



PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH MINISTRY

YOUTH MINISTRY: A PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

Philip Severn

Philosophy of Youth Ministry

Creating a Community that loves God and loves others

CORE VALUES

COMMUNITY

We will strive to create a place where students know they are loved, valued, and accepted. Our hope is that youth group becomes a safe place to build relationships where they can have those affirmations.

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is God's word given to mankind. It is truth. We will seek out ways to help our students learn how to study it and apply it to their lives.

WORSHIP

Worship is not just about music. We will pursue creative ways to show our students how they can worship God in all areas of their life.

DISCIPLESHIP

Attendance is not the end all. We want to see our students become fully devoted followers of Christ. We will pursue their spiritual formation as they learn spiritual disciplines.

SERVICE

We are called to be the hands and feet of Christ. We will look for opportunities where our students can be involved with serving the community, our church, and each other.

OUTREACH

We are called to make disciples of all the nations. Our youth group will strive to be a beacon of light to a dark world.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...And love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matt 22:37,39

Our Youth Ministry exists to help our students love God with everything they have and love others with everything He has given them.

Lifestyle Statements

WHAT WE WANT OUR STUDENTS TO KNOW, BE, AND DO

We believe that our youth ministry is an integral tool in the Spiritual Formation of our students. We will seek to help our students...

- *Learn How to interpret the world through the scope of the Scriptures by **developing a biblical worldview** (Deut 6:6-9).
- *Learn how to **share and defend their faith** with gentleness and respect (Acts 17:16-34).
- *Learn how to **interpret and apply the Scriptures** through the inductive Bible study method (2 Tim 2:15, Acts 17:11).
- *Realize that true Christianity is about a **personal relationship with Christ** which enables them to live a life of obedience to God's standards. John 15
- *Develop **accountability with other believers** to help them as they face the pressures and temptations of life. Prov 27:17
- *Become Godly individuals who **live in today's culture without conforming** to it's standards. Romans 12:1-2
- *Develop a **healthy prayer life** that reflects their dependence on the Lord and confidence in Him. Matt 6:5-15
- *Begin to **discover and use their spiritual gifts** as they serve God in and outside the church. I Cor 12
- ***Love everyone**, even those who aren't easy to love, by developing interpersonal relationships with people they don't click with. Matt 22:36-40
- *Become "**reproducers of the faith**" as they actively share their life with unbelievers. Matt 28:19-20, Acts 1:8

Building Community

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR PROGRAMS

Youth Ministries do not succeed because of strong programs. They are not a success if they have the largest outreaches, the best bands, or the coolest youth workers. They are not a success if they have the most students or boast the best Friday night programs. They are a success if they are following the Scriptures and pleasing God. This youth ministry will be a success if we help students develop a growing relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If we help them love God with everything they have and love others with all the gifts He has given them.

Although to do that, programs are almost a necessity. The program is not the priority, but rather the platform which we use to communicate God's love. We understand that every student that walks through the door will be at a different level in their spiritual walk, so we will have a variety of programs to reach out to the students no matter where they are at in their journey and help them grow closer to the sovereign God of the universe.

On the next page, We have listed several different levels of a spiritual journey and some programs we will put in place to help students at that level continue to grow closer to each other and closer to God. That does not mean that those programs will only be available for students when they are at that place in their journey. It just means that we will seek out ways to be a shining light to all students whether they are devoted Christians or even atheists.

Throughout time, the programs will change with the ministry. In our ministry, the message must never change, but we must be willing to change our methods as the Holy Spirit leads.

Spiritual Development Chart

(WITH CORRESPONDING PROGRAMS)

PLACE IN JOURNEY	PROGRAMS
Unbelief Doubt Questioning the faith	<i>Fun Events</i> <i>Bring a friend nights</i> <i>Community Nights</i>
Realization of sin Realization of Christ's death and Resurrection Decision to follow Christ	<i>Extravaganzas</i> <i>"Alter call" and counseling (big events)</i> <i>Conversion conversations (non events)</i>
Integration with believers Consistent study of God's Word Accountability Development of a Biblical Worldview	<i>Youth Group</i> <i>S.N.A.C.</i> <i>Sunday School</i> <i>Small groups</i> <i>Prayer gatherings</i> <i>Relationships with leaders</i> <i>Discipleship program</i>
Spiritual Growth Witness to unbelievers Discover spiritual gifts Use those gifts to glorify God	<i>CROSStrainers</i> <i>Student leadership team</i> <i>Evangelistic training</i> <i>S.H.A.P.E. class</i> <i>Church ministries</i>
<i>Be Christ to others</i>	<i>Constant theme in every program</i>

For Our Leaders

“WHAT YOU MUST KNOW”

*You don't have to be cool to be a youth leader. A lot of adults are nervous to get involved because they are afraid that students do not want a relationship with another adult. The truth is, students have the same desires adults have...to be loved and accepted. This does not mean that they will open up and be best friends the first time that you talk to them, but it does mean that if you invest in their lives and show them love, it will impact them.

*How to Study the Bible. We do not expect all of our leaders to have Bible degrees or be gifted teachers. What we do expect is a basic understanding of how to study God's word using the tools of observation, interpretation and application. We are willing to help any volunteer that feels like they need help in this area. A few good resources for this are "Grasping God's Word" and "Reading the Bible for All It's Worth."

*We require Commitment. Students have a lot of people walking in and out of their lives, they don't need another place where adults who they care about walk out on them. We require a yearly commitment and hope that you do not take the responsibility of investing in these teens lives lightly. The best scenario would be for a small group leader to be paired up with a group of freshman and be with them for all four years of their youth group. The longer a group is together, the closer they will grow to each other and hopefully, to God.

*We are committed to you. Youth ministries have victories and defeats. Great times and hard times. We will be walking along side of you throughout the process, praying for you, celebrating with you, and supporting you. You will never be alone.

*Know Yourself. Part of being a good youth leader is knowing who you are. Strengths, weaknesses, boundaries, conflict resolution, and personality clashes. The better you know yourself, the more effective you will be in ministry. We encourage self discovery and will work with you as you use your spiritual gifts in the ministry and discover a role that best utilizes those gifts.

For Our Leaders

“WHAT YOU MUST BE”

*A committed Christian. We know there are ups and downs in the Christian walk, but we expect our youth leaders to be committed to living a godly life.

*A godly example to the students. We expect our leaders to show our students what Christianity looks like in the real world. We expect them to be an example of living in the world without conforming to its standards.

*Accountable to each other and the youth pastor. As a leadership team, we will hold each other accountable and be there to encourage each other.

*A person of prayer. One of the best ways to love and care for your students is by praying for them.

*Loving. This would seem to be a given but it can be difficult to love those who are different than us. This requires looking out for the needs of our students beyond the surface.

*Healthy. We want our leaders to be spiritually and emotionally healthy. It is difficult to help others when you need help yourself.

*Balanced. Part of health is being balanced. This means setting boundaries with ministry so you still have the right amount of time for things like family, sabbath, and work.

For Our Leaders

“WHAT YOU MUST DO”

*Share and defend your faith with gentleness and respect. When you have opportunities to share your faith, take a leap of faith and share. God will bless you, and it is much easier to talk about sharing your faith when you are already doing it.

*Pray for your students. The more you pray for your students, the more you will care about them. Also, take time to pray for them throughout the week when you think about them. It doesn't have to be during a “designated prayer time.”

*Begin to discover and use your spiritual gifts as you serve God in and outside the church. If you do not know what your spiritual gifts are, we can help you discover them. If you know how you are gifted, you should seek out opportunities to allow God to use those gifts in and through this ministry.

*Love everyone, even those who aren't easy to love, by developing interpersonal relationships with your students. You will connect right away with some students. It will be a much longer road with others. When all else fails, keep showing them love. “Love never fails”

*Seek out ways to connect with your students outside of church. Find out what they have going on during the week. Give them a call to see how it went, or better yet, show up at the event. Little things like that communicate that you really care about them.

*Learn. We know our leaders have a lot on their plate, but we also know the importance of learning. We recommend committing to reading one book a year in the area of youth ministry to help you on your journey as you minister to students.