

YOUTH MINISTRY TOOLBOX

How to shape a great youth *leadership* team?

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© HOW TO SHAPE A GREAT YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

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As a Youth Mentor, my favorite part of youth ministry is team building. I love seeing young people raised to become mature in their faith and take on the courageous role to be the light of the world in this generation. Nothing gives me a greater high than seeing them exercise their gifts and do great things.

The youth ministry leadership team has been the backbone of my spiritual growth. I depend on them as much as they depend on me. They have seen my struggles and waded through several challenges with me. I can honestly say that I wouldn't be the person I am today without their commitment, passion, love for God, and love for me.

This is what we see in Jesus' public ministry. He taught us that we are not called to do the job alone. Though we may be highly qualified, we are not called for solitary leadership; we are called to work together in unity and love.

Any ministry done alone becomes vulnerable to pride. Jesus himself called a group of twelve disciples who believed in His mission and partnered with Him to expand His reach. This is also our mission.





Often, youth leaders leave the ministry not for lack of support from elders or attention from teens, but due to conflicts and misunderstandings within the group.

Ministry is not about programs, but people. Teams that thrive are not those that focus only on excellent programs and frameworks, but those that have extraordinary examples of Christ around them. Young people want impact and influence. This reality demands that youth leaders go beyond their comfort zones and capacity to make that impact known. But without a dynamic team, those efforts inevitably fall on infertile soil and quickly fade. Jesus calls us onto a team so that we can share our vision, gifts, and burdens; in this way, we become accountable for each other's growth.

Getting the right people on board is not easy. We need discernment, grace, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to ensure the right decisions.

“Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12



Think **GROWTH**

The ultimate goal of a youth ministry is bearing fruit. This places a great responsibility on mentors to invest in leaders by continually feeding their spirits. As leaders, the knowledge we have acquired and the experience we have gained needs to be shared. Training, conferences, and workshops serve as good platforms for advancement of knowledge and administration of spiritual gifts. Investing in youth leaders, both collectively and individually, is crucial in enabling their confidence and ultimately their growth. This investment will go a long way in encouraging them to do the same for others.





Lead **THEM**

Leadership is about leading people. Very often we confuse leadership with management. The outcome is a ministry that places tremendous pressure on things that need to get done, rather than enabling young people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. To lead is to influence and set an example for others.

Today, the world is in need of servant leadership. Humility is one of the greatest weapons against Satan. It is through humility that we model the leadership of Jesus.

If youth leaders hesitate to come to you with their struggles, go to them. When we humble ourselves and pour our lives into others, we not only build great relationships; we allow the work of the Holy Spirit to move through different hands.

When there is true friendship, people do not hesitate to go out of their way to ensure the goal is met. Taking time out to lead one, will allow you to know their background, family struggles, and their own personal struggles.

*“Be imitators of me,
as I am of Christ.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1



Lean IN

Conflict is an inevitable part of ministry. When you feel the tension, investigate it immediately. You may not always know how to handle a conflict. Seeking support of a mentor, priest or spiritual director is helpful. Never approach conflict alone. We need prayerful discernment, to consider the actions we wish to take toward the other. Never underestimate the work of the enemy in conflict. Satan desires to sift us like wheat, so that we remain trapped in unforgiveness and bitterness; ultimately compromising on our calling.

Moving ON

Pope Francis rightfully points out that “there are no leaders for life.” Everyone has limits while serving in ministry. It is important to consider transitions in ministry in which tenures are strictly evaluated and preparation is made for the next generation of leaders. Leaving, after all, does not imply that you are quitting God’s work. It just means that you are mature enough to discern the next level God wants you to go to. Leaving your position also means that you lead without a title, i.e., that you are not wedded to your position. A mature leader will always make way for new gifts to flourish in the vineyard through new members.



Create A CULTURE OF LOVE

Make your youth ministry the kind that will be remembered for a long time. Create a culture that motivates young people to bring their friends along. This can only happen through intentional discipleship. By investing your life in young people, you are creating change agents and game changers in this world. Remember that young people will remember you for your love and care more than for the work you did for them. Allow them to make mistakes and learn from them. Give them space and time to grow in their own uniqueness. Provide constructive criticism and continual feedback when necessary, but always through the language of love. Above all, pray for your youth leaders.

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“Young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at. The language that young people understand is spoken by those who radiate life, by those who are there for them and with them.”

POPE FRANCIS (CHRISTUS VIVIT, 211)