" However, the real emphasis should

be placed on how the *church* can be more involved with young people. Youth ministries should not be about nurturing potential adult believers, but rather about enabling the continued growth of young believers. The shift towards lifelong learning communities is perhaps the key to changing the mentality which suggests that the main motivation behind youth ministries is to provide instruction which can be drawn on in later years. Youth ministries is not limited to the programs and activities sponsored within the church community. It is also directed outward to the needs, concerns and issues of youth in society.

In ministering with young people, we should be alert to their personal experience of God's active presence. It does not mean that we abandon the tradition of the faith community. Rather, we need to make an effort to connect the young people's experience with the community's understanding of God and the church as a supporting community. The most powerful human influence on the forming faith of young people is that exerted by families and peers who are living and expressing their own faith. To a large extent, they make their moral judgements in keeping with what is expected of them by family, peers and other significant others in their lives.

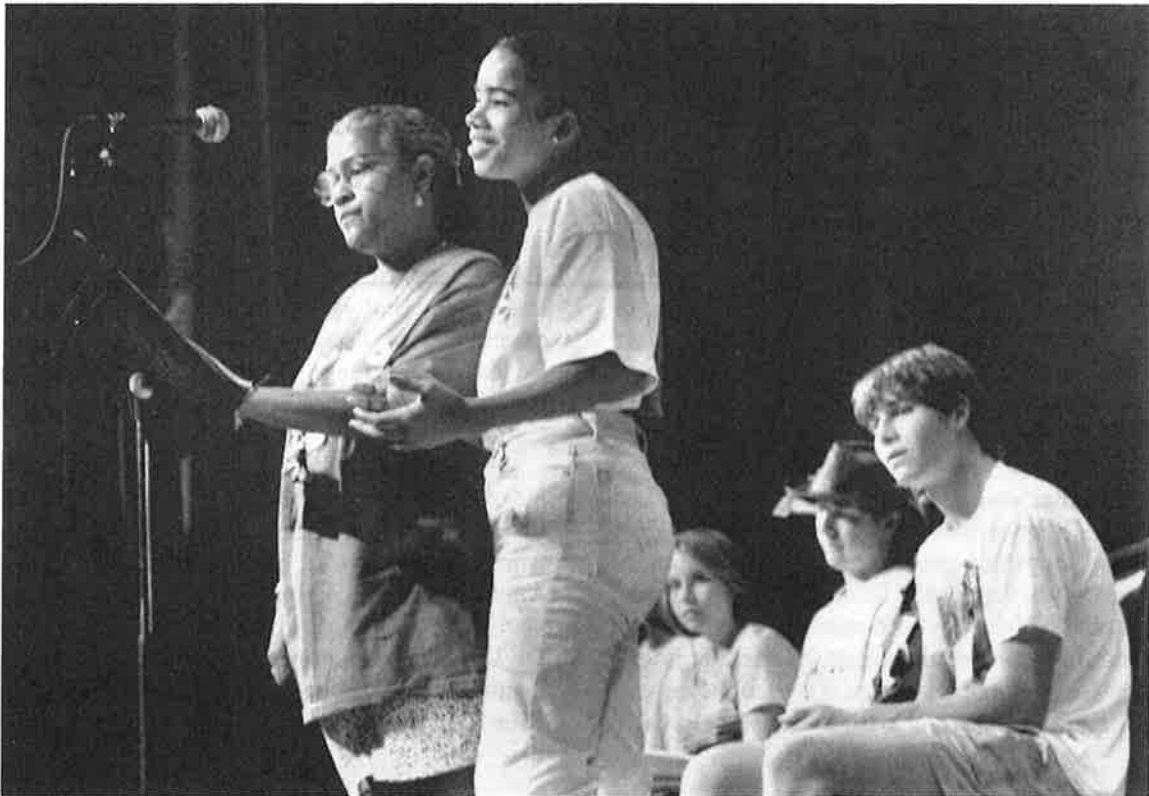
Young people are seeking personal commitment. Commitment includes reaching out towards people, ideas, beliefs, causes, and work choices. The church can assist young people as they begin this formation process of building commitment and purpose in their lives. Participation in religious activities provides an outlet for the curiosity, idealism, and desire for accomplishment that is characteristic of youth. Involvement in worship events and community service can be a source of affiliation when they are actively involved in decision-making.

To some extent contemporary opinion has

erroneously dictated that it is a natural movement for young people to leave the congregation. The assumption is that it is important to anxiously await their return following this phase of rebellion. Our acceptance of these assumptions prevents us from looking seriously at the issues of belonging for young people in faith communities. There are no mysterious reasons why young people often fail to participate in congregational life. For the most part, they are not welcome. In many instances, there are not opportunities for meaningful participation. Perhaps not enough attention is being paid to providing young people a social group where they can belong. It could be that the instruction being given is not taking into account, among other concerns, young people's need to have some say in setting the agenda. Perhaps there is no room in the worship service for the contribution of young people, and the language is not relevant or the concepts

made applicable to daily life. The relative absence of young people from congregational life speaks as powerful evidence. This pattern will only be seriously reversed when congregations take seriously on the issues of inclusiveness and participation in all aspects of its life.

Further, youth ministries should empower young people to transform the world as followers of Jesus Christ by living for justice and peace. Youth ministry empowers young people with the knowledge and skills to serve others and learn how to transform the unjust structures of society. Effective youth ministry encourages young people to examine their culture in the light of their faith and their faith in the light of culture. It is often in and through the cultural context that young people will give birth to their personal faith and sense of ministry. This cultural context is not a peripheral concern for relational youth ministry, it is a foundational principle.



What Does This Mean for Youth Ministry?

It means that we need to give young people a place and time to question their faith, to explore what it means to follow Jesus in their own lives. This can be done through Bible study, worship, and studying the lives of Christians and other faithful people. It means providing opportunities to serve the church and the world through mission projects, local community projects, and teaching Christian education. It means helping young people talk about their faith, within the church and talking with young people outside the church.

It means that we need to build programs that will allow young people to answer such questions as Who am I? Who am I in this community of the church? Who is Jesus Christ to me? It means talking about faith, love, friendship, relationships, hunger, peace, sexuality. It means doing things together, being together, working on projects together: retreats, mission projects, and other service. It means listening to young people as they raise issues that they want to explore, meeting them on their own terms.

It means that we need to realize that partnership means that both adults and young people have responsibilities for youth ministry, but not necessarily the same responsibilities. Adults are partners with young people to provide help to get events and programs planned, to share their faith journey with young people, to provide a point of view as a person who has experienced things that young people are experiencing and knows how to live through them. Being a role model for young people means being willing to share with them, not lecture to them. Young people involved in youth ministry are taking on new and more adult responsibilities. It is one step on their faith journey. They count on caring adults to struggle with them, to help them

look for answers, to show them how faith is part of one's whole life, not just a Sunday thing.

It means that what happens in a youth group or youth ministries program is connected with what happens at school, at home, around the world, and in the congregation. You should expect help and support from your clergy and lay leaders, your diocese, your province, and the "national" ⁵ Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center. You should engage parents in parts of the youth ministry program. Talk with school teachers, principals, and the local librarian for program ideas. Call your diocesan youth coordinator, provincial youth ministries coordinator, and the Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center for help, guidance, and resources. (For additional information on support and resources, see Part VIII of this handbook.)

It means that youth ministries happens wherever young people are involved. This means that young people who just come to Christian education or sing in the choir or serve as acolytes are as much a part of youth ministries as the young people in the youth group. Young people are called to witness to their faith and invite other young people to be part of the community of disciples. Young people who are excited about their faith and their congregation are good witnesses to God's love in Jesus Christ.

At the provincial and national level this means that we work hard to be sure that African American, Asian American, European American, Hispanic American, and Native American young people and adults, as well as members from our church who live outside the United States, are part of events and design teams and take part in the committees of our church.

Characteristics of Young People

Young people are complex. At no other time in their lives will they face more physical, intellectual, and emotional changes than during adolescence. These changes may happen rapidly or slowly, early or late, all at once or over a period of years.

For those who work with these amazing young people, be aware. The individuals you are dealing with today are not the same as yesterday, not the same as they will be tomorrow, and certainly not the same as they will be next year. As a leader of these young people, how do you cope? The first step is to know and understand the kinds of changes that are taking place in young people and what the implications are for your work with them.

The following pages describe some of the changes young adolescents (ages 10–15 years) and older adolescents (ages 16–19 years) encounter in different areas of their lives. While there is no delineation between male and female development within each of the age levels, remember that there IS a great difference in the physical and intellectual areas, especially in young adolescents. Young women develop much faster than young men.

Remember, too, that any description of change in young people speaks in generalities. You, as the leader of your group, know best the development patterns of each person. Gaining a working knowledge from these pages, however, will help as you plan programs and cope with changing attitudes and behaviors.

Note: While the focus of this handbook is on older adolescents, it is important to acknowledge that human development is uneven and relative. While in some areas a fourteen-year-old may share some of the characteristics of the older adolescent, it is also quite possible that a seventeen-year-old may share some of the characteristics of a young adolescent. For this reason we are providing developmental information for both young and older adolescents.



Young Adolescents (approximately ages 10–15)

What is happening with young adolescents relating to others?

- Most spend more time in peer groups, both formal and informal, than they did as children.
- Some develop the capacity for leadership in peer groups, formal and informal.
- Belonging to a peer group and being accepted by it are very important to some.
- Some move from exclusively same-sex friendships to friendships with the opposite sex.
- Some are isolated, with little open communication with others.
- Some develop new relationships with adults through both fantasy and open communication.
- Most are regarded and treated inconsistently by adults, as children one moment and as older youth the next.
- Most vacillate between dependence on adults and independence from them.
- Many have adult models and heroes, often mass-media entertainment figures.
- Many adopt racial, ethnic, religious, and class stereotypes and prejudices.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Spend time and energy developing a sense of community.
- Provide opportunities for positive adult-youth interaction.
- Include adults who are consistent and fair in relating to young people.

- Break down divisive stereotypes, prejudices, and cliques.
- Provide opportunities for positive, non-threatening peer interaction.

What is happening with young adolescents and the family?

- Young adolescents experience distance from and conflict with their parents more than they did as children.
- Some experience greater sibling conflict than in late childhood.
- Many are living in family patterns other than the nuclear family, especially in single-parent homes.
- Peer relationships and school activities begin to take more time and interest away from the family.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Provide opportunities for positive family interaction.
- Include parents in the program.
- Recognize that not all young adolescents are living in two-parent homes.
- Help young people and adults gain skills in positive conflict resolution.

What is happening with young adolescents and physical changes?

- Most experience a spurt of rapid growth in height.
- Most experience growth of hands, feet, shoulders, hips. Many others are physically awkward.

- Some young adolescents experience rapid growth in strength, coordination, and athletic ability.
- Most experience a change in physical appearance; attractiveness is a matter of great concern.
- Most experiment with different roles, varying widely in character, values, mood, and behavior.
- Most experience the onset of puberty.
- Most experience genital maturation, with first menstruation or first ejaculation.
- Most older young adolescents have full capacity for reproduction. Most develop secondary sexual characteristics (breasts, hair, voice change, etc.).
- Most develop sexual interests, fantasies; most try some type of experimentation.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Help young adolescents understand that the changes they are experiencing are a normal part of growing.
- *Focus on physical similarities rather than differences.
- Enable young people to recognize their sexuality in a healthy, open environment.
- Avoid activities that demand great coordination or agility.
- Recognize that role experimentation, value changes, and mood swings are part of growth.
- Accept individuals for who they are and who they are becoming.

What Is happening with young adolescents in faith development?

- Most are beginning to question the literal faith of childhood while at the same time accepting a conventional faith.
- Some older young adolescents are moving into development of a personal faith based on reflective thinking.

- The religious knowledge of most is minimal and poorly organized.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Provide opportunities for them to question their understanding of faith.
- Challenge them to begin to articulate what they believe.
- Enable them to gain more biblical knowledge and organize it effectively.

What is happening with young adolescents in intellectual development and learning?

- A few are moving from almost wholly concrete ways of thinking into more general, abstract, and symbolic forms.
- The reading level of young adolescents varies greatly (some are reading only at fourth- or fifth-grade level).
- Many learn more readily through electronic media than through print.
- Most have short attention spans.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Recognize that not all of them are capable of or comfortable reading aloud.
- Depend heavily on visual aids and include virtually no lectures.
- Make allowances for frequent loss of attention.
- Include more concrete terms and images than abstract ones.

What is happening with young adolescents and self-concept/self-esteem?

- Most experience considerable anxiety with regard to personal identity and adequacy.
- For most, self-esteem is an issue of great importance and extreme fluctuation.
- The search for sexual identity can cause conflict and confusion in the sexual identification with one or both parents.

- For young people of color, race and ethnicity are greatly involved in the search for identity.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Provide a safe place where young adolescents are helped to cope with anxieties about sexual identity, personal inadequacy, and racial/ethnic identity.
- Affirm each individual as a child of God.
- Enable young people to develop a healthy self-concept.

What is happening with young adolescents' characteristic behaviors?

- Many may be exuberant, spirited, reckless, and energetic, especially in groups.
- Most have a short attention span and respond to frequent changes of pace.
- Most are willing to experiment with new approaches.

- Many appear spontaneous, unpredictable, flighty.
- Many take a deep interest in popular music.
- Many spend long hours watching television.
- Many begin using alcohol and tobacco and other forms of addictive drugs.

Therefore, an effective program with young adolescents must

- Include frequent and often extreme changes in pace.
- Set and communicate clear and firm behavioral limits and expectations.
- Include patient and flexible leaders.
- Educate them about drug and alcohol abuse and provide training in refusal skills.
- Model and teach critical viewing and listening skills, helping youth to view television and listen to music discriminately.



Older Adolescents (approximately ages 16–19)

What is happening with older adolescents relating to others?

- Most continue to pursue acceptance by peers; many find acceptance by a select peer group most important.
- Peer groups consume a majority of waking hours for many.
- Leadership qualities begin to mature as opportunities for development are provided.
- Most late teens relate to both same-sex and opposite-sex friendships, with opposite-sex relationships concentrating on one-to-one relationships.
- Some continue to avoid communication with others.
- Relationships with adults vary from conflict to friendship. Authority becomes personified in adults (many times in parents) and, for many, becomes a threat to personal freedom.
- Independence grows in importance; adults and adolescents begin to formulate person-to-person relationships to replace child-adult relationships.
- Adult models and heroes remain important; many become more involved in a more realistic profile of their heroes, especially as they project their own independent lifestyle.
- Many continue to accept established stereotypes; many reject stereotypes in an attempt to gain independence and to establish new lifestyles.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Spend time and energy developing a sense of community.

- Provide opportunities for positive adult-youth interaction.
- Include adults who are willing to work with young people as partners.
- Enable adolescents to assume leadership roles.
- Work to question stereotypes and lifestyle issues.
- Help adolescents develop healthy one-to-one same-sex and opposite-sex relationships.

What is happening with older adolescents and family?

- Conflict with parents can become more intense as each young person continues to establish his or her own identity.
- In the last years of high school, parent-youth relationships may mellow.
- Some young people begin to form their own families through engagement, marriage, and the birth of children.
- Peer relationships and school activities become more and more important for many, leaving less time for family. School athletics take on great significance for some.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Provide opportunities for positive family interaction.
- Include parents in the program.
- Enable young people to view their future as family members and possible parents realistically.
- Begin to teach parenting skills.

- Help young people and parents as the parent-child relationship changes dramatically.

What is happening with older adolescents and physical changes?

- Some mature later than others and experience rapid growth during the late teens.
- Growth begins to level off, and many begin to accept their own bodies.
- Strength and coordination become more manageable and reliable.
- Physical appearance continues to be a matter of concern.
- Adolescents continue to experience later stages of puberty; some catch up with others during this period of growth.
- Sexual interests continue to grow, with fantasies and experimentation becoming more frequent.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Help them develop a healthy attitude toward their body.
- Enable them to cope with their sexuality responsibly. Continue to educate them about the changes they are experiencing.

What is happening with older adolescents and faith development?

- Some are just now beginning to raise questions about religion.
- Many adolescents are attempting to put the pieces together for themselves.
- Some adolescents have begun to relate religious information and to deal with concerns caused by conflicts and lifestyles.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Continue to raise questions about their faith.
- Challenge them to articulate what they believe.
- Provide opportunities to apply faith to real-world issues and situations.

What is happening with older adolescents and intellectual development and learning?

- Late teens are more able to think abstractly and globally.
- Reading levels still vary greatly; many cannot write coherently.
- Electronic media continue to be important for educating.
- More are able to concentrate for slightly longer periods of time.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Challenge them to think in abstractions.
- Broaden their perspectives to include the whole church, community, and world.
- Depend heavily on visual aids and the electronic media to convey messages.
- Provide opportunities for intense discussions and concentration.

What is happening with older adolescents and self-concept/self-esteem?

- Anxiety continues for many, but others begin to accept and concretize their personal identity and to accept their adequacy.
- Most adolescents will have established a role model that may or may not be continued in the future.
- The search for sexual identity continues.
- Many young people of color become personally concerned with racial/ethnic empowerment and cultural awareness.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Continue to provide a safe place where they may cope with anxieties about sexual identity, personal inadequacy, and racial/ethnic identity.
- Affirm each individual as a child of God.
- Enable adolescents to develop a healthy self-concept.
- Provide positive adult role models.

What is happening with older adolescents' characteristic behaviors?

- Most are settled, some to the degree of experiencing boredom in groups.
- Most are able to concentrate for longer periods of time and enjoy discussions that allow them to express their own ideas.
- Most are willing to experiment, but many express reserve.
- Many continue to appear spontaneous, unpredictable, and flighty.
- Many are willing to take on responsibility and are capable of managing difficult tasks.
- Music interests continue; some participate in their own groups.
- Some continue to be avid television watchers, but many are too busy with other activities.

- Drug use becomes more widespread.
- Alcohol and tobacco use continues, and some become champions against their use.

Therefore, an effective program with older adolescents must

- Include new and interesting approaches and teaching methods.
- Depend heavily on group discussions.
- Provide opportunities to assume responsibilities within the group.
- Help to relieve rather than create more stress in young people's lives by providing a strong community that is comfortable and yet challenging.
- Include referral and counseling services for drug and alcohol abusers.

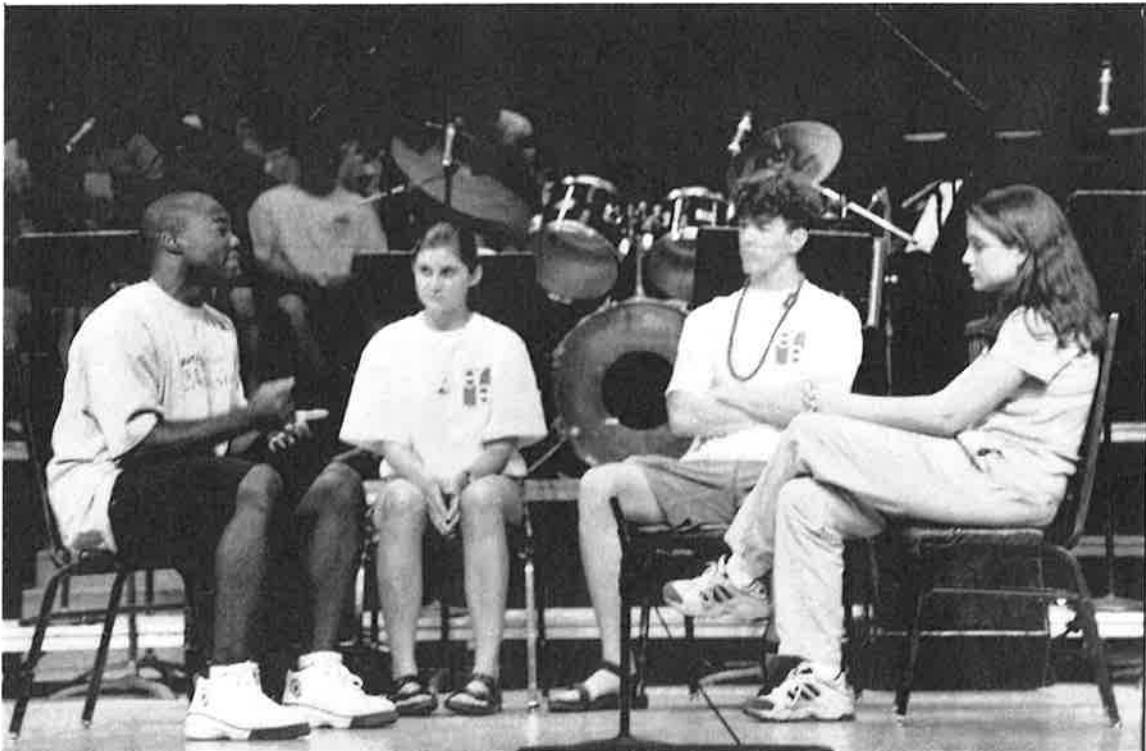


Part II

Effective Planning

Effective planning is important. In fact, though nothing can guarantee a great program, good planning can help one happen. Why plan? There are two primary reasons.

First is to involve the group. When the whole group is involved in planning and leadership, enthusiasm and commitment are increased. The second reason to plan is to save time. Time is a valuable resource. Most groups meet for only a few hours each week. Leaders who walk into a group without a good plan risk wasting time and, worse, boring the group. On the other hand, leaders who have a clear purpose and a good plan have done their job. They are prepared to be facilitators of discussions, learning, and a great program. Good planning and shared leadership are not easy and, at first, may take more time and energy. But when you consider the benefits of ownership, involvement, and interest, the effort is worth it.



The Five-Step Process

There are many ways to plan. The model presented here is a simple five-step process. The first part of this chapter briefly explains and outlines the five steps in the planning process. The second part demonstrates how the five steps may be applied to three different kinds of programs: long-term planning, a weekend retreat or lock-in, and a single session. The five steps are:

1. Assessing needs and interests
2. Setting a goal statement
3. Designing the program
4. Doing the program
5. Evaluating the program

Step One: Assessing Needs and Interests

Good planning begins with the intention of youth ministries to respond to the needs and interests of young people. The first step is to consider those for whom you are planning. What are their needs and interests? What kinds of programs would be meaningful and relevant to them? The best way to find answers to these questions is to ask the group itself. There are several ways this can be done. Some of the more popular methods include a brainstorming session, a needs/interest survey, and a discussion of past programs.

Brainstorming session: At a meeting of the group, brainstorm as many different needs and interests as possible. Spend some time setting priorities and narrowing the list. When you have the list down to the top ten, define each of the topics. Reach a consensus about what the topics mean and in what direction the group would like to move with each one. To get the

group thinking, be sure to ask very specific questions: "What was the most interesting time last year?" "What do you want to know about Jesus? The church? Friendship?"

Needs/interests survey: Create a needs/interests survey and ask group members to choose the topics that are most interesting to them. Tally the results and post them. Then spend some time as a whole group discussing the results and defining each topic. Again, be sure to ask specific questions: "What is your favorite after-school activity?" "What is a burning issue at your school?" "What three activities did you like best in youth group last year?" "What do you want to do again?" "Is there something new you want to do or study?"

Discussion of past programs: Review the topics that were covered in the past year or so. List those that the group remembers as being the most meaningful. Ask questions about how and why these programs met a need or interest. Be sure to separate whether the topic or the activity was memorable. Consider repeating or doing more about these topics.

Step Two: Setting a Goal Statement

After the group has assessed and prioritized its needs and interests, create your goal statements. Ask yourself the question: "At the end of the hour [or weekend, or quarter, or year!], what do we want the group to have experienced? What should they know?"

Your answers are your goal statements. A goal statement is simply what you want to accomplish within your time frame. Goals must be clear, short, specific, and attainable. Some examples of goal statements are included in the three planning models that follow this overview of the five steps.

Remember that for everything you do, a goal needs to be written. You may even choose to post the statement somewhere in your meeting area. Not only does a goal statement tell you where you are going, it tells you whether you got there. This added benefit will be especially helpful to you in the last step, evaluating the program.

Step Three: Designing the Program

After writing your goal statement, you are ready to design how you will accomplish it. Designing your program simply means determining the methods you will use. Now you are getting to the fine details. Most often, your design for the program can be divided into two areas: program and logistics. Program includes the major presentations and learnings during the event. Logistics includes all the details that support the event and keep it moving. Both must be planned well to create an effective program.

Step Four: Doing the Program

This is the fun part. Good planning should help the program run smoothly. Be ready, however, for a sudden change of plans. Youth ministry is unpredictable. A change in the weather or

the local high school team's making it to the state playoffs can foul up even the best plans. Don't panic. Be flexible. Simply regroup and continue.

If at all possible, never cancel or postpone an event. Even if only a few members of the group show up when you were hoping for many more, work with those you have. Consistency is important. If you promised there would be a retreat, then there should be one.

Step Five: Evaluating the Program

At the end of any event, ask the group to evaluate their experience. Not all programs need a formal evaluation, but all should end with at least an informal one. Formal evaluations include written questionnaires. Less formal evaluations may range from comments written on a file card to verbal responses in an open discussion. Use the whole group's evaluation as the basis for your more thorough planning-team evaluation.

How to Apply the Five Steps

The following pages demonstrate ways the planning steps may be applied to a long-term plan, a weekend retreat or lock-in, and a single session.

Using the Five-Step Process for a Quarterly or Long-Term Program

Step One: Assessing Needs and Interests

Planning for the long term helps keep everything in perspective and flowing together. It also enables groups to focus on what is coming. Some major events like mission projects demand long-term planning. For whatever reason, it's helpful to plan at least quarterly. Let's assume you are planning for the next three months, with a group that includes seventeen people.

To assess needs and interests, decide on how you are going to gather information from each person. Let's say your planning group decides to interview each member personally. You take the list of group members and assign each person on the planning team three or four to interview. You agree on four questions and a time when all the interviews must be completed. The questions may include: "What are two strengths of our group right now? Two weaknesses?" "What three topics could we use for program ideas that would really interest you?" "What two fun activities would you like us to do as a group?"

When each person has been interviewed gather the answers and collate them in your planning group.

Step Two: Setting a Goal Statement

After looking over the results of the interviews and discussing them, list the most common strengths, weaknesses, topics, and activities. As you consider long-term goals, it may be help-

ful to create a goal statement in each of the five areas of a congregation's life: worship, study, ministry within the congregation, service, and fellowship. For instance, your goals might say:

Worship: We will include a brief worship time at the end of all of our evening programs, which will be led by a team of one adult and one youth group member.

Study: We will focus in-depth study on three specific topics highlighted by our interviews. These topics include family relationships, understanding why there are other denominations, and interpreting the Bible so it makes sense to us.

Ministry within the congregation: We will volunteer to usher once a month for worship and will be responsible for decorating the social hall for the Halloween party and potluck dinner.

Service/Mission/Social Action: We will collect donations, assemble, and deliver food baskets for Thanksgiving.

Fellowship: We will have a fun activity once a month and plan and publicize our February ski retreat,

Step Three: Designing the Program

Because you are looking at the overall program for three months, you do not need to look at specifics for each session. What you must do, however, is assign dates, times, and responsibilities. Post or distribute a series of monthly calendars. Given your goal statements, fill in the calendars with your monthly activities

and weekly meetings. Set locations and times and determine who will be the key contact. For instance, is the whole group going to plan everything or will certain people be responsible for collecting food baskets?

Step Four: Doing the Program

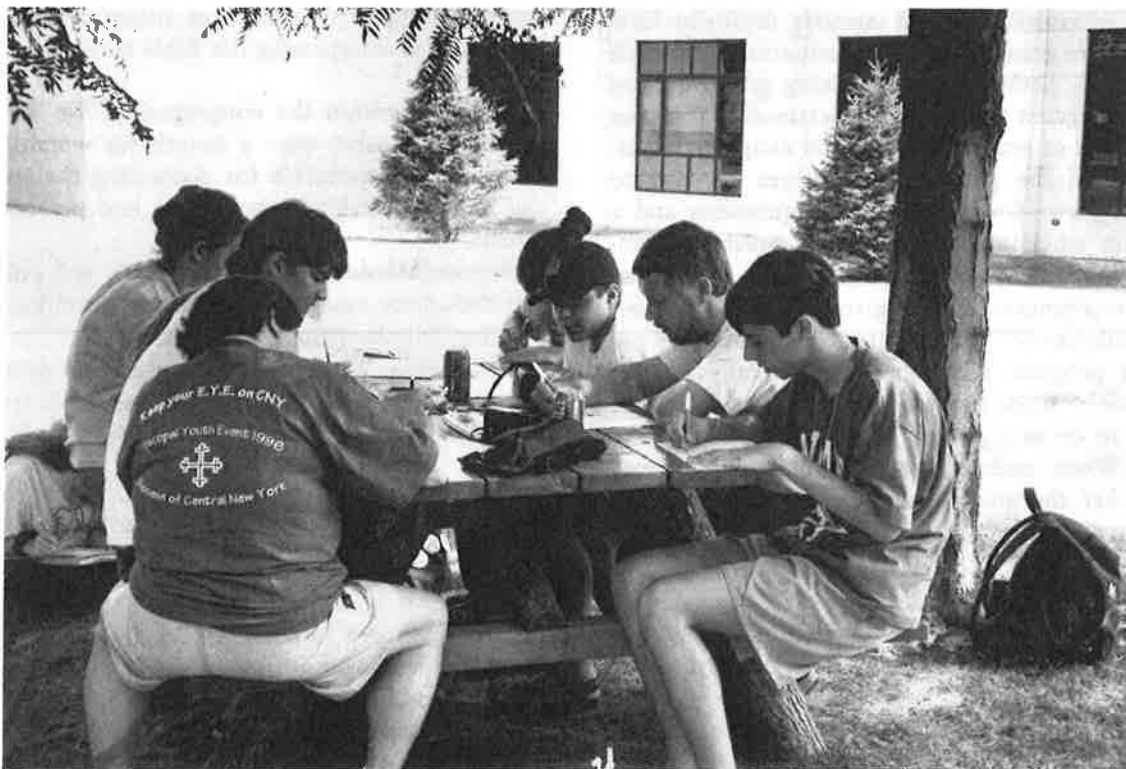
Either one individual or the whole group will have to hold one another accountable for actually doing their part. Once the final calendar is set, consider publishing it and sending it to all members of the group, members of the clergy, congregational leaders, and your diocesan youth coordinator. Get the word out!

Step Five: Evaluating the Program

On a monthly basis, meet together as the planning team to check progress on future programs and evaluate the past month's programs. You will also need to go through this process again for the next quarter. When you do, stop to consider if you have met the goals you set. Ask yourselves: "What did we do well? What needed more work. What would we change for next quarter?"

You may not need to assess needs again so soon. If your first assessment was accurate and gathered enough information for you, it may last you the entire year—all four quarters.

Congratulations! You've completed the five-step process for long-term planning.



Using the Five-Step Process for a Weekend Retreat or Lock-In

Step One: Assessing Needs and Interests

If you have done a major needs/interests assessment earlier, you may decide to use that information as the basis for your retreat or lock-in. It may be time, however, to assess needs and interests again simply for this one weekend or overnight event. You may decide to put out a quick survey during Christian education or at one of your weekly evening meetings. Consider putting together a sheet that lists 15 possible topics, 15 different learning methods, 15 main dishes for meals, 15 activities for free time, and 15 videos for late night fun. Your topical list might include: faith issues, dealing with cliques, peace in relationships, falling in and out of love, etc. Your different methods might include: small-group discussion, journaling, questions and answers, listening to a tape, drawing. Your meals might include spaghetti, taco salad, pancakes, and chef's surprise, etc. The lists go on and on. Collect the survey and tally the results. Use the results for your next step.

Step Two: Setting a Goal Statement

After you have collated and prioritized the results of your needs assessment, put together the overall goal statements for your weekend or overnight. You may consider writing at least two goal statements in two categories: community life and study/learning. For instance, your statements might say:

Community life: (1) We will avoid putdowns the whole weekend and will tell each other when we feel put down. (2) We will all share in

responsibilities for meal cooking, cleaning, and setup.

Study/learning: (1) We will study together and discuss parts of the book of Job, which we've been studying in Sunday school. (2) We will share our concerns and frustrations and create a prayer list so we can support each other in the next year.

Consider printing these goal statements in your publicity and posting the statements in your meeting area during the weekend lock-in or retreat.

Step Three: Designing the Program

Now that you've established your purpose through your goal statements, design how you will meet these goals. Use the following checklist of questions as a guide for designing the program.

1. When will this happen? (Date and time schedule)
2. Where will it happen? (Location)
3. How will we get there? (Transportation)
4. How much will this cost? (Budget)
5. Where will the money come from? (Fund raising)
6. How will we spread the word? (Publicity)
7. What are we going to eat? (Meal planning and preparation)
8. Where are we going to sleep? (Housing)
9. What does each person need to bring? (Sleeping bag, Prayer Book, Bible, etc.)

10. How much time do we have? (Schedule)
11. What resources are needed? (Supplies)
12. What will the program sessions look like? (Leadership)
13. Who is responsible for each part? (Assign tasks)

By going through each question, you'll be designing your program for the weekend. A retreat checklist is also included to help.

Step Four: Doing the Program

In getting ready to do the program, go through the entire schedule with the planning team. Pay attention to anything that is needed for each item on the schedule. Who is responsible for

what? If all the people are doing their jobs, you'll be able to sit back and enjoy the event. Be flexible and ready to help out as needed.

Step Five: Evaluating the Program

Create an evaluation sheet for the participants. Take some time for them to fill the sheet out. A sample form is included. Then, as a planning team, evaluate the weekend and the planning process that preceded it. Ask yourselves: What worked well? What would I have done differently? What did we learn from this process?

Take a moment and be thankful for God's faithfulness in the planning and doing of the event. Save all your work in a file for future retreat planners.

Congratulations! You have completed the planning steps for a weekend retreat or lock-in.



Using the Five-Step Process for a Single-Session Program

Step One: Assessing Needs and Interests

If you've followed the pattern of quarterly planning first, you may not need to do another assessment for a particular session. It may be helpful, however, to narrow the topics from broad to specific. For instance, if your quarterly planning assessment indicated that your group wanted to focus on the issue of teen suicide, what precisely are they looking for?

Need/interest assessments for a single session are often best done informally and quickly. If you know next week's topic begins a series on suicide, ask each person to jot down one question they have about suicide on a file card. Use these for the next step.

Step Two: Setting a Goal Statement

Reach your goal statement by answering the question, "When the session is over, what do I want the group members to know?" Or "When the session is over, what do I want the group members to have experienced?" Your answers are your goal statement. Pursuing the topic of teen suicide, if you want each young person to leave understanding the major causes of suicide among teenagers (such as depression, despair, conflict), that's your goal statement: "By the end of the session, each person will understand the major causes of suicide among teenagers."

Step Three: Designing the Program

After writing a clear goal statement, you're ready to design your session program. How can you achieve the goal statement? Take a moment to think of the most creative method you can use to convey the message. You may already have a set pattern for your single-session meetings.

Most successful sessions include three parts: getting started, developing the session, and concluding the session. Getting started welcomes the group members and gets them involved. It includes active games and group building. It introduces the topic for study in a new way. Developing the session is the major focus. Major information input takes place here. Discussion is often a successful part of this segment. Concluding the session leads to closure and application. Questions like "So what does this have to do with me?" and "Now what?" are answered here.

Other activities that weave around and through these parts may include such things as singing, eating a meal or snacking, or playing volleyball or basketball. Remember that every meeting, especially for young adolescents, must provide opportunities for group building and active learning. A planning worksheet for your use is included at the end of this chapter.

Step Four: Doing the Program

Follow your plan, allowing for the odd interruptions or change that is a natural part of youth ministry. Trust your reading of the group and change direction if needed. When it comes

Planning Elements

PROGRAM	or	SERVICE/MISSION/ SOCIAL ACTION	METHOD
Bible study		Visitation (hospital, nursing homes, new members, concerned calling)	Small group
Prayer		Church maintenance	Large group
Music (history, hymns, contemporary)		Teaching	Ecumenical gathering
Communication skills		Social Analysis	Diocesan gathering
Theological topics (e.g. sacraments)		Helping the elderly (washing windows, errands, writing letters)	Provincial gathering
What the Episcopal Church says about...		Work trips and camps	National or international gathering
Other faiths (e.g. world religions)		Social Action project in the community	Conversation and discussion
Our Anglican heritage		Support of local mission (UNICEF or March of Dimes)	Sunday school
Racial/ethnic identity (yours and others)		Hospitality to traveling youth groups	Vacation Bible school
Culture		Social events for those with special needs	Fellowship
Issues (family, divorce, vocational guidance, social issues, human sexuality, drugs/alcohol)		Emergency help	Youth as teachers
Spirituality		Food and clothing closet	Music
Global concerns		Praying for others	Art
Human relationships (youth/adult, male/female, parent/child, race/race, culture/culture)		Supporting missionaries through letters	Drama
Worship		Prison ministry through letters	Family night
Celebration of major life events (graduation, weddings, awards)		Participation in worship	Recreation One-on-one (clergy/youth, youth/youth, adult/youth)
Evangelism		Participation on church committees	Camps and conferences (backpack, wilderness camp, family events)
Recreation		Being active in congregational meetings	Projects
		Mission fair	Trips
		Child care services	Learning centers
		Peer crisis counseling	Work trips
		Tutoring	Intergenerational events
		Leading recreation or craft programs	Simulation games
		Pledging	Audiovisuals
		Ushering	TV and movies
		Leading worship upon request	Biblical interpretation
		Blood bank	Cross-cultural groups
		Local projects	Coffeehouse or drop-in center
		Attending diocesan convention, provincial synod, or General Convention as a youth delegate, as part of a planned youth presence, or as a speaker	Community youth center
			Retreats
			Lock-ins
			Meals
			Role plays
			Forums
			Panels/Guest speakers

Mix and Match

TIME	LOCATION	LEADERSHIP
Sunday mornings Weekends Saturdays Friday nights Weekday afternoons Early mornings before school School vacations Holidays Overnights Summers Weekday evenings Sunday nights	Public place (restaurant, school, community center) Recreational area (park, lake, amusement park) Outdoors Church (yours or someone else's) Homes Diocesan conference center or camp College or seminary campus	Youth Adults Clergy Lay members Diocesan, provincial, and national leaders Missionaries Community figures (doctors, teachers, public servants) College/seminary faculty College/seminary students Foreign students Educators People with special expertise (such as weavers, artists)

Planning Sheet

Day/Date	Place	Time	Leadership	Supplies needed	Activity	Time schedule
						Getting started
						Developing the session
						Concluding session

Monthly Planning Calendar

Month _____

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Part III

Building Blocks for Youth Ministries



Ten Commandments for Youth Leaders⁶

1. You will love young people and really want to work with them. Above everything else, the most important characteristic of a youth leader is a love of this age group. Leaders need to be willing to take the time to know young people individually. They need to truly care about young people. Some people become youth leaders for the wrong reasons: they are motivated by guilt or obligation to the church, they can't say no, or they have a desire to evangelize young people but no real willingness to know them.

A person who loves young people is a good listener. Young people have a lot to say, and they respond to adults who listen without criticizing, correcting, or making moral judgments. They are drawn to adults who are open and who genuinely will share themselves.

Ask yourself: Do I really like this age group? Could I love these young people? Do I want to commit myself to becoming a part of their lives?

2. You will be committed to the youth ministries program of your congregation. We need responsible adults who will follow through with all that is involved in being a leader: planning, leading, attending leadership meetings, being trained, studying, finding resources. When I recruit, I would rather a person turn me down, because of an honest assessment of personal time limitations, than say yes and not be able to follow through.

When we recruit, we don't make the job sound easy. Instead of begging for leaders, we issue a call, which lets people know that we are serious about youth ministries. When you receive a call, you know that your congregation perceives you to have special gifts and abilities with this age group. It is a calling worthy of your time, efforts, and commitment.

3. You will be willing to grow in your faith and be a role model for young people. One of the exciting parts of being a youth leader is that you will grow in faith, through your own study and preparation, through learning from young people, and through giving and sharing yourself with them.

Like it or not, you will be a role model. But this does not mean you have to be some sort of "super Christian." Rather, we are looking for people who are committed to Jesus Christ, who are struggling and growing in faith, and who seek to do a good deal of that growing within the community of faith, the church. As an active, responsible member of your congregation, you are an excellent role model for young people.

4. You will be a planner with a purpose. An effective youth ministry must have a definite purpose. The key to making it work is planning. First, work with the staff, the clergy, your youth ministries committee or commission, or all of these, to discover the goals and policies affecting youth ministries. Spend time discussing: (1) what we want for our young people; (2) areas in which they need growth; and (3) ways we can increase their involvement in the life of the congregation.

Leaders need to work together on planning. Plan a year of activities that provide a balanced program. Keep one calendar for activities and another calendar for preparatory details, such as when to make phone calls.

Leaders need to meet periodically to evaluate, make changes, and check on details.

5. You will take young people seriously. Involve young people in the planning and carrying out of their activities. Adults should not run a program with no input from young people. Young people are more likely to be active if

they have some responsibility for their own activities. Individual young people vary in the amount of responsibility they can carry, but all can take part in some way.

By opening paths for young people to participate in the life of their congregation, we show that we respect them and believe in their capabilities. They respond positively when treated responsibly. If we treat them like children, we risk stunting their growth in faith.

6. You will be confident in leadership. Once plans for the year are made, leaders need to be confident in carrying them out. Leaders often get cold feet. They fear young people won't like a Bible study or service project, so they back down from good programming and grasp for what they hope will be more attractive to young people. They fall into the "entertainment trap."

We cannot, nor should we try to, compete with the entertainment out there in the teenage world. Since we have a high calling, we need to proceed confidently. Young people are not turned off by the church, especially when they see their leaders excited by the church's ministry. (Remember our role-model image.) Your enthusiasm for the youth program makes all the difference in the world. They will catch it.

7. You will use a variety of methods and activities. Try new methods. Avoid lecture and overuse of discussion. Split into arbitrary small groups as often as possible. This is an excellent way to deal with the problem of cliques. It is hard for kids to reach out to other kids. Breaking up into small groups is one way to facilitate this. This method is helpful for building community within a group. It also provides for movement and variety within a program, which keeps kids from wandering off, being left out, or losing interest.

8. You will define expectations with young people. Consider a covenant. Discipline has un-

fortunately become the number one concern of leaders. It shouldn't be. Three hints: (1) If you have a well-planned, youth-oriented program, discipline problems should be minimal. (2) The way you start the year sets the tone for the kind of behavior that will be tolerated. A retreat full of unstructured free time is not a good beginning. (3) The best way to prevent problems is to draw up a covenant early in the year. This covenant would be designed by both the young people and the adult leaders. It should reflect the expectations young people have of adults as well as those adults have of young people. The covenant could be posted on a sheet of posterboard and signed by everyone, young people and adult leaders alike.

9. You will give individual attention when problems come up. Even with a covenant you'll probably still have one person who is disruptive. These young people are trying to get attention, and attention is what they need. Talk with them personally and lovingly about behavior and expectations. The worst method is to single them out and deal with the problem in front of the whole group. Being neither parent nor teacher, you have an opportunity for a unique relationship as mentor, role model, guide.

There is debate over whether or not to call parents regarding disruptive behavior. Always try to work it out with the young person first. In that way you show respect for the individual as a responsible person. And please don't ever kick a young person out of a youth group.

10. You will seek help. You have a responsibility to get the help and resources you need. Many congregations recruit leaders and then leave them to fend for themselves. To prevent a year of frustration and burnout, you need to take it upon yourself to ask your congregation's staff or lay coordinators for help. Don't wait for someone to call you. Get the help you need.

Fitting Youth Ministries into the Congregation's Total Ministry⁷

The term "youth ministries" is a broad, all encompassing term which frequently conjures up certain mental images — a group of young people sharing Bible study together, a Fall retreat, a progressive dinner, a weekend retreat, a summer social action project. Although these activities are certainly worthwhile, they do not, by themselves, ensure a successful youth ministries program in the local congregation. Whether we want to admit it or not, a youth ministry that focuses itself solely on the "traditional" youth fellowship group runs the risk of becoming a partial, incomplete ministry. Ideally, youth ministries does not isolate young people from the mainstream of a congregation's life, or create weekly programs exclusively to entertain young people; rather, its goal should be to move young people from the weekly youth fellowship programs and activities into the wider arena of congregational life.

It is important for young people to become an accepted, involved part of the community of faith — especially since many of them are baptized members of the church, who possess all the privileges and responsibilities of church membership. The involvement of young people in the congregation needs to go beyond youth group and Christian education classes school into at least four vital areas: leadership, worship, education, and mission. It is possible to find significant involvement in all these areas, using imagination and creativity and developing all available opportunities.

Leadership

In the area of leadership, young people have the opportunity to serve in many areas of the church's life. The canons of the Episco-

pal Church state that all baptized persons sixteen years of age and older are to be considered adult members.⁸ Some congregations have taken the opportunity to elect youth members to vestries, search committees, or to diocesan conventions, but for the most part these congregations are the exception to the rule. In order to enable the election of young people to these offices, it may be necessary to cultivate a network of advocates — people who will speak on behalf of young people, bringing their names to the attention of the nominating committee and the congregation.

Other leadership possibilities for young people in the church lie within the committee structures of the congregation and diocese. The most obvious place for leadership responsibility is on the youth ministries committee or education committee, but all committees can benefit by seeing things from the point of view of one or more young people. Examples of possible committee involvements could be pastoral nominating, evangelism, anti-racism, and mission/outreach committees. It is important to include young people in these areas because they have the talent and interest to serve, not just because they are young.

Worship

It is important for young people to develop regular attendance at worship services and share regularly in the leadership of worship — not just during the annual Youth Sunday. Young people want opportunities to share themselves through their personal gifts and energies and can make their presence visible in the congregation's worship through some of the following roles: lay reader, musician (vocalist, choir mem-

ber, pianist, organist, instrumentalist, bell choir member), sacred dancer, actor, acolyte, usher, or greeter. Through the advocacy of the congregation's youth committee, as an extension of the youth group, or through volunteer commitment cards that are part of many congregations' stewardship pledge campaigns, young people can gain visibility in worship.

A congregation's youth committee can play a major role. It is especially helpful if the youth committee can supply names of young people for recruitment. A number of youth groups have choirs and worship-oriented groups (mime troupes, usher teams, acolytes, lay readers) that are extensions of their group's life. These groups can be scheduled into worship on a regular basis, while others take leadership roles more periodically.

An increasing number of congregations have begun to include the commitment of personal time and talents as part of their stewardship campaign. Young people need to be addressed directly by the stewardship campaign leadership and strongly encouraged to commit time and skills to the congregation, with worship being one of the key areas. Lay leaders responsible for coordinating volunteers (along with members of the staff) can ensure that the names of these young people are entered into the congregation's volunteer lists and used. To provide continuity, the youth committee may want to monitor this list actively.

Education

Again, there is a need to go beyond the regular view of young people as students, in programs and classes designed just for them, and look for other areas of involvement in the church's educational ministry. Two main possibilities exist: involvement as a participant and involvement as a leader.

As a participant in the congregation's ministry of education, young people can benefit by having access to classes, seminars, study groups, and retreats that are not created solely for them. Adult-youth forums, intergenerational studies, and workshops are ways for young people to be involved in the congregation's educational ministry. These opportunities

open the door for cross-generational communication and understanding and also serve to uncover leadership potential and other gifts that exist among young people.

As leaders in education, young people can be tapped to take responsibility for the education of younger children in the Christian education program, vacation Bible school, children's choir, and summer camp, among other areas. Most young people have a sincere concern for children and want to be able to share what they've learned about the gospel with them. Young people make very capable teachers, song leaders and music directors, camp counselors and program staff, recreation leaders, and friends for children. Within this area of ministry lies a great opportunity for them to become positive Christian role models for the children of the church.

Mission

There are a wide variety of opportunities for young people to minister in Christ's name to their community, the nation, and the world. Young people should have access to opportunities where they can learn about mission and also do mission. It is crucial for them to have an understanding of how the church serves. Access to missionaries and people involved in helping ministries, field trips to mission projects and community agencies, service projects, and mission trips are all ways to create an exposure to the church's outreach and develop a response to concerns that need to be addressed.

A mission focus can be planned as a regular part of a youth group's life. Having guest speakers, such as a missionary on furlough or the director of a local community agency, might become the starting point for a group to develop an awareness of ministries beyond the walls of the local congregation. On-site visits to a particular mission area, or a developing service project to assist a specific ministry, are good ways to get young people involved in mission. Some youth groups channel a percentage of funds from their money-raising efforts into a specific mission project, which enables their group to assist an effort that is too far away to visit regularly. "Adopting" a mission cause can

give a group a sense of being able to help, even if the group cannot always be there in person.

A social action project is an excellent way for young people to see and do mission. Individual congregations, clusters of congregations, dioceses, provinces, and even national agencies of the church have been doing this form of project for years. Matching the needs of certain mission efforts with the skills, availability, and interest of young people has created a very special experience for the congregation and its young people. Not every congregation can do this type of ministry, and not every young person will benefit from the experience, but for those who are able, social action projects provide a chance for young people to be involved in what can be a life changing experience.

Social action projects can be organized close to home or around the world; the important factor is that a *relationship* between both parties is established.

Those of us who serve in ministries with the young people of the Episcopal Church have a responsibility to become the enablers of these young people and advocates for them with the leadership of the congregation, to ensure that young people are involved and included in the congregation — *their congregation*. It is important for them to have a solid chance to be the church! When we fit our ministry with young people into the ministry of the whole church, this vision has a greater chance of success. The opportunities are there; we need to see that we make the most of them.



Youth Advisors Say Yes: How to Enlist, Train, Support⁹

The Problem

Securing youth advisors is one of the most challenging and frustrating tasks in the congregation. The reluctance of volunteers to say yes may be a symptom of other problems. Do any of these problems sound familiar?

The Congregation's Priority for Youth Ministries

- Lack of support and appreciation from staff, parents, team members, and youth
- Low priority for youth ministry in the congregation (e.g., low budget item, little advocacy by the diocese)
- Inferior or no facilities for recreation; little or no equipment; no transportation vehicle

Youth Behavior and Needs

- Invisibility of youth ministries to the congregation (e.g., few or no youth leaders in worship)
- Lack of awareness or misunderstandings concerning developmental stages of young people and expectations of their behavior
- Lack of understanding of the need for flexibility and the space to fail; uncomfortable relating with and talking to young people

Advisor/Leader Needs

- Inadequate training
- Lack of program ideas or resources
- Abuse of the youth advisor team concept (e.g., one person assumes role of "boss" or team members are not dependable)

- Inability to communicate with or get to know young people
- Lack of clarity about what the person is being recruited to do or for how long

Miscellaneous

- Poor publicity (e.g., for youth programs, retreats, trips)
- Lack of variety in programming (same format every meeting)

The Solution: Youth Ministry Leadership Strategy in Three Steps, Enlistment, Training, Support

Form an Enlistment/Training/Support Team composed of young people, youth advisors, session members, members at large, staff persons, parents, and the Christian Education Committee (this committee could be a subgroup of the CE Committee).

Step One: Enlistment

Survey the congregation concerning time, talents, and interests to determine:

- Specific interests or skills (e.g., singing, playing a musical instrument, drama, leading discussions, sports, food, dancing, group building, hiking, transportation, counseling)
- Willingness to serve as a member of the youth ministry team / Willingness to participate in one-time events (e.g., retreats, conferences, trips)

Establish relationships. Be intentional about getting to know persons who returned cards, young adults, and other likely candidates. Speak to them following worship service, during coffee hour, and at other social times.

Schedule a weekday Bible study or luncheon study group for adults. Focus on one community-building exercise at each meeting. If they become a close group, they will be more likely to accept an invitation to work as team members in youth ministries.

Extend the invitation. The persons who extend the invitation need to have a relationship with the prospect. Include young persons on the enlisting team. Visit the prospect at home if time permits; if not, use the phone. Check to see if the call is at a convenient time. Have a packet of materials about the group, past and present programs, leaders, or other information to help the prospective advisor get to know the group.

Guidelines for the Invitation

- Be friendly and warm.
- Thank the person for responding to the time, talent, and interest survey or explain how the person was recommended.
- Invite the person to become a member of a team of adults involved in youth ministries. Be specific about what you're asking him or her to do.
- Talk about the gifts and skills of the other team members.
- Indicate the length of time the person will be expected to serve.
- Give the person the schedule for the first training (enrichment) event, explaining that the focus will be "community building."
- Give the person opportunities to express feelings, concerns, and hopes and to ask questions.
- Ask for names of persons with whom the person would like to serve.
- It is important that the volunteer perceive the service to be:
 - **A team effort**
 - **An opportunity for personal enrichment**
 - **Significant for the young people**

- If the prospect wishes to think about it, set a date for the response. Ask the prospect to pray for Christ's calling in ministries and service.
- If the invitation is accepted, send a letter confirming the agreement.

Step Two: Training

- Identify persons from the enlistment team to be responsible for planning the training events. Invite outside specialists if budget permits.
- The first training event needs to focus on team building for the advisors (approximate time: 2-3 hours).
- Provide a booklet for each person containing the following information:
 - Names, addresses, and phone numbers of the young people
 - Names, addresses, and phone numbers of the planners
 - A statement of purpose or goals for youth ministries (you will need to write one if you don't have it)
 - Responsibilities of youth advisors
 - Resources available for young people
 - Program ideas
 - Who the young people are
- Ask youth advisors to indicate areas where they need training. Plan an event, based on these needs, early in the Fall.

Step Three: Support

Recognition

1. Form a planning committee. The committee should be composed of equal numbers of young people and adult advisors (6 to 12 is a good size) and a staff person. If there are two or more youth groups, the committee

may want to split for planning. Use the nominating committee model of persons chosen for extra responsibility and service rather than the student council model of popularity and elections. Ask for volunteers interested in serving, confirmed by the rest of the group.

2. All leaders and teachers in the educational ministry of the congregation need to be recognized publicly during worship. This is an opportunity for the congregation to say "We're with you in your efforts; we thank you." A coffee hour or reception can follow the worship service to give members an opportunity to appreciate and encourage the volunteers.

3. A brief personality sketch of each youth advisor can be put in the congregation's newsletter. Indicate occupation, interests, and a response to the question, "What do you enjoy most about being a youth advisor?"

4. Create a youth bulletin board with pictures of youth advisors and members of the planning committee.

5. Cards or small gifts of appreciation can be given to advisors at Christmas or Valentine's Day or on birthdays. Plan a social event, cookout, picnic, for advisors and committee.

Tasks of Planning Committee

1. Meet monthly or quarterly to plan and implement activities and studies for a period of one to three months.

2. Publicize programs and plans through a monthly or a quarterly newsletter, bulletin boards, as well as announcements in Christian education and pulpit.

3. Attend meetings regularly.

4. The role of the staff person, Christian education coordinator, youth coordinator, or clergy person on the enlistment/training/support team and planning committee is that of consultant, resource person, enabler, and (occasionally) leader and as a contact person with the diocesan youth coordinator and committee and so on.

The Fine Art of Contact Work¹⁰

Here's a quick quiz. Think back to when you were in senior high school. What were your favorite classes? Can you recall two or three of the lessons? How about the teacher? My guess is that information concerning the lesson material is pretty sparse compared to recollections concerning the teacher. Congratulations! You have just proved to yourself why you are the most important part of the youth ministries program. It's not that all the lessons you teach are unimportant, but that they become important only as they are interpreted through the life of someone significant. Youth ministries is the word of God made flesh through pastors, advisors, and other young people. It is through people that the great "I love you" of God is heard. Forget the gimmicks, curriculums, philosophies, and all the program ideas you have ever heard. You are the program. Youth ministries exists only to put advisors and young people into significant relationships. If your program helps that to happen, great! If not, you're kidding yourself.

belongs to the messenger, not the recipient. That often means we meet young people on their turf, or at least on their terms.

Young Life coined the phrase "earning the right to be heard." There is certainly enough truth in that phrase alone to justify nurturing contact work skills. But it is only half the story. By being intentionally and personally accessible to young people, you not only "earn the right to be heard" but "learn to hear rightly." More than all the classes, books, magazines, and seminars on "youth trends," contact work will tell you what is going on with young people. You will be privy to the real hurts and joys of the people who walk through your door week after week. Suddenly, planning the rest of your program becomes much easier and more effective.

Here are a few ideas that are proven winners when it comes to letting young people know that you care about them.

Contact Work

How do you go about establishing significant relationships with young people? One of the most effective ways I know is "contact work."

- Contact work is personal. It says "I care about you" face to face, away from the preplanned program.
- Contact work is intentional. It's always wonderful to find yourself alone with a young person or two. Contact work seeks to create those opportunities.
- Contact work is accessible. The responsibility of communicating "I care about you"

Mutual Interests

The easiest contact work revolves around mutual interests. Activities like racquetball, golf, biking, photography, shopping, concerts, movies, record hunting, and going to the gym all qualify. Some mutual interests need to be cultivated. One advisor I know purchased an old car and invited a couple of guys to help him restore it. They had a whole summer of fun and quality contact time. The car looked pretty good too! That is an extreme example. Good contact work doesn't need to be that involved. Look to your own special interests and see where you might be able to use them as a bridge for establishing contact.

School Campus

Another type of contact work involves getting on the school campus. This is where young people spend more time and energy than anywhere else next to home, and school is often more influential. Why not put yourself in their world for a while? Going to athletic events, plays, graduations, and competitions lets young people know that they are important to you for more than the chair they fill at church. Going to events that young people participate in clearly communicates your care. Some people's schedules allow them to go on campus to share an occasional lunch, speak to a class, or volunteer as a tutor, assistant coach, or even in the PTA.

Fast Food

One of my favorite contact activities is simply taking young people out for a meal at a fast food restaurant. Who could resist? (No one has!) A beverage and the easy atmosphere at a fast food restaurant have set the stage for some fantastic discussions. We have talked about everything from school, movies, videos, and parents to suicide, sexuality, and faith (or lack of it). "Going out for a Coke" has become almost an institution at some congregations.

Telephone

Time is limited, of course, and you can't be with everyone all the time. There are ways of making contact without "being there." The telephone is a great tool for contact work, and you are probably using it already. Try adding a "contact log." Each young person gets a separate page in the log, and each time we talk, important details (everything from upcoming math tests to custody hearing times) are recorded with the date of the call. The next time we talk, I am able to refer back to our last conversation and the person knows he or

she is important. It takes a lot of discipline and effort to keep a contact log going, but all you need, to know it is all worth it, is the sound of appreciation in someone's voice because you remembered. Besides that, it makes a great prayer list.

Mail

Everyone likes to get mail, especially young people. Birthdays, confirmations, and graduations are natural excuses for a quick note. Young people who are away at school feel very cared for when they get a postcard from home (other than Mom's!). Sometimes there are things you want to express to someone, but there never seems to be the right time or place to say it. Letters and e-mail are perfect medium for that kind of contact.

"Walls of Fame"

All these are ideas to get you into the youth world. Try getting young people into your world by making yourself and the congregation more accessible. One day I got tired of looking at the planning calendars and calling lists on my office walls. I took them all down and began covering my walls with pictures of our young people and their activities. I must have two hundred pictures now on my "Walls of Fame," and young people are always dropping by to see if there are any new pictures and to look at old ones of themselves. Besides being a lively place to work, my office has also become a great point of contact.

Those are just a few suggestions. You probably could come up with as many ideas of your own. Contact work is an art. It takes awhile to find the best approach so that your personality and your unique style of ministry come through. Take the time to develop it. It's the most effective way I know to minister to the needs of young people and let them know they are valued.

Beginnings: How to Start a Youth Group¹¹

"We must never underestimate the importance of beginnings; for beginnings shape directions, and directions shape lives. All too often we overlook beginnings as though they were nothing, for beginnings are not history but potential."

—New Covenant Community

Beginnings are turning points in people's lives. They are often emotional, partly because beginnings are points where the unknown is what is coming. In the life of a youth group, two types of beginnings exist: beginning something new and beginning again from something old.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2). The biblical creation story is a good example of beginning something new. God creates something out of nothing. As co-creators with God, we can start a youth group where one was not before. Out of the void comes youth ministries in your local congregation.

The other type of beginning comes out of perhaps only a temporary lull, not a void. Youth ministries can get a fresh start after an old program has died away. The group may be small or may no longer exist. This kind of beginning is somewhat like the story of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32). A tiny seed of commitment has the potential to grow into a group that can meet the needs of many people.

Watch It Grow

You have been asked to lead a youth group. What does that mean? By now you probably have heard lots of things about fun and community and ministry. Here are some suggestions

about what to do to help your group get started and grow in the first six months.

Month One

- Compile address lists.
- Write letters of introduction, one to parents and one to young people.
- Call each young person on the phone.
- Find curriculum and resources at your congregation.
- Visit the senior high Christian education classes.
- Talk with your clergy and Christian education coordinator.
- Announce a get-together for parents and young people in the bulletin.

Month Two

- Use the get-together as a planning meeting for youth and parents.
- Choose planning team members.
- Pick a time and place for weekly youth group meetings.
- Decide whether to combine or separate junior and senior highs.
- Collect resource material.
- Plan a planning retreat.

Month Three

- Mail out first issue of the newsletter.
- Begin planning team meetings.

- Write another letter to parents for update.
- Make a time line for the next three months.
- Put together an interest survey.

Month Four

- Begin weekly meetings of the youth group.
- Have the young people on the planning team report to session.
- Meet one-on-one with each young person for feedback and evaluation.
- Update the mailing list.

Month Five

- Find ways to involve young people in congregational worship.
- Have the planning retreat for all young people and advisors.
- Look for diocesan and provincial events that involve youth.

Month Six

- Meet in a brainstorming session to plan for the next six months.
- Suggest rotation in planning team members.
- Have the young people write an article for the newsletter.
- Dream with the planning team at their next meeting.

How Are You Doing?

The first six months of a program will get mixed reviews, but it is very important to be in tune with what is going on. That means continuous planning, doing, and evaluating. Ideally, this should happen all the time, yet in the beginning it may mean a matter of life or death for the program.

Even if you say “Don’t ask” in one area of your program, the other areas may be doing fine. All parts of the body do not grow at the same speed, so don’t be surprised at your group’s growing pains.

The reason for evaluating — asking “How are you doing?” — is certainly not to make anyone feel bad about the areas of youth ministries in your congregation that are not going so well. It is to help young people and adults be aware of places where energy needs to be spent. In the process, commitment to the group and to its purpose should develop. Joint ownership and responsibility for what happens will make a better group.

Here are some suggestions as to how they you can develop a program in relational youth ministries. You will have plenty of other ideas and ways that you can evaluate your program.

Call to Discipleship

- Bible study
- Adopt a grandparent
- Discussion on prayer
- Study about the disciples
- “Bring a friend” outing

Respond to the Needs

- Interest survey
- Adding youth on planning team
- Group brainstorming sessions

Partnership

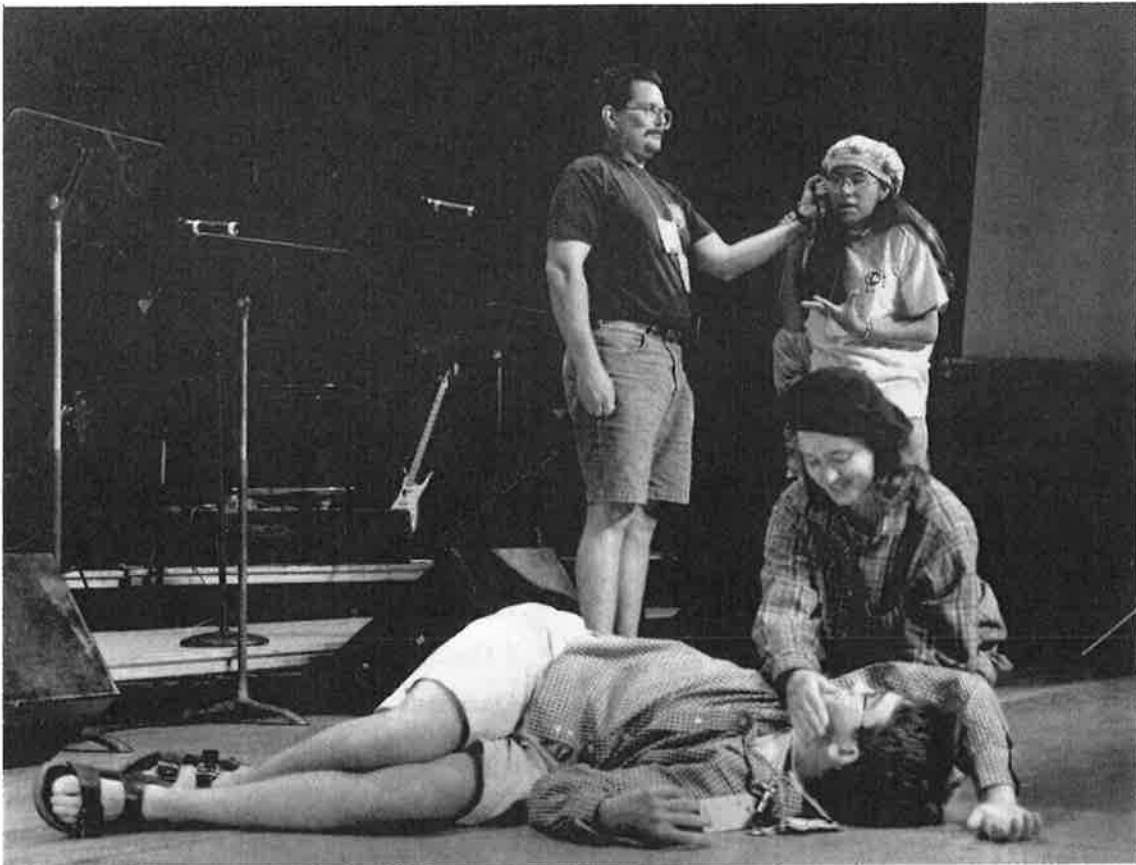
- Youth ministries planning team
- Cluster congregations
- Painting the youth group room
- Social action projects and mission projects

Be Connected

- Participation in worship leadership
- Intergenerational events
- diocesan and provincial events
- participation in the national Episcopal Youth Event
- Ecumenical youth events
- Support the International Anglican Youth Network
- Episcopal camps and conference centers

Be Inclusive

- Cultural diversity programs and training
- “Companion” youth groups
- Including parents in the planning and dreaming



Suggestions for Meetings

The following are some starters for five sessions as the group is beginning. Each meeting plan has suggestions for planning and carrying through activities related to relational youth ministries. As you adapt these ideas for your group, remember to keep in mind the size, age, and interests of the young people in your particular congregation. Add your own ideas too!

Session 1: Who Am I? Who Are We?

Objectives: To hold a meeting for introductions and discussions of who each person is, as an individual and as a member of a group. Emphasize creating things that represent each person's life story.

Materials: Lunch-size paper bags, scissors, old magazines, construction paper, colored pens, glue, instant-print camera and film, large sheet of butcher paper.

Introduction Games: See the "Games" article in this handbook.

Activity: Take instant-print pictures of people as they arrive and post them on the butcher paper. Next to their pictures have people write their names and their favorite something (such as favorite candy bar, food, TV show, musician, place, or pet).

Activity: Life in a Paper Bag. Give each person a lunch sack and a pair of scissors. Seat the group so that the stack of magazines, construction paper, pens, and glue are in the center of the work space. (If a large table is not available, the floor will do nicely.) Next, tell everyone that the bag is who they are and they are to put on the outside whatever they wish to say about themselves that they are willing to share with the group. On the inside, they are to put their more secret selves, the parts that are not so easy to share with new friends. Be sure everyone

knows that these are for their own expression and they will only share one thing from the inside of the bag with one other person after they are through. Anything goes, as far as what can be cut out, drawn, glued, and colored.

After the group finishes creating "Life in a Paper Bag," break into pairs and share one item from the inside of the bag. Allow some time for this and then get back together as a group to discuss the feelings about sharing with new people.

Session 2: Bible Study on Covenant

Objectives: To know the Old Testament and New Testament stories of covenant; to discuss covenant with God and one another in one's own terms; to write a covenant for the group.

Scripture:

- Genesis 9:8-17
- Genesis 17:1-8
- Exodus 3:1-12
- Matthew 26:26-29
- Mark 14:22-25
- Luke 22:17-19
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Questions (to get a discussion going): What is a covenant? What kinds of covenants do people make with each other? What covenants does God make with the people in the biblical stories? Do the people promise something in return? What happens when covenants are broken or people do not keep their part?

Activity: Write a covenant for the group. This may include expectations for behavior, attendance, commitment, responsibilities, and

other items the group decides are important. Each person can make a personal promise to keep the covenant, or the group might want to do this as a whole. Try to keep the focus away from a reward/punishment syndrome for keeping the covenant.

Session 3: Open House

Objectives: To provide an informal setting for parents, friends, and youth to see what is happening at their congregation in youth ministries. Group building and sharing time in the larger congregational family should happen.

- Ideas
- Pot-luck meal
- Games
- Speaker
- Variety show
- Show and Tell about family
- Movie
- Discussion
- Music
- Sign-ups for planning team
- Christian education information

Activity: Tell everyone ahead of time to bring a baby picture to share with the group. Take instant-print pictures of each person as

they arrive, if you do not already have them from the first session. Try to match the baby pictures with the instant-print pictures.

Session 4: Bring-a-Friend Night (Include All Young People)

Objectives: To practice communication skills and spend time with new people.

Group Games: Pictionary, Scruples

Simulation Game: Activity: Tell Me How to Make a Sundae (peanut butter and jelly sandwich, etc.) Divide the group into pairs. Have the chosen food placed where it is available to all. One person is the maker and the other gives directions. The direction giver is the only one who may talk. The maker must do exactly what is said. See what happens as one person in each pair makes the snack. Follow up by discussing how communication affects the outcome of situations.

Session 5: Planning Retreat or Lock-In

Objectives: To provide a planning time for the entire youth group to set goals, dream, brainstorm, talk, share, worship, and be away together.

Ideas: See "Ideas for Lock-Ins, Retreats, and Conferences" on p. 94 in this handbook for suggestions.

In Search of the Small Group¹²

Have you seen one anywhere? They are a delicate species that can hide easily but, once discovered, can show you marvelous treasures of love. They live in close community and often share activities with other small groups in the same neighborhood.

Do you know the kind I mean? Small groups range in size from two to ten. This size has possibilities for intimate discussion, personal sharing, and one-on-one interaction between young people and adults.

Most Episcopal congregations are small, so it would follow that many of our youth groups are small as well. These groups must be tended carefully and nurtured so that all their potential can be realized.

As for the young people in these groups, you can know them well and share their joys and fears. Become their friend, and they will become yours.

If you are on a journey with a small group, read on!

A small group has unique qualities and possibilities for ministry on an individual basis. You can have relationships that develop from a sense of community that would not be possible with larger numbers. It doesn't matter whether your group is small because of declining church membership, a transition time, building a new congregation, or a limited number of young people; you all share in an exciting ministry with one another.

Creativity and spontaneity keep small groups going. As in all groups, planning is vital, and exploring options allows many forms of ministry to take place. In your small youth group, individual needs become apparent, community with the whole congregation can be encouraged, and a setting exists where a relational style of ministry can come alive.

A philosophy of youth ministries indepen-

dent of size enables small groups to be valuable and important. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

The needs of a group of two to ten people are based on where the individuals are in their lives—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. To discover the needs of the members in your group, listen. Watch for topics that continually arise in conversation. Better yet, ask questions. Young people and adults in open dialogue about concerns and issues are partnership in action. Interest surveys and questionnaires are also good methods. Sometimes such a small number will create an atmosphere of closeness that is intimidating for them as well as for you, the leader. Be sensitive to those needs and keep communication open.

A small youth group can become involved in the whole congregation in many ways. You all can:

- Participate on congregational committees
- Do social action projects in the neighboring community
- Adopt senior members of the congregation and visit them regularly
- Participate in worship as readers and liturgists
- Help teach in the Christian education program
- Volunteer in the nursery

Relationships are the core of your ministry. The fewer there are of you, the more time you can spend individually with each one. Treasure them and nurture them!

Made to Size: Altering Resources to Fit

There is no perfect recipe for youth ministries. There are only guides and suggestions on how youth ministries works in other congregations. All resources will need to be adapted to the individual needs of the congregation.

Activities should be for shorter periods of time. Smaller groups can have a difficult time with discussions. A large amount of individual energy is used when there are only a few people. Direct questions to particular people and encourage answers that are more than yes or no responses. Allow for and expect silence. Thinking and feeling may take place more when there are fewer words. Don't avoid discussion, just be sure to balance with other types of activity.

Group games will need some adapting. I have yet to find one single resource that is specifically for very small groups, but most recreation books have sections for small groups. Many times merely a change in the rules will make a game for a big group work for a small one. One of the best times we had in our youth group was playing makeshift badminton with only four people.

Singing is a beautiful way to share in the worship and praise of God. Some young people are not very comfortable with their own voices and therefore feel self-conscious in a small group. If the young people in your group want to sing, encourage them. If not, find other ways to build community and worship God.

How to Start and Where to Go

Ask questions. Talk to the young people and see what they are thinking about the programs in your congregation. Ask parents, friends, and ministers about the purpose and direction youth ministries will take in your congregation. Gather information and resources from your congregation, diocese, and province. Refer to "Places to Find Support," section in this handbook for more questions and answers.

Discover the needs. Who are the young people in your congregation and community and what are their needs and desires? Youth

ministries that includes the ideas of young people is more complete.

Find support. Especially with small numbers the feeling of being alone is common. Your support will come in encouragement from the clergy and vestry, time spent by volunteers, money from the budget, and energy from excited young people. Other people involved in youth ministries can also give you ideas and support. Seek them out!

Investigate your options. This is really where your creativity comes in. For groups that include a wide range of ages, junior high and senior high students can be combined into one group, if you need to do so. I have enjoyed working with this combination, with its unique dynamics, problems, and possibilities. Try it!

Starting interest groups to look more closely at particular issues or participate in various activities is another alternative. Creative thinking can lead to peacemaking studies, hunger task forces, drug abuse awareness programs, or jogging groups, softball teams, and progressive dinners. With smaller groups the interest or activity groups may be the core of the program. Combining the young people with adults in one program can happen in groups of this type. No matter what kind of program you choose, do it with the love, hope, and faith of Christ.

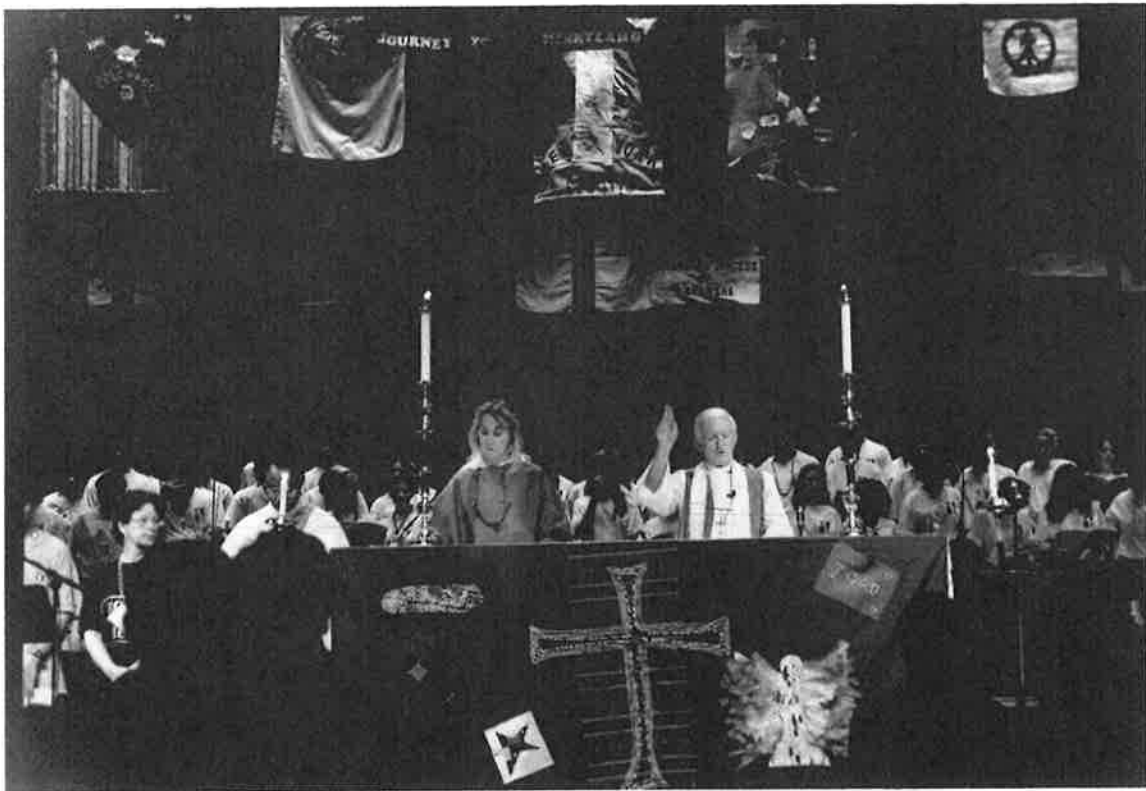
Cluster groups, where two or more youth groups meet together, is a way for young people to meet in larger community settings. Horizons are broadened as young people share their interests and backgrounds. Leaders can also pool resources and share responsibilities when they are involved in cluster groups. Some clusters meet regularly on a weekly basis, while others are scheduled periodically in addition to congregational group meetings.

Be creative and have fun. Take the resources you have access to and use them. Dated material can still speak to youth today when it is introduced in interesting new ways. Make up your own ideas and encourage the young people to add their own.

The small youth group is alive and well in the Episcopal Church. Take care of it, nurture it, and keep the young people and adults active in youth ministries by encouraging groups even when there are only "two or three together."

Part IV

Study and Worship



Leading Bible Study¹³

One of our primary aims in youth ministries is to help young people uncover truth from God's word. Frequently, however, we feel unqualified to teach the Bible to others. We say things to ourselves like, "I don't know much about the Bible myself," or "I've never been to a seminary." Take heart. You don't need to be a theologian to lead effective, exciting Bible studies.

In our ministry with young people, it is important to integrate Bible study with the total youth ministries program. This is not to say that you necessarily need to have a Bible-centered group discussion while playing miniature golf, but programming for intentional Bible study is fundamental. Bible study can be an integral part of weekly fellowship programs and Christian education. In addition, many groups have a specialized Bible study for particular ages (e.g., senior Bible study) or for any in the group who are interested in deeper study.

One of the challenges we face is the reputation of Bible study as "boring," "irrelevant," or "hard to understand." It is our responsibility to present these studies in creative, exciting, and relevant ways. Bible study doesn't happen in a vacuum; it is part of life, and we can help young people integrate God's word into their lives. We must remember that we are in a sense "translators" of the Bible—helping to put the words of Scripture into the language of young people.

The style of Bible study that generally works best is called "inductive" or "inclusive." This method of study involves the students in the learning through discussion, reflection, or creative projects. The purpose of this method is for each person to discover what the Scriptures say, what they mean, and how they can be applied in his or her life. As you prepare for this type of study, you will not ask the question,

"What will I say to the group about love in 1 Corinthians 13?" Rather, you will ask yourself, "What will we as a group do about love in 1 Corinthians 13?" This question allows you to think of learning activities that will open the Scripture to the group. The group members are then responsible for their own learning. The role of the leader is not "teacher," but convener and guide. You are then free from the responsibilities of doing all the talking and having all the "answers."

Fundamentally, an inductive Bible study asks four questions:

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does it mean
3. What does it mean to me?
4. How can I apply this in my life?

All the discussion questions and learning activities you develop for each particular study will follow these four questions. The key to stimulating Bible study is finding creative ways to ask these questions.

Question 1: What Does This Passage Say?

This is the question of facts. It is important to uncover what is actually being said, who said it, where it was said, when it was said, and so on, before dealing with questions of interpretation and application. Here are a few suggestions of ways to ask this question.

- Paraphrase the text; have participants write the passage in their own words.
- Role-play; have members of the group act out the story or action in the text.

- Give each person a handout with questions like (using Hebrews 11 as an example), “What does the author say faith is in verse 1?” “What was Noah’s faithful act according to verse 7?” “What are the names of the people the author mentions in this chapter who acted in faith?”
- Have each person write a “news release” describing the events that took place in the text.
- Create a video, slide show, or photo collage that tells the story of the text.

Question 2: What Does It Mean?

This is a question of interpretation. More specifically, this question deals with interpretation within the original context of the passage. Here the group will go beyond the who/what/when questions and ask “Why?” or “How?”

- On a handout, ask questions like (using Hebrews 11 as an example again), “What does ‘being sure of what we hope for’ in verse 1 (NIV) mean?” “Why do you think it was an act of faith for Noah to build the ark?” “Do you think it was easy for all these people to be faithful? Why?”
- Write a poem from the perspective of one of the characters about how it felt to be that person.
- Discuss questions beginning with words like “What does it mean?” or “How?” or “Why?”
- Have role players answer questions about the character they portrayed, like “Why did you . . . ?” or “What did you mean when you said . . . ?”
- Use Bible dictionaries or commentaries to help understand what something might have meant in that culture. Ask your clergyperson for help in finding and using these resources.

Question 3: What Does It Mean to Me?

This question is intended to cause the group to interact with the text on a contemporary and personal level. This part of the study brings the words of Scripture home, finding meaning and understanding as the Bible speaks to each of us.

- Have each person choose which person in the text he or she relates to the most. Discuss why that person was chosen.
- Clip pictures from magazines that look like “peacemaking” or “love,” for example. Have each person explain the reason for choosing the pictures.
- Role-play a “modern version” of the story that the group creates.
- On a handout, ask questions like (still using Hebrews 11 as an example), “Do you agree with the definition of ‘faith’ in verse 1? Why or why not?” “If you were used as an example of faith, like Sarah or Abraham, what would the author say about you?”
- Using a tape recorder, interview group members about what this Scripture means to them.

Question 4: How Can I Apply This in My Life?

Of the four questions, this is the one most frequently overlooked. Yet this question is perhaps the most important because it takes “knowledge” and puts it into practical form. It is our responsibility to help young people understand Scripture so that it can be life changing.

- Direct experience. After studying about “service,” do a service project. After studying about “love,” make and send valentines to shut-ins.
- Simulation games. Second only to actual experience, a simulation game draws participants into a situation that appears to be real but is not.

- On a handout, ask questions like (using Hebrews 11 as a final example), “What are some things standing in the way of your having deeper faith?” “What three things can you do this week to grow in your faith?” “How can this group help you grow in your faith?”
- As a group, make a symbol that reflects what you’ve learned: for example, banners, posters, collages, special crosses.

- Divide into pairs or small groups, share with one another ways you can apply what you’ve studied, then pray for each other.

These four questions are the foundation for inductive Bible study. However, it is your creativity and relationships with young people that will make your Bible studies come alive. Most important, remember that we truly are inadequate to teach God’s word. But that is good, because we must then trust in God to speak to us and through us.



Sample Bible Studies

Get a Piece of the Rock (Matt. 7:24–27)

1. Engager: Building Pyramids
Divide into groups of three, six, or ten. Each group will build human pyramids (on hands and knees) and then do tricks while in pyramid formation, as instructed by the leader. Have the groups turn completely around, walk from a starting line across a finish line, lift up one arm and hold the pyramid for 20 seconds. Remember, all of this is to be done while in pyramids.
2. Read Matthew 7:24–27.
3. Give each person a handout with the following questions on it. Have them refer to the text and write responses to the questions on their own.
 - Where did the wise person build the house? What happened to it?
 - Where did the foolish person build the house? What happened to it?
 - What do you think the rock symbolizes?
 - What do you think the sand symbolizes?
 - What does it mean for you to “build your life on the solid rock”?
 - What are some of the “sandy” foundations in your life?
 - Write a prayer to God confessing the “sandy” places and asking for strength to build upon the solid rock, putting God’s word into action.
4. Share responses in groups of three to six.

5. Together, brainstorm ways that your group can put God’s word into practice. Select at least one of the suggestions and do it together at your next meeting.
6. Close with prayer.

Join Together for Peace (Matt. 5:9; Eph. 4:25–32)

1. Engager: What does peace look like?
Before the meeting, hang ten to fifteen different pictures of scenery, animals, people, just about anything. National Geographic magazine is a good place to get them. Instruct the group to walk around the room and find the picture that says something about peace to them. Ask each person to share which picture he or she chose and why.
2. Read Matthew 5:9 and Ephesians 4:25–32.
3. Discuss the following questions:
 - What is a “peacemaker”?
 - What do you think the verses from Ephesians have to do with making peace?
 - What are some specific things you can do in your life to bring peace to yourself, your family, your friends, our community, our nation, our world? (Just get a few ideas out; this is to generate thinking for the activity.)
4. Activity: Peace Chain
Making a peace chain symbolizes that when we put our ideas and actions together, we can do great things for peace.

Before the meeting, gather together a large stack of construction paper strips (1½ by 11 inches), marking pens, and a stapler. Instruct the group to think of as many specific things as they can that they can do for peace. Write the idea on a strip of paper (one idea per strip), loop it through another loop, and staple it to form a link

in a paper chain. See how long you can make the chain.

5. Close with a few thoughts on how each of us are peacemakers. As a group, pray for peace.
6. Present your peace chain to the congregation in the next worship service.



Exploring Prayer and Worship¹⁴

The term "youth ministries" usually creates images of high-energy activities or probing discussion and study. However, youth ministries is enriched and deepened when prayer and worship are brought into the youth program and given equal status with activities and study. Exploring prayer enhances young people's involvement in the total experience of faith as they develop their relationship and deepen their communication with God. Having young people lead and participate in worship services involves them in the total life of the community of faith.

While it is true that including prayer and worship in youth ministries helps develop a well-rounded youth program, young people will need some help and direction as they explore these topics. It is quite common to discover that many young people are illiterate in the language of faith and prayer. This is reflected in the dead silence that often follows the request for an opening prayer at a meeting or function. Since many adults share this lack of ease with public prayer, a helpful approach is to have a training program or educational series for parents that provides resources and ideas on how to engage families in prayer and worship at home. It is important to stress the value of having families express their faith together. A young person's faith development is greatly enhanced if he or she is encouraged to share and express faith at home as well as at church. The first task is to help young people become comfortable with the act and purpose of prayer.

Modeling

An easy atmosphere with prayer starts with leaders who are comfortable about praying with the group. As leaders, spend some time

reflecting on your beliefs about prayer and what role prayer plays in your life. Do you feel comfortable leading in prayer, or are you constantly feeling that you never use just the right words? One of the best learning experiences I had with prayer as a teenager was listening to an adult camp counselor share a prayer in language that was natural and easy to understand and that reflected the speech of our age group. Her prayer helped me realize that God could understand my language and listen to my thoughts and not just those thoughts that were eloquently expressed by adults. Modeling ease with prayer in contemporary and natural language will encourage young people to feel relaxed about prayer.

Make sure that when the group is together, prayer and worship are an integral part of your program. Open and close youth meetings and gatherings with prayer. An example of a non-threatening approach to group prayer is to have the group hold hands in a circle and offer one-word or sentence prayers. The leader starts the prayer and squeezes the hand of the person on his or her left to pass the prayer around the circle clockwise. If someone chooses not to pray, he or she simply squeezes the next person's hand to keep the prayer going until it reaches the leader, who then closes the prayer.

Another way to introduce prayer is to have the group members share their concerns so that a list can be compiled. The leader then features those concerns in a simple prayer that he or she offers for the first few weeks until a youth member feels comfortable with leading the prayer.

Retreats

Retreats provide an excellent opportunity to involve young people in worship. Each retreat

should include a closing worship service that involves the young people and relies on their ideas and leadership. The relaxed atmosphere of a retreat can help young people feel comfortable with worship while still honoring its special and sacred nature. Ask for two or three group members to plan worship as part of the retreat design team. Set aside time on the retreat schedule for them to plan the service. The closing service should reflect the theme of the retreat with prayers that include the joys and concerns that were a part of the weekend or overnight. The meditation can be a simple summary of the theme, tying together the biblical passages and the issues raised during the retreat. Use skits or act out a biblical passage enhance the message of the meditation.

One particular idea that has worked well on retreats is to have the young people draw names of "secret pals" on the first night of the retreat. During the time for the offering in the service, the young people offer to share one special quality that their secret pal brought to the retreat. In addition to sharing their observations, the secret pals can exchange hand-made crosses that are constructed with materials found in the natural retreat setting. This activity brings young people together in the context of a worship service and creates an atmosphere for sharing communion, if that is a part of the retreat design.

Worship

Another valuable experience is to have young people lead and participate in worship services with the congregation. It is important for young people to learn to participate in a service and to become involved in the total life of the community of faith so that youth ministries does not become a segregated program that only does "youth stuff." Leaders should look for opportunities to involve young people in Sunday morning worship services and special services. Present your goals for youth participation in worship to the worship committee of your congregation so that the committee can support and encourage that aspect of your program.

A good way to start introducing young people in worship services is to have them read Scripture and lead prayers. It is essential whenever young people lead worship that leaders schedule practice time in the sanctuary with the congregation's public-address system. To build confidence about their role as worship leaders, participants must be well prepared. This also ensures a positive reception on the part of the congregation. The most common problem for young readers is the volume and speed of the speech. Type out the reading, mark the places to pause and slow down, and underline words for emphasis.

Youth Sunday

Have a Sunday service of worship developed, planned, and led entirely by young people. All over the country, these Youth Sundays are high points in the church year. Each year, the International Anglican Youth Network sets aside the Sunday before Advent I, as Anglican Youth Sunday, and provides resources for use in Episcopal congregations.¹⁵ But whenever your congregation chooses to celebrate Anglican Youth Sunday, young people are capable of sharing their faith in insightful and meaningful ways; it just takes some organizing and planning to tap the potential and channel the energy so that Youth Sunday can be a time to glorify God with the family of faith.

Begin preparing for a Youth Sunday by studying the meaning and structure of your worship service. If the group understands the purpose of the different elements of the service, it will enhance their learning experience as well as add depth and insight to what they design and create. It would also be helpful if the pastor or worship committee explained the particular order and elements of your congregation's worship.

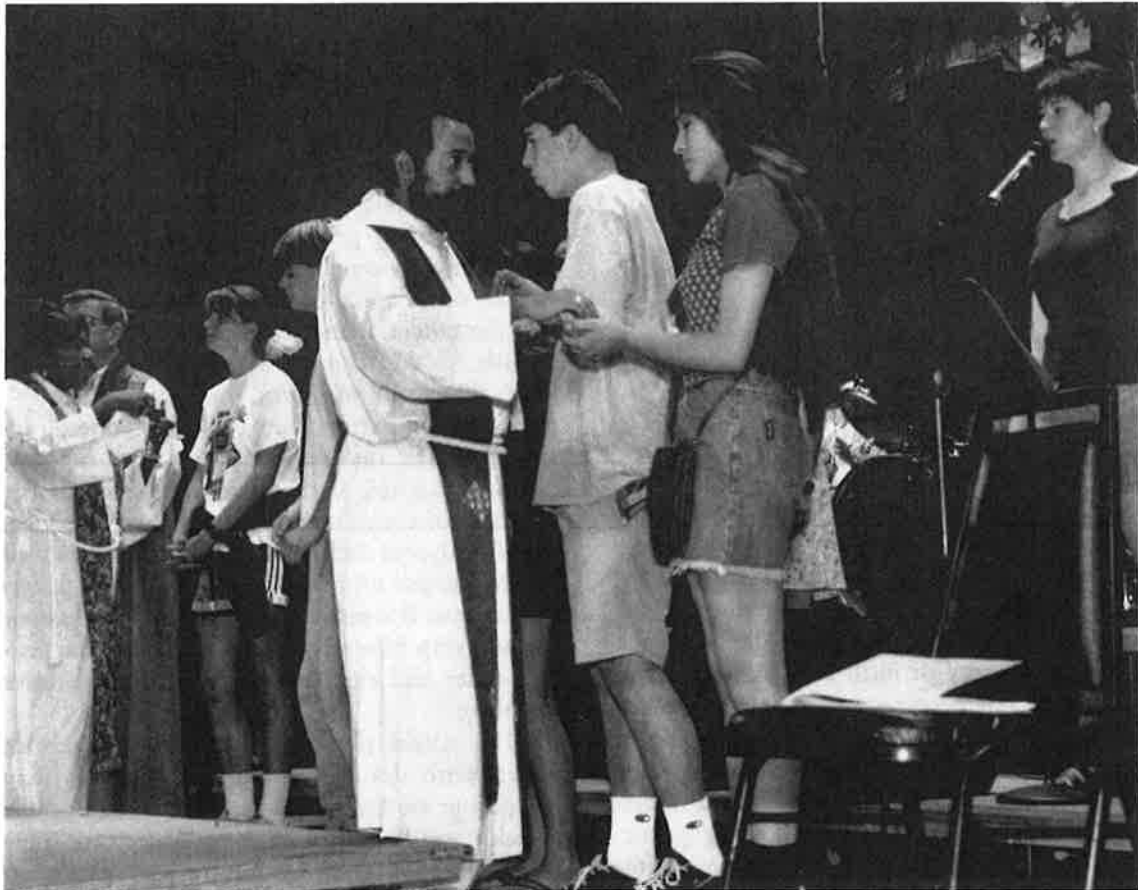
The actual planning for the youth service starts with developing a theme. Themes may come out of the church year calendars or the weekly readings, called a lectionary, or they may be determined by the group. Specific issues such as world hunger or peacemaking can provide meaningful themes. Another way to generate your theme is to consider a more

general topic, such as the congregation as a caring community of faith. Biblical passages could also lead to focusing on a central theme. For example, if the New Testament lesson was the parable of the prodigal son, the theme could be on receiving and sharing forgiveness.

After the theme is in place, the entire group can begin to work on the different parts of the service. This process provides an excellent opportunity to involve all the members of your group. There are many different types of tasks, so that if someone is uncomfortable speaking, he or she might design a bulletin cover or banner or choose hymns and participate in the music portion of the service. Encourage the young people to be creative. Instead of having

one speaker deliver a fifteen- or twenty-minute sermon, that portion of the service could feature three speakers reflecting on different parts of the theme, or a skit or dramatic reading, or a dance and clowning. These forms are creative approaches that still respect the dignity and sacred nature of worship.

One of the most important aspects of exploring prayer and worship with young people is to enjoy the process! It is indeed a joy and a blessing to share and grow with them as they express their faith. Though there are details and arrangements that will need your attention, there will also surely be profound moments when you will be touched and moved by their insight and depth.



Planning a Worship Service with Young People

A surprising degree of flexibility can be found within the services of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Consult with your clergyperson about the proper forms of worship for various occasions, particularly if you are planning a Youth Sunday for the entire congregation. Listed below are simple formats to assist you in working with young people as they create prayers and homilies that express their concerns in their own language.¹⁶

Writing a Prayer or Confession

1. List the ways we act that demonstrate how we fall short of God's hope that we will be caring people; for example:
 - Gossiping
 - Cheating
 - Hurting others
 - Not helping when we could
2. List the reasons that we act that way; for example:
 - We think of ourselves more than others.
 - We listen to others rather than follow God.
3. How can God help us?
4. After writing out these ideas, try to compose a prayer by putting the responses into sentence form; for example:

God, who loves us, forgive us when we think of ourselves more than others [refer to second list]. Sometimes we [refer to first list]. It is often easy to listen to others rather than you. Help us to [refer to third list].

Writing a Statement of Faith

Keeping in mind the theme and emphasis of the service, what do you believe about:

1. God
 - In terms of creation
 - In terms of provider
 - In terms of divine qualities
2. Jesus Christ
 - In terms of his life and activities, especially relating to the theme of the service
 - In terms of what he taught us
3. Holy Spirit
 - In terms of how we receive power through the Spirit
 - In terms of how the Spirit leads us
4. The church
 - In terms of what it does
 - In terms of why it is important
5. Being disciples
 - How do we respond to God?
 - How does God help us?

Writing the Prayers of the People

1. List attributes of God and ways to address God.
2. List the areas of our lives in which we are thankful to God.
3. List the concerns in the life of our church and, after each concern, list how God can help.

4. List some world concerns. What do we believe about God that gives us hope in a troubled world?
5. What do we need to focus on as we begin another week?

Put your responses in sentence form, using smooth transitions and addressing God before each new section.

Developing a Homily

1. Think of key words that relate to your theme.
2. Look up the words in a Bible dictionary. Did you find any new insights from the definitions?

3. Look up the key words in a concordance. Look up Scriptures indicated next to the words and read them. Choose two Scripture passages that match your theme and have potential for a dialogue or sermon or drama.
4. Is there any recurring word, phrase, or concept in any of the Bible passages?
5. What do we learn about God in these passages?
6. How does this relate to our daily life? What are some examples?
7. Are there personal experiences you could relate?



The Disciplines of Meditation, Prayer, and Journaling¹⁷

You have just arrived to meet with your young people, a bit late and somewhat rushed. To increase your anxiety, the meeting place is chaotic: chairs must be arranged, trash needs to be picked up. You get the group to help set up the place and make it neater. It is time to begin. What do you do? Of course, start with prayer. You ask for a volunteer to open with prayer. And now we can begin.

My hunch is that this scenario is not an uncommon one. More often than not, prayer is used more as a ritual than as an act of spiritual nurture.

We will discuss the disciplines of meditation, prayer, and journaling. These disciplines are not spiritual luxuries, they are vital to nurturing and enabling one another on our journeys. They are not methods of magic, they are gifts of growth, strength, and vision. I hope the following ideas will help to preserve meditation, prayer, and journaling and encourage young people to experience their discipleship fully.

Meditation: The Discipline of the Mind

What Is It?

Meditation is a discipline that probably originated when humans found the need to experience silence in their minds rather than clutter. Meditation means many things to many people, depending on individual culture, religious tradition, and psychological orientation.

The original and basic aim of meditation is enlightenment. By means of a conscious mental process, the meditator empties the mind of all present thoughts (shoulds, oughts, demands)

and focuses on replenishing and nurturing the mind with the light of the Divine.

Why?

In Matthew 12:43–45 a parable is told about man who was possessed with an evil spirit. Although the evil spirit left, it returned later to the same person, after having had a difficult time finding a new environment. When the evil spirit returned, it found the same person with a mind now cleaned and organized, yet empty. The spirit rested once again with him and soon brought along seven other evil spirits. Meditation is useless if its aim is only to empty the mind and not replenish it. For a Christian, the discipline of meditation is not only to let go but also to receive the strength, nurture, and vision to live in the world.

Who Can Do Meditation?

Meditation is the one common practice shared by all major religions. It is available alike to the agnostic, unbeliever, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, and Christian. Meditation is for the person who desires to be enlightened and strengthened in a relationship with the Creator.

When?

Meditation is a discipline that demands a commitment to consistency. It may take the form of ten minutes of repeating a mantra, thirty minutes of yoga, or thirty minutes of focusing on an icon or cross. The element of consistency is required.

Ideas to Incorporate into Youth Ministries

- Create a time of silence for some guided meditation or centering when beginning or ending time with your youth group.
- Incorporate a time for meditation in a retreat.
- Use the practice of breathing slowly and steadily as a way to help young people center before a devotional.
- Encourage young people to read about the discipline of meditation.
- Use candles in your time of silence.

Prayer: Discipline of the Soul

What Is It?

Whereas meditation is available to the agnostic and unbeliever, prayer is unique in that it demands the element of faith: faith in God.

Why?

As Christians, we have been taught the need to pray by Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. The New Testament writers repeatedly tell us of occasions and events where prayer was practiced and taught by Jesus: in the midst of breaking bread, healing persons, as a request of the disciples, with acts of forgiveness. We pray not only because we were taught but because it is our active communication with the One who is our source of life, vision, calling, and strength.

Who and When?

Because the discipline of prayer will lead us not only to our heart but also to the heart of God, it is important to pray at a time and place when we are free to speak to God without interruptions or anxieties and can "be still and know who God is." Both individual prayer and community prayer are important to our lives of faith. We are called not only to be individuals of faith but to be a collective body, who need one another for the living

of these days. We come to God individually or as a group, bringing our prayers of adoration, petition, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession. We pray collectively in worship, when sharing meals, in preparation for exams, in thanksgiving for birthdays, graduation, and rites of passage, and when interceding for those experiencing times of pain, sadness, and grief.

Where?

We pray in community gatherings; in hospitals, schools, jails, bedrooms, chapels, open fields, valleys, cities, on mountaintops and under trees; in kitchens, parish houses, dorm rooms, cars, ballparks, and offices-wherever the presence of God is known, and that is everywhere, yes, everywhere.

Ideas to Incorporate into Youth Ministries

- Hold a candlelight vigil for peace, have a hunger walk, or support a social justice issue.
- Write litanies and prayers to be included in the bulletin.
- Have young people examine prayers from various traditions (e.g., Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Desert Fathers, prayers from Anglican sources).
- Include prayer during a time of reconciliation when there has been a disagreement or friction between People.

Journaling: Discipline of the Heart

What Is It?

Journaling is a time when we record experiences, ideas, or reflections for private use. It is a gift we give ourselves. The writings might be intense, jovial, detailed, or general, in the form of prose, poetry, or sketches. Whatever the style, it is your writing for your own use. It is a history of your heart, your soul, and your mind. No one will question it, no one will criticize it, no one will "should on it." because it is your gift to yourself.

Where and When?

There are no time demands on a journal. However, the more consistent you are with your journal keeping, the more you become aware of yourself and your life. Like any discipline, it must be done with deliberation. Pick a time and place when you will not be distracted or disturbed. Remember, this is your time with yourself.

How?

You decide. Perhaps it will be in the form of a poem, a letter, or a drawing. The unique element about journaling is that it is for private use. Journaling is an expression of what becomes part of our sacred ground. This expression can be positive or negative, fantasy or reality. Whatever it is, it is yours.

Ideas to Incorporate into Youth Ministries

- During times of retreat, provide time for journal writing.
- Read journal entries of early and contemporary spiritual leaders during times of centering and devotion.
- Provide journal-writing workshops.
- Have young people write letters to the President on such subjects as capital punish-

ment, AIDS/HIV, or hunger and mail them to themselves.

Summary

The disciplines of meditation, prayer, and journaling are essential and significant tools in helping young people on their particular path as Christians. These are gifts that enhance our wholeness to be disciples "in but not of the world."

Young people are going through transitions from childhood to adulthood, from following their parents' instructions to making their own decisions, from hearing about "a" God to claiming their own God. Young people need to know that it is good to grow spiritually, to be fed spiritually, and to experience the Divine Presence outside of Sunday morning worship.

There is nothing romantic about these disciplines, and living out these disciplines is a commitment to faith formation and not tradition. These disciplines take time. They need to be nurtured, supported, and encouraged. Do not demand; invite. Do not discourage questions; see growth come from doubt. Remember, our call is to be faithful. As we play, work, struggle, cry, and laugh with our young people, we also pray, meditate, and learn to live in wholeness with each other.

Part V

Community



Building Community Among Youth¹⁸

Building community has been part of our Christian heritage since Jesus walked through Palestine spending time with his disciples. Jesus and his followers spent many hours learning who they were, discussing what Jesus was teaching about the kingdom of God, and preparing to share the "good news" with the rest of the world. The group ate, prayed, laughed, and worked together for three years. Through this experience the little band grew to know and trust one another despite jealousy, selfishness, conflict, and disagreements. Through the example of Jesus and his disciples we can begin to learn what community means and how we can form a community among individuals with different backgrounds and interests.

Most of us long to be in a group where we are accepted as we are and where we can feel that what we say will be listened to without judgment or ridicule. We want a place where we can share some of our innermost thoughts and trust they will remain in the group. We search for a group where we can have the freedom to ask questions, to discuss sensitive issues, and to disagree with each other. We want to build close and supportive relationships.

Community

Young people today look for this type of community. They want a caring, loving, supportive group. They need a place where they can come and let their hair down. Meeting this need should be a priority in youth ministries. How do we go about creating such a community?

One of the first things we can do to bring this about is to get to know young people individually. The best way is to make some type of personal contact with each young person.

This may be done in several ways: a visit to the house, going out for a soft drink, calling on the phone. Another help is to use a survey that gives each person an opportunity to share specific interests, hobbies, and talents that can be very useful as planning takes place. These two methods assist in building trust, which involves a lot of patience and perseverance. It does not happen on its own. We have to meet young people where they are. (See the section on "The Fine Art of Contact Work," in this handbook.)

Recreation

Recreation is an excellent means for creating a non-threatening atmosphere to help group members get to know each other and break down the barriers that exist when cliques are present. Icebreakers and mixers are good tools to place people into new situations and groups and create a sense of enthusiasm that will carry over to other activities. Some suggestions are Human Bingo, Numbers Mixer, Human Knots, Four Facts/One Lie, and Circle Mixer. Some games that offer opportunities to build teamwork and unity are One Frog, A What?, Balloon Basketball, Circle Relay, Skin the Snake, and the Lap Game. (See "Recreation and Recreation," and "Games," this chapter.)

Recreation for many of us is scary, either because we have never led games or we don't feel as capable as some recreation leaders we have seen in action. Learn the directions and practice leading games. You will be surprised by the conversations, warm feelings, openness, and positive outlook it will create for your group. Recreation is a great foundation from which to build a community.

Study

Engaging in studies where young people can share their thoughts and feelings is important for a cohesive group. Regardless of the study, it helps to break the larger group down to smaller units of three to five people for a particular assignment. Smaller groups provide an opportunity for community building to take place. By mixing people with those outside their usual group, they are put into situations where new relationships may form through sharing the task at hand. (See the section on "Leading Bible Study," in this handbook.)

Today's groups often include young people who attend more than one school. Although this can create cliques and feelings of rivalry within the youth group, it can also provide the opportunity for a study that may break down hostilities. When you have more than one school represented in your group, provide an opportunity in small groups for the students from each school to list the positive and negative aspects of the other school. Then bring everyone back to the large group for a discussion. Not only does this give new insights about the different schools, it also can help to end some of the rivalries that may exist.

Retreats

Retreats and conferences sponsored by congregations, dioceses, provinces, and the Youth Office at the Episcopal Church Center offer young people a chance to get away from their everyday routines and to relax and be with others their own age. The chance to share ideas about what other groups are doing opens up all kinds of possibilities when you get back home. Participating in creative worship services, listening to gifted leaders, and experiencing very large groups are activities we do not usually have access to in our local congregations. Most groups come back feeling closer and renewed. The key is to build on this and not let the feeling die.

Each youth group, if possible, should try to schedule times when they can get away as a group. Whether it is a weekend retreat or a week-long trip, there should be a structure to

provide opportunities for study, worship, fellowship, and free time. Being away from everyday pressures can allow for freer and more frank discussions than at regular meetings. Retreats do take special planning, but the time is well spent toward building community. (See "A Recipe for a Christian Community Adventure," in this section.)

Music

Music is one of the most important avenues for group building. Music is one of the main languages that young people "speak." Sharing songs with accompaniment of guitar or piano is a wonderful way to bring a group closer together. Discussing and talking about the music young people listen to establishes bridges of communication that might not otherwise be available. Much of the music that is part of youth culture offers a message about life that helps us begin to understand who they are. Within many groups there is musical talent that may open up new avenues of communication and establish group pride. (See "A Music Note for Youth Groups," in this section.)

Worship

Another excellent opportunity for building a cohesive group is to plan and lead worship on Sunday morning at least once a year. This gives people a chance to understand what worship means and how the individual parts fit together. It also gives them exposure to the congregation. The most beneficial aspect is that it can bring all the young people together to work on one project. This is their time to share their faith experiences through their own words, music, and message. (See "Exploring Prayer and Worship," in this handbook.)

The Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center distributes a yearly resource for Anglican Youth Sunday. It provides a theme, Scripture ideas, and suggestions for how to plan an Anglican Youth Sunday. Write to: Youth Ministries Office, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 800/334-7626.

Projects

Social action projects or service projects are great for group building as well as providing firsthand mission opportunities. Some local projects might include using social analysis to examine the issues affecting youth in your own community, adopting families in need or working in a soup kitchen. Some week-long or week-end mission projects might include a shared experience with a Companion diocese, a Washington seminar, or Appalachia Service Project. Many places welcome youth groups and have had a lot of experience working with them. (See section VI, "Service, Mission and Social Action.")

To see young people come together and share in God's mission is rewarding in itself. However, to see the changes in outlook and perspective of the young people who participate in these experiences is a miracle. These people feel they have accomplished something important together, and it sticks with them for many years. The work is hard but the unity it creates will carry into other parts of the youth program. Young people who do not usually associate with each other form new friendships and learn to support one another.

Conflict

Conflict is something every group hopes will not occur, but it is impossible to avoid. If an atmosphere of openness, ownership, and commitment is created, and if there is sharing in the planning of schedules and leadership, much potential conflict can be snuffed out. If disagreements do take place, patience, flexibility,

and timing can help. Don't hide from conflict; accept it and confront it and learn from it. (See "Life Is a Series of Hellos and Goodbyes," in this section.)

Every youth group is unique. Some helpful ways to establish a feeling of community among young people have been suggested. Not all of them will have the same effect on one group as they will on another. Try several of these and use your own creativity and ingenuity as you work to build a close-knit group. It does not happen overnight, but you are laying a strong foundation for the future.

Love

Patience, understanding, love, and listening are virtues a leader needs to have as he or she builds community: patience to deal with differing personalities and actions that occur; understanding to realize the emotional, mental, physical, and psychological changes that young people face; love to create an atmosphere where young people can be accepted as they are; and, finally, listening to them with an openness that does not judge and is not quick to answer, but offers warmth even though it may not accept the behavior.

Building community is an ongoing process in any youth group. It is never complete because new people are coming in and advisors change. In our local congregations, whatever the size, we have to make sure young people are ministered to so they can minister to us and others. We have to provide the best youth ministries we can, and that means building a community that allows them to feel accepted and to continue their faith journey.

Recreation and Re-Creation¹⁹

Recreation is part of a holistic youth ministry. The trend in youth ministries has been to divide everything up into segments: one Sunday evening we will have recreation, the next week we will study, and the following week we will worship. This format adds to fragmentation in the lives of young people. It perpetuates a lifestyle prevalent among adults: worshipping God on Sunday mornings, working Monday through Friday, and at some point during the week, one hopes, finding time to have fun! Part of our ministry with young people is to help them understand that God is present in every aspect of our lives, and this is a reason to celebrate and give glory to God every day.

Recreation should be an integral part of everything we do. The most significant times in my ministry with young people have been those of "just being" with them—those unexpected moments when I found myself delighting in the presence of these wonderful people. These moments have come as we jammed away to tapes while we made sewing kits to send to a cooperative in Africa, or at a large and very profitable car wash that turned into a huge water fight in the middle of the church parking lot. Another moment came on a camping trip as we all peeled carrots and potatoes for supper and laughed and had such a great time being together that it took us two hours just to prepare the meal.

Young people today are hungry for adults who can enjoy them simply for who they are. They constantly feel the pressure to be the best student or a super athlete. After school, they are herded from one lesson or practice session to another, and they have very little time for "just being." Yet the message Christ came to bring is that we are not loved because of our achievements, we are loved simply because of who we are. All the talking in the world won't convince young people of Christ's unconditional love. We, as youth leaders, must live it by simply

enjoying our young people as the special people they are. By enjoying God's children created in God's image, we are also enjoying God.

Healthy Recreation

We need to model healthy, constructive forms of recreation. Much of what our society does in the name of recreation is destructive and consumptive. We spend millions on equipment and on the salaries of professional athletes but we resent being asked to build shelters for the homeless. We can use recreation to teach young people that we can play without spending a great deal of money. We can help young people understand that it does not glorify God when we invest hundreds of dollars in recreation equipment and allow God's children in our own cities to go hungry.

Through recreation, we also build the body of Christ. When we can really play together, we tear down some of the walls that divide us. For example, some diocesan summer camps begin the first night of every camp by playing a number of large-group noncompetitive games. These help young people interact in a way that is not threatening. The young people run and scream and play together, and by the end of the evening they are feeling more comfortable with one another.

Cooperation

In our recreation with young people, we must deemphasize competition and emphasize cooperation. So much of our society is competitive—we have to be better than everyone else—and this builds barriers. The message of the Parable of the Talents is that God has given us each unique gifts and needs us to share these in the

world. Again, through competition, we are saying that people are winners because of what they have achieved. At a very vulnerable time in a young person's life, this is a destructive message—particularly if he or she is one of those who didn't make the football squad or the tennis team. Especially in our recreation, we need to be saying that in God's eyes everyone is a winner.

Opportunities

Modeling healthy recreation also means giving young people opportunities to have fun without drinking alcohol. One article in a denominational magazine discussed young people and alcohol and drug abuse. Of the junior highs surveyed, 14 percent said most of the people they knew (of their own age) drank alcohol, and 60 percent of the senior highs surveyed said most of the people they knew (of their own age) drank alcohol. When asked if they felt that these people had serious drinking problems or drug problems, 29 percent of the junior highs and 54 percent of the senior highs said yes.

As the church, we must offer young people some options. These options can be renting a movie, making pizzas at someone's house on a Saturday, or taking a group out somewhere after a ball game. Let the young people say what they think would be fun. By experiences such as these, we give options for recreation other than drinking. We also let young people know that the church is more than Sunday mornings, it is also being rowdy on Saturday night with your friends, with God always present.

Celebration

Finally, our ministries with young people must be one of celebration. We believe in a God who is alive and creative—who created a world full of wonder, with mighty oceans and giant redwoods and gentle breezes. Our God is the majestic creator of all and our God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. One of my favorite activities with young people is to have them take a psalm of praise and write down all the adjectives used to describe God in that

psalm. Then they each write a call to worship or a prayer or even a brief message based on those adjectives. In this manner, we create our own celebration worship service and the young people begin to see that God is alive and sometimes even noisy and definitely fun.

Practice

We have discussed the theology and theory of recreation. It might be helpful to give a few practical hints. Recreation is different with each group, and each leader will find what works best only through trial and error. First, in leading recreation with young people, be free to risk and even to fail. It is OK to make mistakes; in fact, it is the way we learn. If you can laugh at your goofs, the young people will be able to laugh at theirs and they in turn will be more willing to try new activities with you.

Second, begin small and do what you feel comfortable doing. If you have never had a dance class in your life, don't try to teach liturgical dance. A great way to begin the year is to have a cookout and play some simple icebreakers to get to know one another.

Borrow good ideas from anyone and everyone who knows how to lead recreation. Make a notebook and write out the instructions to games you play at different events to keep a record of fun party ideas. Along with this, be in touch with recreation people in the public schools such as coaches or art teachers. They can be terrific resources for game ideas or for equipment or films. Check your public library for books, films, and other recreation ideas.

Throughout the year, various workshops are given for adults who work with young people. Find out what your diocesan office has to offer in the way of resources and leadership, and find out what is available from other governing bodies.

Plan a party for the congregation such as a Halloween carnival or a dinner with some type of entertainment. A project such as this is a great way to build your group, and it is something young people can give to the rest of the congregation.

Finally, listen to the young people. They come up with some of the best ideas.

Games²⁰

Most youth ministries already incorporate games in one form or another — as ice breakers, community building exercises, free time activities, workshops, program related experiential learning, or just as fun time fillers. For those of us leaders who are less musically confident, games may even replace singing as an inclusive large group experience. An effective, responsible game leader is much more than an entertainer or a rule enforcer. The questions I want to address are why, what and how. Why do we play games? What makes games work? How can we lead games effectively? (And yes...I have also included instructions for almost forty recommended games.)

For the purposes of this article game will mean a planned, theologically sound, interactive experience that safely achieves one or more of the following: fun, information exchange between participants, cooperation or team building, appropriate levels of contact or touch, and communication. This means games may include, but will not be limited to: board games, competitive sports or even just ice breakers. It also assumes that the choice of games depends on the particulars of the situation. No one game will work under all conditions, and more importantly what is ideal for one setting may be utterly inappropriate for another.

Why Do We Play Games?

Life is a gift which deserves to be taken seriously and also to be celebrated! Fun, laughter and discovery are indicators that life is being valued and enjoyed. We play games to share in life, to experience life through our senses and to discover the richness of relationships. As Christians we believe that it is possible to experience the Good News of Jesus Christ through the

honesty and substance of relationships modeled after his life. So if games are intended to bring us closer to one another and to God they should emphasize participation, affirmation of others and building self-esteem over competition or winning. Games for ministry should leave players feeling worthy and valued — that they have participated in something that had a positive effect.

A by-product of healthy game playing is community building. Community forms gradually, in an ongoing manner. It is by definition never static. We can not make community happen. It is hugely dependent on the movement of the Holy Spirit and our readiness to receive it. We can, however, set up situations in which participants have the best possible opportunities to build healthy relationships, to experience the presence and meaning of God, and thus to be moved from superficiality towards authenticity and transformation. Games present a problem to be solved by the players. “How will I participate?” “How will I be included?” The full potential of any game is realized through the necessary problem solving and working out of details that leads players towards meaningful connection, true community. Think about the fun players have when they develop their own strategies to achieve the identified goal.

Games also allow participants to learn through experience. Second only to first-hand experience, created or simulated experiences such as games or role plays communicate content more effectively than any other educational method. The right games at the right time can communicate more about being incarnate people made in God’s image than any sermon, video or even song, because one’s whole self, body, mind and spirit, is involved.

What Makes Games Work?

In general, well planned and carefully led games work well. Too little structure can be frightening for some players and too much will feel oppressive. The challenge is to find a balance between responsible management and controlling every dimension of the game.

To achieve this it is essential to know something about the group for which you are being asked to lead games. Games which are planned taking into consideration as wide a range of factors as possible will work best and will contribute more effectively to the process of community formation.

Factors to consider:

- Purpose of the gathering — expectations of the group and its leaders;
- Age — age range of group; developmental and energy levels; verbal skills;
- Gender balance — ratio of female to male players; appropriate levels of physical contact; strength, speed or training differentials;
- Range of physical ability — mobility of players; coordination; stamina; knowledge of left and right;
- Terrain or facility — indoors or outdoors? open or closed? flat or hilly? natural obstacles or breakable materials; lighting; acoustics; furniture?
- Numbers — how many expected? how many with experience? how many leaders? how will you organize teams if needed?
- Strong personalities — who's expected that is a natural leader or trouble maker?
- Pressing issues — Are there critical issues facing this group or unfolding in the world that should be considered?
- Time of day and duration of program — how long are you expected to lead games? *What will the group have come from and be going to? Will they be hyper? sleepy? hungry? relaxed?
- Time the group has spent together — what is their common history? How many are new?

returning? anticipated levels of trust? ability to risk?

- Economic, cultural or racial backgrounds — many gatherings today are multicultural and many games assume that all players will be comfortable with Euro-centric forms of communication. Examine assumptions about eye contact, touch, intimacy, sharing, lifestyles etc.
- Language — English may not be everyone's first language; learning; disabilities may affect reading, speech, memorization.

When these factors are ignored games may still be fun, even worthwhile, but the risks of offending or alienating are higher and the outcome is less predictable.

If you enjoy the game you are leading, chances are good that you will communicate your enthusiasm to the participants and it will run well. It never works to lead a game you dislike or feel is stupid. It is hard to lead a game well if you have never played it. This is because game leading is more about group process than rules. You have to be familiar enough with a game to recognize when it is working, when players need additional instruction or when a new "twist" needs to be introduced to keep the excitement level high. The more you practice leading games the more natural your style will become.

There are endless possibilities for creative and fun game playing. Keep searching or adapting until you find a collection of games with which you are completely comfortable. Children's games are a great source. How might they be adapted for teenage or adult use? Keep focused on your purpose. Remember: the game is simply a vehicle to assist with the transportation toward that purpose. It does not have to, and probably couldn't, be played perfectly.

Games that are consistent with the leader's values and theology work best. I, for example, believe that we are all called to be responsible stewards of the earth's resources. Waste bothers me tremendously. So I do not encourage the playing of games which waste food or any other valuable resource. I am also not rigid. Several years ago at a Junior High camp session, in the middle of a serious California

drought, I had emphasized the importance of water conservation. One day the temperatures soared to 110 degrees and the campers were begging for a water fight. I could just imagine every hose in the place running at full capacity. Rather than say, "No!" on principle I compromised and told the campers that they could do anything they wanted with two large garbage cans of water as long as they played over grass or soil that would absorb the moisture. The campers came up with an ingenious game that involved every imaginable water carrying device! (An added note: When a game leaves a mess of any kind, I automatically create an additional group activity around the clean up tasks in order to emphasize our shared responsibility and to get the job done.)

How Can We Lead Games Effectively?

Put safety first. One preventable accident can ruin your whole day.

Plan your games well ahead. Plan alternatives and be willing to use them. Plan to move from playful non-threatening (low vulnerability) towards deeper interactive games (higher vulnerability). Plan games you enjoy. Try to balance thinking/feeling, doing/being.

Have all equipment and space prepared in advance. Mark off any necessary boundaries.

Be sure the game leader can be seen and heard. Stand on a wall or chair if necessary. Stand in a circle of players, not inside it, to give instructions. Be willing to model anything you will ask the group to do. This will reduce anxiety about the unknown.

Start positively and with energy. Trust your plans and your discretion. Do not ask, "Do you want to play a game?" Do say, "We are going to play a game now!" Identify yourself as the game leader and not the judge. Watch closely, pick up clues.

Put the group into game playing "position" before explaining the instructions. Divide into teams, lines, circles, pairs etc. first. This reduces confusion and allows the group to start playing sooner.

Make instructions brief and straightforward. Give just enough information to start

the game. Do not try to anticipate all possible situations. Allow players to do their own "problem solving." Remember that the game leader may always stop the game and modify the rules if the need arises. Encourage people to ask for clarification, but avoid "what ifs. . ."

Demonstrate more and talk less. Choose games with simple rules.

Always allow people to choose to observe and identify them as participants too.

Encourage players with positive feedback. Communicate honest acceptance.

Timing is important. End the game before it reaches its peak. Signs that it is time to end: people's attention wanders, they modify the rules on their own, they break the rules. (Note: Teenagers often like to play games over and over and over. Try not to let one become stale or habitual because the element of discovery is central to community formation.)

Make the game as fair as possible. This is particularly important for active games that require physical coordination. If there is extreme variance in ability or experience try to adapt the game to compensate. Ice hockey can become broom ball on ice wearing tennis shoes. Water polo can become inner tube water polo. Use water balloons for volleyball or a big rubber ball for softball. Teaming stronger players with new players, or creating an adjusted scoring system or adapted rules for the players with more experience can work well and build community. For example ask participants who are familiar with a problem-solving exercise to play in silence, thus, emphasizing their non-verbal communication skills.

There are times when well planned, well executed games do not work. Be willing to acknowledge a flop and move on. If it's not fun or meaningful, stop! Postpone evaluation until the appropriate time. Remember that the games are a vehicle for growth, not a task to be accomplished.

Watch out for:

- "Hot seat" games that will produce group enjoyment at the expense of an individual;
- Players' feelings if they have to be eliminated or set apart; (Suggestion: adapt the game

to include them in some way. See Musical Chairs in next section.)

- Blindfolds — never require them, ask for volunteers;
- Any game that does not reflect your personal theology or values;
- Games that are culturally biased and may alienate players. If you do not know whether a game is culturally biased ask people whose cultural backgrounds are different from your own how they might respond;
- Games that require expertise and may divide the group into those who are confident and those who are not, or may embarrass less experienced players who are sincerely trying to participate.

Above all else, don't take yourself or your games too seriously. Have fun! Celebrate life as the enormous gift that it is.

OLD FAITHFUL GAMES—TO BE USED IN NEW, FAITHFUL WAYS

Information Exchange

Theological Foundation:

- Each person is created in God's image. (Genesis 1:27)
- God calls each of us by our name. (Isaiah 45:3-4)
- We, the people of God, have a story.

Rationale:

- Each person is unique. We have our own stories to tell.
- We are curious about the world and want information.
- We all want to belong, to find out that we are "normal."
- Information gives us power.

1. Map of the World (recommend 10 or more players, works well with adults)

Ask participants to stand on an imaginary map of the world relative to one identified point and direction, according to (a) where they were born, (b) where they would most like to travel if money and time were not an issue etc. Sample some of their locations by asking volunteers to introduce themselves and say "where" they are standing and "why."

2a. Confusion Bingo (recommend 20 or more players)

Prepare by drawing a 5 square by 5 square grid on a piece of paper. Fill in each square with a fact e.g. likes chocolate, can speak Spanish, has a dog, wears size 11 shoes; or with an action e.g. did 10 jumping jacks, curled his/her tongue, made a scary face. Try to pick facts or actions that are relevant to the group you expect. Make enough copies for everyone. Hand out one grid and one pencil to each person. Instruct the group to move through the room finding people who match each square. If player A finds player B who for example has size 11 feet, s/he initials player A's paper in the appropriate box. Set a limit about how many squares one person can sign on one sheet. Set a goal — one full line of bingo, or two, or blackout.

2b. Signature Hunt (adaptation for 10 or more)

Give participants a pencil and a list of experiences, talents or qualities such as: climbed a mountain over 10,000 feet, basketball player, creative, ate snails once, never had chicken pox, can curl tongue, and so on. Ask them to collect signatures of other people in the group who have those characteristics. The first person to have a signature beside each item or the person who collects the most in a given time period wins.

3. Shoe Chart (any number, but people need to be wearing name tags)

Make up a simple chart with columns for people's names, type of shoe, color of shoe,

kind of material. The object of the game is to mingle around the room and, *without talking*, write down on the chart everyone's name and shoe information. This game could also be done with other categories, like hair color, eye color, etc.

4. Clumps (10 or more. The larger the group, the more options there are)

A caller tells participants to mingle around the room and to "clump" in a group of the size called out. As they mingle the caller shouts out a number, or bangs a spoon on a pot, or blows a whistle that many times. If the players hear "5" they must try to get into groups of five people and await further instruction. The caller then gives the groups an assignment appropriate to the participants, e.g. untie and tie everyone's shoes in your group; tell each other how you got here; stand in height order. Then the caller repeats the "mingle, mingle" instruction and the game is repeated with a different group size and task.

5. Fruit/Vegetable Name Game (any number)

Each person picks a fruit or vegetable that begins with the same letter as his/her name. Sit in a circle. Go around the circle and say your name and your fruit/vegetable. You can ask each person to repeat all the combinations before her/him, or for a less pressured experience chant the combinations as a whole group each time. You can also put a person in the middle with a pillow. A player in the circle begins by saying a 2nd person's name and fruit. The person with the pillow tries to swat the named 2nd person before that 2nd person says a third person's name and fruit. If the swatter succeeds the 2nd person takes over with the pillow.

6. Zip/Zap/Boom Name Game (any number)

Everyone sits on chairs in a circle. Each person must learn the name of the person to his/her LEFT (ZIP) and RIGHT (ZAP). One volunteer

stands in the center of the circle and points to someone, saying, "Zip" or "Zap." The appointed person must say the correct name of the person in the zip or zap position depending on what was requested. The rest of the group can determine what is a correct and timely response. It is good to have a few trial runs. If correct the pointer points again. If the receiver was wrong, s/he takes over the position in the center. The center person has a third alternative, "Zip, Zap, Boom!" which means that everyone must get up and change seats. The center person tries to grab a seat, making someone else sit.

7. How Did You Get Your Name? What Does It Mean? (in small groups)

Ask each person to respond to these two questions. A good follow up is often to talk about the nicknames a person has had over the years, and what s/he prefers to be called today.

8. I Like People Who... (15 plus)

Everyone sits in chairs in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle. S/he says very loudly, "I like people who _____" filling in the blank appropriately. All players in the seated circle who have done/are/like what is named must get up and find a new chair, at least two spaces away from their original seat. The person in the middle tries to grab a chair which leaves a new caller and the game is repeated. You can ask people to shake at least two or three people's hands as they cross the circle and introduce themselves to increase the get-to-know you stuff.

9. Walk through the Wallet (small groups)

Ask people to take out their wallets, purses or to empty their pockets and share the contents with one another. Make it clear that players can choose what they share and what they do not. Tell each other what meaning certain things have and why.

10. Unfinished Sentences (even number, 10 plus)

Prepare a set of unfinished sentences e.g. My favorite food is . . . ; The last movie I saw was . . . ; What I like best about church is. . . . Pair players up and position them in two concentric circles with partners facing each other (inside circle faces out, outside circle faces in.) Read the first question and have them both respond. Then play music while the circles move in opposite directions. When the music stops, read another question for the new pairs to answer, and repeat.

11. I Have Never . . . (groups of 5-15)

Give each player one piece of wrapped candy, peanut in the shell, or playing tokens for every player. So, if there are 15 players everyone needs 15 pieces of candy or playing tokens. Sit in a circle. Go around the circle and complete the sentence "I have never . . ." with a true statement, trying to name things that you suspect other people in the group have done or been. If other players have done the thing named they must give the person a piece of candy/playing token. This is a great way to learn interesting facts about people while rewarding the players who might have had the less exciting lives.

12. Brown Bag Collage (any number)

Give all people a paper lunch bag. Have lots of old magazines and newspapers around, with scissors, pens and glue. Tell people to cut out words and pictures that show things related to their "outer" life e.g. that they do/are interested in/like and stick them on the outside of the bag. They can also draw on the bag. Then cut out pictures and words that represent their "inner" life, their dreams/fears/hopes/disappointments/secrets, etc. and stick them on the inside of the bag. When ready break into small groups and share your bags with one another. It must be clear that the inside of the bags is confidential and participants may share as much or as little as they choose.

13. Group Up (20 plus)

As everyone mills around the room the leader yells out a qualifying characteristic like "Same first initial!" Quickly, the group members try to find others who have the same first initial as they do and stick together. Whoever is the largest group wins that round of the game. Possibilities for qualifying characteristics are endless. They can be informative or a little silly, e.g. same favorite TV show; same age; same birth month; same brand of shoes, same eye color etc.

Contact/Touching*Theological Foundation:*

- God created us and we are good. (Genesis 1:31)
- Physical touch is important to confirm reality. (Mt 9:21, Lk 24:39, Jn 20:27)

Rationale:

- We are flesh and bones people, incarnate.
- We need to discover ways to move from isolation and self-consciousness to other-centeredness and community.
- Our fragmented world desperately needs healthy, loving touch to invite people out of isolation, into community.

1. Face to Face/Back to Back (odd number, 10 plus)

Ask people to find a partner. Instruct them to stand front to front and introduce themselves. One person should be without a partner and will begin as the game leader. The leader calls out "front to front" or "back to back" at varying paces and the players move accordingly. When the caller says "Change!" the players must find a new partner and the original caller tries to find one too, which should leave a new person to be the next caller.

2. Human Knot (8 to 10 per group)

Have each group stand in a circle facing each other. Tell them to put their arms out in front

of each other and to hold hands with people across the circle. They must not hold the two hands of the same person or hold a hand of either person beside them. Once all hands are paired under these conditions the group tries to untie the knot without letting go. It is possible.

3. Ear to Elbow (even number, the more the better)

Have everyone find a partner. Make two concentric circles with the inside partner facing the outside partner. Tell that each circle is to walk clockwise (i.e. in opposite directions) until the leader calls out two body parts. At this point the partners must scramble to find each other and connect the two body parts as quickly as possible. Once players "get it" the last pair to find each other and connect the right parts will be eliminated by the leader. The object is to survive to the very end. If eliminated, ask players to become assisting judges and callers. Example of calls: knee to back, head to stomach.

4. Lap Sit (15 plus)

Have each player sit on a chair in a circle. The game leader will say a series of "If you..." sentences and if the sentence is true for players they must get up and move the number of chairs in the direction the leader has specified. E.g. If you go to high school, move six chairs to your left. All high school students would get up and move. They may find someone already sitting in their new chair. If so, they are instructed to sit carefully on top of them. The piles will grow.

5. Elbow Tag (10 plus)

Ask for a volunteer "cat" and "mouse." Position other players in pairs linked at the elbow around the room/area. Cat begins to chase the mouse. Whenever the mouse attaches him/herself to one of the standing pairs it launches the person at the open end of the pair to become the mouse. If the cat looks tired, ask for a new volunteer and continue.

6. Reconnect Palms (any even number)

Find partners. Eyes closed, partners face each other and touch palms. Feel the energy and then on an instruction drop their arms. Instruct them to take two steps back, turn around three times and try to reconnect palms. Invite brief reflections on the experience.

7. Palm Dancing (any even number)

Find partners. Sit on the floor facing each other with palms connected. For practice: one person in each pair begin to move hands freely, creatively and partners follow movement keeping palms connected. Reverse roles. Then leader ask participants to close their eyes, listen to the music and allow paired palms to move freely in response to it. Leader play a piece of taped music, preferably meditative in nature. If there are lyrics choose words that communicate affirmation or basic Christian theology.

Cooperation/Team Building

Theological Foundation:

- We are one body in Christ with many parts. (1 Cor. 12)
- We have diverse gifts, all necessary for bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Rationale:

- We all yearn to belong, to feel needed and trusted.
- Life is a gift to be shared and celebrated.
- Together we can accomplish so much more than alone.
- By experiencing the love and acceptance of others we can know God's love.

1. Human Tic Tac Toe (at least six)

Divide into two equal teams. Give each team a tube of colored zinc oxide to put a mark on their faces to differentiate the teams (or use colored stickers etc.) Set up nine chairs in a 3 X 3 grid. Each team takes turns putting one player into the grid just like tic, tac, toe.

2. Rock, Paper, Scissors (large number, with ample space to run)

Divide into two teams. Identify a mid line and two home bases equidistant on opposite sides of that line. Tell the teams to huddle and select rock, paper or scissors for their sign on the count of three. The teams line up along the mid line. The leader counts, 1,2,3 and then the players show their sign. The losing team runs as fast as it can back toward its home base. The winning team chases and players tag members of the opposite "losing" team as quickly as possible until they are safe across their home line. Anyone who was tagged switches teams and the procedure is repeated.

3. Sound and Motion (6 or more)

Players are divided into three approximately equal groups. Each group decides on a sound and motion combination that will be their teams contribution to the game. Each group teaches the other two groups their sound and motion combo. Then the groups huddle and each group decides which combination it will do when the leader counts to three, not necessarily their own. The object of the game is to see how many rounds it takes for all three groups to do the same sound and motion combo.

4. Making Rain (any number, the more the better)

Ideally have participants sit in a circle or semi-circle more than one person deep. Leader begins at one point and tells the group to do whatever motion s/he is doing when s/he makes eye contact with them, and to continue making that motion until the leader returns and changes the motion by example.

- Sound one — rubbing hands together.
- Sound two — snapping fingers, alternating hands
- Sound three — patting thighs, alternating hands
- Sound four — stomping feet (if floor not carpeted) or hitting hard surface with palms

- Build up the storm and then reverse the motions to end with a quiet, light rain.

5. Putting Together the Puzzle (any number, with preparation)

Prepare pieces of paper with words or phrases that go together to build a familiar passage (Scripture, hymn, prayer etc.) or that make up a total object (car, machine, books of the Bible) Put one piece of paper on each person's back and instruct the group to get into appropriate positions *without talking*.

6. Yarn Web (5 or more)

Have players stand in a circle. The leader holds the end of a ball of yarn/string and tosses the ball across to another player who pulls the suspended piece of string tight, holds on to it and tosses the ball across the circle again to another player. This action is repeated until the ball of yarn has been passed to every player in the circle and there is a unique web pattern connecting everyone. This is an opportunity to talk about being One Body of many parts, about each person's unique and important contribution to the whole life of the group. What would happen if one person let go? The process can also be used as an affirmation or thanksgiving exercise. As the yarn is tossed the thrower may say something s/he appreciates or values about the receiver, or the receiver may say something for which s/he is thankful, or something s/he has learned during the program.

7. Back-to-Back (even number up to about 20)

Have everyone pair off with someone about their height and sit on the floor, back to back. Next tell them to lock arms and try to stand up together at the same time. Now have each pair join with another pair and try it again with all four people sitting back to back. When these groups have been successful at standing up, combine larger and larger groups until the entire group is all in one big circle trying to stand up together in the locked-arm, back-to-back position.

8. Shuffle Your Buns (15 plus)

Ask players to make a circle sitting on armless chairs. Ask for one volunteer. S/he will stand and leave one empty chair. It is then his/her goal to sit down in the empty chair. Tell the seated participants that their goal is to keep the volunteer from sitting in the empty chair by shuffling their buns around the circle in a clockwise direction. Whenever the chair to a player's left is empty it will be his/her responsibility to slide into it as fast as possible. Then the next player will slide over etc. On "Go!" the player to the right of the empty chair slides into it and the volunteer races towards it, trying to sit down. If the volunteer gets tired or discouraged, ask for a new volunteer, or two, or three at once depending on the size of the group.

9. Rhythm Group (5 or more)

Sit in a circle. One person starts to make a sound and continues making it at a regular rhythm (e.g. snap, clap, wind sound.) The next player adds a new sound and rhythm to the mix. Go all the way around the circle adding new sounds, rhythms and discovering your very own performance band. If you have a small group the players change their sound each time it is their turn.

Communication

Theological Foundation:

- There is a time for silence and a time for talk. (Eccles 3:7)
- You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)
- Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. (Matthew 28:19)

Rationale:

- Telling the truth and being consistent matters as Christians.

1. Charades (6 or more)

There are many ways to play this game. Divide the group into two teams. Each team prepares

a number of titles (books, TV, plays, songs) for members of the opposite team to act. Each player has up to 3 minutes to act out one title in front of his/her own team. When the team guesses the correct title the time is recorded. The team with the lowest total time scored is the winner.

2. Telephone (any number in small teams)

Whisper a sentence in one player's ear. That person repeats what s/he heard into the next person's ear and so on down the line. What comes out at the end is often good material for laughter and a discussion about how the truth gets twisted in our daily lives.

3. Gossip Game—Drawing on Backs

(equal teams of up to 4 players each)

Prepare one set of several simple drawings for each team (e.g. a house, a tree, a dog, a star.) Have the teams line up behind a captain, facing the front of the room. Then have them sit on the floor. Put blank paper and pens in front of each captain. Give the last person in each line a copy of one of the pictures (the same one for all teams). Tell the last players to draw the shape they have been given on the backs of the people sitting in front of them. Those people draw what they feel on the next backs and so on, until each front person draws a picture of what s/he receives on his/her back. The final pictures rarely look like the original. How is this process like gossip?

4. Emotions with Adjectives (any number)

Prepare signs with a noun in large letters on the top and an emotion on the bottom e.g. Hippopotamus/Anger; Homework/Passion. Ask players to find a partner and sit on the floor facing their partner so that one of them is facing one end of the room and the other is facing the opposite end. (This means all pairs are facing exactly the same directions.) Then the leader will go to one end of the room and hold up one sign. The players (half) who are facing the leader will read the sign and by saying only the one noun on the top of the page must communicate the emotion below it. Body

language is fine. Other words are not OK. See who of the guessing partners gets it first. Then walk to the other end of the room and repeat the process with a new sign. Afterwards talk about what we communicate with our bodies and voices that often has little to do with our words.

5. Count Off! (any number up to 20ish)

Know how many people are playing. Tell all players that the object of this game is to close their eyes and see if they can count up to the number of players with each player only saying one number once. Close eyes and begin. Someone just says, "One" and someone else, "Two" etc. If more than one person speaks at a time go back to the beginning.

6. Peepers (8 plus, in pairs)

This is a fun and more tasteful version of "Murder." Ask people to find a partner. Then ask everyone to sit in one large circle on the floor and to sit directly across the circle from his/her partner. Close eyes and put heads down. On three each player is to lift his/her head with eyes open and look in one of three directions: (1) straight ahead into the eyes of his/her partner, (2) directly at the person on the left, or (3) directly at the person on the right. If two people are looking directly at each other — they DIE! and are eliminated. (Encourage dramatic deaths.) Looking at someone's ear is safe. Rearrange the reduced circle to be sure everyone has a partner and repeat. Last pair remaining are the winners.

7. Forced Choices (any number)

There are many versions of this activity and it can easily be adapted for a range of program themes. Gather group in the center of the room. Tell them that you are going to read a list of paired items. For each pair, they must choose the item that is most like them and make their choice by moving to one end of the room or the other. You, the game leader, must designate which end of the room is for which item.

Once the group is divided you may want to ask for opinions from both ends. Examples: night/day, spectator/participant, giver/receiver, mountains/ocean, dog/cat.

Miscellaneous Games

1. Musical Chairs (15 plus)

Set up a long row, or several rows of chairs with alternate chairs facing the opposite direction. Start with at least one less chair than there are players. Play music, and move around the chairs in one direction. When the music stops grab a seat. If a player does not find a seat s/he must occupy a seat for the rest of the game. Chairs will fill up and it will be harder and harder to find a vacant seat. The "out" players will begin to develop their own defensive strategies!

2. Mrs. Mumble (any number)

Sit in a circle. Cover all teeth with your lips. The first player turns to his/her neighbor and asks "Is Mrs. Mumble at home?" That person also with teeth covered replies, "I don't know. I'll have to ask my neighbor" and turns to the next player to repeat the first question. The goal is for no one to see your teeth.

3. Magazine/Newspaper Pictures — Seeing God

Let individuals or pairs pick a magazine picture that speaks to them. Then ask the following questions and provide paper and pencils for the prayers. What do you know about this picture? Where do you see God? Write a prayer for the picture. Share the picture and the prayers as a part of your worship together.

4. Zap! (any number)

Stand in a circle. Close eyes. One person begins a low buzz. People join in. Let it build. Count to three and all shout, Zap! Then silence for 30 seconds and close in prayer.

A Music Note for Youth Groups²¹

Music is a marriage of notes and words that poetically identify life situations. One of the most influential catalysts in the lives of young people, and a vital part of many youth groups, music offers a way to celebrate the wholeness of life. It expresses one's identity and forms a common bond between the people of God. One of the most difficult tasks is finding the right songs, the right style, and the right approach in music that will fit your group.

Most people want to sing, and they often do. While driving down the road listening to the radio, plugged into a portable stereo, or even in the shower, people sing. Yet many of us shy away from singing in any group gathering. Today's high-tech, performance-oriented music has placed us in a state of frustrated silence. The atmosphere for a youth group to sing should be lighthearted, free from stress, and liberating, not technical and performance-oriented.

Create a non-threatening atmosphere for your group that will invite those who claim to be monotone and unable to carry a tune to feel free to try. Begin by getting your group acquainted with music through various singing or musical games.

One example is the game Singing Circles. Divide your group into small clusters. The object of the game is to sing a song with the name of a color in it. (Variations to this could be to use a single word or to use a category, such as "Christmas songs.") Going around the room, each cluster decides on a song that contains the color indicated by the leader in its lyrics. When the cluster has reached a consensus they must sing the song aloud. Each group has five seconds to come up with a song. The leader will then move on to the next group. After each cluster has had a turn, the leader begins a new round, starting with a different group by calling out a new color. If a group fails to identify

a song within the five-second time limit, the leader will move on to the next group. This game should move rapidly and challenge each cluster to remember a library of songs. Before your group realizes it, they are singing. No high-tech music, just plain fun.

Another great way to begin your group in singing is by using children's songs. For example, have half of your group sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" while the other half sings "Are You Sleeping?" at the same time. Then have the groups switch songs. Another way of using "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" is to have the entire group sing through the song once at a rather fast pace. Then, each time through the song, drop off the last word. As the song progresses, there will eventually be no more song to sing!

Remember, the place to begin singing is with *simplicity!* In teaching songs, two rules of thumb need to be stressed. First, remember that repetition of a song never hurts: it can only help a group become more comfortable with the song. A group will sing through a song three to five times before beginning to feel familiar with it. This is especially important for song leaders, because they often become so familiar with a song they forget its newness to a group. Second, the rhythm of a song needs to be consistent. Whether the song leader is playing an instrument or not, the group needs to hear the rhythm and melody line, loudly and clearly. Fancy fingering on any instrument will only cause confusion and make it difficult for the group to learn or follow the song.

Here are some simple styles that you can use in teaching your group a new song.

Rhythm clap: Help your group keep the rhythm of a song by clapping on the beat. The rhythm clap also adds an element of excitement to the song.

Hand direction: Using your hand and an

imaginary ladder in front of you, direct the pitch of the song by raising or lowering steps with your hand. The position of your hand from one note to the next will help the group move in pitch.

Line-by-line: Sing the first line of the song and ask the group to repeat it after you. Do this until an entire section (either a verse or chorus) is completed. Then ask the group to put all the lines together and sing that section as a whole. Move through the rest of the song in the same manner.

Motions: Many songs, often referred to as “action” songs, have accompanying motions. This not only involves the whole person in the fun, it also helps the group remember the words. Be creative and ask your group to make up their own motions. A variation would be to use sign language.

Composers have captured and translated a personal statement through music. As your group sings together as a community and expresses their identity and beliefs, let music be a way in which they can celebrate all of creation under God.

Here are some ideas for your group to consider as they make choices in music.

- *Inclusive language* is a way to support the individual value and dignity of all God’s people.

- *Changing “I” pronouns to “We”* includes the entire community of singers and listeners.
- *Using a variety of languages* allow the community to reach out beyond itself to touch other cultures.
- *Different styles*, such as hymns, gospel, folk, popular, and country, allow diversity of expression and interpretation.
- *A variety of topics* challenges us to think, feel, and educate ourselves and others about a variety of faith issues.

Whether your group includes musicians or in-the-shower monotones, music can build and uplift the spirit of your group. Music can be used to set the mood of a meeting, provoke one’s thoughts, and be an aid to learning or a thoughtful expression, no matter how it is said.

Music is a powerful communicator! Many youth groups have used music in their outreach to nursing homes, prisons, and other places throughout their community. As a tool for ministry, music has unlimited possibilities. Psalm 96 reads, “O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!” So whether it be the bang on a bongo, the strum of a guitar, the tinkling of the ivories, or the unstable gargle of one’s voice. *God calls us to go forth and sing!*

Drama in Youth Ministry²²

Why is drama so wonderful? These major benefits give it star qualities. Drama:

- Increases self-confidence and self-worth
- Can be a tremendous teaching tool
- Can promote spiritual growth
- Brings people together, promotes fellowship, breaks down barriers
- Is a powerful, moving medium for communication
- Helps people identify with others and feel they are understood
- Allows people to discover and develop gifts and talents
- Employs skills of many different people, including actors, producers, organizers, artists, lighting designers, costumers, stagehands, set designers, musicians, graphic designers, and writers

Movement

If you are interested in incorporating drama into your program but are a complete beginner, there's hope! Start with things that are simple and fun. Games that involve movement but have a low-threat threshold are helpful. An activity like "The Human Machine" is a great example. Start with one person standing in front of the others. That person begins to do a simple movement, such as lifting one arm up and down, and at the same time makes a sound to go along with the movement, something like swish, swish, swish, swish. When another person thinks he or she has a movement that will fit into the first movement, that person goes up and adds a second movement and sound to the first. Then the next young

person adds a movement. The game continues until everybody has joined the movement-in-progress, creating a strange and wonderful "machine."

Ape Tag

Another fun and easy way to get young people to "act" in a non-threatening manner is to play Ape Tag. Simply start off by saying "Not It!" The last one to say "Not It" is "It" and begins moving around the room like an ape, making monkey noises, scratching, stooping, swinging arms, and so forth. All other people are apes for the chase too. As soon as someone is caught by the first ape, he or she becomes It. The game continues until several have been It, and then you call out "S-L-O-W M-O-T-I-O-N tag!" People stop being apes and begin moving as slowly as possible, including the one who is It. Any other tag variations are at the leader's discretion. There are dozens of exercises like this that can be used to start a meeting. You may want to talk with a local junior high or high school drama teacher for other ideas and resources. There are several benefits for beginning a meeting with icebreakers:

1. They break tension and release nervous energy.
2. Each individual comes to the group from a very different place. The icebreaking brings all these individuals together and helps create a sense of "groupness." This is essential for working together as a dramatic team.
3. Non-threatening movement games help young people become more comfortable with their bodies and less frightened of having an audience. They come to trust themselves more.

Now that you have your youth group loosened up a bit, let's talk about some of the possibilities for drama in your own congregation. They are numerous, and I only have space to list a few, so don't be afraid to dream!

Role-Playing

Role-playing is a communication medium that can be funny and light or deep and moving, depending on the subject matter, the mood of the group, and the tone you set. For example, if you want to focus on dating, you might create a role play in which two couples are in a car on a double date. You place four chairs in the center of the room, one pair behind the other, pick four of the hammier young people to play the couples, then set the scene something like this:

"Bill and Maria, you two have been dating for three years and are heavy into romance. Greg and Laura, you are on a blind date and are with Bill and Maria. You two are very uncomfortable with each other." You then let them run the scene. Needless to say, if you pick the right mix of personalities to play these parts, lots of giggles will ensue. What will also happen is that the door to discussion will be opened wider for teens to express their concerns, anxieties, and feelings about dating.

Role-playing can also be very effective in handling the thornier issues young people face, such as pregnancy, drugs, and peer pressure. Create an opening situation, choose several young people you feel will handle the issue sensitively and thoughtfully, and let them go. (Respect the right to decline to participate.)

Drama in Worship

Many congregations have an annual Youth Sunday, when the young people design the entire service. One idea went especially well for us at a recent national youth conference. The Scripture for the day was the Zacchaeus story. With the help of a narrator, Zacchaeus (a girl mime), Jesus (a boy mime), a crowd, a pianist, and "tree," we re-created the tale. The scene opened with the crowd in place down front.

As the narrator read, the piano played a light melody in the background. (If you have a pianist who feels comfortable improvising, allow him or her to do so.) Jesus mimed his way from the back of the church to the front, shaking hands, smiling, and waving at the crowd. When Jesus arrived down front he froze, waving, as the narrator announced Zacchaeus's entry. Zacchaeus entered from a side aisle and mimed her way down front. Meanwhile the crowd onstage moved into a "tree" position. Two piano benches were placed side by side. The kids in the back of the crowd stepped up on them, becoming "branches," and the kids in front of them became the "trunk." On a signal from the narrator, all the young people popped out real tree branches they were hiding behind them. (The effect was wonderful!) Zacchaeus climbed up into the "tree" (via one of the piano benches) and peeked through a "branch." She got a gentle slap in the face with a leaf. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus he mimed for her to come down. As she was doing so, the "tree" began to complain about the kind of treatment Jesus was giving this tax collector. "Hey, wait a minute, why are you being nice to Zacchaeus?" one branch said. "What's going on?" said another. "This isn't fair," said a third. The tree began to wilt. The drama continued as the narrator read the Scripture, and a simple mime ensued between Jesus and Zacchaeus until Zacchaeus (through the narrator) said, "Oh, all right. Anyone I've wronged will be repaid fourfold." Jesus replied, "Salvation has come to this house today." End of parable. At that moment, the "tree" perked back up to full standing position while the pianist plinked three triumphant finishing notes.

Full-Scale Musicals

Maybe I watched one too many Garland/Rooney films, but this is one of my favorite events to do with young people. Be warned: To do this right requires tremendous commitment, taxing everyone's time, energy, and good humor, but the results are equally tremendous. Producing a musical the young people and the congregation can be proud of not only gives

the group a great sense of accomplishment, it unifies them like few other events can. If you decide to undertake such a project, find a director with some experience and lots of enthusiasm. There may be a person in your congregation who has acting or directing experience. If you have some experience but have never directed a full-length play, ask a local high school or college drama teacher to take you through the steps of putting a play together, from holding auditions to scheduling rehearsals to striking the set when the last performance is over. Map it all out on your calendar and stay fairly close to schedule. As much as possible, push the young people to be involved in all stages of the planning. Not only will their enthusiasm and sense of ownership increase, they are sure to come up with clever ideas that will enhance the whole production.

In every production I have directed, the following elements have been helpful:

1. As much as possible, open each rehearsal with a prayer/sharing time.
2. Affirm-affirm-affirm at each stage of the production process. Let people know how well they are doing and how much you appreciate their efforts. People feel more confident of their abilities and are willing to try new things if their contributions are affirmed and accepted rather than criticized.
3. After your last performance, spirits will be flying high. Before you go off to celebrate at a cast party, try closing with an agape feast. After the audience has left, gather the cast onstage, turn the lights low, and hold a simple worship service in thanksgiving to God for the gifts your group has been given. After an opening song, ask the group to share one thing about the production they are thankful for or will remember. After everyone who wishes has expressed these feelings, share a simple meal: bread, cheese, grapes, juice. Close with another song and prayer. You and your group will go home knowing that something very wonderful and spiritual has happened.



A Recipe for a Christian Community Adventure: Lock-Ins, Retreats, and Conferences²³

Adventure

INGREDIENTS

- 1 group of young people
- 1 extended block of time
- 1 setting without distraction
- 1 interactive adult for every 8 young people
- 1 challenge to accomplish
- Pinch of caring and love
- Pinch of support and encouragement
- Dash of awareness of Christian connectedness
- Fantasy and initiative-to taste

Mix ingredients together and stir well until blended. Knead slowly. As lumps arise, knead them gently but do not leave mixture unattended. Cook until done. Do not overcook! Check it periodically. Add fantasy and initiative as needed.

After the Adventure is done, let it cool. After it is cool, taste and savor. As the Adventure is digested, be aware that what we eat today is what we wear tomorrow. If the Adventure has been prepared properly, it is quite nutritious, and large servings are recommended.

This is the basic recipe. Note that the cook is only one important part of the whole process, and great care must be taken to ensure that no ingredients are omitted or overused. If the cook is not attentive, the mixture will become hard and crumble, or the ingredients will separate and turn sour. But with luck and care, everything will come together to form a most unforgettable, savory, Christian Community Adventure.

Developing a Christian community is like putting a recipe together. All the ingredients are important, and the cook must take great care with the recipe. Community building and the recipe analogy are different in that the group of young people and the cook are not only the parts of the recipe, they also partake of the food produced. The final outcome also needs some explanations.

Life Stories

First, the group members-including the adults-need to feel free to share their own life stories. In sharing our life stories, we come to understand others; and in making new life stories together, we become a part of each other's stories. In learning about and sharing this history, we begin to see our connectedness.

The challenge of accomplishing a task or a goal is what allows us to share ourselves. The challenge cannot be accomplished by any one person. Each individual is needed. We realize another person's uniqueness by working on a challenge together.

Whether it is playing a game, resolving a problem, finishing a social action project, figuring out a Bible passage, or working on who is washing dishes and who is cleaning bathrooms, several things must happen to attain the goal. In sharing ideas, people begin to recognize commonalities and differences. Different individuals give their talents in order to accomplish the goal, in the meantime, the individuals are sharing themselves. The challenge is the vehicle by which the group makes memories together, and personal and group history is developed. It is in these memories that we become a part of one another.

Challenge

When the focus is on the challenge, people forget themselves. They must share their real selves in order for the group to achieve its goal. Masks and barriers drop; what is being shared is the whole person, raw edges and all. The members of the group can tell when someone is giving less than his or her real self.

The final aspect of the community building happens after the goal is reached. The group must be allowed and encouraged to "debrief" the activity. They need to process what happened throughout the challenge. Who made what decisions? How was the goal reached? Who led, who followed, and why? The "why?" question may be one of the most important. Whether it is why the group took a particular direction in achieving the task, or why someone did not contribute, or why someone felt the way he or she did, all of this leads to understanding. As these feelings come out and the group takes apart the process of how and why the task was accomplished as it was, the event and the people become more a part of each participant. The interrelatedness of the situation and the people comes to light.

Diversity

In the debriefing the leader can highlight some scriptural connections, to deepen the whole experience. The most obvious biblical foundation is the passages on the body of Christ: 1 Corinthians 12. In sharing a task and accomplishing a goal as a group, we become aware of the gifts each individual has to offer to make the group work as one. Attitudes about our interrelatedness are also found in Romans 12. It is in sharing these parts of ourselves that we not only recognize the gifts of others and the need for others, we also see the Christ in each other. John 14 adds the aspect that the actual connections for all of this come to us through the Holy Spirit.

The leader must be an enabler and a questioner, a part of the group and a challenger, a counselor and a pastor. But all this must be done with the attitude that the more the

group can grapple with and discover and realize on their own, the more those discoveries will become a part of who they are as individual Christians and as an identifiable Christian community. The leader must help the group discover its diversity, its sameness, its brokenness, and its Christ-likeness.

Lock-In

At a lock-in all this may happen in the course of several hours. But at a retreat or conference, different aspects will happen at different times over the course of several days. Some of the interactions may happen on their own, and other aspects will have to be brought out by the leader. It is important that whatever the length of the event, after debriefing has happened, the event must be closed, packaged, and digested as an event that cannot and will not be repeated ever again, and at the same time the experience has become a part of every participant.

When a group can have the extended, intentional time together that a lock-in, retreat, or conference allows, closure to the entire experience becomes very important. The group has done the task (even an uncompleted task or goal is a situation for learning about failure and how a Christian community deals with that), debriefed the interworkings, recognized the connectedness and disjointedness of its members, and can now seal the experience through a time of worship and sharing a common meal. Communion is the ultimate way and symbol of our recognizing our differences, our sameness, our need for each other, our brokenness, and our wholeness. An agape meal serves a similar purpose when an ordained minister has not been a part of the process.

Communion

The two words "community" and "communion" say exactly what has happened: Through sharing ourselves as individuals to make a group and in bringing that brokenness and wholeness together we are recognizing the common-unity we share and the common-union we have as God's children in Christ. We

need one another! We must be willing to share ourselves and risk showing our rough edges to become whole persons in Christ—we cannot do this alone.

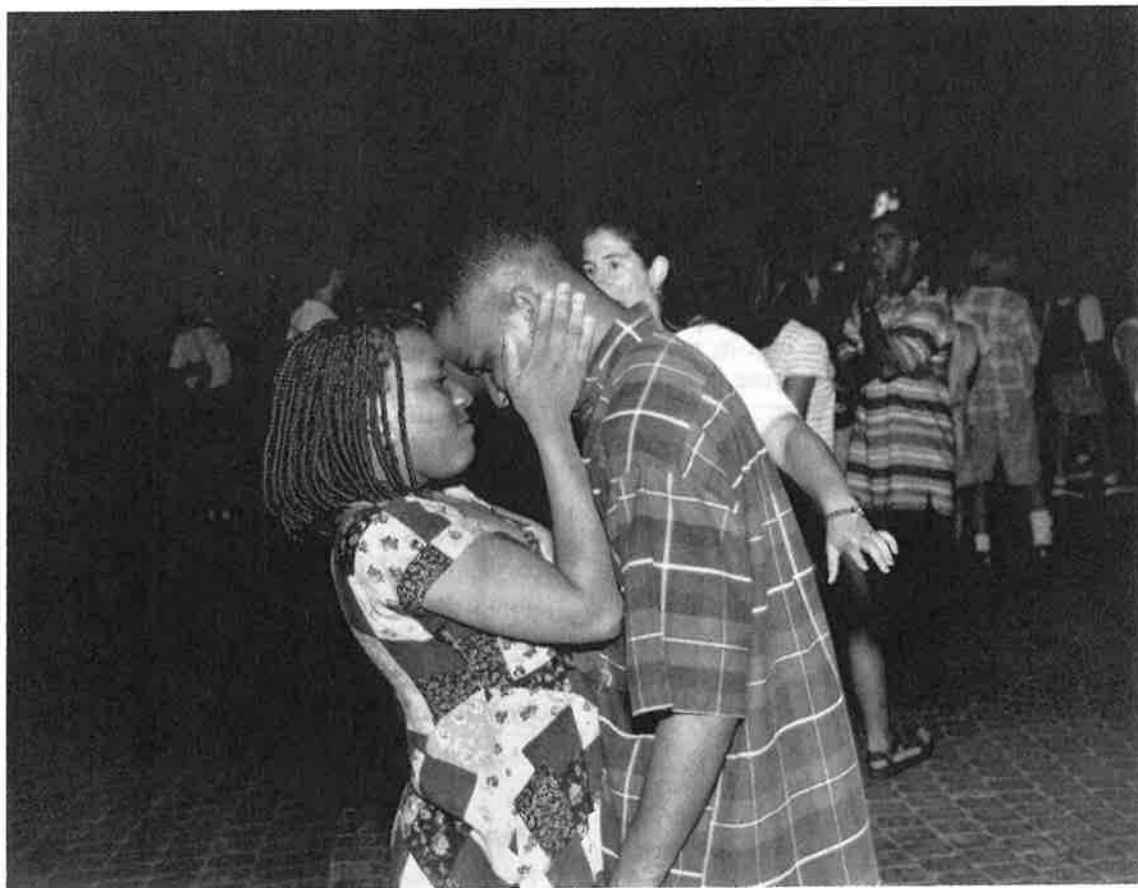
Community

The final hope of any community-building activity is that in sharing and developing a community, we begin to recognize the transfer that must take place. The community we can develop at a lock-in or retreat is a community that tangibly does not last and cannot be repeated. But in the experience, the memories that become a part of each individual are a gift

from God. We become a part of each other—taking a bit of each other with us. It is in each community experience that we begin to see the community that does last forever. We are all a part of it, now and forever!

Community building is a gift... a gift from God. It is recognizing our sameness, differences, connectedness, and it is celebrating all of this. It is recognizing that Christ is the greatest ingredient and the community builder.

In the biggest and best recipe for a Christian Community Adventure, we are all the ingredients. God is the master chef—mixing, kneading, blending, molding, and shaping the final feast of which we are all a part and of which we all partake.



Ideas for Lock-Ins, Retreats, and Conferences²⁴

Lock-In

lock-in (lahk'in) n, v: An event where the youth group spends an overnight in the church. The program can include recreation, music discussion, Bible study, worship, entertainment, food, and very little sleep.

Where: Usually at church

When: Usually an evening to a morning

Why: To spend concentrated time together to build community. The group should develop any other specific goals in the planning.

Step One: Plan the Event

Logistical details

1. Find a time. Take into consideration other activities in young people's lives such as sports, music organizations, school trips, school fund raisers, dances, and other miscellaneous events. Look at the church calendar. A Saturday night lock-in will not be the most ideal time because of Sunday morning use of the building.
2. Get approval. Check with the appropriate committee or with the diocese for accountability and building use.

Program

Assemble both young people and adult advisors who are interested in planning the program. The group should decide which of the following eight areas to include.

1. Theme, discussions, and goals: What kinds of goals, purposes, or objectives does the group want to accomplish? Will you use a curriculum? Will you talk about certain issues? Will you have someone outside the group come to speak?

2. Recreation and music: What kinds of music do you want? Do you have musicians you could use? What kinds of recreational activities do you want to have?
3. Schedule: Is there enough time in the schedule for sleep, preparing meals, and free time?
4. Worship or devotions: What kinds of worship experiences do you want to have? Do you want to have daily devotions?
5. Food: Who will cook, clean up, and shop for supplies?
6. Entertainment or special activities: Does the group want to do any special activities (such as hiking, skiing, or sightseeing)? What kinds of entertainment would you like (movies, dance)?
7. Cost: How much will the weekend activities cost each individual?
8. Publicity and registration: Who will send out some kind of communication (whether through a newsletter, flyer, or personal letter) indicating cost, time, possible schedule, and registration form?

Community life

The group should decide how it will live together as a Christian community, with a covenant, discipline, and rules. The decisions should be clear, with consequences discussed and understood.

Step Two: Do It!

Have fun. Be flexible. Enjoy the community.

Step Three: Evaluate the Event

This can be done quickly by the participants during the evening at the end of the sched-

uled activities or by sending out a letter. Have the planning committee also evaluate and make notes on what worked and what didn't.

Retreat

retreat (rih-treet') **n, v:** An event in which a youth group goes to a place away from home, usually scheduled on a weekend. Includes recreation, Bible study, discussion, worship, food, entertainment, and good community living. Can be an exciting, fun, challenging, and life changing experience.

Where: A camp, conference center, retreat center, vacation cabin, or beach house

When: Usually a weekend (one night and two days or two nights and three days)

Why: To get away as a group, spend concentrated time together, and build community. The group should develop specific goals in the planning.

Step One: Plan the Event

Logistical details

1. Find a time. Check school calendars for events that may not allow certain members of the group to attend. Check the church calendar for scheduled activities.
2. Find a place. Important things to look for in a location are cost, nearness, and adequate facilities. Make sure to get a written record or contract indicating the dates needed, the cost, and the anticipated number of people.
3. Cost. Figure out cost per person for food, transportation, and housing.
4. Congregational approval. Make sure the proper committees to which the youth group is accountable are aware that a retreat is being planned.
5. Publicity and registration. Communicate the dates with the members of the youth

group and their parents by letter, newsletter, or flyer. Have registration sign-up sheets that include necessary information about the participant (address, phone, parental consent, health questions, etc.).

6. Recruitment of advisors, drivers, and cooks. Try to find people who have had contact with the group in the past. If you bring on new people who have an interest in working with the group, make sure they are involved in the planning and follow-through.
7. Insurance. Check with your congregation to make the necessary insurance arrangements for coverage.
8. Transportation. Make arrangements for necessary vehicles, whether you use a bus or van, rental or charter vehicles, or cars.

Program

Get a committee together of young people and adult advisors to plan for the different areas of the retreat. Not all of them need to be present. The group should decide what to include.

Community Life

The group should decide how it will live together as a Christian community. The decisions should be clear, with consequences discussed and understood. If you are bringing someone to cook and clean up, this will not be an issue. However, if the group is cooking and cleaning up after itself, you will need to decide how to divide the responsibilities.

Step Two: Do It!

Have fun. Be flexible. Enjoy the community.

Step Three: Evaluate the Event

Have the participants evaluate the retreat at the end of the weekend. The planning committee should also evaluate and make notes for future use about what were good planning decisions and what were not good planning decisions.

Conference

conference (kahn' fah-rents) n: An event that includes discussions among representatives of more than one group or region. Can be on a diocesan, province, or national level. Usually the programming has already been planned, and the group chooses what to participate in from a variety of options. Can be an exciting time for meeting new people from different places; a challenging time to deal with issues of faith, justice, identity, or peace; a life-changing experience; or any combination of the three.

Where: Usually at a conference center or camp

When: From two days to two weeks, usually during school vacations

Why: To get away as a group, spend concentrated time together, build community, meet new people, learn new things. The group or conference may have other specific goals.

Step One: Plan the Event

Even though you will not need to plan the actual programming for the conference, a lot of arrangements need to be made.

1. Check the dates of the conference.
2. Get information from the conference center about the conference itself and about arrangements for housing and registration.
3. Publicize and contact parents.
4. Get approval on the dates and financial arrangements.

5. Plan fund raisers if needed.
6. Figure up cost per person based upon housing, transportation, food, registration, and insurance costs.
7. Make registration and housing arrangements.
8. Arrange transportation (such as a charter bus, van rental, cars).
9. Arrange for insurance.
10. Recruit adult advisors and drivers.
11. Recruit cooks if the conference is not providing cafeteria facilities.
12. Get materials that are needed for study before the conference, if any.
13. Plan orientation for those going, to discuss responsibilities, conference purposes, and covenant, discipline, and conflict resolution.
14. Make an informational sheet for parents with important phone numbers.

Step Two: Go to the Conference

Enjoy it. Be flexible. Participate fully. Be a community.

Step Three: Evaluate and Debrief

Make sure you have some time as a community going home to discuss the events of the conference. Evaluate the arrangements made as well as the conference itself. Make notes for future events. Maybe the group could make a presentation to the congregation after the conference.

Small and Special: Ideas for Small Congregations²⁵

The small congregation offers many exciting possibilities for doing youth ministries. The intimate atmosphere allows for the building of community in a very natural way and promotes the visibility of its young people. That is all well and good, but what is done with the ministry and visibility is what counts. The following are some ways to involve young people in the planning and experiencing of youth ministries. It is up to your group to determine which, if any, are of interest. As has been said, "There's nothing new under the sun, just new ways of approach." Youth ministries in the small congregation relies on the partnership of young people and adults working together. Therefore, it is crucial that planning not be done solely by one group or the other. Ownership of the overall program will bring the best possible experience and attendance and model what it means to make and keep commitments. In other words, plan together!

1. The small congregation experience brings the opportunity to do relational youth ministry between young persons and the rest of the congregation, in many different combinations. Some specific possibilities are:

Adult leaders and adolescents. At least once a year invite one or two of the young people to your home for dinner. Discover special activities and interests of individual group members and go to an event of which they are a part, or invite them to join you in attending an event they would enjoy.

Young people and peers. Use resources on identity and peer ministry, have training sessions to help young people develop their skills in relating to peers in a positive way. Retreats, lock-ins, and field trips, where interaction of peers is comfortable and natural, all aid in this area of ministry.

Young people and older adults. A magical thing happens when a cassette recorder is turned on and a young person asks an older adult to share some of his or her history or faith story. The tape may be turned into a journal of faith and shared with the congregation, used for a congregational dinner program, or placed in the church or local library as a resource.

Adolescents and children. Young people and children are wonderfully matched together in tutoring, child care, storytelling, campouts, vacation Bible school, and day camps and as choir partners. These types of opportunities allow young people to develop parenting communication and teaching skills. The children develop healthy attitudes about adolescence and adolescents, communication skills, and community love when they are important to someone outside the family.

Parents and adult leaders. Constant communication regarding program, studies, and activities can benefit both parents and adult leaders in helping in the coordination and participation of young people. If, in addition, one or two special programs for parents are offered each year, this will be viewed both with appreciation and as an educational opportunity. Parental involvement with their young people in the youth ministries program is also crucial. This may range from serving as transportation chairperson, cooking a meal, or sharing special interests or vocational emphases to up-front leadership at a retreat or study series. The key is to involve parents (with the approval of their young people) at least once a year.

Parents and adolescents. Special Bible studies, communication sessions, shared retreats on particular topics, survey experiences, and so on can awaken family relationships and deepen the love that already exists.

Young people and congregation staff and vestry. In the small congregation, "Everybody knows everybody" is a familiar comment. Use that real plus by having young people and vestry members partnered to discover the various ministry programs and to explore places where young people can fully participate. The staff person or vestry member could help explain how to function as a member of a committee and serve as mentor in a particular office of the congregation.

2. Adolescents are exploring what commitment means. Request young people to coordinate particular events; allow them to discover what all is involved in putting together a program or ministry opportunity. The congregation might covenant with the young people to serve as the staff for vacation Bible school, a special Advent or Lenten series, or a congregational program. Committees might have a fair, where representatives explain the role of each group and allow individual young people to select a committee where their interests lie.

3. Young people may discover or know an area of ministry that is not being handled in the congregation and choose that area for their outreach opportunity.

4. When numbers are needed for a particular opportunity, inviting school and community friends and relatives might be a possible avenue. A more beneficial route would be to partner with one or two other groups from the congregation.

5. Biking, hikes, hiking retreats, concerts, movie marathons, travel, and visiting local officials, sites, and personalities are ideal for youth ministries programs with small numbers, for coordination is more manageable. The important thing to do is to capitalize on the unique size of your group by choosing those activities a larger group has difficulty in pulling off.

6. Begin a "sharing of talents" skill bank within the congregation community and move outside to other youth groups. For example, Shadow Valley wants to do a lock-in and needs a song leader; your group has a sixteen-year-old who is an excellent song leader. You match them up with the understanding that Shadow Valley will reciprocate by inviting your group to do something with them sometime

in the near future. This creative bartering can strengthen both your ministry and others.

7. In a similar fashion, the youth group might choose to become "time and talent brokers" for their own congregation, local (nearby) congregations, and the community. Taking the "time and talent" cards most congregation members fill out, the group lists the names of those with similar interests. These are then put on large posters and placed in a highly visible area of the church. In addition, the group matches up these lists with other congregation lists and community persons. Great things could happen, and for once people would have something done with "those cards" in an effective way.

8. Have young people list those adults in the congregation with whom they would like to work in the youth program. Then have a young person or two take the names and be responsible for personal recruitment. If an adult leader can go with them, that's great. But do a few simulations to practice how to recruit, have a printed job description for the adolescents to take with them, and give only a short time frame to be in touch with the potential adult leader.

9. The youth ministries program of the congregation could sponsor a "family enrichment" film series at the church and open it to the community. By soliciting the aid of the local PTA, school librarians, public libraries, and perhaps community college personnel, movies could be secured inexpensively or even at no cost.

10. A congregation newspaper might be started by the young people. There are many jobs to be filled on a newspaper. With team effort the key, everyone would have an essential role. Duplication problems? How about calling one of those "barter" congregation in the community to see if they would let you use their equipment if you supply the paper. No money for paper? Read on!

11. Doing youth ministries does cost money, and a holistic program may cost more than the budget will allow. This may be viewed as an excellent time to call on the congregation to live out in a tangible way the commitment they made at the point of baptism to nurture and aid in the growth of the young people.

Make a "Youth Ministries Needs and Wants List." Post it on the bulletin board, and outside the sanctuary (in the narthex), and put it in the bulletin. Do it as a WANTED poster and clearly differentiate between those items the group feels to be essential (needs) and those items the group feels it would be nice to have (wants).

12. For "people profiles," each member of the youth ministries program fills out an interest sheet, which can be used in the bulletin as an ongoing "Youth Corner" entry (acquainting the congregation with an in-depth look at youth ministries), as a scrapbook with individual photos, or as a "guess who?" program, allowing for identification of the youth profiles and then Bible study on "people profiles."

13. Try the Early Bird Special, a once-a-week breakfast (in homes, at the church, or at a local hangout) where prayer and Bible study are the focus. Or the group might choose to be responsible for composing some portion of the upcoming worship (a prayer, talk with children, the sharing of a song or poem).

14. Begin a creative arts troupe—clowning, drama, dance. Look for resource persons in your community.

15. Can't afford to go to a diocesan, or provincial event? How about volunteering your congregation to host the event, so you can participate! Everyone benefits this way.

16. Radio stations have what is known as "public air spots" — free time for community use. Your group might develop some youth spots and approach a local station, either for a regular "Youth Impressions Corner" or to provide isolated offerings.

17. Break out that old 8mm home movie camera and produce your own issue-oriented or special-topic movie. Or find someone in your congregation with a video camera.

18. Use photography to raise the congregation's awareness of local needs by having a "discovery in print" adventure. Young people, armed with whatever type of camera is available to them, with an adult guide on a discovery tour of the area, snap areas of need in the community; perhaps a community center, the local schools, homeless center, or shelter. (Note: never take photographs of people without their permission!) After the initial outing, the films are produced and prints used to develop a program on what was discovered. This may lead to a mission project. You might invite local community leaders to view the program and follow it with a panel.

These are only a few ideas. There are lots more where they came from. That's right — from within your very group. So what are you waiting for? Small is special. It's time everybody learned about the benefits of living, working, sharing, and caring in the smaller congregations.

Life Is a Series of Hellos and Goodbyes²⁶

"I've been asked to take responsibility for the youth group. The last leader moved, and now I'm responsible for a group I really don't know. We met last week and they seemed distant. Maybe it's just because we don't know each other yet."

"I can't believe the seniors are graduating. When I started in youth group last year, I thought they were really hard people to get to know. Now after our retreats, fellowship meetings, and work trips, they are leaving to go to college. The group is going to be really strange without them. We're also getting a new freshmen class in this Fall. I can remember them from junior high. Youth group just isn't going to be the same."

"I can't believe she's leaving! She's been our minister for as long as I can remember. What are we going to do without her? Is our group going to continue? Who are we getting? What happens if we don't like this new person?"

These are some of the feelings involved in coming into a new situation, in realizing that groups change every time someone leaves, in saying goodbye, and in understanding that when someone leaves someone new may arrive. It is difficult for most people to accept change, especially when it directly affects them. Youth groups are in constant flux, with young people, volunteers, leaders, and ministers coming and going. One constant is the yearly class change when seniors graduate and freshmen join.

Changes, transitions, and goodbyes are a part of our life. No matter how old or young we are, changes in our lives can be difficult. The youth group as a Christian community offers an opportunity both for the group and its individual members to deal with these feelings and doubts as a natural part of life. Here are some

suggestions for using the changes in the life of the community to grow.

Saying Hello to a Group

As a newcomer, understand that the group will need time to get to know you and possibly to adjust to losing someone. The key word is discussion. One way to facilitate working through these changes is to talk about what the group has been, what they have done, what they have enjoyed, what they like. Then talk about what they want to do, what they want to change, and what they dream about doing.

Time and trust are also two important words here. It will take time for you and the group to adjust to one another. Trust is an important thing to build. In the first few months, be intentional about community and trust building. Find ways to explore and reveal who you are, where you have come from, and what you hope to do. Learn who the individuals of the group are, where they come from, and what they hope to do. Plan a retreat focusing on identity and faith journeys. Plan an excursion to an obstacle course for group building. Plan a time where you have to work together on a particular project such as a fund raiser, a special dinner, a mission project. In these early days, be open and honest in expressing and hearing feelings.

Saying Goodbye to a Graduating Class

Every year an old class goes and a new class comes. It's a fact in every youth group's life. How does the group deal with it? This reality offers a great opportunity for the community to approach change and transition as a particular issue in each individual's life. Once again,

the key word is discussion. Plan a time for the group to discuss feelings, doubts, fears, and joys. Embrace the fact that the group will be different and that some people will no longer be actively involved. Celebrate the time and gifts that have been shared. Do a worship service together, have a meeting where the group reflects upon the time they have shared, a giving time where the classes give each other responsibilities and gifts. Have those who are leaving share with the group their hopes, doubts, and dreams for their new endeavors. At the last meeting of the year, use the time to support and commission those who are leaving and to celebrate the richness of the community and its gifts.

Exit one group, enter another. The uncertainty of the new members and the old members can be used to encourage sharing ideas about the possibilities of a new year. Explore together what the group has been. This can be a good time to share the history of the group. Explore together what the group can be by affirming the best of what the group has been and dreaming of what the new group can be. Be intentional about having the group share feelings and expectations.

Saying Goodbye as the Person Who Is Leaving

If you are the person who is leaving, it is important to have closure with the group. Feelings and doubts should be openly discussed. As with any ending, a process of grieving will occur. If it can happen within the established community where trust has already been built, it will give the group a sense of identity and direction. Dealing with these feelings can also make it easier for the new person coming in. The stages of grief are applicable to changes in a group—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. The group collectively or individually may or may not experience these feelings.

Once again, the key word is *discussion*. The group needs to hear about the fact you are leaving from you first, not from the congregation's newsletter or their parents. It is important to

talk about where you are going and when, so the group will be able to get an idea of distance and time (even if you are not going anywhere but just becoming involved in another part of the congregation). Don't just tell them the details; be open and honest about how you feel about leaving something familiar, starting something new, appreciating what has happened, and struggling with the change and its implications for your life. Let them know that you are affected by the change too; there are certain feelings involved in all changes of life. Ask them how they feel about your departure and how it will affect them as a group. Listen to these concerns and help them work out their fears through taking on responsibility for the life of the group. Talk about the changes that happen in life and how each of us has different ways to deal with them. Then celebrate both the time that has been spent together and the possibilities for the future of the community and for you as an individual.

If we are open and honest with our feelings, we may be able to develop a closer community within the group. All our lives we will be saying goodbye to someone. By dealing with closure in an open, honest, and natural way, those feelings of frustration, uncertainty, and sadness can lead to these feelings:

"I've been asked to take responsibility for the youth group. The last leader moved and now I'm responsible for a group I really don't know. We met last week and they seemed distant. Maybe it's just because we don't know each other yet. I know it has got to be difficult to get used to a new leader, and I also realize that they are still adjusting to the change. Maybe we should talk about it."

"I can't believe the seniors are graduating. When I started in youth group last year, I thought they were really hard people to get to know. Now after our retreats, fellowship meetings, and work trips, they are leaving to go to college. The group is going to be really strange without them. I'm going to miss them, but I know that the friendships we made will change and grow even though we will be away from one another. And those freshmen we are getting, we'll work to make them a part of

the group. Sure, the group won't be the same. Change is both scary and exciting. But it's also a fact of life, and it can be a challenging time of growing."

"I know she's leaving. She's been our priest for as long as I can remember. I know that the group will change, but we will continue. The new person will be different, but we can work together to grow as a group."

Celebrate what the group has been, is now, and will be. Celebrate where people are going, not just those leaving but also those who are continuing. Both are growing experiences, and we will all be in these different places at some time in our lives.

Specific Activities

Saying Hello to a Group

Objectives

- To build trust
- To get acquainted with one another

Trust walks can be done in many ways. Here are two suggestions. You will need enough blindfolds for each person.

1. Break the group into pairs, putting together those who do not know one another well. Blindfold one person in each pair and let the other be responsible. Have them explore the building and grounds for a period of time with the blindfolded partner relying solely on the voice and touch of the other. Reverse roles and repeat. Then have them talk about putting complete trust into someone and how that felt. Bring the whole group together to discuss their experiences and being able to trust one another.

2. Use all advisors, new and old, as leaders. Have the group divide into as many smaller groups as there are advisors. Blindfold the young people in each group and have them stand single file with their right hands on the shoulder of the person in front. Each advisor will verbally lead a blindfolded group on a ten- or fifteen-minute walk throughout the church property. The group must listen to and trust the

advisor. Gather the groups together to discuss their experiences.

Self-collages are a way to get to know one another through creating an illustration of oneself. You will need magazines, paper, scissors, and glue. Have participants look through the magazines for pictures and words that describe who they are, what they like, what they do. Share yourself with the group too.

"Press conference" gives members of the youth group a way to get to know new advisors, but make sure the advisors are willing to be put on the hot seat. For this activity, the young people play the role of newspaper reporters, with the advisors being the ones interviewed. The questions should be "getting-to-know-you" informational questions that allow the advisors to tell something about themselves: "Please tell us about your family. Your home. What is your favorite holiday? What is your idea of a good time? What makes you happy? What sort of things bug you? What were you like in high school?" The questions should get some basic information from the advisors. They should be non-threatening to both the advisors and the group. As a possible follow-up, group members may want to publish a story on their advisors in the group newsletter.

Visiting members is a great way to get acquainted with group members on a one-to-one basis. Maybe you could announce that you will be visiting at certain times on certain days and have people sign up for a time.

Saying Goodbye to a Graduating Class

Objectives

- To celebrate good times the group has had
- To remember what the group has been and become
- To communicate feelings about change
- To dream about the future in the midst of change and gain a vision that life continues

"I remember when..." is an activity where each person writes down a good memory experience or a lesson learned with the group. Have people create or draw a symbol of their significant memory and then share the symbol and memory with the group.

“Dear Youth Group” is a letter-writing activity in which each person tells the youth group in a letter what the group has meant and recalls a cherished time spent together. Compile the letters into a “Dear Youth Group” edition of the newsletter.

“Senior story session” invites each senior to tell his or her story, not just up to the present but into the possible and impossible future. Have the seniors imagine what leaving their familiar surroundings will be like, where they will be in ten years, and how they feel about these changes. Discuss the dreams and hopes of the group with one another. From this information the group can then work up a short biographical sketch on each senior, to include in the Sunday bulletin or group newsletter, or create a senior dream page, where dreams and hopes are posted.

“I am leaving behind... I am going to...” is a way to get everyone in the group to think about the changes involved in leaving and having people leave. Have the group write down what they leave behind as a graduating senior and what they think they will go to. Discuss these items and the feelings attached to them.

Map out the places where people are going when they leave. (You will need a map of the United States or the world, depending on your class.) Collect the addresses. The map can serve as a visual representation of how your community is spread throughout the country and the world. Discuss the feelings of those leaving to go to a new place in life. Discuss the feelings of those staying. Post the map as a reminder of the community that still exists, even across the miles.

Saying Goodbye as the Person Who Is Leaving

Objectives

- To discuss leave-taking and transition as a normal part of life

- To discuss your feelings as you leave
- To discuss the group’s feelings as you leave

“Childhood to adulthood” looks at the changes and transitions we have all gone through or will go through. Have each person bring an item that represents childhood, such as a toy, clothing, documents, or mementos. Group members are to introduce themselves in turn and share their item and how it represents their childhood. Discuss the transition from being a child to where they are now. Next think about the transitions that will take them from where they are now to where they will be in the future (driving, dating, jobs, leaving home). List the transitions on newsprint. Then list the losses and gains of each transition. Close the discussion by sharing your feelings about leaving and the transition you will be going through.

“Letting go and leaving behind” is an activity where participants chart significant times of transition in their lives. You will need pencil and paper. Have each person fold a sheet of paper into four columns. The first three columns represent one third of their life to the present. The fourth column will be for the next five years. Chart and graph the ups and downs of each life. After this, have the participants discuss their charts in small groups, focusing on people or experiences they have left behind and the feelings that were involved. Then have the participants think about the next five years. What do they see as their ups and downs? What will they let go of, say goodbye to? In the large group, list the significant goodbyes from their past and then the ones in their future. Share with them your feelings about leaving and saying goodbye.

Map out where you are going. As a physical way of showing distance, point out on the map where you are now and where you are going. Share with the group the possibilities that await you. Discuss your feelings of excitement, joy, sorrow and uncertainty.

Sharing and Eating Food as Stewards of God's Creation²⁷

"Pass me the corn chips, would you, Bryan?"

"Can I have another cookie, Amy?"

"You didn't have to throw it!"

"Would you guys quit talking, I can't hear the movie."

"Hey, who ate all the candy?"

The typical youth group movie night is nothing without snacks. Whatever we do, wherever we go, food is part of the program and is constantly inquired about. "When can we eat dinner? Can we stop at the store? Will there be doughnuts at Sunday school class?" Young people's lives are filled with thinking about, planning for, and eating food. Food keeps the body alive and enables it to grow and repair tissue. Anything different is waste. Those raising or working with young people realize that food can end up being much less or more than nourishment.

Consumers

Eating, for young people, can be anything from socializing to self-destruction. It can be a form of self-comfort, a sign of social status, mere conformity, or a way to alleviate hunger brought on by rapid physical growth. Perceptions of food, which affect eating behaviors, have been rapidly changing. Food, for many young people, has become the consumer rather than the consumed. Americans of all ages spend more money every year in trying to lose weight than the hard-earned dollars that were spent in gaining it. Food fights are considered humorous. If we don't like what is on our plate, we

throw it away. Food is often left in refrigerators so long it spoils and can't be eaten.

Language

Our language betrays our false understandings of both food and our physical needs. We've all said, many times, "I'm starving!" Starving? The food and beverage companies, via the media, lead us to think that we cannot survive without their products, and we often believe it. Bulimia and anorexia are eating disorders that cause the affected person, usually a young woman between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two, to perceive herself as overweight when in most cases she is not. This false perception leads to obsessive dieting and exercising and includes forced vomiting and the abuse of laxatives. For some, these diseases of the mind, body, and spirit are fatal.

These perceptions of food, in combination with the pace at which today's young people and adults operate, have set the stage for a lifestyle of fast food, convenience stores, and overly processed food products. Many young people eat where it is both convenient and quick; fast food is heavily processed, especially with salt.

Young people, and many adults, are not aware of where food comes from and what it takes to get it into their hands. Many people have never worked on a farm or been to one. The experience of planting, tending, nurturing, and sweating over the growth of a plant or an animal has been lost. These are only the early steps in a very long chain of making food ready to eat.

Much of the grain used to fatten cattle for hamburgers and steaks could be fed to

people around the globe to alleviate hunger. Three times as many natural resources are used to produce beef products as are needed for poultry, fish, or complementary proteins like beans.

Cooking

Many young people don't know how to cook from scratch. Some are not taught to cook at all, and thus they dash to fast-food establishments. Very little understanding exists between young people and their food. Food is a void-filler.

This lifestyle, filled with false perceptions and lack of knowledge, has alienated young people from their responsibility as stewards of the earth for their sisters and brothers. Our calling in youth ministries is to reorient and balance young people's lives, and our own, into a lifestyle that provides nourishment for all people. Stewardship is taking responsibility and having the personal power to be a caretaker. Genesis 1 describes God giving all animals, plants, and trees to humans to keep and to have dominion over. In an age of violent action films, it is indeed difficult to think of dominion or power very positively. Yet we have dominion and young people have dominion.

Jesus understood our difficulty and addressed it. Jesus explained that life is a circle of interrelatedness and not a pyramid of competition. First and last trade places, and servants are royalty. He showed us that it is best to treat others as we would want to be treated. Jesus' perceptions make having dominion and power a very difficult thing: dominion filled with thankfulness, respect, and love; this is our calling as stewards. Native Americans thanked an animal and prayed over it when it was killed, as an act of respect for the life it held and the gifts it would bring to them. They used every portion of the animal — for food, tools, clothing, and shelter. This is stewardship born of relationship. Youth ministries is an ideal forum in which to build the relationships that can instill this strong sense of stewardship. The study of food can be the context for understanding the relationship of the immediate community, the natural community, and the

world community. Activities and experiences that make the sense of community more vivid are vital.

Activities

Visit a facility in your community that serves the hungry. Meet real people who are in need. Help to collect food for this facility and make a commitment to do it once a month for six months. Later, volunteer to sort food at the facility. Discover how political action affects the lives of those in the community and the world by scanning newspapers for relevant articles. Ask questions such as, Do these actions make life better or worse for the poor and hungry? Is food used as a pawn for another goal? Are these actions globally just?

Visit a production plant. Discover how food is grown and processed and how these processes affect the soil, air, and water. Visit a farm and find out which foods use more natural resources to grow. Discover which pesticides or tools are harmful to the earth. Volunteer labor hours at the farm, perhaps at different times of the year. Celebrate the harvest with the farmer.

Games

Use simulation games to understand the current distribution of food in the global context. Ask a recent immigrant or refugee to speak about the types of food, production, and cooking practices in his or her country. Participate in fund raising for overseas hunger relief. Direct aid in the local or global community is fantastic mission work and provides a firsthand experience of service to others. Emphasize that direct aid is not going to solve the bigger problems of inequality in distribution and lifestyle consumption. Personal lifestyles must be changed in order to bring about a global community where everyone has enough to eat.

Personal lifestyles are affected by a variety of experiences centering on art, habits, nutrition, and faith. Use art to strengthen personal feelings and understandings about hunger. What color is hunger? What shape and texture is

hunger? Use clay, paint, and pictures to elicit these feelings. Draw a portrait of hunger. How does it look? Is it male or female? What kind of music sounds hungry? These experiences can bring out young people's feelings about hunger in different areas of their lives.

Journal

Evaluate personal eating and food-purchasing habits through use of a journal. For a week, keep track of what was eaten, where, and with whom. Make a personal list of twenty favorite foods and then choose five and analyze them for their nutritional value, impact on natural resources, and level on the food chain. If these are convenience foods, save the money that would have been spent on them for a week or month and send it to hunger relief. Take cooking lessons from one of the parents or grandparents at the church.

Nutrition information is handy on most food labels. Take the group to a grocery store and look at all the ingredients of their favorite foods. Have a nutritionist come and talk to the group. Do this while going hungry for twenty-four hours and talk about what happens to a body without food, or a body

with the wrong food. Discuss what is enough. Why is it that eating nutritional food often not enough?

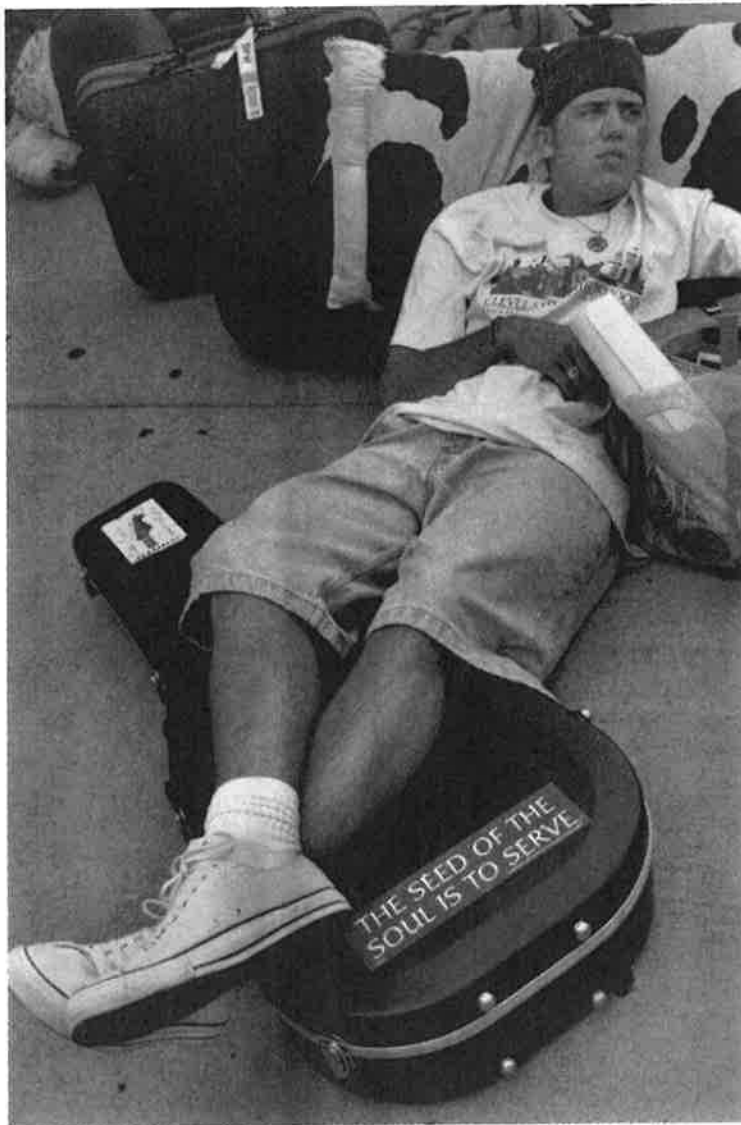
Bread

Eucharistic liturgies that focus on the bread are powerful. Have your group bake the bread for the service. Take note of where the ingredients come from and what nutritional value each has. Emphasize that many in the world do not even have bread to eat, and pray for them. Focus on a sense of gratitude whenever food is eaten. Give thanks for the food, for those who grew it, produced it, cooked it, and served it. Create a joyful atmosphere where eating is a meaningful experience, one that will fill the other hungers that plague young people.

Eating together as stewards is a challenge. Food, in the life of young people, can be a joyful celebration of community, the earth, and all God's gifts, but it is not easy. We in youth ministries are called to be a light in the darkness of over-consumption and destructive eating in order to make wholeness for all people a possibility. The ability is ours through a limitless and creative God who has dominion and power over us and who continues to be fruitful.

Part VI

**Service, Mission
and Social Action**



Service in Youth Ministries

What's going on around you? Better yet, what's not going on around you? Everybody needs help sometime, some way, but who around you needs specific help now? And don't forget that you also need help and get lots of it from many persons and you'll keep on needing help. This is a useful idea to remember as you think about being helpful to others.

A few possibilities to start you thinking:

- Children and youth who need friendly tutors
- Children who need play experience with youth
- Mothers who need short-term child care so they can get out
- Old persons who can't do for themselves
- Shut-ins who need all kinds of things
- Sick people

Or think of it this way: What useful things can your youth group do around the church building? At the Y? With scouts? Community centers? Hospitals? Homes? Do you have a volunteer bureau or a Voluntary Action Center in your community? Ask.

And then there are issue-oriented service activities: voter registration programs, pollution control activities, political campaigns (yep!), programs dealing with drugs, runaways, and so on. Community organization to empower the powerless is another way to serve.

Now we're getting down to the nitty-gritty, the kind of service that really means something: dealing with issues, changing the system.

That's where a lot of young people want to be. "I want service that is meaningful," said one young person. "I don't want bedpan duty." It's a challenge to try to change the system, and it needs changing, no doubt about that. It's understandable that many youth want to take the glory road of effecting social change rather

than emptying bedpans. But, dear friend, what kind of new system can be created by persons who lack the human compassion and humility to empty bedpans?

Occasional service will occur when there is an unusual event. Something happens. A need is evident. You do something about it. After a flood or fire or accident or tragedy, you organize your group to clean up or gather food and clothing or provide child care or just be there or whatever else is needed.

Ongoing service settings are more likely in that for many people the needs go on and on. But in either ongoing or occasional service settings, make careful plans so that your group can provide adequate personnel for the service needed for the period of time designated. Don't complicate the lives of people by offering more than you can deliver. Make certain you have the skills and capabilities needed. This means careful assessment of proposed projects for junior highs and senior highs alike.

The possibilities for service are numerous. Here are a few general guidelines.

1. Start in Your Own Community

Hurt, loneliness, injustice, and oppression exist everywhere. It's much more glamorous, of course, to take a trip to some exotic place for a service project, but the cost of such service is usually far more than the service contribution made by a youth group in a short time. Not only is there the cost of preparation, transportation, rooms, meals, and supplies on your part, but the bigger cost in the time, energy, and dollars the host situation expends for preparation, supervision, and recovery. Often the already exploited people end up being further exploited so that a youth group can have a

groovy service project away from home. It's a hard reality to face.

If your group wishes to visit mission projects and special programs, take a trip, learn all you can, enjoy it, but don't try to justify a trip by calling it service.

2. Take a Long Hard Look at Unmet Needs

Who has poor eyesight and might enjoy being read to? Who lives alone and would find a visit from a young friend most pleasant? Who is tied at home with young children and would appreciate baby-sitters a couple of hours during the day to get out for some uninterrupted shopping? Who has difficulty with chores and might appreciate a helping hand? One church member, after a lonely stay in the hospital, dedicated his free time to visiting sick persons in hospitals in his community. Young people manage the visitors' desk at one hospital.

Ecology groups are springing up. Programs to recycle paper and glass are found in many communities. Young people can help in these programs. And who is it that cleans up the town creek? In our town, the high school students!

Our town has a tutoring program in the public schools with five hundred tutors, many of whom are high school students. Young people at times are more effective than adults in tutoring situations.

An important issue is going to be discussed at the town council. Who will come? Will various viewpoints be heard? Young people inviting citizens to attend can help shape a decision. At one time some young people were interested in a particular issue. It was scheduled as the last item on the agenda of the town council. When seventy teenagers showed up, the agenda item became number one!

3. Plan Carefully

While many young persons find meaningful service as individuals, it is important to remember that a congregation is a body of persons acting corporately in worship and in service. So

don't strike out on your own; make plans in your group to serve as a group insofar as this is possible.

- Determine a need in your community.
- What will service cost in terms of time, energy, dollars? Be reasonably certain you can deliver what you promise.
- Do you have the skills to do what is needed?
- Talk your plans through with the agency you are working with or with the persons to be served. Does everybody understand what is to be done? When? Where? Who? How?

One group of young people committed themselves to a tutoring program and then had to cancel because they didn't have dependable transportation to the school. Another group planned to build a small frame building on a long weekend-and left a messy uncompleted job because their skills were not adequate for the time allowed and they kept getting in one another's way! A group from a suburban church planned a weekend project with youth of a city church to clean up a city lot for a playground. Planning included:

- Thinking how big the job was
- What tools were needed and how to get them
- The muscle power needed
- How they would get there and back
- What to do with the junk
- Where they would sleep
- Who would cook what, when, and where
- Who would buy and pay for food and other supplies
- Who would be the supervisor
- Recreation and worship
- How to do a similar thing when youth from the city church came to the suburban church for a weekend project

What are the differences between service activity for senior highs and junior highs? That depends a lot, of course, upon the particular group. But generally junior highs will

need much more supervision, and their projects should not require developed skills. A ninth-grader can tutor a sixth-grader, but ninth-graders should not attempt tasks for which they have not yet acquired necessary skills. Junior highs will tend to find service opportunities with community agencies into whose programs they can fit. Senior highs can organize service projects of their own devising but can find meaningful service with organizations also.

4. Examine Your Motives

Young people should ask themselves: Why do you want to serve? To score brownie points? To get a star on your crown? To be one of the gang? To help people? To work out your own problems? To find fulfillment for yourself? Service is a tricky thing. Much of it is for selfish reasons. Not that all selfish reasons are bad, but there is nothing worse than somebody whose need to be needed is so great that other persons are exploited to satisfy the needs of the one who serves. If poverty were abolished, a lot of helping agencies and volunteers would be out of business. Sometimes it seems that needy people are kept needy so that those who need to be needed are needed.

So why serve?

"I want to do something meaningful. I'm fed up with school. My life is full of useless routines. I want to do something that counts." Multitudes of young people are saying these things. And meaning apparently isn't found in what most of us do most of the time.

It's tough to see meaning in what we ordinarily do, so we go looking for something else. And the farther removed from our routine the better. Okay, so you're human. But the trick is to discover meaning in what you are doing. Serving others may be just that thing. In a way this is selfish, but it is self-fulfillment and not self-aggrandizement.

When John set out to make a name for himself in school, he succeeded. He joined everything, volunteered for every project, didn't get anything completed, and his grades suffered. He didn't care for the name he made for himself! Sue didn't buck for anything. She did

fewer things but did them well. She lost herself in her activities and in service to others. John campaigned vigorously for student council. Sue was elected.

Jesus put it on the line. He said that to be great, one must be the servant of all. Greatness is not to be number one. To know the full joy, happiness, meaning, and purpose of life is number one. Being a servant to all doesn't mean that you're a slave for anybody to push around; it means an attitude, practice, and lifestyle of voluntarily doing things for others.

Jesus put it on the line, not only in words but with his life. He has been called "the man for others." He was always doing something for somebody. He did something for all of us, and he did it voluntarily. Although executed as a criminal, Jesus did not have his life taken from him. He freely offered up his life for all people. That's what salvation is all about.

5. Anticipate Trouble

You would think that most people's attitudes about service are mature. You are going to run into problems. As long as you are engaged in "safe" service projects, most everybody will applaud your actions: caring for the sick, teaching children, reading to the blind, helping the elderly, working around the church, cleaning up-whatever are good things to do.

But when your actions are direct service or advocating social change in the arenas of race, poverty, drug culture, peace, gender issues, or anything else that frees, liberates, and empowers people, you will meet stiff opposition from folks who don't want to change. You'll hear things like:

"They are shiftless and lazy and are taking advantage of you."

"Charity begins at home; take care of your own first."

"Go slow. Don't rock the boat."

"That's too controversial."

"That's our work, and you keep out of our way."

"That's a good thing you're doing, but is that really church work?"

When engaged in such service, careful planning for the program itself is essential, but more important is planning of a political nature to deal with parents, church officials, community leaders, and professional leaders in service agencies. Who is likely to be critical? About what? Why? How do you get potentially critical people in your planning? How do you get objectors involved?

6. Experiment

This is an opportunity to try out new roles, new relationships, new occupations. Does someone want to be a secretary? The office of many voluntary associations could use help in office routines. What about ecology as a career? Test it out by looking in your community for evidence of pollution and its sources. How about the medical profession? Many hospitals and clinics can use volunteers. Interested in social work? There are agencies nearby which would be glad to have volunteers. Maybe your group's thing is administration. Take on the administrative responsibilities for a service project. Service programs are ways to expand personal horizons. Perhaps your group doesn't come into contact with aged people. Maybe it's small children they might need to know. Perhaps persons of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds will come into your group's life to enrich it in an unusual way. Working with business and professional people also is a benefit of service. Persons who are different may come into your life. Learn from these new experiences.

7. Evaluate

This usually means "How did you like it?" and "Do you want to do it again?" Of

course, personal feelings are important, but the central question is: To what extent did we achieve our objectives? Sometimes a negative evaluation does not indicate poor performance but too large an objective. One can hardly stress too much the importance of clarifying the objectives for a project.

Objectives include the specific service to be performed and the learnings you hope to gain from the event. The first can be stated concretely (130 hours of tutoring for ten persons during the next three months), but the second should be more open and anticipatory. While 130 hours of tutoring is a measurable objective, the quality of what goes into those hours is another matter. However you may feel about what takes place, the one being helped is the one to say if the event has been helpful or not.

Evaluation should include a review of learnings. Take some time and talk through your experiences and list the things you learned. You probably will be surprised.

8. Enjoy Yourself

The world is full of qualified experts. They mess things up too. Youth service activity does not assume professionalism or expertise. You have some skills. You have muscle. You have a brain. You have energy and enthusiasm. These are needed, and there is much to be done. Relax and do the best job you can. Don't expect to work miracles.

Along the way, plan (or have the sense to recognize) moments of celebration, especially with those with whom you work—those moments of rapturous joy when the Holy Spirit sweeps over a group or explodes within its midst. Name that moment and celebrate in singing, shouting, dancing, hugging, praying, crying, laughing, or whatever is the natural thing to do.

Taking Risks Through a Mission Project²⁸

Ordinarily a mission project is an away-from-home happening in which young people and adult leaders have an opportunity to give their total energy to accomplish a particular manual labor task. A mission project experience has the possibility of challenging adults and young people both as individuals and as the community to intentionally work together.

The intent is to offer people a choice to deepen relationships with one another and with persons who live a different lifestyle. Mission projects are suitable for both junior highs and senior highs. When considering a mission project with junior highs, a short period of time and more specific tasks to be accomplished are advisable. Senior highs tend to be more adaptable for longer experiences and more varied tasks. These experiences may include construction, visiting hospital patients, an outdoor drama, a recreation program, maintenance at a conference center, or an environmental project in Alaska. The possibilities are virtually limitless. When a youth group is open to such an experience, the creative spirit begins to put into shape what will happen.

The most important ingredient is a clear understanding on the part of leaders about the preparation necessary for a mission project.

Preparing for a Mission Project

Consider the following questions. Any "yes" answers probably mean the adult leaders and the youth group are ready for a work camp experience.

1. Has the youth group demonstrated the ability to work together?
2. Are you, the adult leader, feeling the need for something more challenging for the young people?

3. Does the youth group need an experience that will help build community and develop a more cooperative spirit?
4. Is there a ready-made experience (diocesan, agency) in which your young people could participate?
5. Are you, the adult leader, feeling adventurous and ready for a big, demanding task?
6. Does the youth group want to experience life and live in a different setting or culture?

These same questions can also help determine objectives for a mission project. Here is an example of some possible objectives:

Young people and adults on this mission project will:

1. Encounter a job, or jobs, that challenges individual skills and energy
2. Commit themselves to accomplish together a specific task
3. Learn to live together in a setting different from their usual life situation
4. Be challenged to appreciate how other people live
5. Grow in the Christian spirit of giving and receiving
6. Be able to share new learnings for their own lives

Young people and adults planning a mission project will want to struggle with a purpose and reason for the experience. Listing specific objectives will help focus planning and assessing the event.

Congregational Support

Early in planning, the issue of money presents itself. Persons planning mission projects will want to learn what funds may be available in the congregation's mission committee budget or consider raising the funds through the youth group. Garage sales, donation dinners, selling youth skills for cutting grass or baby-sitting, private donations, and sponsorship by church members are all possibilities. Whatever way money is raised, it is a good idea to check with the vestry to make sure raising funds outside the operating budget is permissible. A mission project budget might include:

- Transportation (Van rental, tickets, gasoline)
- Supplies (Paint, work gloves, printed materials)
- Publicity and promotion (For a fund-raiser dinner, talent show, etc.)
- Food (On-site for participants)
- Housing (Donations for utilities, tents, etc.)

When planning for a mission project, involve the congregation for support and diocesan-wide interest for the project. If a fund-raising event is held, the congregation is automatically involved. Another way to include the membership is to publish a "needs" list for the mission project for tools, supplies, and snacks or sponsors. A few Sundays before the event, a commissioning service during worship also gives the congregation an opportunity to be a part of the experience.

Orientation

The mission project planners will want to include parents in at least one of the orientation sessions for the participants. These orientation sessions are essential for a good experience. Orientation might include:

1. History and information about the location of the work site
2. Information on what to bring: types of clothes that are appropriate, personal articles needed, medical release forms or permission slips from parents, bedrolls, money needs, insurance coverage

3. Expectations that participants have for the event and the objectives for the mission projects
4. Information on the living conditions of the work site
5. Travel information: departure and return, mode of travel, baggage requirements, money exchange, entry documents necessary (passport, visa), medical release forms
6. Clearly defined leader and participant roles and expectations
7. Language skills (if going to a non-English-speaking location)
8. Skill development if specific things need to be learned (how to talk to terminal patients, telling a Bible story, mixing paint, leveling a board, using a chain saw)
9. Clarifying the specific task to be accomplished at the work site
10. Getting acquainted, if the group is not known to one another
11. Resource people who can offer information about the location, the people, and the task to be done
12. Medical forms from all participants, including name, address, special medication, allergies, or handicaps and signed by a parent

During the Mission Project

In planning your day, be sure to arrange time for worship together or with the host community every day, time for recreation, time to visit local cultural interests, and time for participants to be alone. Set daily work goals that are reasonable, yet will challenge the group.

Evaluating the Experience

A most valuable part of the mission project is the debriefing or evaluation of the experience. Some evaluation, of course, takes place

on the spot—for example, not having hats in 102-degree heat or being without plastic sheets during the rainy season. However, a more intentional appraisal is desirable. The debriefing is not so much for finding out what went wrong as for exploring feelings and new learnings that happened to individuals and to the group as a whole. It is helpful to set aside some time before the mission project or soon after returning home to do the evaluation. Some possible questions for evaluating a mission project are:

1. What happened that you expected would happen?
2. What happened that you did not expect to happen?
3. What three things about the trip will you share with your family and friends?
4. What messages would you give to persons planning such a trip next year?
5. What changes has the experience made in you! feelings or attitudes about yourself? The youth group? The adult leaders?

Sharing the experience with the congregation enhances the evaluation in that participants sort through the happenings and select those things that best interpret and illustrate what took place. This sharing could take the form of a parish supper with presentations and reports, posters with captioned pictures, a series of slides, or a videotape. Participants might take three to five minutes during Sunday worship to give highlights of the event in a more formal way. A giant “thank you” poster with pictures, souvenirs, and artifacts might be made and posted in front of the church the Sunday after the trip. This evaluation and sharing with the membership gives the experience public

closure. It will be impossible to put away or wrap up what has happened to the hearts and spirits of the participants. It will be with them for a lifetime. No one mission project is like another. Nor can an experience ever be exactly like the last one. What worked well last time might not fly the next time. Some things for adult leaders to remember:

- Be flexible
- Deal with conflicts and misunderstandings as soon as possible
- Take emergency money
- Learn as much as you can about the site, the task, and the people involved
- Be prepared to change course
- Have a “rainy day” plan
- Be prepared for those who get sick or homesick
- Have some basic first-aid supplies
- Take out travel insurance
- Take some games and recreational equipment
- Investigate sources for purchasing food on site
- Expect someone to lose his or her money
- Leave valuable personal articles home
- Never leave luggage unattended in terminals and stations
- Allow for some down time, some time to be free of work responsibilities
- Consider an exchange—having persons from the site you go to come to your location for a similar experience

Doing Social Justice²⁹

There are many valuable activities that help young Christians discover, explore, and proclaim the presence of the reign of God in our midst. In Luke 4:18–19, Jesus' message to those who gathered at the synagogue in Nazareth was:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because God has anointed me to preach
good news to the poor.
God has sent me to proclaim release to
the captives and recovering of sight to
the blind
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the
Lord.*

In the first four verses of Revelation 21 we find these words:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
for the first heaven and the first earth had
passed away, and the sea was no more. And
I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming
down out of heaven from God, prepared as
a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard
a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold,
the dwelling of God is with humankind. God
will dwell with them, and they shall be God's
people, and God's ownself will be with them;
God will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and death shall be no more, neither shall there
be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for
the former things have passed away.*

Vision

It is important for us to claim the vision that Jesus and the authors of the Scriptures have set before us as the way in which we are to live in this world. We must begin to recognize the community of heaven in our midst by help-

ing those who are blind to see and those who are lame to walk, breaking open the prisons of poverty and oppression, and working toward building communities where there is no need for crying and pain. It is important for the young people of the church to claim this vision and begin the journey.

It is important for young people to explore the Scriptures, which give us the vision we are to reach for and seek in our lives. Studying the parables of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God is a good place to begin. Spend some time as a group talking about the kind of community you would really like to live in. What would it look like, how would people be treated, what scriptural verses would guide the community?

Talents

After discovering with the group how they would recognize God's promise on earth, take some time to find the people and institutions who are already working and living for that vision. Also look for places in your community, volunteer groups, or other institutions that have a vision of God's justice. Invite your vestry to a youth group meeting to discuss ways in which your church is already involved in social justice ministry — feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, drying the tears of those who mourn, and so on. Discuss ways that time, talents, and budget are used. You may be surprised at the amount of social justice ministry already being carried out in the name of your congregation and through the gifts and actions of its members. Explore with the officers of your congregation ways in which the young people of the church could offer their talents to carry out these ministries as well.

Visit places in your community or in nearby cities and towns where social justice ministries are taking place: a food pantry, a shelter for abused women and children, a night shelter for the homeless, an adoption agency, a crisis or suicide hot line, a drug rehabilitation center, the chaplain at a local jail or prison.

Volunteer

Discuss with the staff ways in which your congregation, young people and adults, can be involved with these programs in a personal way. Perhaps the night shelter will accept sandwiches made by congregation members to feed those who stay overnight. The neighborhood clothing center might need people to help sort, clean, and mend clothing. Remember to discuss why these problems exist along with exploring the solutions being offered by different groups in the community.

Have the group choose an area of interest to be the focus of a series of meetings and special activities in the life of the congregation. Choose something simple that everyone can feel comfortable being involved with, like hunger. Everyone is touched by a hungry child, whether the child is next door or halfway around the world. Plan events that involve both young people and others in the congregation to educate, increase understanding, and involve them in action.

Hunger

Study the issue of hunger during the regular youth group time. After you learn and understand some of the issues involved in world hunger, plan a special event to share the learning with the rest of the congregation and enable the congregation to act. Conduct a twenty-

hour hunger fast. During the fast, continue learning about hunger. Raise money for every hour of fasting through pledges from members of the congregation and other friends. For those of you who are more sports-minded, raise money by receiving pledges for every mile ridden by participants in a bike-a-thon, swim-a-thon, or walk-a-thon. For the more sedentary, try a rock-a-thon, in rocking chairs.

Kingdom

Help the youth group choose the institutions or organizations that will receive the money they raised. Give to organizations you know. Get a suggested list from your pastor or the session. The young people may choose a place that was visited by the group earlier in the program. The group could begin a long-term relationship with this place. Part of the money could be given to a mission site to be visited by the group as a mission work trip.

At the conclusion of the study, serve a meal from a third world country or simulate the world food crisis by showing the disparity between world population and food distribution. Choose an appropriate time of year for these activities, such as World Food Day in October or during the season of Thanksgiving.

Whatever course your group chooses in order to be involved in social justice ministry, remember that we have been given a vision to look toward as we seek the kingdom of God in our midst. As Christians, we must not shy away from our responsibility toward helping to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Being involved in social justice is not just making statements to the community about how things should be, it is setting before the community an example of how we can go about seeking and recognizing the kingdom of God in our midst.

Social Action Projects³⁰

As the summer program season approaches, many congregations and dioceses being planning social action or “mission” trips by young people. But just how meaningful are these “trips”? Such learning experiences can build self-esteem and leadership skills, as well as a greater sense of social responsibility. Yet well-intentioned projects far too often fall short of potential benefits, becoming primarily opportunities for travel on the part of the sponsors, and occasions for anger or feelings of powerlessness for those visited. Some projects, emphasizing work and desiring to help others, only reinforce the status quo, rather than offer a transformative opportunity for young people to see the world anew.

Social action projects for young people, in order to be transformative experiences, need to both educate young people on how oppression operates in our society, and stress how we who are part of the dominant culture participate in that oppression. Rather than patronize the poor and the oppressed, participants need to learn to recognize how God is already at work in those encountered.

Here are helpful criteria for congregations and dioceses planning social action experiences for youth:

- **The project is built on a long-term relationship between people.** Though many groups sponsor one-time mission projects, these isolated projects are not as effective for young people learning about society as are ongoing projects where lasting change — for all involved — is possible.
- **The project has a direct relationship to participants’ home community.** Projects which are little more than opportunities for tourism convey the message to young people that the poor live elsewhere rather than in our own communities, congregations, and

dioceses. Programs that do require travel to another location need to have a component emphasizing how participants can enact learning in their own communities, and should only be conducted in locations where there is a relationship between the groups involved (such as a companion diocese relationship) and with the consent of the local congregation and diocesan bishop.

- **The project emphasizes the mutual relationship between people rather than work for other people.** Although manual labor can be a helpful component of social action projects for youth, it does not by itself set the stage for young people to learn more about society, nor does it advocate for social change. All projects should specifically include training for all participants — youth and adult — in the areas of cultural sensitivity, as well as the history and socio-economic condition of the local area.
- **The project demonstrates a “systems approach” to issues rather than an approach emphasizing charity or service.** A “system approach” to social action programs focuses on issues of empowerment, the development of networks, and community organizations, rather than participants simply giving time or money and receiving immediate satisfaction. Include a reflection-and-action process that helps young people confront issues concerning their project. These need to include: Who are the oppressed?; Who/What are the oppressors?; What are the classes of interest (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, ageism and others); Action opportunities that allow participants to dialogue with and learn from the poor and oppressed; How is God present in this experience?; How the people’s struggle relates to the process of history?; The possibilities and plans for future action? Critical

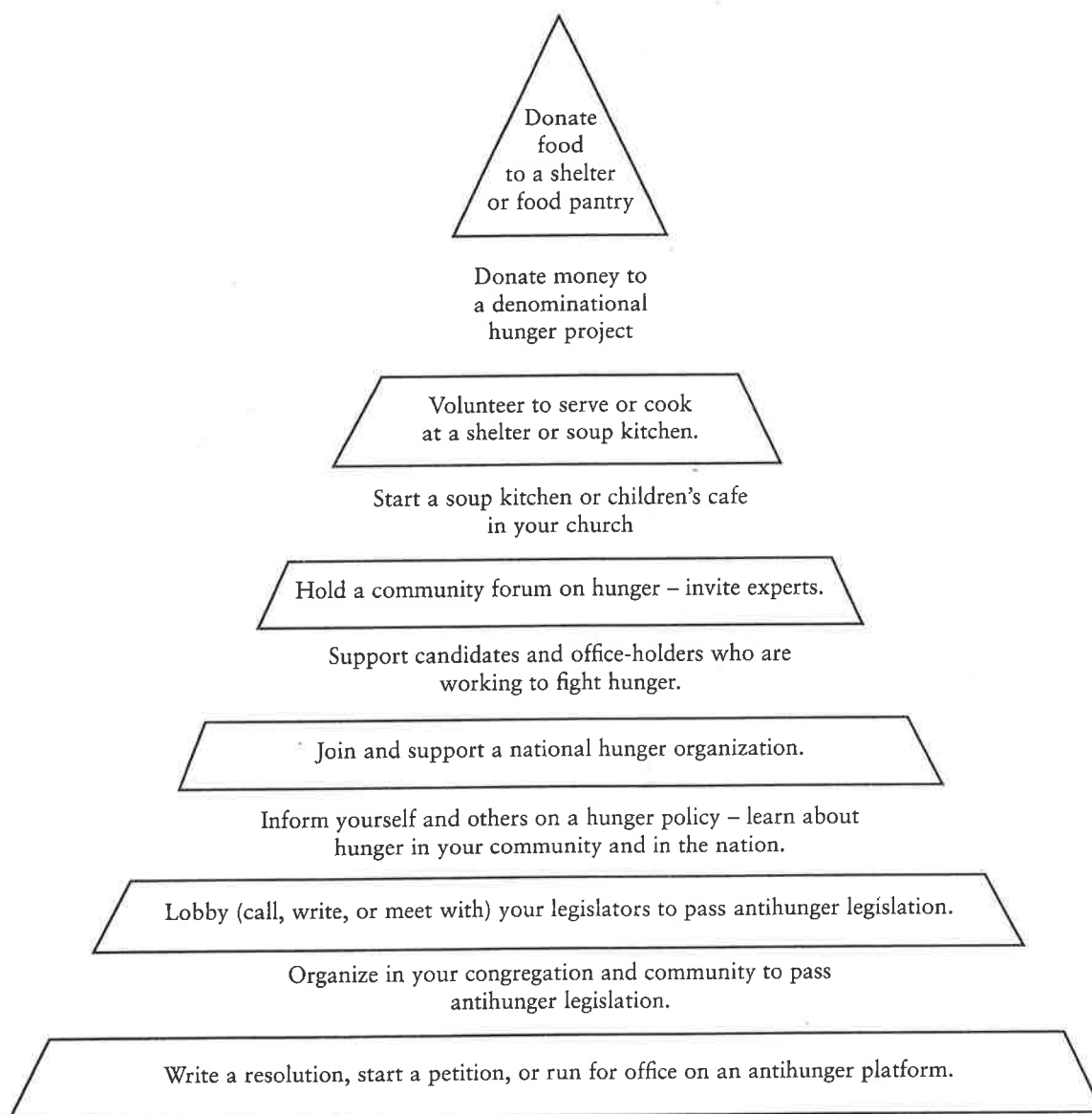
- reflect helps young people to see how we are all interconnected, and sets the stage for a mutual understanding which allows different communities to work together for change.
- **The project design allows for those who are visited to define their own needs.** Rather than the sponsoring group designing what they would like to accomplish in another setting, the type of mutual education needed for social action requires planning which allows both groups to define what they want to get out of the project. Rather than one group “helping” the less fortunate, the focus of the project is focused on listening, identifying, and sharing. Both groups are then empowered, neither are left depressed and hopeless.
 - **The project design demonstrates a planning and evaluation process which includes the full participation of young people and adults who reflect the diversity of the sponsoring congregation or diocese, as well as the host community. Well designed social action programs often take more than a year to plan, execute, and evaluate.** Just as adults should not plan social action programs without the input of young people, sponsoring groups should not plan or evaluate such programs without the full participation of the host community. Participants in social action projects — youth and adults — should also reflect ethnic, racial and cultural diversity. Designs for monocultural groups designed visiting people of another culture should be avoided.
 - **The project design clearly incorporates intentional community building, as well as decision making which will enable young people and adults to speak openly and honestly, trusting their experience.** Any residential program needs to take seriously the community needs of the entire group, and allow for young people to participate in all phases of group life.
 - **The project includes an educational pre-project orientation for all young people and adult participants.** This design should include the following information:
 - The names and addresses of the participants;
 - Information on the community or region, including maps and demographic information;
 - Any pertinent contextual and logistical information about the program;
 - A clear statement of who is sponsoring the program and who has financial responsibility for the program, including a complete budget;
 - A clear outline of non-negotiable behavior and consequences;
 - A listing of resources or supplementary reading related to the project;
 - Due dates for registration materials.
 - **The project clearly demonstrates how the project will be supervised and evaluated.** Project guidelines need to reflect the structures of accountability for the project. Project sponsors are responsible for seeing that the program is insured and that health forms are obtained from participants. In addition, the project must be evaluated, including on-site and post-event evaluation. The project design should also include a debriefing or reentry process.
- These guidelines were developed through the Youth Ministries Network, and tested through various provincial social action projects. Those interested in further resources are this subject, may choose to read the following resources:
- Peter L. Benson and Eugene C. Roehlkepartian, *Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1993.
- Lynn Duvall, *Respecting Our Differences: A Guide To Getting Along in a Changing World*. Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, 1994.
- Frances Hunt O’Connell, *Giving and Growing: A Student’s Guide for Service Projects*. St. Mary’s Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1990.
- Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J., *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. New York, Orbis Books, 1990.
- Barbara A. Lewis. *The Kid’s Guide to Social Action*. Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, 1991.

Barbara A. Lewis. *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects*. Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, 1995.
James, McGinnis. *Helping Teens Care*. New York: Crossroads, 1991.

Kartina Shields. In *The Tiger's Mouth: An E-empowerment Guide for Social Action*. Millennium Books, Newtown, NSW, Australia, 1991.

To discern the approach of your social action project, reflect on the "Pyramid of Action" on the next page. The "Pyramid of Action," can be found in *Stand for Children: Pray, Speak Out and Act: National Observance of Children's Sabbaths*, 1996. The Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001; 202/628-8787.

Pyramid of Action



Reprinted from Children's Defense Fund, Children's Sabbath, 1996.

Youth Ministries in the Global Community³¹

One aspect of youth ministries is creating and developing opportunities to learn, understand, and become aware of our differences and similarities as God's people. Experiencing our global community means realizing that there is not one "right" way of doing things but many different ways. Yes, we are people of different colors, races, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Every society teaches its own "right" ways of doing things. Individuals who isolate themselves can go indefinitely without ever having to confront different situations. But God has given each of us, as part of the church in a global community, the opportunity to experience our common humanity. We "are no longer strangers and sojourners, but... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19).

Awareness

How can we experience the church as a global community? Traditionally, we've been taught that the only way to create an awareness of and participate in the global community is through overseas ministries and serving others. Christ, our model, listened, cared, healed, fed the hungry, taught, preached for peace and justice, and freed the oppressed. We are called to be "ambassadors of Christ," caring and reconciling, that there may be equality. There is no definite place or geographical location to do this ministry. Our call is to our family and friends near and far, in our country and in other countries. Experiencing the church as a global community is not only for a chosen few but for everyone. We experience being part of the global community when we work, serve, learn, share, and struggle together.

Early Christians gathered for discussion, study, worship, reflection, prayer, and fellow-

ship. The power to go out into the world to share God's love in their lives was a miracle of faith. We too, today, need to make the time to pray, worship, study, and share as we go and reach out to others in love.

Serving

It is exciting to see the energy, satisfaction, and hope young people receive from helping and serving others. A mutual learning experience occurs when we listen, share, and grow from our differences and similarities. This is how awareness develops. We are different and yet alike as people created in God's image.

There are many projects that can be developed to enable young people to experience the church as a global community. Do not see fear or lack of finances as a barrier to global experiences and opportunities.

Start Small

Start small. Don't overwhelm your group or produce guilt feelings to the point of creating a negative experience. Begin with a good theological foundation. Do not try to do too many things at the same time. A project that the youth group does together will create a sense of investment in the outcome. Put the group in charge of some guidance.

There are always ways to raise funds for a big project. Car washes, dinners, sales, and other efforts can raise funds for any youth group whether the investment is an overseas mission projects or a local construction project. There are, however, creative projects for youth groups that don't require a lot of money but still require getting the group motivated. Some suggestions follow. Remember, the goal is to

create an awareness of the group's surroundings and the global community of which they are a part.

Ideas

1. Provide summer recreation programs for day-care centers.
2. Prepare teams to do cleaning, house care, and repair work for the elderly.
3. Support a children's home by visiting, reading, playing, collecting clothes, and so on.
4. Share, learn with, and support young people from other countries through correspondence and an "information day" in your congregation, school, or community.
5. Volunteer to help in soup kitchens, visit and help those who are ill or shut in, develop a prison or jail ministry in your community.
6. Invite speakers, missionaries, and other guests to share information, programs, concerns, and updates on global issues.
7. Develop events and programs that motivate and create an environment for cross-cultural exchanges and participation.
8. Assist congregational, diocesan, community, and city projects that promote awareness and help the needy (such as Habitat for Humanity, city shelters).
9. Help your youth group create awareness for themselves and your congregation through Bible study, display areas, bulletin boards, workshops, and presentations.
10. Read and stay abreast of news, social issues, and economic concerns.
11. Write to elected officials and others who have impact on laws and actions.
12. Learn and study about other cultures and races.
13. Live and create awareness for a healthy environment and the preservation of natural resources and wildlife.
14. Create opportunities for education and the sharing of money, skills, and time.
15. Sponsor a celebration of Anglican Youth Sunday.

These are some ideas to enable your youth group to become aware of what it means to be part of a global community. It is very important that youth and adults share, learn, and grow together. That is part of being a "community." Being part of the global community is a reason to celebrate, rejoice, and then reach out to others to invite them to belong also. May we recognize the gifts of our young people and their essential role in creating a church that will model what it means to be a global community.

Surprised with Joy: Evangelism³²

Evangelism is joyously unpredictable! For instance, take my experience with Joel. (Names have been changed.) We had just concluded a large high school conference, and near the end of it Joel asked to make an appointment to see me. I was sure that Joel was deeply affected by the conference and wanted to see me so that he might know how to give his life to Christ. I reviewed the basic gospel and brushed up on those special “evangelism” verses. When we got together, what was on his heart was his parents’ divorce, and since he knew my parents were divorced, he needed a listener who understood. I put away my evangelism outline and listened. About five days later he called me and asked to get together again. I assumed it was to continue our dialogue about our parents. When we met he poured out from his heart his desire to know God, and then and there, after a brief review of some Scripture, he became a Christian. Surprising, unpredictable — God at work!

Then there was the time in youth group during our emphasis on teaching the basics of the gospel. One young girl named Jill had just started coming to our meetings. She was new in town and was struggling with drugs and loneliness. We were hoping and praying that the presentation of the gospel would bring her to a place of hopeful response. After a Wednesday night meeting she pulled me aside, looked me square in the eyes, and said, “Do you leaders really love each other as much as it seems?” Three weeks later she became a Christian. Surprising, unpredictable! It was not our intentional teaching of the gospel that attracted Jill but an unconscious quality of life within the community of faith that caught her.

Principles

I share these stories because they are illustrations of two major principles of outreach that I want to develop. The first is this: God is the one who brings people to faith. God is constantly at work calling and wooing humans into a relationship in ways that surprise us.

The heartbeat of the Old and New Testaments is the story of God longing to be in relationship with creation, especially human beings. The Scriptures are the story of God’s pursuit of us and the great lengths God has gone to in order to be known by us. Indeed, the major thrust of the Scriptures is that God has and is and shall be continually and consistently at work to bring humans back into relationship with God.

Three C’s

For those of us who work with young people this is a tremendous comfort. It gives us a context for our ministry. God has been at work for a long time in the lives of “our kids,” and after we are gone God will still be at work. This principle also develops confidence. When we feel that we are getting nowhere, we can be sure that Yahweh is actively working. We can act with conviction because God has lavished love upon all of us in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus. If God would do that for us, we can be sure that God is ready to welcome all who believe that Jesus is the Savior.

So the fact that God is actively seeking and longing to be in relationship with youth gives us a foundation upon which to build our outreach. Indeed, is there any other foundation?

The second principle that the two stories illustrate is that God chooses to express God's love, character, and longings through people. We are a major expression of the love of God to those who do not know God. And the primary context for that expression is found in and through the relationships we have with young people.

God is at work building relationships with those who don't know God, and God "gives us" the ministry of reconciliation. Even stronger, God entrusts us with a message of reconciliation. We participate with God in seeking others out.

Ambassadors

Third, we have been made ambassadors for Christ. We have become the primary agents in God's reconciling plea to those who don't know God. The use of the word "ambassadors" is very helpful. In politics, governments cannot communicate to one another without ambassadors. They are not needed to convey information, but they are useful because they speak the language, know the culture, develop friendships, and can more accurately and fully convey the desires of the government they represent to a people they understand and know. So it is with us. God does not desire simply the convenience of transmitting information, but through our relationships God is seeking to express loving-kindness in terms that people can understand and see. That is why our relationships with young people are so vital. It is primarily within the framework of their relationships that they can begin to experience, clarify, and relate to the information of the gospel.

Ideas

With these principles in mind, let me share with you a few suggestions for reaching out with your youth group to invite young people into the community of faith.

1. A youth ministry seeking to reach out will place primary importance on building relationships as the central method of sharing the good news.

2. It is crucial that the adult leaders in the group be women and men who are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and are continually growing in faith.

3. Ambassadors know the culture they are sent to and care greatly for the people. In youth ministry, the adult leaders must be people who love young people and want to be with them.

4. Adults must be committed and available to spend time with young people. Building relationships takes time. Young people want to be around adults who want to be around young people and are available to spend time. Here are a few suggestions of ways you can spend time with young people:

- Take the initiative and enter their world by visiting their home, seeing their room, pets, family, etc.
- If the school allows, stop by and have lunch with a few young people in their cafeteria or take them out to lunch.
- Be sure to get to athletic events as well as some of the social events. Offer to BE A a sponsor for a dance or a trip.
- Invite young people to be part of your world. Have them in your home for dinner, for parties, as baby-sitters, or just to drop by.
- Take young people on special trips and events. The goal! is to create a space and time where relationships can flourish.
- Share together in ministry projects such as vacation Bible school, a mission project, or nursing home visitation.

The more you demonstrate an interest in their world, the more potential there is that they will be interested in your world of faith.

5. Young people need to experience Jesus Christ at times to understand the gospel. Mission projects, and social action in your own community are hands-on ways of

learning about the gospel. Young people who participate in these experiences are changed by the people they meet and the work they do.

6. Young people need to learn that the community of faith is different from other communities. It is a community of forgiveness, a place to lower masks and be able to celebrate who God created us to be. As adult leaders, we must be persistent in demonstrating that the group is a small community that is part of a larger community. Modeling that larger community with young people can help them see how being faithful really is different.
7. Encourage young people to care for those others who are not part of the group. They are already in a myriad of relationships, and they know the youth culture. So train and encourage them to be ambassadors for Christ, to care for their friends, and to share the very best news they know.

Work together to create a youth group atmosphere that is warm, inviting, and hospitable to newcomers.

8. Finally, develop a persistent and consistent habit of individual and corporate prayer for each other and for young people who are not involved in the group. Pray with confidence because God deeply desires to be known by young people. Our prayers become another vehicle for God's love.

At the heart of outreach is the person of Jesus, sharing with us, caring for us, and communicating a love and a longing that is lavish. So as adult leaders with a desire to work with young people, let us share our faith and love of Jesus with young people so that they can learn what it means to be loved by God. And they will find ways to express this love so that other people, old and young, can experience God's love. If this occurs, the unpredictable will happen regularly in your group, and you will often be surprised with joy!

Part VII

Support and Resources

The Episcopal Church is a member of the world wide Anglican Communion. There are more than 70 million Anglican Christians, in 29 autonomous churches spread across 160 countries in every continent. The Episcopal Church is comprised of approximately 116 dioceses in nine provinces. The Episcopal Church is an international church; our 2.5 million baptized members live in 7,413 parishes in the United States, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, panama, Haiti, Micronesia, Taiwan, the Virgin Islands, the Convocation of American Churches in Europe, and in the Armed Forces.³³

Our structure allows for and encourages networking between people. That means you are an important link in the ministry of which we all are a part. Take seriously what you do as a youth leader, but don't be overwhelmed! There are places and people to go to for information, help, and support as you plan and carry out your youth program.

In the following pages you will discover lots of good stuff to get you going and keep you on the right track. You can't do ministry by yourself, so your support system is very important. Along the way you will see questions to ask in the process. Don't stop with these only-ask your own!



The Youth Ministries Adventure

Before you begin this journey along the road of youth ministries, you must be prepared to ask questions and make choices about what to bring.

You enter a room with many doors. On the table there is a note. You pick up the note and read it. It says:

- Why do you want to be involved in youth ministries?
- How will your special skills, interests, and talents serve to make a more complete program?
- Do you have ample time and energy to give to the program and the people?
- What are your roles and responsibilities within the youth ministries program?
- What are the goals and directions of youth ministries in your congregation?
- Where is the program now?
- What are the plans for reaching the goals, both short-range and long-term?

After pondering these questions, you decide you truly are called and are willing to be a part of this exciting journey. Move ahead to next square.

After reading over the questions, you feel overwhelmed and not sure. Continue on anyway, to ask more questions.

You are on a dark and winding road. A guidepost appears ahead through the mist. You have two choices:

Continue on alone (back to square one).

Call your clergy person for help (move ahead to the congregation).

The Local Congregation

This is the primary location for the most of the youth ministries in the Episcopal Church. It is also where the church is best prepared to respond to the pastoral needs of individual young people. In other words, the nitty-gritty takes place here. Relational youth ministry can be worked out in many ways in the youth program. Remember that youth ministries is involved in the larger ministry of the whole congregation.

You are on your way again and come to a fork in the road. As the dust settles you discover a sign. You have two options:

- Go into the Forest of your diocese (move ahead one square).
- Take the loop trail back home (return to the beginning of the journey).

The Diocese

The diocese is the basic unit of the Episcopal Church. The word "diocese" comes from the Greek *dioikesis*: an administrative division of a country. In the church, a diocese is a geographical unit under the supervision of a bishop. The Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center provides resources and information to dioceses through the diocesan youth coordinator or other contact person, that can assist people working with youth in congregations. This handbook is an example of one such resource, as are youth conferences and training events.

Youth ministries has a support group at this level usually in the diocesan Youth Ministries Committee or the Christian Education Committee. Most diocesan Youth Ministries Committees are now comprised of young

people and adults. Diocesan youth programs vary, but many provide conferences, youth and adult leadership training, camps, conferences, and support of others doing youth ministries.

You leave the office in the Forest of your Diocese and continue on the road of youth ministries. The underbrush is thick on this part of the trail, yet you proceed. There is a plateau ahead where the tall grass has been trampled down.

You go and investigate; here you find your Province (move ahead).

You go around the plateau and end up back in the forest (go back to the room with many doors).

The Province

The Episcopal Church is divided into nine geographical areas called Provinces. Meetings of the provinces are called Synods. Each province can originate programs within its boundaries, and has a program budget. The Youth Ministries Network is organized along provincial lines, and funds, along with the provinces, provincial youth networks that sponsor youth events, training events, and other conferences. Each province has a provincial youth ministries coordinator, and programs are funded through the Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center and the province. The role of provincial youth ministries is to support youth ministries in dioceses. Most provinces also have some kind of youth presence at the provincial synod.

You are tired but continue on your way because you really want to know all the places to get support for your youth ministries adventure back home. The guidepost ahead says you are entering another country: the Episcopal Church Center. Again you have two choices:

No one is around, so you go home by a different route (back to square one).

The Episcopal Church Center looks interesting, so you proceed into the building ahead (advance to next square).

The Episcopal Church Center

Youth ministries at the Episcopal Church Center is housed in the Ministries with Young People Cluster, of the Service, Education, and Witness Unit. Other offices in the cluster are the Office of Children's Ministries and the Offices of Ministries with Young Adults and in Higher Education. There are two staff persons in the Youth Ministries Office. These people communicate with the provincial youth networks and with key contact people at the diocesan level. (They are also glad to talk to you !) The Youth Ministries Office is your link with the International Anglican Youth Network, which sponsors conferences and develops resources for youth leaders around the world. Resources, and national events are generated from the Youth Ministries Office. The office also coordinates the General Convention Youth Presence.

The purpose of youth ministries at the Episcopal Church Center is to enable the whole church to be aware of the needs of young people as a part of the body of Christ and to provide church members with the skills and resources with which to reach these needs. The "national" office encourages communication within the wider denomination and has a priority for cultural diversity in all youth ministries resources and programs. Nurture, empowerment, and advocacy with and for young people are key elements in all that is done at this level.

As you leave the Episcopal Church Center, you realize that you have found many places and people along the road of youth ministries. Your detective work has paid off, and you return to your local congregation to continue the youth program loaded with ideas and encouragement from all levels. You are glad there is support for relational youth ministries within the Episcopal Church and are waiting to share your newfound knowledge.

What to Check Out in the Local Congregation

In the Congregation

- Budget
- Insurance
- Permission slips
- Carpools
- Parent phone tree
- Emergency contact person
- Congregational events
- Diocesan youth coordinator and Youth Committee/Commission
- Diocesan events and resources
- Provincial and national youth events and resources

In the Community

- Public service organizations
- Community events
- Opportunities for ecumenical interfaith youth activities
- Yellow Pages
- Libraries
- Parks and recreation department
- Other Episcopal congregations
- Media equipment
- Resources, curriculum

Ideas

- Discover your own talents and skills.
- Talk to other people in similar youth ministries leadership positions in your town.

- Seek support from friends, colleagues, pastors.
- Talk with the Christian Education Committee in your congregation.

Project

Have your youth group put together a resource center for your congregation. The young people can find information about community programs and bring in flyers and brochures. Call these groups and ask for people to come and talk to your group.

Names and Numbers

(Depending on the size and structure of your congregation, you may or may not have some of these persons.)

You _____

Youth Minister(s) _____

Director of Christian Education _____

Associate Clergy _____

Rector _____

Parish Secretary _____

Music Director _____

Others _____

What to Check Out in the Diocese

Resources

- Youth events
- Funds
- Committees
- Newsletters
- Denominational resources
- Camps and conference centers
- Training opportunities
- Social action projects

Ideas

- Find out who is responsible for youth ministries.
- Find or help begin a Youth Ministries Committee.
- Look for leadership training events.
- Ask for money! Scholarships are often available.
- Find out if there is a resource center.
- Get on the mailing lists for youth ministries newsletters.
- Discuss the possibility of small congregation or regional clusters.
- Look for information on provincial and national resources and events.

Names and Numbers

Diocesan Office _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____

Youth Ministries Coordinator _____

Christian Education Coordinator _____

Camps and Conference Centers _____

What to Check Out in the Province

Resources

- Newsletters
- Resource centers
- Available funds
- Provincial and regional youth events
- Leadership training
- Social action projects
- Camp and conference program

Ideas

- Contact your provincial youth ministries coordinator.
- Ask about the process for nominating youth delegates to synod.
- Be in dialogue about the needs and interests of your congregation.
- If your diocese is not active in the provincial youth network, see if you can be.

Names and Numbers

Provincial Youth Ministries Coordinator

Phone _____

Address _____

Diocesan Contact Persons (for provincial youth network)

What to Check Out at the Episcopal Church Center

Resources

- Resource Books
- Handbooks
- Provincial and national youth events and conferences
- Newsletter for youth ministries leaders
- Information on Episcopal camp and conference centers
- The Episcopal Youth Event
- The General Convention Youth Presence
- Information on conferences for young people of color

Ideas

- Ask to be put on mailing lists for the newsletter.
- Pass on information that you receive from the national office.

Names and Numbers

Youth Ministries Office
Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10017-4594
800/334-7626 (exts. 5217, 5196)
800/321-2231 (NY State only)
212/922-5217 (voice mail)
212/922-5196 (voice mail)
212/490-6684 (Fax)
QUEST: Youthcluster

The Episcopal Book and Resource Center
Episcopal Church Center
(see address and toll free numbers above)
212/922-5107 (voice mail)
212/661-1706 (Fax)

Episcopal Parish Services
PO Box 269
William Penn Annex
Philadelphia, PA 19105-0269
800/903-5544

(Write for a catalog of available resources.)

- Ministries with Young People Cluster staff
- Other Episcopal Church Center staff

Part VIII

Resources

Learning the who, what, where, and why of resources is a challenge. If you are not sure what to look for, it is hard to know which of the many resources available in catalogs, advertisements, and local bookstores is the one or ones you should buy. This section is designed to help you make some decisions about how to select resources and ask questions of speakers or musicians or other people you might hire, and provides a form to help make looking at videos and films more fruitful, as well as some lists of printed resources to help you begin your youth ministries library.

There are a great many resources available for youth ministries. Many are very good, some can be adapted for use, and others are just not appropriate for Episcopal Youth Ministries. The Episcopal Church produces many resources in various areas each year. Not all of them are aimed at young people, but many can be used by youth groups. Use the criteria that follow as a transfer guide for using these materials.

You will find a variety of people around who can help you in youth ministries. Certainly there are people in your community who would be good speakers or role models for young people, or who have particular skills for youth ministries. It is important that you know each person and have heard him or her speak or have previewed his or her demonstration before issuing an invitation to come to your group. If you are unfamiliar with a speaker, be sure to get a recommendation from someone you trust who has worked with the person or seen his or her work. The criteria for written resources apply to speakers as well.

Music can be approached the same way. Listen to music before discussing it. Use the questions for films and video as a guide for discussing music. Use the intentions as criteria to evaluate music. Choose musicians for conferences whom you know and respect or who have worked with people you trust. Know their philosophy and theology before hiring them. Not all music that is billed as "Christian" is necessarily any more desirable than some "secular" music.

Remember that resources do not make a program, people do. It is possible to have a good youth ministries program without a lot of printed resources, videos, or dynamic speakers. The relationship with God and other human beings that you are building are the most important parts of youth ministries. Being a vital part of the community of Christ is more important than razzle-dazzle programming. Some of the best resources for youth ministries are the people of your congregation and community. Find them! Look for museums, art galleries, service centers, jails, hospitals, libraries, colleges, and centers providing day care for children and older people.

How to Select Resources

The following criteria provide one way to choose resources, particularly printed resources. It might be helpful to make several file cards with this information on them to take with you to a store or when ordering materials. Make a file of this information to keep at your congregation. Make a copy for yourself for the future and leave a copy with your congregation as a gift.

Step 1: Look at the materials. Don't be fooled by fancy multicolor covers or the word "success" in the title. Look at an individual session. Read the whole session, not just the goals and objectives. After you have read it, ask yourself these questions:

- Did I understand the unit or session?
- Could I find all the materials needed?
- What feeling might specific young people in our group have about this lesson?
- Were the photographs and/or graphics representative of persons of various racial and ethnic groups, as well as females and males?
- What ideas or understanding would surface?
- How did we arrive at these perceptions (actions, words, images, textures, colors, etc.)?

- What need(s) or interest(s) of our young people does this material meet?

Step 2: Review the characteristics and theological principles of relational youth ministry. How does this resource agree with the characteristics and principles? How does it match your own sense of relational youth ministry? One publication will not meet them all. You will have to decide if it meets enough of them to buy the resource.

Step 3: Evaluate the implications. Ask yourself these questions:

- What could we do with this resource?
- If we need to adapt parts of it, how much would need to be adapted?
- Am I-or are we-willing and able to make those changes?
- Will this resource match enough of our criteria to buy it?

Step 4: Make a list. Write down on a file card the author, title, publisher, date of publication, and cost. This will be particularly helpful if you decide not to buy that day but to come back or if you put it in the file for someone else to use.

Additional Resources

Listed below are resources of interest to those who work with youth in Episcopal congregations. The list is not exhaustive. It is the responsibility of the congregation to review resources, and determine which of those available will be used.

- Benson, Peter and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain. *Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 37202.
- Called to Teach and Learn: A Catechetical Guide for the Episcopal Church*. New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1994, 1996.
- Clapp, Steve and Sam Detwiler. *Peer Evangelism*. Elgin: Brethren Press, 1991.
- Daley, Shannon and Kathleen Guy. *Welcome the Child: A Child Advocacy Guide for Churches*. Washington: Children's Defense Fund and Friendship Press, 1994.
- Doyle, Aileen A. *More Youth Retreats: Creating Sacred Space for Young People*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1989.
- Duvall, Lynn. *Respecting Our Differences: A Guide to Getting Along in a Changing World*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1994.
- East, Thomas and John Roberto. *Leadership*. New Rochelle: Don Bosco, 1994.
- Edelman, Marion Wright. *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
- Finn, Jerome. *Building Youth Ministry in the Parish*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1993.
- Fortune, Marie. *Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Study for Teenagers*. New York: United Church Press, 1994.
- Foster, Charles and Grant S. Shockley. *Working with Black Youth*. Nashville:
- Fowler, James. *Stages of Faith*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In A Different Voice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Gleason, Kenneth T., et al. *Ministries Growing Together: Resources for Integrating Adolescent Religious Education and Youth Ministry*. Winona, 1992.
- Grenz, Linda, ed. *In Dialogue with Scripture*. New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1993.
- Heath, Shirley Brice and Milbrey W. McLaughlin. *Identity and Inner City Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.
- Hefling, Charles, ed. *Our Selves, Our Souls and Bodies: Sexuality and the Household of God*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1996.
- Karnes, Frances A. and Suzanne Bean. *Girls and Young Women Leading the Way*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit, 1993.
- Kujawa, Sheryl A. and Lois Sibley, eds. *Resource Book for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults in the Episcopal Church*. New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1995.
- Lee, Stacey J. *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.
- Lewis, Barbara A. *The Kids Guide to Social Action*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit, 1991.
- Lewis, Barbara A. *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit, 1995.

- McCarty, Robert J. and Lynn Tooma. *Training Adults for Youth Ministry*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1993.
- McGinnis, James. *Helping Teens Care*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.
- McGinnis, Kathleen. *Educating for a Just Society: Grades 7-12*. St. Louis: Institute of Peace and Justice, n.d.
- Michno, Dennis G. *A Manual for Acolytes*. Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1981.
- Myers, William. *Black and White Styles of Youth Ministry*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991.
- Ng, Donald. *Asian Pacific American Youth Ministry*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1988.
- Packer, Alex J. *Bringing Up Parents: The Teenagers Handbook*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1993.
- Palladino, Grace. *Teenagers: An American History*. New York: Basic Books, 1996.
- Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York: Grosset/Putman, 1994.
- Prophets of Hope Editorial Team. *Hispanic Young People and the Church's Pastoral Response (I); Evangelization of Hispanic Young People*. Winona: St. Mary's Pres, 1995.
- Reid, Kathryn Goering. *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse, Ages 9-12*. New York: United Church Press, 1989.
- Reynolds, Brian. *A Chance to Serve: A Leader's Manual for Peer Ministry*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1993.
- Roberto, John, ed. *Justice*. New Rochelle: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1990.
- Roberto, John, ed. *Liturgy and Worship*. New Rochelle: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1990.
- Robinson, Gene and Thaddeus Bennett, eds. *Episcopal Guide to TAP (Teens for AIDS Prevention)*. Episcopal Church Center, 1994.
- Roehlkepartain, Eugene C. *Youth Ministry in City Churches*. Loveland: Group Books, 1989.
- Roehlkepartain, Eugene C. and Peter C. Scales. *Youth Development in Congregations*. Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1995.
- Russell, Joseph, ed. *The New Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education*. Boston: Cowley, 1996.
- Rydberg, Denny. *Youth Group Trust Builders*. Loveland: Group Books, 1993. 1994.
- Shelton, Charles M. *Adolescent Spirituality*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
- Shelton, Charles M. *Morality and the Adolescent*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
- Silberman, Mel. *Active Training*. Toronto: Lexington Books, 1990.
- The State of America's Children Yearbook 1996*. Washington: Children's Defense Fund, 1996.
- Stephens, Lois A. *I Love to Tell the Story: An Episcopal Handbook on Christian Education*. Ed. Linda Grenz. New York: Center for Christian Formation, 1994.
- Strommen, Merton. *Five Cries of Parents*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Strommen, Merton. *Five Cries of Youth*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Warren, Michael. *Youth, Culture and the Worshipping Community*. Rahwah: Paulist Press, 1989.

Curriculum Resources for Youth

- All Saints Curriculum*. All Saints Episcopal Church, 6600 The Plaza, Charlotte, NC 28215; 704/536-4091. Lectionary-based curriculum. Lesson plans are arranged in four volumes and cover nursery through grade 12.
- Episcopal Curriculum for Youth*. Center for the Ministry of Teaching with Morehouse Publishing, PO Box 1321, Harrisburg, PA 17105; 800/877-0012. Biblically-based curriculum. Sessions focus on biblical content and scriptural themes. Supplemental materials available. Junior high materials available, with plans to expand to senior high. Prospectus available on request.
- The Journey to Adulthood*. LeaderResources, 149 Dewberry Dr., Suite 101, Hockessin, DE 19707; 302/234-8237. A congregational program of spiritual formation for young people between the ages of 11 and 17 that follows the imperatives of the Baptismal Covenant. The curriculum includes materials for both leaders

and young people. Included in this curriculum are materials related to Confirmation preparation for older youth.

Living the Good News. 600 Grant Street, Suite 400, Denver, CO 80203; 800/824-1813. Lectionary-based curriculum, covering nursery through grade 12. Includes teacher preparation and supplemental materials. Sampler available on request.

The Whole People of God. Logos Productions, PO Box 240, South St. Paul, MN 55075-0240; 800/328-0200. Based on the Revised Common Lectionary, with a supplement for Episcopal congregations. Designed for all ages—birth to adult—for the whole year. Includes reproducible activity sheets.

Word Among Us. United Church Press, 700 Prospect Ave. east, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; 800/537-3394. Ecumenical curriculum, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, with an Episcopal supplement in preparation. Includes materials for planning worship. Available in units for youth ages 12–14) and older youth (ages 15–18).

Resources for Confirmation Preparation

All of the resources listed below are available through Morehouse Publishing; 800/877-0012.

Carlozzi, Carol. *The New Episcopal Way. A Guide to the Episcopal Church and The Book of Common Prayer.* Provides the essential facts on the teachings and structure of the Episcopal Church. Teacher's book and student workbook.

Cunningham, Steven L. *Confirmation — A Workbook Based on The Book of Common Prayer.* 10-unit workbook that can be used as a supplement to any Confirmation course.

Foxworth, George M., Carl G. *Grow in Grace: A Confirmation Workbook.* 10-session course based on the Catechism, with materials for parents, sponsors, teachers, and confirmands.

Molrline, Ronald C. and Charlotte Molrline. *Encountering Christ in the Episcopal Church.* 15-active, experiential sessions, for ages 11 through adult. student's workbook, leader's guide, and copy masters available.

Parker, Andrew. *Keeping the Promise: A Mentoring Program for Confirmation.* 9-session program organized in two books—one for the mentor and one for the confirmand.

Notes

1. From *Let's Put Young People in their Place*, prepared by Robert Gribbon, Nancy J. Van Scoyoc, Dale Evans, Bobbie Bevell, et al. (The Episcopal Church Center, 1984), pp. 44-46. The text of the assumptions is slightly updated in this article.
2. *Let's Put Young People in their Place*, p. 47.
3. See *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 47.
4. "The Principles of Relational Ministry" were developed through the Diocese of Connecticut in consultation with the Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center. These principles became part of the Youth Ministries Leadership Academy (YMLA). Finished texts for the principles and prologue, portions of which are used in this article, were developed by the Rev. Thomas C. Ely, coordinator of the YMLA program and former director of youth ministries for the Diocese of Connecticut.
5. Though the term "national" church is popularly used, it is important to note that it is somewhat of a misnomer; the Episcopal Church in fact includes dioceses and congregations who are located outside the United States. Also, while the term "national church," frequently refers to the offices, such as the Youth Ministries Office, that are located at the Church Center, it is important to remember that the "national" Episcopal Church is comprised of the Executive Council, and the General Convention, as well as the offices at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.
6. Adapted from an article by Ginny Ward Holderness. Holderness is the author of several books on youth ministries, including *The Exuberant Years* and *Youth Ministry: The New Team Approach*.
7. Adapted from an article by Rock Carus.
8. *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*, 1994, see Title I, Canon 17, pp. 47-48.
9. Adapted from an article by Dusty Moser.
10. Adapted from an article by Russ Kane.
11. Adapted from an article by Lea Appleton and Lonna Lee.
12. Adapted from an article by Lea Appleton.
13. Adapted from an article by Jeff Peterson.
14. Adapted from an article by Nancy Hutchinson.
15. For additional information on Anglican Youth Sunday, contact the Youth Ministries Office at the Episcopal Church Center; 800/334-7626.
16. For additional assistance in worship planning see, Joe Russell, ed., *The New Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education* (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1996); Howard E. Galley, *The Ceremonies of the Eucharist: A Guide to Celebration* (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1989).
17. Adapted from an article by Rebecca Reyes.
18. Adapted from an article from E. Bruce Harvey, Jr.
19. Adapted from an article by Kathy Carpenter.
20. This article is by Lisa Kimball, and is reprinted from the *Resources Book for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1995).
21. Adapted from an article Nancy Eng MacNeill.
22. Adapted from an article by Cheryl Goodman-Morris.
23. Adapted from an article by Lynn Turnage.
24. Adapted from an article by Lonna C. Lee.
25. Adapted from an article by Dee Koza-Woodward.
26. Adapted from an article by Lonna C. Lee.
27. Adapted from an article by Dorothy Tremel.
28. Adapted from an article by Martha Holman.
29. Adapted from an article by Karen Kokles Akin.
30. From "Social Action Projects: A More Excellent Way," by Sheryl A. Kujawa, in *Resource Book for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Episcopal Church Center, 1995).
31. Adapted from an article by Zulma N. Suarez.
32. Adapted from an article by Greg Thorson.
33. For an overview of the "Anglican Way," see *called to Teach and Learn: A Catechetical Guide for the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Episcopal Church Center, 1991, 1996), pp. 63-75.

