

Ten Ways

TO BUILD A STRONGER YOUTH MINISTRY



In youth ministry we often find ourselves reacting to circumstances that demand our time and prevent us from building strong systems and practices. But being reactive rather than proactive can prevent us from investing in the disciple-making opportunities that are crucial to healthy youth ministry and healthy churches.

Here are 10 proven strategies that will help strengthen your youth ministry.

1. DEVELOP A STRONG YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

Your best resource in youth ministry is the youth themselves. They are the ones who know the struggles teenagers are living with and the joys they experience daily. Use this to your advantage! Find youth who have shown leadership skills, and invite them to help plan a youth group evening; find older youth to mentor younger youth; ask youth for input on study topics, social events, and outreach. Your youth program is a great place to start developing leadership skills in young people and equipping them to be disciples—and doing so will also help build their faith!

2. DEVELOP A STRONG ADULT LEADERSHIP TEAM

You can't do it alone, even if you think you can! God has called and equipped many others in your congregation to be leaders and mentors for youth, so find them and invite them to serve the church in this way. Developing a strong adult leadership team will allow you to invest deeper in the lives of youth rather than being spread thin trying to do it all.

3. MAKE TIME FOR ADMINISTRATION

The word "administration" is like kryptonite to many a youth pastor. Youth ministry leaders are often relational beings who let the administrative side of things go. If that is you, set aside time every day to deal with the administrative things that need to be done in order for the ministry to succeed.

4. BUILD A DETAILED CALENDAR

In order to have a successful season of youth ministry, it is vital to develop a strategic calendar of events, teaching dates, outings, and so on, so that your leadership team, the youth, and their parents will all be on the same page and can plan their weeks accordingly. When there isn't a clear path to follow and direction for the year, chaos can and will happen.

5. COMMUNICATE IN MULTIPLE WAYS

While we can plan well, ongoing multilayered communication is crucial for success. Create distribution lists of parents and youth for emailing/texting/calling with ministry information. Find the ways your people prefer to be contacted, and count on sharing the same information on multiple platforms. Youth generally don't use email, but parents still do. Youth may be using Facebook less and less these days, but parents and grandparents are all over it. Tailor your communication to your audience.

6. PRAY EARLY AND OFTEN

Youth ministry cannot succeed without being in the will of God. Bathe your youth ministry in prayer daily. Ask that it be included in the congregational prayer on Sundays. Develop a prayer calendar for yourself, praying through the specific needs of your leadership and teens. Be intentional in prayer. Do not let it become something you do only when you think you have time; make time!

7. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE YOUTH LEADERS

Your youth leaders are crucial to youth ministry. Invest in them. Get to know the flock you are called to shepherd. These are the faces and voices of youth ministry in your church, and they reflect your leadership. The more you equip and support your leaders, the stronger your youth ministry will become.

8. BUILD ON YOUR CHURCH'S OTHER FAITH NURTURING MINISTRIES

A church ministry platform needs to be built on a systematic theology that equips our children, youth, and young adults with a biblical worldview. Work with the leaders of your church's Sunday school, catechism classes, GEMS, and Cadets to develop a fully orbed faith formation plan for young people. For more on faith nurture, visit our Building Blocks of Faith toolkit at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.

9. DON'T LIVE IN A SILO

Intergenerational interaction is critical for the faith formation of teens. Look for opportunities for your youth group to learn, serve, and grow with people of a variety of ages. Consider planning intergenerational service projects and mission trips. Invite older members of your church to come and tell their faith stories. For more ideas, visit our Intergenerational Church toolkit and our Faith Storytelling toolkit at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.

10. BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT YOU DO

When you do ministry, it is important to be accountable for what you do. As a youth ministry leader, whether you are planning an event at a corn maze, developing communication strategies, or scheduling a meeting with the senior pastor, be accountable for what you do. You are under a microscope when you do ministry, so be self-aware and honor others through your actions and deeds.

This resource has been developed by Thrive. If you have questions or would like support in ministry, please email thrive@crcna.org.

