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# HIRING A YOUTH PASTOR OR DIRECTOR

WHAT CHURCHES AND NEW HIRES  
NEED TO KNOW







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# INTRODUCTION

It's an exciting time when a church experiences growth and decides to hire a youth pastor/director. Some churches experience significant success in their hire, and their youth groups flourish. But at other churches, a poor hiring process can lead to incompatibility problems, missed opportunities, abuse issues, or wrongful dismissals that leave a trail of hurt.

While there are no guarantees in any hiring process, there are important steps to follow that will help you set the stage for success when hiring a youth pastor/director.

In this resource we'll examine some best practices that will help your church through the process of finding, hiring, and holding on to a youth pastor/director. We also offer support and suggestions for your new youth pastor/director that will help them succeed in their journey with your congregation.

## WHAT'S IN THIS RESOURCE

We've divided this resource into three sections:

**FOR THE CHURCH: A HIRING CHECKLIST:** This section outlines a robust hiring process that sets the new youth pastor or director up for success.

**FOR THE NEW YOUTH PASTOR OR DIRECTOR:** This section provides helpful guidance for new hires.

**MENTORING:** This section explores the importance of a strong mentoring relationship for new hires.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the topics in this guide, contact the CRC's youth ministry catalyzer at [youthministry@crcna.org](mailto:youthministry@crcna.org).

# FOR THE CHURCH: A HIRING CHECKLIST

What can your church do to find a good match in a youth pastor/director? Many congregations have been successful in their search, while others have not. It's not easy to find compatibility in ideology, ministry focus, and ministry passions. But here we offer a few key points to lead you on this journey.

## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Every hiring process should begin with prayer. Seek God's will. Hiring a staff member is like getting married; you want the staff member to work well with fellow staff and volunteers and be in it for the long term. Taking extended times to pray isn't easy but is worth the effort. We encourage you to ask your prayer team and council to actively pray for the process. We also highly recommend that the pastor(s) include the process in congregational prayers from time to time. This will help to keep the search team and the vision in front of the people so it is not a forgotten mission.

## ANALYZE YOUR CONGREGATION'S NEEDS

Have you determined the need for the position? A church can react to a perception that may or may not exist based on little more than a few random comments or thoughts about having a youth director. Or you may have lost or released a person and have not evaluated the ministry to determine what the next step should be. Any time you are looking to fill a position, paid or volunteer, pastoral or administrative, do your homework. Review and determine the need.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What need (or needs) is driving our hiring process?
- What do we expect of this person?
- What demographic will this person serve? There are a number of great processes by which this can be evaluated: Youth Unlimited, Compass 21, Ministry Architects, etc.
- Is the primary responsibility of this position shepherding students, developing programs, or engaging in evangelism?
- Will this person work in a staff context?
- To whom is this person accountable?
- Is there already a support team that this person will oversee and work with?

## MODELS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

There are more than two dozen types of youth ministries, and knowing which type your church has (or would like to have) is helpful in knowing where or how this new leader will be using their gifts and calling. The following list was created by Mark DeVries, founder of Youth Ministry Architects and director of youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee. His books include *Sustainable Youth Ministry* and *Family-Based Youth Ministry*.

- 1. MISSIONS:** This model seeks to make every component of the ministry revolve around a series of excellent summer (or Christmas or spring break) mission trips. Paul Borthwick (youth pastor turned missions pastor) and Ridge Burns (Center for Student Missions) are names in this field.

**2. STUDENT LEADERSHIP:** In *Developing Student Leaders*, Ray Johnston proposes a model in which every young person in the church is involved in some form of leadership.

**3. INTEREST-CENTERED:** The typical church-based version of this model is a youth ministry that is centered on a group like the youth choir. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is the classic parachurch version.

**4. FAMILY-BASED PROGRAMMING:** This model is not identical with Family-Based Youth Ministry. It suggests programs for family functions and provides education and support for families.

**5. DISCIPLESHIP:** Duffy Robbins's book *The Ministry of Nurture* is an excellent resource for this model of youth ministry. This model focuses on creating programming that systematically leads youth through intentional stages (what Robbins calls the "come level," the "grow level," and the "lead level") of growth toward Christian maturity.

**6. CREATIVE EVANGELISM:** Willow Creek Community Church seems to have grown from this model of youth ministry. Their youth ministry, originally titled "Son City," was built on high-energy, high-tech, quality outreach events designed to attract a large number of youth.

**7. RETREATS:** This model centers on reducing programming so that the major focus of the youth group is a series of retreats. All other programming feeds into and out of these continuity-building retreat events.

**8. TEAM-BASED:** This model is based on Ginny Ward Holderness's book *Youth Ministry: The New Team Approach*. A team-based youth ministry seeks to balance worship, service, fellowship, and study, using a rotating team of youth and adult leaders for each of the specific focal points.

**9. MENTORING:** Miles McPherson and Wayne Rice have an excellent resource titled *One Kid at a Time*, which covers the waterfront for setting up a mentoring program.

**10. WORSHIP:** Based on William R. Myers's book *Black and White Styles of Youth Ministry*, the worship model centers the youth ministry on the weekly experience of worship with the entire church family. This model was particularly present in Myers's study of African American churches.

**11. RECONCILIATION:** This model focuses on building a bridge between churches from different socioeconomic/cultural backgrounds. In this model the majority of the programming would be designed for the two groups together.

**12. ASSETS:** Based on the "[40 Developmental Assets](#)" identified by the Search Institute, this model seeks to find ways to ensure that as many of these assets as possible are provided for youth in the church and the community.

**13. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:** The model puts all the eggs in the Sunday-morning Sunday school basket. The focus here is on building an intentionally excellent Sunday-morning program.

**14. "IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME":** This model is the classic Sunday night youth group model (based on the original Society for Christian Endeavor). "If you build it" youth ministries simply focus on exceptional programming in the evening to attract and involve youth in the life of the church.

**15. CONFIRMATION:** Rick Osmer's book *Confirmation: Presbyterian Practices in Ecumenical Perspective* is helpful here, providing significant theological reflection on the topic of helping the confirmation/profession of faith experience become a true (new) beginning of a young adult's faith experience. A youth ministry that is focused on the confirmation model would build its programs around preparing for the confirmation/profession of faith experience and living out the vows made.

**16. CHURCH PLANTING MODEL:** Recommended by Mark Senter in a recent *Youthworker Journal* article, this model is built on the idea that students from healthy youth ministries can be used to begin entirely new churches.

**17. LOGOS:** This popular transdenominational youth program is the heart of many youth programs. Having its roots in the mainline church, this model provides students with a variety of activities and Bible study, usually centered on tables at which there is an intentional "family" atmosphere.

**18. SPIRITUAL PRACTICES MODEL:** Currently being developed by Mark Yaconelli at San Francisco Theological Seminary, this model focuses on giving leaders and students opportunities for experiencing God through classical spiritual disciplines together.

**19. PURPOSE-DRIVEN YOUTH MINISTRY:** Growing out of the thriving Saddleback Church in California, this model is arguably the "state-of-the-art" presentation of the most widely accepted perspective on what youth ministry ought to be. Doug Fields's book *Purpose-Driven Youth Ministry* offers an insightful and comprehensive approach to discipling students.

Darwin Glassford and Lynn Barger Elliott from Calvin Theological Seminary add a few other models:

**20. MISSIONAL:** The main purpose of the ministry is to serve needs in the community. An example of this would be a basketball ministry or an open gym program.

**21. SMALL GROUP:** This ministry is structured primarily around small groups, coming together either around interest or spiritual maturity.

**22. INTERGENERATIONAL:** Intergenerational programming takes place in a church that has decided to center its youth ministry specifically on programming across generational lines.

**23. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:** Young people are organized, trained, and empowered to facilitate change in their communities. This approach is advocated by the New Horizons Foundation in Romania.

**24. EVENT-DRIVEN:** Emphasizes monthly or quarterly big events that are evangelistic in character. The early Friday-night rallies conducted by Chicagoland Youth for Christ were an early example of this approach.

**25. INTEGRATION:** Focuses on meaningfully integrating young people into the life and ministry of the church, with appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability, with caring adults.

**26. WORLDVIEW-APOLOGETICS:** Challenges students to develop a biblical worldview and the ability to defend their faith. This approach is advocated by Summit Ministries ([bryan.edu/summit](http://bryan.edu/summit)).

**27. YOUTH WORSHIP:** This model provides youth-driven and -oriented worship services marked by youth-oriented music, involvement, and teaching. In some settings, the youth worship services parallel the adult services.

**28. SOCIAL JUSTICE:** This approach is oriented around understanding and engaging local, national, and global social justice issues.

## HIRING VS. CALLING

Somebody will probably ask, “Do we hire or call a youth pastor/director?” Conversations in churches about titles, ordination, and hires have certainly created opportunities to discuss these issues when it comes to bringing in paid youth workers. Let’s start with some definitions from Wikipedia:

In Protestant churches, the term “ministry” often implies the service of an ordained minister or pastor. In youth ministry, however, this is not always the case—a youth ministry leader may be an ordained member of the clergy, an employed layperson, or a volunteer. Titles applied to youth ministry leaders vary widely as well, even within denominations, using terms such as “youth minister,” “youth pastor,” or simply “youth worker.”

Youth ministers may be trained in an education specifically to work with youth. Many Bible and Christian universities and colleges now offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in youth ministry. While youth ministry used to be considered a stepping stone toward other ministry opportunities, the trend is currently moving toward treating it as its own vocation.

In the Christian Reformed Church, a youth director position is typically a hire that could have a term (an end date) connected to it. A youth pastor is typically called on the basis of credentials (commissioned pastor, M.Div., and so on) and Church Order.

Please refer to the Appendix of this guide for more details on hiring and calling.

## CRAFTING A JOB DESCRIPTION

Creating a clear job description is key to a strong hiring process. Be as specific as possible. The more you have in writing, the better. The more defined the job description, the easier it will be to know when you’ve found the person you’re looking for. If you don’t already have an appropriate job description in place, here are some guidelines for writing one. See also the Appendix of this guide for some job description templates you can use.

- Begin with a job title that accurately describes the role.
- Share your congregation’s mission or vision statement.
- Provide a brief summary of the position. Below is an example from an actual job description:

**Intent:** With a love for the Lord, the youth director of (church name) is called to expand and empower the development, direction, and education of the youth and young adult ministries of the church. With an emphasis on youth, this ordained or nonordained staff person will facilitate spiritual growth within our membership through development and integration of various church programs.

**Mandate:** The youth director is to be the person whose primary purpose in ministry is to help lead youth and young adults into a closer relationship with God. We pray that this relationship, in turn, will lead them to an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord of their life and to profession of faith. The youth director will do this by providing relational leadership in developing and directing youth ministry programming at (church name).

- State the purpose of the job description. Example:

**Purpose:** The purpose of a written job description is to give the congregation and the youth pastor/director a clear understanding of work expectations. The job description protects the youth pastor/director from being assigned tasks beyond his/her immediate responsibilities. It must be understood that no job description can ever cover every situation or circumstance in ministry, but the hope is that this document can help the youth pastor/director, the Leadership Team, and the Youth Ministry Team frame roles and responsibilities for the youth ministry position.



- List the job qualifications, which might include
  - education and training
  - abilities
  - doctrinal beliefs (see “A Word about Theology” on p. 11)
  - past experience
  - other

Remember that these things are what you *want*, but you might not find a person who fills your wish list exactly. From your needs analysis you will be able to assess which qualifications are necessary and which ones are optional.

- Define the position’s support/accountability team (either a person or a group) and what the accountability will look like (i.e., meeting frequency, purpose, etc.). Accountability is one of the most important avenues of support for a newly hired/called person, and it must be provided with integrity and love. In the Appendix of this guide you’ll find templates to help you define a support team for the youth pastor/director.
- State to whom this position reports and who will conduct regular reviews (the elders? the council? another group?).
- List the job responsibilities. Be specific, and refer back to the “Intent” section of the job description. Describe the parts of the job that
  - are relational.
  - have a “teaching” element to them.
  - involve the creation and administration of programming.

When you have drafted the job description, evaluate how realistic it is. Network with other churches, with your classis, and with denominational staff for insights. Check out descriptions posted by others to see if your expectations are in line with the rest of the marketplace. These sites are good resources:

- [YouthUnlimited.org](http://YouthUnlimited.org)
- [YouthSpecialties.com](http://YouthSpecialties.com)
- [ChurchStaffing.com](http://ChurchStaffing.com)
- [crcna.org](http://crcna.org) and other denominational websites
- Websites of seminaries and Bible colleges

## THE SEARCH PROCESS

### APPOINT A SEARCH COMMITTEE

A well-organized search committee is a key component of a successful hiring process. Your search committee should include high school students and young adults, youth ministry leaders, church leaders, and parents. Ask for volunteers from the congregation, but don’t be shy about directly asking people as well, especially teens. A wide variety of opinions will be invaluable when you interview.

Appoint a search committee chair who will conduct meetings and communicate with applicants.

### THE PROCESS

Here’s how the search process commonly goes:

- Advertise the position online, in Christian publications like *The Banner*, at schools your church recognizes as solid training grounds, and in the “Church Positions” section of The Network ([network.crcna.org](http://network.crcna.org)). Post the opening on your church’s website and social media. Ask members of your congregation to spread the word about the position opening.

- Acknowledge the receipt of every resume within 48 hours.
- Keep applicants updated on the timeline for your search process.
- After the application deadline has passed, gather to review all the applications and decide which applicants to interview. Be careful not to make assumptions about applicants based on their ethnicity, gender, age, or location.
- As soon as you know which applicants you won't be interviewing, thank them warmly for their interest and release them from the process professionally and quickly so that they can continue their search elsewhere.
- Conduct initial interviews to narrow the field to several top candidates. Never conduct a group interview; interview a single candidate at a time.
- Conduct a second round of interviews (or more) to identify the person you wish to hire. Ask applicants to supply references if they have not already done so.
- Conduct a police background check on all viable candidates.
- Each time you make a decision, follow up with a letter, phone call, or email. Many churches never conclusively respond either way to applicants who aren't offered the position. This can send a powerful message about the character of the church. Since the church world is fairly small, act professionally to everyone.
- References are invaluable to the hiring process. Be sure to request them from all of your viable candidates, and contact all references by phone.
- Offer the position to your preferred candidate by phone or letter.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

The search committee should address the following questions:

- Is there, or should there be, a written contract for this position that outlines terms, finances, holidays/vacation, continuing education expectations, etc.?
- Do we have funding for the position? Make sure your budget is clearly articulated to your congregation about what this position will cost.
- Can we provide moving costs?
- Is there a support team in place for this person after he/she is hired or called?
- Who can mentor and support this person outside the congregation?
- What might the person's "first day" look like? Who will help him or her get settled in and learn the ropes?

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

### PREPARING TO INTERVIEW

Make sure that the members of your search committee are on the same page before interviews begin. Here are some things to consider:

- Know your congregation's philosophy of youth ministry and be ready to articulate it.
- Agree that you will be transparent about any difficulties your church is facing.
- Interview face-to-face if possible, but be prepared to interview long-distance candidates via Skype/FaceTime/Google Hangouts or another teleconferencing medium.
- Draft a list of interview questions that you'll ask of each candidate.
- Find a comfortable location for the interview to help candidates feel at ease.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It's good to familiarize yourself with which interview questions are appropriate and which are inappropriate in an interview context. Canada and the U.S. have differing protocols when it comes to interview questions.

Ask the same questions in all interviews to create a level playing field. Be willing to go the extra distance of asking clarifying questions to communicate your understanding of a candidate's answer. Apply a personal touch; for example, take notes on the candidate's family and use their spouse's/children's names where appropriate in some of your questions.

Sample questions to consider:

- What is your faith story?
- What do you love about youth ministry?
- What do you find most challenging about youth ministry?
- What do you think are the most difficult issues facing youth today?
- What would you say to a teen who thinks church is irrelevant?
- What do you like to read? What do you watch on TV or online?
- What are some of your favorite youth ministry resources and websites?
- How familiar are you with the Reformed expression of faith? How would you summarize it?
- What do you understand about the meaning of baptism and profession of faith?
- What is your understanding of the position you are applying for here?
- What do you envision your first year might look like?
- What questions do you have about our church and this position?

## A WORD ABOUT THEOLOGY

Be firm in this! If this person is leading and/or teaching your youth, you want someone who knows God's Word and can communicate it. This person should be on the same page (doctrinally) and have a clear understanding of the vision for your church. While it may sound simplistic, remember that this person will be instructing your youth in your congregation's theology, so make sure that they have a firm grasp of it. At the beginning of the next section of this guide, we've included excerpts from *Reformed: What It Means, Why It Matters* by Robert De Moor (Faith Alive) that give a basic description of the Reformed worldview.



# FOR THE NEW YOUTH PASTOR OR DIRECTOR

Congratulations! You're embarking on a great adventure in this new position, and we are very excited for you.

The first section of this guide was aimed primarily at the church that's hiring you. This section is for you. Beginning any new journey requires careful course charting and strong navigation skills, so here are some important things to know as you head into the interview process.

## UNDERSTANDING THE REFORMED WORLDVIEW

Since youth workers are involved with the faith formation of young CRC members, it's important to be familiar with the Reformed worldview. If you are new to the CRC or would like a refresher on what it means to be Reformed, below are some excerpts from *Reformed: What It Means, Why It Matters* by Robert De Moor (Faith Alive). These excerpts are used by permission of Faith Alive Christian Resources.

Faith Formation Ministries also offers a helpful one-page resource called *Ten Ways My Reformed Identity Shapes My Life*. Download it at [network.crcna.org](http://network.crcna.org) or order printed copies for a small fee at [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org). This is a great discussion starter for some youth group conversations on how the Reformed faith affects daily living!

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REFORMED?

Reformed Christians [are] a small part of a much larger body of believers who love and serve Jesus Christ. We're part of a family that includes Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Evangelical, and a host of other churches that confess and practice the Christian faith. . . .

Reformed teachings are shared by . . . denominations [other than the Christian Reformed Church]. What's different is the emphasis that we might place on them. Cornelius Plantinga writes:

*Our accents lie more on the sovereignty of God, on the authority of Scripture, on the need for disciplined holiness in personal Christian life, and, finally, on Christianity as a religion of the kingdom.*

—*A Sure Thing: What We Believe and Why* (Faith Alive, 2001), p. 281

For example, the Reformed faith teaches the lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation. We can't imagine a Christian church that doesn't hold to that teaching. But Reformed believers place a lot more emphasis on this teaching than many other Christians do. As a result, Reformed believers have invested a lot of their energy and resources in Christian education (Christian day schools, colleges, and seminaries), Christ-centered political/social action, and parachurch ministries to those in need. . . .

[While] all Bible-believing Christians share one single language of faith . . . as Plantinga points out, we all speak it with our own accent. . . . [It is part of] the rich diversity of tongues that speak of the great things God has done.

### THE BIRTH OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES

The Reformed Churches formed one branch of the Protestant churches that broke from the Roman Catholic Church. . . . They began in the sixteenth century in Switzerland under the leadership of Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. Calvin's teachings became the dominant and leading force in these churches as they spread across Europe, particularly to France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and, by the eighteenth century, to North America, Africa, Hungary, Indonesia, and many other parts of the globe.

John Calvin was born in Noyon, France, in 1509. Educated in the humanities, he earned his academic stripes summa cum laude at age twenty-four. Inspired by the teachings of Reformers like Martin

Luther, Calvin took up serious study of the Bible. His education and his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew gave him access to what for most people remained a hidden book. His study of the Bible prompted him to write commentaries on almost every book of Scripture. He also wrote a fabulous summary of biblical teaching titled *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The *Institutes* continue to be widely read and studied, and have been translated into several major languages.

Because he was persecuted by the Roman Church, Calvin had to flee France. He was drafted by another Reformer, Guillaume Farel, to support the Protestant cause in Geneva, Switzerland. There Calvin became an active preacher, teacher, leader, and proponent of Reformation teachings. While in many ways a child of his age, Calvin made a tremendous contribution to helping us understand the Bible and the living faith to which it calls us. . . .

Reformed teaching was introduced to Scotland by John Knox, who was initially influenced by the Lutheran stream of the Reformation. His teacher, Patrick Hamilton, was burned to death for his faith, and Knox himself was captured by the French and forced into hard labor as a galley slave. Once freed, he studied with Calvin in Geneva, returning to Scotland in 1559. In spite of stiff opposition from both church and state, Knox succeeded in establishing what came to be known as the Presbyterian Church.

## SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

How did Calvin get along with other church leaders of his day? Opposing Roman Catholic teachings of the time, he *agreed* with the other Reformers that

- Salvation is by grace alone through faith, and not by our own good works.
- The Bible alone is the authoritative Word of God for our lives—not church tradition or what church leaders say.
- *All* believers are priests of God, anointed in Christ to serve him always, everywhere, in all they do.
- God gave us two sacraments, baptism and communion, which are signs and seals of God's promises.
- A priest's or minister's blessing of the communion bread and wine do *not* turn them into the actual body and blood of Christ.
- The original sinful condition in which we are born as well as our actual sins are all fully atoned for by Christ's one sacrifice on the cross.
- Prayer should be directed to God alone through Jesus Christ, not to saints or to Mary. In fact, all believers are both sinners needing God's constant forgiveness and saints whom the Holy Spirit is already remaking to be like Jesus.

So what were some of the differences that have kept the followers of these Reformers in separate denominations ever since? Here are a few:

- Calvin differed with Luther on how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper. Calvin taught that Jesus was not physically present but was spiritually present through the work of the Holy Spirit in believers' hearts. Luther taught that Christ was in some sense still physically present in the bread and wine. Calvin also had a different view of how the kingdom of God actually operates in this present world. And Calvin placed more emphasis on how we should live *as a result of God's grace*, while Luther placed more emphasis on continually experiencing that grace itself.
- Calvin also differed with Zwingli on the Lord's Supper. Calvin taught that Jesus actively participates in communion. Jesus is our host who actually gives us his grace through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Zwingli taught that Christ does not actually give himself to us spiritually in communion, but that it is mainly our activity in remembering what Jesus did for us on the cross.

- Calvin differed with the Anabaptists on the role of civil government. Calvin saw government as a necessary agent of God to which Christians had to submit and which they had to actively support. The Anabaptists taught that civil government was only for non-Christians and that those within the kingdom of God had to separate themselves from civil society. Calvin also maintained the tradition of infant baptism, a practice rejected by the Anabaptists in favor of believer's baptism.
- Calvin differed with the Anglicans/Episcopalians on many of the same points as he did with the Church of Rome. Anglicanism broke with the corrupt leadership of the Roman Church but retained some of its teachings.

## PROS AND CONS

Before he went to the cross to earn our salvation, Jesus prayed to his Father:

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

—John 17:20-21

Clearly Jesus wanted the church to be one unified fellowship around the whole world. But through two millennia the church has been fractured into different groups—groups that often tear each other apart over relatively unimportant things. There's no denying that the Reformation contributed to this fragmentation. So was it good or was it bad that it happened?

Thoughtful Reformed Christians would probably answer that question by saying it was both. It was bad that the Reformation had to break up the visible unity of the church. But it was good that it did so because the church in those days had gone so far astray. Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Zwingli never wanted to break up the body of Christ. That's why we call them “Reformers.” They wanted to stay in the church. They urgently tried to get the Church of Rome to *reform*, to become obedient again to the Word of God. That was their aim—not to establish their own brand of Christianity. But they ran out of choices when the church leaders of their day stubbornly refused to budge and persecuted them ruthlessly. The Reformers *had* to break from the existing church. Notice in the verse above how Jesus prays not only for unity but also asks that believers will remain in God. When the church drifted away from God, the Reformers saw no option but to return to the straight and narrow as commanded by Scripture, even when it meant breaking ranks with the Roman Catholic Church.

Where does that leave us? We need to stay true to the teaching of Scripture. That's the only way we can stay in Christ. However, we should always, always be looking for opportunities to join with other Christians. We should work with them even if our differences will not allow us, yet, to routinely worship with them. We need to keep reaching out to each other as we continue to reach for our Bibles. We may not always agree on doctrine or on how to worship. But there's plenty we can agree on that God wants us to do in this impoverished, sin-wracked world. So let's join [efforts] and do what needs doing together. Let's make our own unique contribution to God's mission, using the particular gifts God's Spirit has given us. That way we may be the hands and feet and voice of our Savior for those who need to share in his goodness. Then we'll still be functioning as Christ's body, and the world will experience God's reconciling love.

As Reformed Christians, we want to keep praying both of these: “Lord, keep us obediently in you” and “Lord, make us one.” And, to the best of our ability we'll need to work at both, right along with our Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, and Baptist sisters and brothers.



## AGREEING ON PRIORITIES

When the congregation established the position you have been hired for, hopefully it also drafted a detailed job description that spells out both the nonnegotiable job priorities and the “would likes.” If you’re not crystal clear on what the congregation expects of you, don’t wait long to talk with the pastor or your team leader. Agreeing on expectations is key to your job success and satisfaction—and your mental health.

For example, if the congregation expects you to teach catechism but you have different ideas about how to teach Scripture to teens, work that out together. Neither approach is right or wrong, but unless the issue is clarified, trouble will be brewing.

Or if the congregation has always done a huge fundraising car wash and you spend all your time planning it rather than getting to know the teens in the church, that will lead to problems.

Know what the congregation expects from you, and help them understand that philosophical differences, if there are any, need to be addressed.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

Have you ever heard a youth pastor/director say, “I have 300 people telling me what to do, and each request is different”? Been there, done that.

Many youth workers are “yes people” by nature. And when you’re a new hire, it’s natural to try to please everyone. But many great youth leaders have been pulled apart by the pressure of trying to do that. It can lead to burnout, hurt, squashed passion, and perhaps even a desire to leave ministry.

Now that you have been hired/called by the local church to be their youth pastor/director, make sure you know who you are accountable to and who is there to support you.

In some churches, the senior pastor oversees the work of the youth pastor/director. This works in some situations, but not all. Personalities must mesh for this to work well, and some senior pastors are not comfortable in this role.

When things get rough, you will need an outlet—a person or group who will support you, pray for you, be a sounding board, and encourage you. This group or person will want to see you succeed in the call God has placed in your heart, and will be vitally important to you personally and to the ministry. Make sure you have a person or group like this in your church.

## DENOMINATIONAL SUPPORT

### FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES

*Faith Formation Ministries* encourages and equips local Christian Reformed youth ministry leaders with coaching and resources to help build lifelong faith. Check out our [Youth Ministry page](#) for more information and a list of available resources.

Ron deVries, FFM’s Youth Ministry Catalyzer, is available to support CRC youth workers. You can contact him at [youthministry@crcna.org](mailto:youthministry@crcna.org).

### CLASSIS SUPPORT

A classis (plural “classes,” pronounced “classeez”) is a group of churches within a geographical area. It has the authority to deal with matters that concern its churches in common, and its decisions are binding on the churches in its region. A minister, an elder, and a deacon from each congregation are delegated to attend classis meetings. There are 48 classes in the CRC, and they are grouped into 12 regions. The following people and groups are excellent resources for you:

**Classis Youth Ministry Consultant.** Some classes have a staff person in place who serves as a consultant to the classis, the local churches, and its leadership to help support, encourage, and pray for its youth ministries. See the Appendix for a job description of the consultant from Classis Alberta North, for example.

**Classis Youth Ministry Champions.** All of the Canadian classes, and a growing number of U.S. classes, have in place a “classis youth ministry champion” who serves in a capacity similar to that of the consultant. Classis champions make up a team of people who are passionate for youth ministry and faith formation within the CRC. They listen, pray, help connect, and serve as a voice for youth workers in the classis. For a complete classis champion job description, please refer to the Appendix.

**Classis Youth Ministry Committees.** Some classes have a committee that reports to its meetings about youth ministry inside and outside its geographical boundaries. The committee will also meet regularly apart from the meetings of classis. It will often be called a classis youth ministry committee.

## FINDING VOLUNTEERS

No doubt about it—finding volunteers to serve in your youth ministry can be difficult, but you’ll burn yourself out if you try to do everything yourself. Here are some insights we have found helpful, adapted from the blog post [Seeking Volunteers?](#) from GenOn Ministries:

- Help people recognize that God calls people to very broad roles (to be a covenant people and to be faithful followers of Christ) as well as calling people to use specific gifts in a specific way.
- Find ways for the people in your church to discover and understand their specific gifts.
- Establish a team that will go through intentional steps to implement the process of calling (search team).
- The search team spends time in prayer and Scripture study to ask for God’s guidance in the process.
- The search team creates a description for each position that needs to be filled (tasks and expectations, term of service, spiritual gifts needed, personality fit, support and resources provided) and continues in prayer for God’s guidance.
- The search team meets again to consider nominees for each position (how well each person matches the gifts and talents needed, how the church will benefit and be blessed by each person serving in the role, how each person will benefit and be blessed by serving in the role) and continues in prayer for discernment.
- When the team has discerned a single nominee for each position, each nominee receives an invitation to serve and is given time to talk to and listen to God (and other people) about the call. The invitation is best delivered face to face at an arranged time and place, or at least by way of a person-to-person phone call . . . not through an email or in passing in the church hallway on a busy Sunday morning.
- The search team member who extended the invitation follows up three to five days later to hear the nominee’s answer and accepts and celebrates a “no” as readily as a “yes,” assuming time has been spent in discernment.

The call process should always be followed by a commitment to equip volunteers once they have answered the call to serve.

## YOUTH MINISTRY RESOURCES

### THE NETWORK

If you don't yet have an account on [The Network](https://network.crcna.org) (network.crcna.org), sign up! This is a great place to connect with other CRC youth workers, ask questions, and share resources. Be sure to follow the posts in the Youth Ministry topic area.

### FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES

Also check out the [youth ministry section](https://crcna.org/FaithFormation/youth) of Faith Formation Ministries' website (crcna.org/FaithFormation/youth), where we list helpful resources and more.

### RECOMMENDED READING

- *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry: A Personal and Practical Guide to Starting Right* by Doug Fields (Zondervan/Youth Specialties)
- *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last and What Your Church Can Do About It* by Mark DeVries (IVP Books)
- *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* by Kenda Creasy Dean (Oxford University Press)
- *Deep Justice in a Broken World: Helping Your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs Around Them* by Chap Clark and Kara Powell (Youth Specialties)
- *Effective Leadership in the Church* by CRC Sustaining Pastoral Excellence. Free download available at [FaithAliveResources.org](https://FaithAliveResources.org).
- *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin (Baker Books)
- *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids* by Kara Powell and Chap Clark (Zondervan)



# MENTORING

How you begin your ministry can profoundly affect how you fare along the way. The perspectives, habits, and style you develop, as well as your experiences in your first church, can shape and set direction for the years to come. Discerning God's leading into a place where the opportunities and challenges match your gifts and passions is a crucial aspect of beginning in ministry in a manner that holds promise for the future.

Entering into a mentoring relationship strengthens the possibility that good beginnings will lead to a lifetime of fruitful service and to sustained excellence in ministry. A mentoring relationship can be a blessing and a learning experience for both parties.

## CRC MENTORING PROCESS

The CRC is a geographically and culturally diverse family of congregations. Every local congregation has its own unique context and story. Regional and seasoned youth workers who agree to mentor other youth workers are an important component in the story.

At the denominational and classis levels, there are people (Youth Ministry Catalyzer, Youth Ministry Consultant, Youth Ministry Champion, or Youth Ministry Committee) available to support you, advise you, and walk alongside you in this very important journey. They want to see you succeed in the call God has placed in your heart.

Once you become part of the classis (whether this is your first youth ministry position or your fifth) a representative of your classis will set up a mentoring relationship with you (not *for* you) to connect you to a person who will help, support, encourage, and pray for you. We encourage you to maintain this relationship for at least the first two years of your ministry. We pray that you will be so blessed by the connection that in time you will desire to mentor others who also feel the call into youth ministry.

The quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee is the most critical factor in the mentoring model. All the other components of a mentorship depend on this key factor. The quality of this relationship must be assessed and addressed by the mentor, the mentee, and the Youth Ministry Consultant.

### AFFIRM THE FIT

Sometimes the chemistry just isn't there in a mentoring relationship. The initial mentoring relationship should be exchanged for a new one if, after a few meetings, it becomes apparent to any of the parties involved that this mentoring pairing will not provide what is needed in a productive relationship.

### CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

Within the first few meetings, talk about your expectations together. Decide about things like these:

- location and frequency of meetings
- discussion topics
- occasional spousal involvement
- group mentoring options

Once the expectations are clarified, realize that at times adjustments may need to be made.

## MENTORING DISCUSSION TOPICS

Talk together about specific issues you might like to address in your mentoring sessions. Here are some ideas to consider.

### SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

“Should the cabin lose pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. If traveling with a small child, put the mask on yourself first, and then assist the child.” Pre-flight passenger instructions recognize that self-care and self-nurture must precede the care of others. This is also true in the realm of spiritual leadership and pastoral longevity.

In your mentor relationship take time to ask these questions:

- How is my prayer life?
- What are my current practices relative to spiritual disciplines?
- Who am I when no one is looking?
- Using the Lord’s Prayer as a guide, what do I neglect to emphasize?

### CHARACTER FORMATION

The development of Christian character is a lifelong process for any disciple of Christ. To have the mind, attitudes, and reflexes of Christ is a necessary aspiration for all who call him “Lord.” This is nowhere more obvious than in the Christian vocation of professional ministry. The history of the Christian church is replete with examples of persons in public ministry whose character has been marked by chronic and destructive flaws. This does much to dishonor the name of Christ and damage the witness of the church.

The continual pursuit of Christian character is an essential dimension of Christian ministry, but in the pursuit of many lesser goals it can be sorely neglected. It is integrally related to every aspect of life and ministry and requires both commitment and intentional effort.

Questions to help in your journey:

- In what ways are you measuring your growth and strengthening your Christian character?
- How do you understand the relationship of God’s work and your effort in the process of sanctification? How does your understanding translate into your behavior?
- Accountability and developing similarly accountable relationships is important to the journey, but there are also temptations in this. Ask yourself:
  - With whom am I willing to be transparent?
  - To whom do I confess my sins?
  - How do I remain hidden?
  - What else keeps me from strengthening my Christian character?

### TIME MANAGEMENT

Managing time is managing life. It involves balancing work and play, church and family, time for self, and time for friends. How you manage your time reveals a great deal about your personality, your theology, and your sense of call.

No two people manage time the same. Personality, work style, situation, and history affect our individual approach to time management. Whatever our style, the satisfaction of time well managed can be eroded by workaholic or slothful tendencies. Part of the challenge in youth ministry is that excesses of work or nonwork can go unobserved for significant periods of time. Systems of accountability (such as regular office hours) are important to you and to your hiring congregation.

In a class on spiritual disciplines, Dallas Willard encouraged participants to spend some time doing nothing. He wanted to challenge the incessant “doing” that characterizes so many of our lives and challenges the foundation of grace in our life before God. An argument can be made that being good stewards of our time is rightly tackled from that grace foundation. Time can become our friend and an opportunity for worship, work, prayer, and play.

- What are your attitudes toward time?
- How are these attitudes shaped?
- How do you keep Sabbath?
- What does your ideal week look like, and where do you fit God, family, prayer, recreation, and work into it?
- In what area of time management do you need to be held accountable?

### USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In the past few decades we have seen great leaps in technological advances. Computers, the Internet, smartphones, 3D/HD television, email, and social media have made our lives so radically different than they once were. So how does that affect the ways we do youth ministry? And how does it affect your time? Here are some questions to discuss with your mentor:

- What is your cell phone’s main purpose for you? When do you turn it off?
- How much time do you spend in front of the computer or TV? Are there things in the medium that can help you in ministry? Who holds you accountable in what you look at and/or watch?
- Are you aware of the hazards of texting/emailing, especially with minors?
- What does plagiarism mean to you in your ministry?
- Does the use of technology prevent you from or enhance your ability to read and contemplate?

### MINISTRY “FIRSTS”

In your first few years in youth ministry, there will be many firsts. Situations will arise that will be new to you, new to the church, and new to the congregation. These will be exciting times, but they may also be unnerving. Meet with your mentor or with the appropriate church staff member when you encounter “firsts” like these:

**Public speaking:** Your first time up in front of the church can be stressful. What is expected of you? Where do you go before the church service starts? What happens if the microphone doesn’t work? Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

**Profession of faith:** You have just finished leading a profession of faith class, and some of the group members are ready to profess their faith publicly. How does that happen? Do you tag team with the senior pastor?

**A youth emergency:** A young person in your youth group is having a personal crisis and wants to talk with you. What do you do? What are the Safe Church policy guidelines? Do you have liability insurance? Where should you meet?

**Mission trips:** All the plans are in place for your youth group to go to California for its mission trip. You have 10 students and three leaders going along. Two nights before you leave, the one female adult leader has a family emergency and the other leader is a 21-year-old male. You have 8 girls in your group and two boys. You are a male leader. What do you do? What is your contingency plan?

**Sexual orientation:** A young man in your youth group tells you that he is gay. He no longer feels that God and the church will accept him and wants to leave the youth group. What do you say? How do you as a leader minister to this young man?

**Weddings:** A couple of your former youth, who are now young adults, are getting married. They would like you to be part of the service. Exciting! But what does this look like?

All of these firsts will happen at some point in your journey, and there will be many more that have not been mentioned. There is comfort in knowing that there is someone around that you can call, visit with, and chat with about situations like these. You'll need someone you can trust who has been around the block, who can offer wisdom, prayerful support, and an encouraging word. Having someone like a mentor who can help you through these joys and concerns will be important in your development as a youth worker.

## OTHER TOPICS

Over the course of your ministry, there will be many other mentoring moments that will arise in your conversations. Some will reflect real struggles, including

- dealing with other staff members
- stress in ministry
- conflict
- confidentiality
- working with volunteers
- managing money

Never be afraid to ask questions. Communication is vital to your role as a spiritual leader within your congregation.



# APPENDIX

## YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM (YMT) TEMPLATE

### MANDATE

The youth pastor/director is the person whose primary purpose in ministry is to help lead youth and young adults into a closer relationship with God. It is hoped that this relationship, in turn, will lead to young people acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord of their life and professing their faith.

The main goal of the Youth Ministry Team (YMT) is to help lead, work with, encourage, supervise, and pray for the youth pastor/director using Matthew 18:15-17 as a template for a ministry of accountability.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the YMT will help the youth pastor/director find effective avenues to reach out to youth and young adults. The team will lead and encourage the youth director to function at his or her full potential.

### MEETINGS

The youth pastor/director will meet with the YMT on a monthly basis and/or as needed to communicate plans, goals, and problem areas.

### DUTIES

The youth pastor/director will be evaluated annually by the YMT and by the church council. A written report will be provided and explained.

Should the youth pastor/director feel mistreated or unsupported by the church staff, congregation member(s), or a church committee, he or she may discuss any grievances confidentially with the YMT.

The youth pastor/director is accountable to the YMT, and the YMT in turn is accountable to council.

### MEMBERS

The YMT should consist of five to seven members; the youth pastor/director, two or three members from the council, and two or three members from the congregation—one of whom should be a youth leader and one a parent. The members from council should consist of a youth elder(s) and another elder, or perhaps the pastor and a youth elder. The YMT must also have a chairperson and a person who records minutes. Minutes should be taken at every meeting, and a copy should be forwarded to the church office for filing.

### TERMS

The terms of service for members of the YMT could be three years (renewable) and reviewed annually, with the exception of the youth director, who is *ex officio*. Consideration of the giftedness of persons serving in the YMT role is more important than the length of the terms they serve.

### UPDATING

The mandate and the YMT will be reviewed annually by the council, which will seek and honor the youth pastor/director's input.

# YOUTH PASTOR/DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

## INTENT

### Youth Ministry Mission Statement

With a love for the Lord, the youth pastor/director of \_\_\_\_\_ (church name) is called to expand and empower the development, direction, and education of the youth and young adult ministries of the church. With an emphasis on youth, this ordained or nonordained staff person will facilitate spiritual growth within our membership through development and integration of various church programs.

### Mandate of the youth pastor/director

The youth pastor/director is to be the person whose primary purpose in ministry is to help lead youth and young adults into a closer relationship with God. It is our prayer that this relationship in turn will lead them to an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord of their life and to profession of faith. The youth pastor/director will do this by providing relational leadership in developing and directing youth ministry programming at \_\_\_\_\_ (church name).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of a written job description is to give the congregation and the youth pastor/director a clear understanding of work expectations. The job description protects the youth pastor/director from being assigned tasks beyond the job's immediate responsibilities. Though it must be understood that no job description can ever cover every situation or circumstance in ministry, the hope is that this document can help the youth pastor/director, Education Committee, and Youth Ministry Team to frame roles and responsibilities for the position.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The youth pastor/director . . .

- must be a professing believer who walks daily with the Lord and is an example for others.
- must have confidence in God's calling to this ministry.
- must accept the Bible as God's infallible Word; the full and complete revelation of God.
- must be in agreement with the *Covenant for Officebearers* and the *creeds* ([crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds](http://crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds)) and confessions of the Christian Reformed Church and will become a member of \_\_\_\_\_ (church name).
- must display an ability to work with youth, young adults, volunteer leaders, and the church council.
- must demonstrate intelligence and sound judgment.
- should have a minimum of a bachelor of arts degree with at least one year of training in youth ministry, educational administration, and Bible and theology.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The youth pastor/director is required to outline annual professional development plans including schedule, costs, and goals to the Education Committee/YMT.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

No job description can cover every situation or circumstance in ministry, so this accountability section of the job description describes the process by which the youth pastor/director can function effectively within the church.

- The youth pastor/director is accountable to the Education Committee, which is in turn accountable to the council. (It is important to have the youth pastor/director responsible to the Education Committee and to the council. Feedback from this committee and council gives the youth pastor/director the general guidelines required for implementing ministry.)
- A Youth Ministry Team (see YMT template on p. 22) from the Education Committee will be formed. Their primary responsibility will be to walk alongside and supervise the work of the youth pastor/director. They will meet with him/her on a monthly basis or as needed to communicate plans, set goals, and work through problem areas.
- The youth pastor/director will manage schedules with the senior pastor, the church's administrative staff, and the Education Committee/YMT.
- The youth pastor/director and the youth director position will be evaluated annually by the Education Committee/YMT, which reports to the council.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The youth pastor/director will take on a variety of roles while adhering to the “Intent” portion of the job description. The roles are listed below:

### **Relational**

This part of the ministry is very important to the role of the youth pastor/director and usually taps into every facet of youth ministry. However, there are specific areas in which this person should be involved:

- Walk alongside youth and young adults while praying, listening, and helping them in their faith journey.
- Be a voice for youth to the council and help them to understand this generation and youth ministry. This can be done through quarterly written reports to the council or in other ways that fit the culture of the leadership. The council will be invited and held accountable to engage with and listen to the hearts of the youth and young adults.
- Act as a consultant to elders, youth leaders, and mentors.
- Together with the Education Committee, provide and encourage opportunities for parent information sessions. Plans and opportunities can be shared by way of monthly calendars and/or quarterly newsletters.
- Plan to spend about 3-5 hours per week in scheduling one-on-one appointments with youth, young adults, and/or their parents for the purposes of relationship building, counseling, and/or encouragement.
- Based on discussion with and direction from the YMT, the youth pastor/director will help implement and plan a parent night at a youth group meeting for the purpose of developing healthy relationships.

### **Education**

- Recruit, train, encourage, and support lay people and youth in the various youth-related volunteer ministries within the congregation.
  - Education committee
  - Sunday school
  - Youth group

- Locate and decide upon appropriate program material.
- Maintain a yearly education ministry schedule.
- Work with the senior pastor in leading profession of faith classes.
- Act as a contact to young adult education and small group ministries.
- Be a resource to volunteer leaders.

### **Youth Ministry Programming**

The youth pastor/director will advise, encourage, and support the YMT in their development, planning, and facilitation of the following areas of ministry. As time permits, the youth pastor/director will assume responsibility for specific points of ministry as agreed with the YMT on an annual basis.

#### **Youth**

- Recruit youth leaders for church ministries
- Organize, lead, and facilitate leadership training
- Attend meetings with ministry leadership as required

#### **Young Adults**

- Act as a contact for organizing, promoting, and leading quarterly social events, and attend outreach/mission/service opportunities as requested
- Recognize YA leadership for church ministries

### **Vacation Bible School**

Assist the VBS director in the following ways:

- Recommend potential youth volunteers for the program
- Encourage youth to participate in volunteering for VBS
- Advise on curriculum, providing the VBS director with principal support, taking major concerns and any additional responsibilities to the Education Committee for resolution

### **Miscellaneous Responsibilities**

- Submit weekly bulletin announcements
- Attend weekly staff meetings
- Attend Youth Leadership Team or Youth Ministry Team meetings
- Submit annual ministry reports

### **Youth Ministry Extras**

We recognize that every child of God is gifted with talents and unique qualities that allow them to excel in special ways. Examples of this may be drama, sports, music, curriculum writing, participating in local and church community opportunities (i.e., leading school chapels, serving on classis committees, etc.).

With the support, direction, and encouragement of the YMT/Education Committee, the youth pastor/director may use those gifts and talents to serve the congregation.

The YMT/Education Committee will encourage the youth pastor/director to use those gifts within the allotted hours of ministry and will look for ways to fill any gaps created by doing so.

## HIRING VS. CALLING

### YOUTH PASTOR

In the CRC, ordination as a “minister of the Word” can happen in the following ways. (For more information, see the [Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government](#). Order a copy through [Faith Alive Christian Resources](#) at FaithAliveResources.org or view online in the [CRC’s Digital Library](#) at library.crcna.org.)

#### Article 6, Article 7, and Article 8

When looking at someone to fill the youth pastor/director role who has been established as a minister of the Word through article 6, 7, or 8 of the Church Order, the person is then deemed to be “called,” and an official “Letter of Call” must be provided as part of the hiring process. Church Order clearly defines how we are to work with this person, and we would refer to this person as a “pastor.”

Some youth workers have taken another route toward ordination, by way of . . .

#### Article 23 (commissioned pastor)

For a person pursuing this route, the council of the congregation will supervise the person, and if the commissioned pastor’s work includes preaching the Word and administering sacraments, those functions may be performed only within the local classis. If another congregation calls this person to work for them, the call would include the use of a “Letter of Call.” If the person is called to serve a church in another classis, the call and ordination must be approved by that classis as well as the classis in which the person is currently serving.

### YOUTH DIRECTOR

Many churches look for a youth ministries leader who is not a pastor requiring ordination. They need a person who will work with teens, develop programs, perhaps train other leaders, and administrate the youth ministry, but will not preach. This role is often referred to as “youth director.” The person in this role is someone who has had experience and/or training in youth ministry and desires to run the programs and supervise the people in them. Such people have a heart for working with youth and usually are gifted leaders who want to do God’s will in ministry.

Youth directors are hired as church employees, and their hiring does not require an official “Letter of Call.”

Directors are typically hired for a specific time period, which of course can be reviewed and extended based on the needs and requirements of the local church they are working for. State or provincial laws concerning hiring and termination will apply in these situations.

A director/worker can (but does not have to) become a commissioned pastor through Article 23.



## CLASSIS YOUTH MINISTRY CONSULTANT JOB DESCRIPTION (SAMPLE)

The following job description has been used by Classis Alberta North, and you may wish to adapt it for use in your classis.

### PURPOSE

The Youth Ministry Consultant will be responsible to work with the churches of Classis Alberta North in growing, developing, maintaining, and training for youth ministry the leaders and members of the churches of this classis. (See *Acts of Synod 1991*, Article 70, C.4., pp. 739-40.)

### MOTION

That Classis Alberta North hire a full-time professional youth ministry consultant to assist the churches of our classis in ministering to our youth. Candidates will be interviewed and recommended by the Classis Youth Ministry Committee and will be approved and hired by the classis.

### GROUNDINGS

1. Synod has advised all classes to consider hiring a professional youth minister to assist the churches and the Classis Youth Ministry Committee in ministering to youth. (See *Acts of Synod 1991*, Article 70, C.4.c, p. 740.)
2. Classis Alberta North is one of the larger classes in the CRC in number of churches (31 churches) and in physical area. The logistics of a part-time person doing this job are unmanageable.
3. Two-thirds of the churches in our classis do not have a hired staff person to work with their youth.
4. There is a need for coordination of ministries. There has been an overlap of retreats and service projects that could be more effectively and efficiently done in conjunction with others instead of always as individual churches.
5. There is a need for a person who can give guidance and support to those who are in leadership in church youth ministries.
6. The churches' issues are not about resources but about support and training.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Training and equipping the leaders of the youth ministries of the various churches of Classis Alberta North
  - Offering seminars at the Day of Encouragement
  - Connecting leaders with training events that are held locally
  - Bringing training to the churches as individuals or in regional groups
- Pastoring the youth pastors and leaders
  - Give support and leadership to those who minister to the youth in our churches
  - Make personal contact with leaders of the youth ministries
- Coordinate interchurch ministries
  - Regional and seasonal retreats
  - Serve and Encounter projects
- Develop and coordinate young adult ministries
  - Work with the leaders of the individual churches
  - Coordinate ministry activities
  - Plan an area-wide service monthly

## CLASSIS YOUTH MINISTRY CHAMPION MANDATE

A youth ministry champion serves as the youth ministry “conscience” of the classis, being the focal point for communication, networking, advocacy, and vision.

We recognize that individual mandates will vary due to four factors:

1. Champions vary from full-time paid classis staff to volunteers who may have other employment. Therefore personal capacity for this work will vary greatly.
2. Each classis is unique (e.g., some are quite compact geographically, and some are very spread out).
3. The champion role may be fulfilled by a person, two people, or an entire committee/team, depending on personal availability and the context of a classis.
4. Various champions already have official roles in their classes, and tasks have been mandated by these classes. Such persons need to discern the intersection points between their classical mandates and participating in this national team.

Because of these four variance factors, the mandate will be divided up into two categories: indispensable tasks and “helpful if possible” tasks.

### A. INDISPENSABLE TASKS

Every Youth Ministry Champion (person or team) will . . .

1. Become known as a trusted encourager in his/her classis who will listen to the joys and struggles of youth leaders and congregations and connect them to people and resources for support as needed.
2. Be a communications link for the classis by
  - facilitating networking among the congregations of classis.
  - representing congregational voices to the Youth Ministry Team (YMT).
  - making congregations aware of events and resources that are available and being a conduit of information from the YMT.
  - intentionally connecting personally with the local church youth ministry leaders (via phone, Skype, visit) at least once per year in a posture of listening and then offering. (We realize that time is required for making lasting connections and that one will need to find other creative ways to connect as often as possible to let the churches know they are loved and cared for.)
  - updating the classis contact database of youth ministry leaders as needed.
  - praying for each of the churches’ youth ministries in the classis once a month, using a monthly prayer guide.
  - encouraging (as is possible) either regional/classis or cluster gatherings for networking and support annually.
  - advocating for youth ministry at classis in terms of funding, vision casting, and decision making; submitting a written report to every classis meeting; and presenting an oral report at least once a year.
  - pointing church leaders to people and resources that will address specific issues they are dealing with.

3. Participate in the work of the Youth Ministry Team for vision casting, accountability, and encouragement. This participation would include
  - a full team conference call every 6-8 weeks.
  - a one-on-one meeting with one of the youth ministry leaders at least every three months (and checking in whenever necessary).
  - an annual two-day youth ministry retreat, funded 50 percent by each classis and 50 percent by the denominational office (subject to approval by the funding bodies).

## **B. HELPFUL TASKS**

When the champion has capacity for additional tasks, and the context of the specific classis warrants carrying out these tasks, these may include the following:

- organizing events to equip and encourage youth leaders
- organizing youth events (e.g., youth services, youth retreats, one-evening events focused on a specific topic, etc.)
- facilitating discussions at classis related to youth ministry and faith formation
- organizing support clusters, especially for classes that are widespread
- where appropriate, serving as equippers/trainers (e.g., Compass 21 facilitators)
- discerning which other tasks are appropriate and possible in light of personal capacity and the needs of one's classis
- collaborating with other classes

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I believe youth ministry is on the cusp of a revival within the Christian Reformed Church. The fact that you are using this resource means that your church is taking seriously the process of finding someone to serve in youth ministry. By extension, you are part of this significant revival moment. Thank you for honoring this important hiring process.

If you have any questions about this resource or the material inside it, or if you need someone to talk to about youth ministry in the CRC, please email me at [youthministry@crcna.org](mailto:youthministry@crcna.org).

I pray that this tool is a blessing to you and your church.

*Ron deVries  
Youth Ministry Catalyzer  
Faith Formation Ministries*







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