



Search by title, author, isbn, etc.

Search

Articles

Developing a Youth Ministry Philosophy

by Randy Fields

Share   

Related Content

[LifeWay Students](#)[Teaching tips for teachers of teenagers](#)

A philosophy of why and how you do youth ministry takes time up front but can save you hours of headache down the road. Few things have proved to be as important to me in the last 16 years of youth ministry as having a philosophy of ministry and expectations written down for our volunteer youth workers. Use this description of our church's philosophy to help develop one for your own ministry. With it you'll too experience the joy it is to have all who are working with teenagers on the same page & headed in the same direction

Overviewing A Philosophy

Our church has identified some crucial elements in a well-rounded youth ministry. Picture a common household ladder with six rungs. The foundation of our ladder is Philippians 3:13-14: "Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (HCSB®).

Our basic philosophy is this:

- To have and build a dynamic relationship with God and His Word.
- To have and build a dynamic relationship with fellow believers.
- To have and build a dynamic relationship with nonbelievers and share the love of Christ with them.

How we live out the philosophy is identified by successive steps up the ladder. Each step must be completed before the next step.

Step One: Come and See

We invite students to come and see what our church has to offer and how Christ can change their lives. We help newcomers begin to understand our philosophy by providing several come-and-see activities that will attract them to our group and give them a taste of who we are. These range from weekly youth group meetings to amusement-park trips and lock-ins. Come-and-see activities are not heavy on Bible study or serious in nature. They simply provide a place for students to experience fun and the love of Christ.

Step Two: Commitment

We invite students to make a commitment to Christ and His church. Commitment means something different to teenagers than it does to adults in church. Teenagers will commit to something that is meeting their needs, something that is providing substance and is challenging them to grow. They may not walk down the aisle of the church and join, but they will commit to a weekly Bible study, drama group, or discipleship class.

Step Three: Growth

Students reach the third step on the ladder when they begin to grow in their relationship with Christ. If students did not have that relationship when they began their journey, by this step they will have prayed to receive Christ. Youth workers who build relationships with students facilitate this process of growth. A well-balanced youth ministry provides several opportunities for intentional growth. Students will grow only as much as you expect them to. Aim high in all that you offer for students and challenge them to look more and more like Jesus.

Step Four: Personal Ministry

We provide students opportunities to minister and to discover the personal ministry to which

God is calling them. When students begin to experience ministry by doing ministry, their relationship with Christ reaches new heights. By providing students with opportunities to serve within our church as well as during church mission trips, we are helping to ensure that someone will be taking our place in ministry.

We also encourage them to serve within our church body. Our students serve on important committees, lead in planning and conducting projects, teach younger students, and participate in mission trips. This rung on the ladder helps to ensure that when our students leave our youth ministry and go on to college or move away, they will not be long in finding a place to serve.

Step Five: Ministry Above and Beyond

We empower our students to take their personal ministries into their world to reach their generation for Christ. This next-to-the-last rung on the ladder emphasizes taking ministry out of the four walls of the church into the students' everyday life. Going on mission trips is one thing; evangelizing their friends and peers is quite another! This step on the ladder helps our leadership team think outside the box of normal youth group stuff. It makes us ask questions that help us reach the students who don't go to church anywhere. These ministries that go above and beyond are typically student-led. Such ministries include evangelistic events, campus clubs, student-led cell groups, and city-wide youth events. The list is limitless; we never limit ourselves by the words "We can't do that."

Step Six: ?

We help students realize that God is never finished with us. The top step on the ladder is simply a question mark. Even if students have climbed the ladder and look a lot like Jesus, they need to understand that there will never be a place in their Christian walk where they can stop maturing. Standing on the sixth step of the ladder can be uncomfortable, even scary at times; but we are never alone at the top. Jesus is right there with us, to lean on for security and even to catch us if we lose our balance. There is no such thing as a comfort zone at the top of the ladder.

A ladder is a valuable tool, but if it does not have all the rungs in place, it becomes unstable and generally is not useful for much. We need students in all five areas to have a balanced ministry. If there are too many on the top rung of the ladder, the ladder becomes unstable. If there is nobody on the ladder at all, there is probably not much happening except for a gathering of students.

If you do not have a philosophy statement, I encourage you to sit down and write one, even if you are the only worker at your church and you have a small youth group. If you know where you are going as the leader, others will want to follow and be a part of the ministry. In addition, let workers know what you want them to do. Don't just throw a teaching book in their hands and feed them to the wolves. Guide them, nurture them, help them to look more like Jesus; in return, your students will also.

Randy Fields is a former youth minister and is currently Lead Pastor at New Covenant Baptist Church in Grass Valley, California.

About LifeWay

[About Us](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Careers](#)
[Newsroom](#)
[Licensing & Permissions](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Advertise With Us](#)

My Account

[My Orders](#)
[My Downloads](#)
[Shipping Rates](#)
[Return Policy](#)
[Gift Cards](#)
[Live Chat!](#)

Digital Resources

[Ministry Grid](#)
[LifeWay Worship](#)
[Digital Church](#)
[KidEvent Pro](#)
[Downloads](#)
[MyCurriculum Manager](#)
[Simulcast Management](#)
[LifeWay Reader eBooks](#)

Join now! Get inspiring content, special offers, and more.

[Sign Up](#)



Payment Options:     

Your trusted source of Christian resources since 1891

© 2001–2015 LifeWay Christian Resources

