

YOUTH PASTORS MUST DEVELOP AN ANNUAL RHYTHM OF EVENTS

Suggestions for Developing a Rhythm for Church Youth Ministry Activities

Nothing here is etched in stone.

Everything is up for grabs.

Options are endless [see addendum]

LONG-TERM ANTICIPATION RUNS DEEP THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

WEEKLY

Sunday School—often not youth pastor's responsibility

Bible study to appeal to spiritually growing kids

Get-together

- * to appeal to unsaved friends
- * to enjoy Christian fellowship

MONTHLY HIGH ENERGY ACTIVITIES—probably during one of the regularly scheduled weekly meetings

Social event requiring moderate planning

- * minimal cost, perhaps no cost
- * any prizes \$2 to \$4
- * worth coming to but not so “vital” that a kid would:
 - ask his boss for time off
 - turn down an invitation to see the US President
 - skip his own birthday party

Examples: Superbowl Party [can't come without an unchurched friend], **local Christian weight lifter, 100' Banana Split** [served in a rain gutter], **Marshmallow Olympics, Fight Night** [several 3-minute rounds inside a roped off area: water balloons, ketchup [bring your own], raw eggs [not necessarily refrigerated—bring your own], mustard, mud], **3-on-3 basketball round robin, Bible Trivia Contest, costume night** [hair, hat, superhero pairs], **fill-a-VW, honor police-fireman-first responders-teachers-coaches-mayor, etc. Computer brain games, DVD night, Special Night-at-the-Local-Park, skateboard competition, find a local Christian award winner, “Ask-Any-Bible-Question—Get-A-Bible-Answer”** if it doesn't have a Bible answer, move on to the next question [Have a different topic each time. Panel of 4 or 5 including the pastor] **Skeptics Forum—answering the tough questions, Look-It-Up-on-Your-Smartphone-contests, 25 different kinds of races** eat, run, think, teamwork, scavenger, city photos by teams in cars, pairs, indoors, outdoors, climbing, obstacle races, must-hold-hands, etc. **And on, and on, and on, and. . .**

Most of these events should be targeted to bring in different kinds of friends: geeks, athletes, locker mates, study hall friends, teammates, etc.

Staff prayer & discussion meeting, mandatory for all adult staff, 29 minutes, 59 seconds
[nothing to discuss? Just pray!]

QUARTERLY and/or ANNUALLY

Well planned events may involve 3 to 7 “committees”

see p. 5 great opportunity to train Youth Council kids to grow in leadership skills

I.M.C.P. [It May Cost Plenty]

Determine your purposes:

- evangelistic, strong emphasis on bringing unsaved
At least once a year pull off a neat event to which you absolutely cannot come unless you bring an unsaved [or unchurched] friend.
- Christian growth [3 choices]
 - *exclusively - heavy Bible studies
 - *leadership training: peer counseling, mentoring, prayer, special speaker
 - *basic + advanced tracks
- mostly group cohesion building, team activities
 - * earn the right to come: Scripture memory?, Bible reading?, witnessing blitzes?, bringing visitors?, etc.
 - * homework afterwards

D. banquet:

- * honors and awards: Scripture mem? Bringing friends? student leadership recognition? honor graduates, athletes, coaches, teachers, police?
- * bring parents?
- * serve the church leadership?

E. mission trip or Project

- * VBS in Qatar?
- * raising \$1,000 for a missionary

F. other—white water rafting, paint widow’s house, Superbowl, 6-day camp, snow camp in Tennessee. . .

Always plan excitement around public school “days off” plus summer’s break

- * definitely worth paying for a friend’s fee
- * lots of hype for many weeks [*months?*]
- * worth missing your own birthday party
- * worth rearranging your family vacation dates
- * may require church funding [*or permission*]
- * talk about event for months ahead of time
 - skits to get kids to save money
 - video blips from last year
 - solicit prayer partners from congregation to pray for specific kids
 - * 3 weeks prior to major events blitz the adults with specific prayer requests: numbers to attend, decisions to be made, finances, new kids who are being invited [*by name*], topics which will be covered at special sessions, etc.
 - * List the specific times of the day when prayer is most needed.
 - * A note of thanks to your “Prayer Battalion” is always appreciated.
 - contact parents who do not attend the church far in advance

Addendum

- Bible quiz teams competing against other churches
- Weekly witnessing at the mall, sports events, parks. . .
- Online Bible courses
- Student-run children’s weekly Bible Clubhouse in a home
- Tutoring, afterschool activities
- Interchurch or community soccer competition
- Gym night at the church, weekly—a low-key evangelism outreach, 10-minute “Bible Time”
- Volunteer at Boys & Girls Clubs, Habitat for Humanity, Meals-on-Wheels, downtown rescue mission, food bank, hospital visitation, hospice visitation, AIDS visitation, Boy & Girls Scouts
- Youth serve as bus captains for church bus ministry
- Youth float at annual city parade
- Picket abortion clinics, or help at crisis pregnancy centers
- See-You-At-The-Pole prayer meeting each September
- Raise money for
- Street preaching
- Denominational, regional and national, youth competition: art, music, preaching
- VBS overseas
- Serve as AWANA leaders & helpers