

YOUTH MINISTRY TOOLBOX

# What do your youth meetings look like?

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® WHAT DO YOUR YOUTH MEETINGS LOOK LIKE?

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Youth meetings do not have to be complicated. They need to be meaningful. Regardless of how often and how long, youth meetings need good planning.

While no two meetings are alike, youth group traditions are formed by consistency. At a basic level, that means beginning and ending the meetings the same way each time. There is no one “perfect” way to plan a youth meeting, but these practical tips—planned in advance—ensure the consistency needed to build trust and connections as you explore your faith together.

Before we begin, it is important to remember the “why” of a youth ministry. What is the goal of your meeting? What would you like to achieve at the end of this meeting? A few of the goals listed below may help steer your focus before you begin constructing the agenda.

The goals of youth meetings are to:

- Help youth experience Jesus.
- Imitate the life and teachings of Jesus by loving God and thus your neighbors.
- Assist youth in discovering their identities as sons and daughters of God.
- Become disciples and partner in the purpose of evangelization.
- Support youth in their spiritual formation and integrate them into a community.



## *Get* **ETIQUETTES**

Establish meeting guidelines and etiquette to clearly communicate what is expected from all. Vital information on timing, ground rules, and other information concerning engagement can be displayed or spoken. Etiquette can be posted at visible locations or presented on a slide for all to see. A mention can be made about the use of cell phones during the meeting: for example, they may be used to look up a Bible passage or answer a question, but not to engage on social media or send text messages.

## *Stick* **TO THE SCHEDULE**

Always be on time and run an organized meeting. Consistency is a good marketing tool. It sends the message that you value people's time and personal agendas.

## *Get up* **ATMOSPHERE**

Create a comfortable, inviting, upbeat atmosphere. There should be a sense of electricity in the air. People should feel that there is something special happening at these meetings. Sometimes, depending on location, the room can be set up with rugs, carpets and lamps to give it a homey, cozy feeling.



## *Seek* **GRACE**

Begin with prayer. Spend quality time worshipping God, allowing young hearts to receive the Presence of God through the Holy Spirit. Invest in the ministry of music to communicate worship that is relevant to young people. Allow youth to exercise the gift of “singing a new song” by becoming spontaneous in prayer. Encourage silence and allow youth to make short prayers, reflecting that scene of worship and what they sense God speaking to them.

## *Stir up* **FUN**

Include icebreakers and team builders to incorporate elements of fun and familiarize youth with each other. If adults are participating in the meeting, encourage them to participate in these activities as well. This equalizes youth and adults, and establishes shared respect for both parties.





## *Speak* **TRUTH**

Bring in speakers who are well grounded in youth ministry, who know how to communicate the truth with young people without making them feel compelled or intimidated. Keep youth intrigued with a mix of "heavy" topics (e.g., abortion, sexuality) and "lighthearted" ones (e.g., friendships, virtues, etc.) Include sessions that reflect current issues and everyday challenges. When ministering to youth, do not forget or ignore issues that they may face in their daily lives. It is important to provide an opportunity for teenagers to discuss these issues and incorporate faith into them. Topics such as dating, social media, drugs and alcohol, and same-sex marriage can be periodically incorporated into the meetings in the form of a Q&A or a group discussion. Use videos, demonstrations and other props that can enhance learning.



## *Spiritual* **GIFTS**

Youth meetings that have all the right activities, games, music, lighting, and snacks can draw a crowd week to week, but life transformation is a work of the Holy Spirit. A time of ministering and infilling can provide an opportunity for young people to be encouraged to discover their gifts and, crucially, how to exercise them in the appropriate context and manner.



## *Celebrate* **SUCCESS**

Celebrate successes, birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestones that foster the vision of the ministry and provide a place for people to come together.

## *Sent* **FORTH**

Always close with a prayer and blessing before cleanup. Remind young people that the goal is not for them to say “yes” to a great meeting, but to say “yes” in their hearts. By reminding them that they are disciples, you encourage them to “grow” and to “go”—to their friends, family, classmates, teammates, and co-workers—with the good news. To that end, you may establish a “Bring A Friend” night once a month to encourage discipleship.

