



Gimme 5IVE

Fifty Top Ten Youth Ministry Lists.
We Give Five. You Give Five.

What is the deal with this resource?

Youth workers have felt needs and real needs. The felt needs are often things like a new game for this week's youth group, a crash course in counseling for an upcoming conversation, or a dozen more youth workers. The real needs are a discipleship process, a biblically informed approach to youth ministry and a robust theological foundation. You can't deal with the real needs by only addressing the felt needs, but you can't stay in youth ministry long enough to wrestle with the real needs unless you get some tools and resources to help with the felt needs. Felt needs is what this book is about.

The idea behind this resource is quite simple. A team of youth workers helped identify 50 tasks or aspects in youth ministry that would qualify as felt needs. These 50 lists were then broken down into seven different categories. Finally these same youth workers brainstormed and came up with 5 tips/suggestions/ideas for each top ten list. And yes, we know. Five doesn't equal ten. That is where you and your team come in. You are the experts on your setting and we wanted you to add your voice to the conversation. Gather as a team and go through a list, talk about it, and then add 5 insights of your own to complete the list. **One disclaimer: Always default and submit to what your church leadership and church policies require. None of these suggestions trumps that.**

We hope that Gimme Five helps you navigate some difficult tasks and think through some important questions. And we hope that addressing the felt needs enables you and your team to create a place where the real need of teenagers can be met—the need to hear and be changed by the gospel. Thanks for what you do.

Thank you to the NY youth pastors who helped shape this resource by suggesting both topics and tips!

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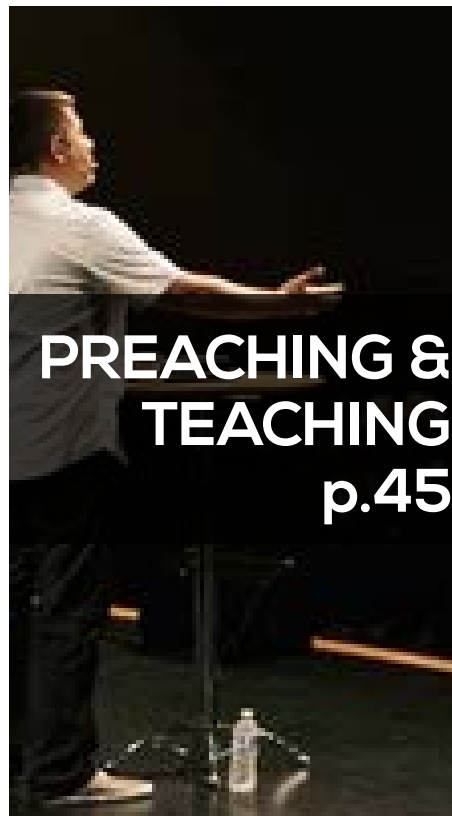
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FAMILY MINISTRY

Helping kids in broken families

- 1** Don't assume anything. Take the time to hear the story of the student. Practice reflective listening and ask clarifying questions.
- 2** Work hard to stay in the loop on basic details about their life. For example: Where are they living? Which parent brings them to church? Who is their legal guardian?
- 3** Plan to communicate youth group/youth event information to both parents.
- 4** Make your senior pastor aware and seek his or her counsel.
- 5** Help that student see how God uses broken families and broken individuals in his plan of redemption—especially in the Old Testament.

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Effective External Communication

- 1** Plan as far in advance as possible so that you aren't sending out last minute information.
- 2** Always connect "the why" to "the what." Don't just announce events—connect them to the vision.
- 3** Utilize multiple platforms: social media, email, phone calls, mail. Be strategic about how you use them.
- 4** Say what you need to say as efficiently as possible. Don't use too much text and format it so that the key information is easy to identify.
- 5** Limit the amount of communication. When you say everything, you say nothing. Too much communication reduces the impact of it.

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Walking Through Divorce

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1 Reassure the student that this doesn't have to be their future.

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2 Help them process that they aren't the reason for the divorce.

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3 Don't be quick to oversimplify the situation.

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4 Don't be caught in the middle and don't throw one parent under the bus.

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5 Be a stable adult presence in their life both emotionally and with your consistency.

Reaching Parents Who Don't Come To Church

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Meet them in the parking lot. Be in the place where parents drop off and pick up their teenagers and introduce yourself.

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Go where their kids are. Attending their sporting events and school concerts and introduce yourself.

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At bare minimum, communicate with them as much as the school does. This includes inviting them to things their kid is involved in.

9

Make sure they have your contact information.

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Mail them an encouraging hand written note highlighting the great things you notice in their teenager.

Caring for your family

- 1** Schedule time with your family. Communicate strong boundaries to your teenagers and leaders. Set aside a day a week to be with your kids.
- 2** Avoid ministry related travel or activities on important dates like birthdays, anniversaries, key school events.
- 3** Makes mealtime a priority. Eat together and turn off the cell phones.
- 4** Remind yourself that caring for the spiritual health of your family is your first ministry. Ask your spouse how you're doing with this.
- 5** Always honor and speak well of your spouse and children publically. Do not make demeaning jokes about them in sermons or openly rebuke them.

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Conversations With An Angry Parent

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6 Keep your senior pastor in the loop on the conversation from beginning to end. In some case, he or she may want to join you.

7 Up the mode of communication. If they text, you call. If they email, you ask to meet them face-to-face. This communicates your seriousness about their concern and moves the conversation to a vehicle that is less likely to result in misunderstanding.

8 Let them know you have heard them and that you want to resolve the issue. Keep the environment safe by not getting defensive and communicate that you have the same goals.

9 Pray together before and after the meeting.

10 Clarify what the next steps will look like and be sure to follow up.



EVENTS



Designing Promotional Materials

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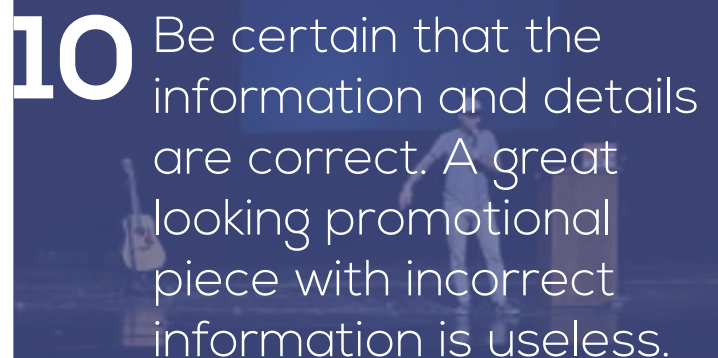
6 Keep it simple. Minimalistic and clean design is the current style.

7 Pay attention to the quality. Only use graphics and photos that are high resolution and don't use clipart.

8 Do not include too much text. The promotional material can direct them to a place they can get more information.

9 Don't use more than two fonts on one graphic.

10 Be certain that the information and details are correct. A great looking promotional piece with incorrect information is useless.



Event Planning

- 1** Know and communicate the purpose for the event and the audience for the event. A good event won't hit all audiences.
- 2** Get the right people in the right places. Be certain that team members are in areas of strength and know what they are being asked to do.
- 3** Understand your budget! Know where the money is coming from and where it is going. Leave room to pay, house, and feed speaker and band.
- 4** Create and use checklists and timelines in preparation for an event.
- 5** Take the time to have regularly scheduled individual conversations with key players.

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Partnering With Local Organizations

1 Promote them, not your group. This involves being as helpful to them as they are to you and finding out what they really need.

2 Don't be afraid to clarify expectations on your end—what your desired outcome is. The best way to do this is to meet in person.

3 If you are working at their facility be sure to ask if you need to provide any insurance information or if they have insurance for volunteer workers.

4 Run the partnership opportunity by your senior pastor before committing to it. He or she may know a reason that it shouldn't happen.

5 Keep it connected to the vision. Not every good opportunity is the right opportunity.

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Promoting An Event

- 1** All the key information must be clearly visible on any promotional material
- 2** If you can't promote it well, don't do it. Change the date to give you enough time to promote it well.
- 3** Don't forget the power of personal invitations. Create promotional material that can be handed off personally.
- 4** Clarify your why down to a one-sentence pitch—present a clearly defined win.
- 5** Use multiple platforms to promote the event and keep at it. Ask key leaders and student leaders to help with this.

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Fundraising

1 Join the rhythm of the calendar; use holidays to your advantage. Sell potted plants in the months leading up to Mother's Day or chocolates in the months leading up to Valentine's Day.

2 Don't do fundraisers that keep asking church people to buy stuff. Do fundraisers targeted at neighbors, family, etc...

3 Choose individually driven fundraising over group fundraising. A candy bar sale is preferable to a group car wash because a) there isn't much money per person once the group splits it up and b) it eliminates the drama of people trying to determine who worked hard, showed up on time, etc... Every teenager gets what they worked for.

4 Be choosy about which events you fundraise for. It might be wise to only fundraise for mission trips and not for amusement park trips.

5 On every event registration form give parents the opportunity to partially or completely sponsor another teenager.

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TEAMWORK



Recruiting Leaders

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Clearly define the type of people you want on your team. Identify some non-negotiables.

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Share the vision for the youth ministry. People buy into "the why."

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Don't recruit from the stage. Recruit personally and intentionally. Target people based on who they are and what they're gifted at.

9

Staff for the vision and not the need. If your group doubles in size tomorrow, can you sustain it with your current leadership set up?

10

Carefully follow your church policies on background checks, references, etc...

How To Delegate

1 Don't just give them the task. Give them the authority to complete it. And communicate that authority to those that need to know.

2 Delegate to people's strengths instead of to your need.

3 Expect that the task won't be done as well as you could do it yourself. But that's the only way others will develop and the only way you will create a sustainable model.

4 Don't be too quick to save the day. Let them learn from non-crucial mistakes.

5 Proactively communicate checkpoints on the front end. Let them know in advance that you will check in with them before, during and after the process.

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Removing A Leader

- 1** There should be written expectations provided up front. This provides a healthy reference point for difficult conversations.
- 2** Keep your senior pastor in the loop and get his or her advice.
- 3** It shouldn't be a total surprise to the leader. If it's a complete surprise then you probably missed the opportunity to have less serious conversations along the way.
- 4** Do it in person, but don't meet alone. Bring someone who is your authority to the meeting and not someone who is their peer.
- 5** If possible, continue to pastor and care for that person even after they are not on your team.

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Managing Conflict Within The Team

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1 Don't let it linger—lean into it quickly. If the level of emotional tension requires some time to pass then be sure to state your intent and plan to have a future conversation.

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2 Help your team learn that conflict isn't a bad thing necessarily. It is often a necessary part of growth and it can be a sign of health.

8

3 Don't make your highest priority the desire to be right or the need to determine who is right.

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4 Hear both stories. Take the time to understand what's being said and what's beneath what's being said.

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5 Grow forward. Look for ways to redeem the conflict and celebrate how God brings your team through it.

Difficult Team Members

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Understand their strengths, leverage them and celebrate them. Some leaders are frustrated because they aren't positioned properly.

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Don't view them as a tool to be used, but as a person to be shepherded.

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Make sure they understand "the why" (vision, mission, values) and not just "the what" (programs, tasks, events). People buy into "the why"—not "the what."

9

Ask them, "What can I be doing to better to help you succeed?"

10

Don't give up on difficult leaders. Someone probably stuck with you longer than they should have!

Being An All Star Youth Worker At Youth Group

6

1 Show up on time. Better yet, be early. This means you can help with any last minute issues and that you're there to greet students.

7

2 Don't hang out with other leaders. Hang out with students! Seems obvious, but this doesn't usually happen.

8

3 Model involvement for the group. Get involved in the games, singing, etc... You're not there to observe.

9

4 Write down your questions/suggestions. If you see anything during the night that could be done better or differently, don't go to the leader during the service. Write it down and share it later.

10

5 Make three meaningful connections. At the end of the night you should be able to identify three conversations you had with students.

Effective Internal Communication

- 1** Try to have one way of communicating that everyone is on board with—a private FB group, group texting, Planning Center.
- 2** Communicate consistently and strategically. Be frequent in your communication, but make sure the content is always important and useful.
- 3** Leaders should know what’s happening before they show up at your youth service. Send them an order of service, topic of message, specific responsibilities, etc...
- 4** Don’t waste their time with what you communicate. Ask yourself, “Do they need to know this?”
- 5** Send specific training materials to specific team members. Your entire team may not need an article on worship music, but your band leader does.

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Ways To Lose The Trust Of Your Youth Leader

- 1** Be unreliable. Don't show up on time. Forget to do what you're asked to do.
- 2** Publically undermine his or her leadership through what you say and what you don't say. Sometimes strategic silence speaks volumes.
- 3** Act like a youth instead of a youth leader. Don't have healthy boundaries.
- 4** Bash other leaders and parents. Drive a wedge between students and parents.
- 5** Be a social media train wreck. Post links to questionable material and rant and rave online about every little thing.

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SERVICES

Follow Up

- 1** Find an easy way to get the basic information of every visitor.
- 2** Create a group FB page and Twitter and Instagram and include that information on an information piece you give the visitor.
- 3** Social Media is an easy way to connect with visitors, but follow church policy for social media interaction.
- 4** Create an information piece for them to hand to their parents.
- 5** Create a draw for them to return. Give them a coupon that they can use at their next visit for a free snack or drink.

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Staging and Lighting

1 Make sure the design can stay up for a while. You probably don't have the money to do new staging for every sermon series or season.

2 Use online websites to get great design ideas (Pinterest, Churchstagedesignideas.com)

3 Look for simple solutions and try to use what you already have in the church. This includes asking people in the church what they might want to get rid of.

4 Go LED in place of halogen cam lights. One advantage is controlling the heat coming off the lights.

5 Using fabric is an easy and relatively cheap way to change up a space.

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Running Games

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1 Remember the why. How does this game or mixer contribute to the mission and align with the vision of the youth ministry?

2 Get them into their game specific location and setting (in their teams) first and then explain the game. If you explain it too soon, they will forget everything in the time it takes them to get to the new setting.

7

3 Explain it well and use graphics if possible. Basically answer these questions clearly: How does someone win? How does the team work together? How does one team keep the other team from winning?

8

4 Offer an example up front and/or let them have a practice round.

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5 Keep the whole group engaged in some way. If there are only a few people on stage playing, ask them to cheer for one of them.

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Connecting Churchy Kids and Community kids

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6 Get them away together—like at a retreat or day trip. Great ways for them to serve together.

7 Be strategic when assigning small groups or rec teams so there is a mix.

8 Structure your service times so that they're accessible and intelligible to the unchurched kid.

9 When playing mixers, let the students pair up with a friend first and then have them move around connecting with other pairs. This takes away some of the fear of the mingling scene.

10 Create onstage opportunities for the group to hear each other's names and stories. Maybe do a weekly interview or video spotlight.

Assimilation

- 1** Tell them what is going to happen that night. Help them relax and fit in by explaining every step of the way.
- 2** Clearly communicate what the next step of involvement and commitment is for them and encourage them toward it.
- 3** Create as many connections between that student and other students and key leaders.
- 4** Learn what they are good at. Connect them with someone who shares that interest and see if there is a place in the youth ministry for them to use their ability.
- 5** Connect with their family. Let the parents know the different ways you serve teenagers and families.

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Dealing With Distracted Students

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Have a private conversation with them. Confronting them publically will not go well for you or them.

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Get them involved in the youth service. Find ways for them to serve and direct their energies toward being part of the team.

8

Change your systems. For example: If you have students getting up and leaving the room during the service then let them know that when they return they will sit in the back of the room with a leader so as to not distract the group.

9

Get leaders seated near the students. If that is difficult then designate specific chairs for leader only and strategically position them.

10

Love Them. Often the loudest most annoying teenager is also the one hurting the most. They might be just waiting for you to quit on them—show them you are in it for the long haul.

Leading A Small Group

1 Don't re-preach the message, but do know the material. You should only talk 20% of the time!

2 Let the seriousness and difficulty of the questions progress. Start with easy shallow questions to create a flow to conversation and a comfortable space.

3 Ask open-ended questions and good follow up questions. Some examples: Why? What has led you to believe that? How would you explain that to someone who has never been to church? When is that most true for you?

4 Don't set a path, set parameters. The goal is not to get through every question, the goal is helpful honest conversation. But also you must bring the conversation back on track at times—especially with teenagers.

5 Know the type of small groupers you have. There are the Sunday school answer kids. The distracters. The outsider. The storyteller. Know who you have and learn how to best engage them.

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Working With A Student Band

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1 Don't let their focus be limited to growing musically. Create space for them to pray together, study Scripture together and grow together.

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2 Teach them that less is more when it comes to playing their instruments. Most young musicians will overplay.

8

3 Help them learn to listen to each other. Teach them to be aware of what everyone else on stage is doing. This is especially important for the bassist and drummer.

9

4 Make them think through the content of the songs. Can they explain what the song means? Scriptural Foundation?

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5 Broaden their understanding of "worship." Challenge them to think of worship in non-musical terms.

Altar Ministry

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6 Pray with a teenager of your own gender.

7 Ask them if and how you can pray. Don't assume you know what they want prayer for. Don't even assume they want you to pray with them.

8 Don't try to make something happen by getting louder or praying longer. Just trust God's work in their life.

9 Have another leader present if you sense you have something to share. Don't give directive or predictive words to students one-on-one.

10 Keep the conversation alive. After praying ask for permission to check back in with them later in the week about what God is doing in them.

DISCIPLESHIP



Ways To Help Teenagers Read The Bible

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6 Use the Bible in your gatherings. Help them get use to looking at Scripture for themselves.

7 Recommend a version that will be understandable for them and suggest a reasonable and sustainable amount of daily reading.

8 Make them aware of apps and reading plans that can help them read the Bible on a daily basis. Set up a texting plan where a verse for the day or a reminder to read is sent to them daily.

9 Suggest a book and schedule that a small group can go through together. Each student reads individually and the group gathers weekly to discuss what they've read.

10 Help shape the questions they ask when they read. Use the SOAP model or the "Wake, Warn, Win" model from *The Word and The Spirit* by David Hertweck.

One-On-One Discipleship

1

Put time in your calendar for it. Make it a priority.

2

Spend as much time with leaders as students. Disciple leaders who disciple students. This multiplication approach is a more sustainable model.

3

Have a plan for training leaders to have these conversations. Equip leaders for the unique nature of one-on-one discipleship. Train them to ask great questions.

4

Find a good resource to help move those conversations forward and keep them focused. Going through a discipleship resource together creates a safe framework for challenging conversations. Suggested resource: *Learning to Follow Jesus: Youth Edition* by Daniel McNaughton and Claude Valdes Jr.

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Keep it gender specific and follow church policies about adults meeting with students.

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Counseling Students

- 1** Work within proper boundaries and church policies.
- 2** Know your limits. Most likely you are not a professional counselor. Be quick to refer to a professional and be sure to know your role as a mandatory reporter.
- 3** Practice reflective listening. Ask questions that constantly clarify what is being said and what is being thought and felt by the student.
- 4** Walk with students through issues and avoid the tendency to always try and fix them. Help them discover truth instead of just preaching at them.
- 5** Remember there is a uniquely Christian way to deal with issues. Only the Gospel changes our hearts. Don't default to moralism. Good news is better than good advice.

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Teaching Teenagers To Pray

1 Model it. Pray in front of them often. Pray with them often.

2 Give them specific ways to pray and specific things to pray for. During youth services block time and lead them through a time of prayer. They need help in knowing how to pray and what to pray for.

3 Show them prayers in Scripture. Encourage them to pray the Scriptures and to know the pattern of those prayers.

4 Teach them to reflect and listen, not just talk. Encourage them to begin their prayer time by considering who God is and what He has done.

5 Give them written prayers to read and study. Give them opportunities to write their own.

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Asking Teenagers Good Questions

- 1** Start with easy questions. Ask about family, school, what they do for fun, etc...
- 2** Ask open-ended questions and not just yes/no questions. Try to discover what they really like and what they're really like.
- 3** Have realistic expectations of the quality of the conversation based on gender/age. Junior high boys can be quite limited in the depth of conversation—that's ok!
- 4** Get into the habit of following up with the question: "Why?" Other versions: "Can you tell me more about that?" "What do you like most about that?" "How did you learn that?"
- 5** Don't give up after first question/interaction. Build trust and the conversation will follow.

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Moving Behavior Focused Conversations To Gospel Conversations

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6 Start where they are at. Talk about what they want to talk about and learn about their life and their values.

7 Think like a marathoner, not a sprinter. Don't feel the pressure to get across the finish line in one conversation. See each conversation as leading to the next one.

8 Help them think through the why. Why are they feeling that way? Why are they struggling with that? Why did they do that? Keep asking why until you get to the issue. Help them to see that the sin is deeper than behavior.

9 Help them identify the lie. In *You Can Change*, Tim Chester teaches that when we sin, it is because we forget who God is and who we are in Christ. Which lie are they believing? Those lies can be traced to their idols.

10 Help them to see God as great, glorious, good and gracious. Help them see the uselessness of their idols in the light of our God.



PREACHING & TEACHING

Topics To Hit Every Year

1 The Gospel

2 Community (The Church)

3 Living on Mission

4 Relationships/Dating

5 Consider preaching a book of the Bible instead of a topic

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Using Humor In Your Sermons

1 Be strategic about placement. Don't go too long without some humor or story, but don't sabotage yourself by using humor when the message is intended to hit home for the students.

2 Don't try too hard. Authenticity matters most. Stay within your natural sense of humor. If you're not funny, use media that is funny.

3 Don't discredit yourself with choice of humor. Self-deprecating humor can be helpful, but don't take it to the point where the listener wouldn't see you as someone worth listening to.

4 Use the rule of threes. When you're listing things, start with two real examples and then use an absurd one as the third. This is a simple way to get a laugh.

5 Observational humor. Tell stories where you notice unusual or funny things. This is a better approach to humor than telling jokes.

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Teaching Controversial Topics

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6 Don't do it unless you are studied up. This means you must know both sides of the issue very well.

7 Don't make Scripture a prop in your message. Be sure that the text you are preaching was intended to address that issue.

8 Connect the topic to the heart issues behind it. Don't just say something is bad. Explain how it reveals a bigger issue in our hearts—the worship and love of things more than God.

9 Make sure it will help them grow in their faith. Don't just get on a soapbox to make you feel good. Will this message help them grow in Christ?

10 Bring in other voices. You might have experts in the church on the issue—your senior pastor might be a good option.

Christ-Centered Preaching

- 1** Place the story within The Story. Don't reduce Bible stories to morality tales. How does this story fit into the story of redemption?
- 2** Ask: What does this passage teach us about who God is?
- 3** Ask: How does this passage show us our need for Jesus?
- 4** Ask: How does this passage show us the beauty and sufficiency of Christ?
- 5** Frame application as worship and not work. Call students to a heart level response to the Gospel and suggest what that might look like in their life.



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Handling Scripture Well

- 1** Context Context Context. You must study the surrounding verses, read the entire chapter and have some level of understanding of the entire book's purpose and themes.
- 2** Read it for yourself several times and in several different translations. Read it out loud if possible. At this point determine what genre the passage is. You don't interpret poetry the same way you interpret historical narrative.
- 3** Make a list of observations and questions. What do you notice and what are you wondering about? Take it one step further and try to think of what a churched/unchurched teenager would be wondering.
- 4** Get Help. At the very least use a good study bible. If possible use other resources like a commentary. Listen to other sermons on that text (can be found online). Try to learn something about the cultural and historical context.
- 5** Place it in The Story of the Bible. Where does this passage fit in the story of redemption? Before the cross or after the cross? Written to show us our need for salvation, our great Savior or both?

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Storytelling In Sermons

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Practice your story. Practice saying it out loud.

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Write it down so that you get the flow and details right, but memorize it! Nothing seems more inauthentic than a speaker reading his or her own story.

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Use visuals when appropriate. For example if it's a story from your past show a picture of what you looked like at that age. If it's a story from a specific place, show a picture of that place.

9

Don't overstate your transition in and out of your story. Don't say, "I'm going to tell you a story now." Just pause for a second and start the story. After the story don't spell out the illustration with painful detail. Go straight to your point. If it's a good story, they will understand the connection.

10

Get permission to tell stories that involve and might embarrass others. This includes family members!

Structuring A Youth Talk

1 Start by connecting. Connect with the audience and connect the topic to your own life. A story is probably the best way to accomplish both. Position yourself as someone who has wrestled with (or still is wrestling with) this topic.

2 Build Tension. Connect the topic to the life of the audience. Raise a question/tension that they want to hear answered/resolved.

3 Always answer one of two questions (or both). Who is God? What has he done?

4 Point to Jesus. Get to a point in the message where Jesus is shown to be supreme over everything and sufficient for everyone.

5 Suggest applications for different audiences. How might a believer respond in worship to this truth? How might an unbeliever move forward in considering truth?

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Keeping Your Audience With You

1 Use personal stories, but be sure that they belong in the message and be sure to not read it—memorize it!

2 Use humor. See the list “5 Tips on Using Humor in Your Sermon” for more detail.

3 Use pictures and graphics to help engage and focus the eyes of the listener and provide a reference point.

4 Use videos to break up the talk and to help strengthen the message.

5 Involve students in illustrations. Even if you can share an illustration without a teenager try to get one involved. Other ideas: have a teenager read your Scripture text, share a personal story, ask a question...

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Creating A Sermon Series

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6 Use your values as a springboard for selecting topics. This ensures that your students are hearing messages on what matters most.

7 When it comes to series graphics, don't reinvent the wheel. Find free stuff—there's a lot of it out there.

8 Share the topic with your team and ask for ideas for media, illustrations, Scripture passages, etc...

9 Set a Google Alert specific to that topic. You will receive an email every day with any article mentioning that topic, providing you with current illustrations.

10 Be prepared to allow the Scriptures to challenge your preconceived ideas on the topic. In fact, it's not wise to always preach on topics—preach through a book of the Bible every now and then.

LEADERSHIP



Transitioning Into A Youth Ministry

- 1** Don't overpromise. Don't make any promises other than you're ready to serve and help teenagers follow Jesus.
- 2** Listen and learn about what's going on. There are reasons why things are the way they are. You should know those reasons before making changes.
- 3** Build relationships before you build a program. Take plenty of time to get to know parents and students and other church leaders and community leaders (local principals, other youth pastors).
- 4** Communicate and celebrate the leaders who have led through transition. Don't invite comparison to last person and always honor the previous leader.
- 5** Be committed to the long-term process. It's easy to have a big vision. It's hard to have a long vision. Make the effort to build slowly but surely.

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Dealing With Ministry Frustrations

- 1** Get some rest. Take a nap. Eat healthy. Sometimes ministry related frustration causes us to not take care of ourselves physically. Big mistake.
- 2** Don't let it steal you from your family. Create a safe space at home where you can disconnect from church and youth group. Choose to be present with your family.
- 3** Find ways to vent. This might be running, golf, playing an instrument or a video game. You'll need other ways to let off steam (as opposed to punching things!)
- 4** Find a mentor or someone outside of the situation to talk to. You will benefit from the perspective and lack of bias that comes with someone who isn't in the middle of it with you.
- 5** Feed your soul. Find books and devotionals that can help you rehearse and remember the Gospel.

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Leading During A Community Crisis

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Be available to listen. Students, parents and teachers will all need someone who will listen to them. Be that person. Clear your schedule and listen.

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Look to serve the school. Don't go in with your own agenda and don't try to capitalize on the emotions of the moment.

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Recommend professional counseling. Don't try to be a professional counselor if you aren't. Know good local Christian counselors you can recommend. Have their contact info on you.

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Suggest practical ways that students can direct the emotions. This might involve making posters, raising funds for the affected family or planting a tree or flowers in memory of a friend.

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Resist cheap answers. Don't spout off random Bible verses and trite Christian statements. It's ok to say we don't always know why certain things happen.

Transitioning Out Of A Youth Ministry

1 Raise up leaders before the transition is on your radar. Always be looking for people who can replace you. Position your leaders to grow and learn.

2 Don't apologize for the transition—you have nothing to be sorry for. An apology confuses things.

3 Know when to cut your ties, especially if there is a new leader right after you. You'll want to stay connected, but it is probably best for you to make a clean break from the group—especially from any pastoral type interaction.

4 Prepare the students for change. Let them know that the next person may make some changes and may be different and that that is a good thing.

5 Create useful resources and training material for the next guy.

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Ways To Keep Growing

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1 Mix up your spiritual disciplines. Silence, fasting, reflection, written prayers, and journaling can all be nice variations to a regular diet of Bible reading and prayer.

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2 Read. Read more. Follow key bloggers and thinkers on Twitter and read an article everyday. Carry reading material with you to meetings so you can redeem any of the time waiting.

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3 Listen to podcasts and sermons of many different types of preachers. Listen to TED talks and any talks on leadership, culture or personal development.

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4 Create space for growth-focused conversations. Identify a mentor, coach and someone you can disciple and/or coach.

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5 Engage with different minded people. Don't only read and listen to people in your area of ministry and stream of evangelicalism.

Ways To Support Your Senior Pastor

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6 Offer him or her encouraging feedback. Most pastors do not receive enough encouragement—be a person who builds your pastor up.

7 Always honor him or her in public conversations. Speak well of your pastor in conversations with others. Even strategic silence can communicate a lack of support—speak up!

8 Care for his kids well. Make the effort to pastor his children and be personally connected to each of them.

9 Ask how you can help. Instead of telling your pastor all the things that need improvement, offer yourself as a willing team player.

10 Share what you are learning. You are probably learning from blogs, books and podcasts that your pastor may now know about. Make it your practice to share those resources, explaining why and how it has helped you.

Suggestions For Social Media

1 Don't be the social media police for your students. Don't take it upon yourself to publicly correct every dumb post from a teenager. Have a conversation if necessary, but don't hash it out on social media.

2 Follow basic social media etiquette. Limit how much you post. Don't harass people with invites to games.

3 Don't argue with others. Facebook is the worst place to try and make a point. Don't get drawn into an argument.

4 Think carefully about what you post. As yourself: Does this add value or just noise? Realize that your postings reflect upon your church and ministry even if it's your personal opinion.

5 Follow your church policies on social media interactions with teenagers. No exceptions.

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