

My Youth Meeting Playbook



The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

Proverbs 21:5

Welcome to My Meeting Planner

As youth workers, you live and die by your meetings. Meetings are where you meet guests, involve students and play games. Right or wrong, it is by our meetings that you are judged.

Students want them to be fun.

Parents want them to be safe.

The Pastor wants them packed.

But, let's back up. The meetings aren't just meetings; our "meetings" are the gathering of the saints (yes, not all are saints, hopefully) which we call church. If we are the body of Christ, and Christ is our head, it is He we must please, first and foremost and everyone else has to get in line.

I loved planning a meeting and then executing it. Some went according to plan and others did not. Sometimes I messed them up and other times God messed them up. When God messed them up, they were really good meetings.

You maybe a rookie who has no idea how to plan a meeting. Welcome. You may be veteran who's been there and done that. Welcome. No matter where you fall on the ministry experience spectrum, hear me, there is no place for a sloppy, disorganized meeting when we are dealing with the souls of teenagers.

I designed this planner to give you an edge. A place to doodle, dream and deploy the resources God has given you and plan meetings that turn into movements.

Good planning goes a long way to a good meeting. On the next page I'll break down every section of the planning sheet and share some articles with you throughout the book.

So, grab your pen and cup a coffee and let's plan a meeting where teens can meet, serve, and follow Jesus.

Paul Turner
thediscipleproject.net

Dissecting A Youth Meeting

Every youth meeting has similar components but not every meeting uses every component every week. Throughout this planner I will have articles and worksheets to help you work out a meeting that is purposeful and engaging. Let's get an overview at all the components on your planning sheet.

Message Topic

What is the core message of the text you are using? Can you sum up the truth it is trying to convey in one sentence?

Purpose

What is the purpose of this meeting? Is it evangelism? Is it to teach the saints and focus on discipleship? Is it worship? You can have multiple purposes, but you should major in one and minor in the other.

Core Text(s)

What is your main text (the tree trunk) and which are the supporting texts (the branches)?

Opening Ideas

Most youth groups have a game, but you don't have to have a game to open the youth meeting if you don't want to. There are other ways to open the meeting such as a video or a meal.

Closing Ideas

I put the Closing Ideas box close to the Core Text box because I want you thinking about the end of your meeting first. How do you want to wrap things up? Once you find the ending, you can design every part of the meeting to get you there.

Worship

I hear so many youth workers who bemoan not being able to have worship because they don't have a band. Worship is not just about a band, it's not even about worship songs. Worship is about the direction of our hearts, we're facing towards or away from God. There are other ways to worship and not have a band.

Media

Media is anything from quotes to YouTube videos to art. Media has many forms and your youth meeting doesn't have to be solely dependent on one from or another.

Students Involved

There is a reason this component is on the front of your planning sheet. How many times have you planned a meeting and forgotten to include students in making that meeting happen?

Adult Leaders

Yes, you need adults too. You need adults to build relationships, guide students, be role models and perform tasks your students may not be ready to assume.

WOW!

This is where you get a little crazy. Choose a portion of your meeting to add a little WOW to so that your meeting will be remembered.

Movement

Where is this meeting taking students? What is it asking them to do? To believe? To pursue? To challenge? If your meeting isn't moving kids somewhere, why have a meeting in the first place?

Evaluation

What went right? What went wrong? What can you do better? Where do you need to shift focus? Evaluation leads to transformation.

Prayer, People, Process

You will notice on the back of each planning sheet there are is a very short checklist. Prayer. People, Process is organized to represent your to do list.

Prayer

Prayer is what we begin with. Sadly, I've had a few youth meeting where my prayer time was not invested wisely or was sucked up by task in preparation for the meeting. Prayer is the key to calming our hearts, releasing stress and above all, an invitation to God to take over the meeting.

God desires to be a part of every component of your weekly gathering of young believers. Does that mean every part of the meeting has to be super spiritual and serious? No, it means out best ideas to glorify God will come from God himself. God has a vested interest in your meeting and the young people who attend, let Him guide your planning rather than asking Him bless your plans

People

If you see a turtle on top of a post, you know that it didn't get there by itself. Maybe you could plan and execute the whole meeting by yourself, but to what end? To prove you can do it? Because you're paid to? No, this meeting needs people, all kinds of people with all kinds of gifts to achieve a desired results.

People are second on your list because there are people in your youth meeting who are overused and some who are under utilized, both adults and students. A youth meeting, a gathering of saints means we have a responsibility to find a way to let people do what they're gifted at so each person can serve the purpose of the meeting, grow in faith and contribute to growing the Body of Christ as a whole.

Process

Have you done the first two? That's part of the process. Other pieces of the process include:

Sending texts

Making phone calls

Posting on social media

Filling out forms

Budgeting

Shopping

These are all possible preparations for one meeting, but not always. Other parts of the process include asking good questions.

Will we have enough time to do X?

Have I amply promoted tonight?

Do I have commitments from adults to help with the meeting?

What's plan B?

Throughout this planner I will offer you some ideas and articles to help you plan the best possible meeting so that students are reached, the body of Christ is activated and God gets the glory.

01 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

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Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

02 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

03 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

04 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

05 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

You Need To Mess With Your Meeting

I love the Esurance commercial where the older lady is putting pictures on her “wall” to show her friends what she thinks this social media is. She then tells her friend, “I unfriend you” for not liking her wall of pictures, to which her friend replies, this is not how any of this works”. This commercial tells me that we can completely misunderstand how something works, even our meetings

When it comes to sloppy youth meetings, I feel like saying, “This is not how any of this works”. Youth meetings serve multiple purposes from reaching the lost to building up the saints to giving students an idea of who you are in the community. Meetings can become stale and repetitive with the same old everything (songs, games, etc). Maybe it’s time to mess with your meeting.

Many of my kids wouldn’t have given me an extra night of the week for a small group, etc. so I’d have to look at the one meeting I did have and revamp it to get kids to be more involved.

Youth Meeting are pretty standard across the board but here’s what a meeting for us looked like:

- Opening Game or Activity
- Announcements
- Praise and Worship
- Altar Time
- Preaching
- Prayer/Altar/Commitment Time

Those were the main pieces and part of our meetings with some derivations along the way. I started doing a Connection Night once a month where students got in small groups, with adults helping, so they could do the Bible Study. That meant I would preach three times a month and they would connect once a month in a small group giving them the chance to study and lead.

This worked really well but we couldn’t keep meeting like this and here’s why:

1. There were not enough opportunities for kids to lead

If you look at my meeting above, there were some ways for kids to lead

They do the game

They do the announcements

They do praise and worship

They preach

They can pray with people at the altar

Our teens did all of these things through out the year. You may ask, "If it's working, why did you mess with it?" I messed with it because I wanted our youth meetings to offer more than a task to those who needed meat and not milk. There are many of our kids who were past the task stage and needed to move into the leading stage. Which leads to my second reason for messing with the meeting.

2. Students needed the room to grow and mature

Tasks are a great beginning tool to help kids lead but the task is like tying your shoes, eventually you master that task and want to move on, it's a means to an end. I think about what the writer of Hebrews wrote

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.... Hebrew 5:12

It's entirely possible for kids to become "dull of hearing" when they hear the same voice or have the same kind of meeting over and over again. Kids can also fall back to the milk stage if I'm not giving them a chance to use those teeth to chew on bigger ideas or take on deeper responsibilities. In my case, I wanted to turn spectator and turn them into participants for the sake of their growth.

That's why I inverted the process, where kids lead three weeks in a month and I preach once a month. This gave a few kids who were ready to chew on "the meat" of God's word for themselves and then pass along the nutrients to their peers.

If you don't customize the meeting to adjust to the growing needs of your students, you'll lose them from both a spiritual growth perspective and possibly from the attendance perspective as they may seek out other challenges, possibly at other churches.

How To Keep Your Message From Bogging Down

When I prepare a message, most of the time, I usually know where I'm going with it and I have an outline in my head. There are times though when I leave the prepared path and go muddin', (as they say in the south)

In preacher talk we call them rabbit trails. Talking and preaching like we have all the time in the world, is like a fun day at the mud pits. Well, it's fun for us but the people in the passenger seat may not feel the same way.

Unless your students like to sit and hear you preach for hours and hours, like mine did (insert eye roll here), we all have a limited amount of time to say what we feel like God has put on our hearts before kids mentally check out on us. Remember, muddin's fun but we can also lose track of time.

A rabbit trail here and a mud sling there can add 10 minutes to your message that's not necessary. Those ten minutes can suck up your prayer time, response time from kids or worse, it could get you stared at from watch tapping from parents at your door.

Before you scream, "Yeee Haw!" into that funny bit or story, take another look at your message and ask a yourself a few questions.

Is this essential?

When I say we should examine our message before we speak, I'm not talking about slapping on the rubber gloves for an invasive probing. If you write out your messages, look at your introductions and decide how far you have to go before your kids are with you. Ask yourself whether the story fits, is the intro video too long and whether the game you want to play really gets your group's minds and hearts moving in the direction you want them to go. Much of what you want to say may be fun or cool, but isn't necessary.

Where am I going with this?

The old adage, "Begin with the end in mind" has saved me a ton of time and grief. If I know my kids need time at the altar I won't put a lot of fluff in the beginning. If I have a feeling that our kids need to connect with each other more I may have them team up at the end and pray for each other.

As tempting as it may be, you cannot afford to do everything in one night so something has to get cut. You have to think about the end of the night and where God is wanting to lead your students.

What is the Spirit saying?

We had what was called a SERVE night. It wasn't a normal meeting because kids would be breaking up into small groups for projects. One of the songs that night had a closing chorus that said, "let the veil down, let the praise go up, we're in the presence of the Lord." The Holy Spirit pinched my heart and said, "Let's go muddin' here".

I decided to trash my mental notes and spend 10 minutes talking about the veil that was torn in two when Christ was crucified and that many of the students were living on the wrong side of the veil and not entering into God's presence.

After using a few students as an illustration, I invited kids to "pass through to the other side of the veil" and into the Holy Of Holies, Best muddin' ever! Kids came to the altar for prayer. I cut MY stuff for Spirit stuff and the kids had plenty of time for serving.

Asking these three questions before you get up to speak will not only save you time but will help you get your kids to where God needs them to go faster.

SERMON/LESSON

WORKSHEET

DATE

TOPIC

MAIN TEXT

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

SUPPORTING VERSES

ILLUSTRATIONS

APPLICATION

06 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

07 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

08 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

09 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

Why Are You Having This Meeting?

How you open and bring closure to your meetings are important. Openers set the pace, closers bring, well, closure. This goes back to the top right of your meeting planner: What is the purpose of your meeting?

If your meeting's focus is for believers, that is one thing. If your meetings focus is for those who do not know Christ, that is another.

If you're trying to reach those who do not know Christ, you could do a fun, hype night that introduces students to your ministry and give you the opportunity to build relationships. I would not call this evangelism, I would call this Outreach. Outreach is about letting kids know who you are whether that takes place in your meeting or at an event.

You can also reach students who do not know Christ through showing them what a worship service is like. I don't think lost students are put off by worship, I think they're put off by a lack of authenticity.

Being honest with students about why invited them is something they'll respect. At an evangelistic meeting you're sharing the gospel with the hopes that some will receive Christ and determines the kind of songs, activities, etc. you will have.

There are youth meetings where you'll focus on discipleship or teaching. Your focus might be on your regulars, those who show up no matter what. You ought to put more into this meeting out of respect for their commitment and as a reminder to never take your students for granted.

When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor. It's to enjoy each step along the way. - Wayne Dyer

Don't look at your meetings as just spiritual building blocks, look at them as opportunities for students to create, make memories, laugh, develop friendships and discover the joy of knowing, serving and loving God and one another.

Opening and Closing Ideas

Opening Ideas

A game

Will it be low key or high energy? Teams or Up Front games? Will it be a powerpoint game or a physical game?

A contest

Who can do a cool trick? Who can do more push ups? Let the audience vote on who will win before they do the stunt.

A team builder/cooperative

Maybe your group needs an activity that will cause them to work together. You could do an Escape Room or a physical challenge such as The Electric Fence where they must get everyone over a 4ft high piece of string.

A Discussion

I've seen several videos of late that place lines on the floor that say Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Agree, Kind of Agree and Strongly Agree. You could ask questions that might pertain to your message. An activity like this will give you some feedback of where your students stand on certain issues.

Example: It's important to read your bible everyday.

Ask kids to go to the line (or sign on the wall) where they feel they stand on the question. Ask kids to share why they're standing at that particular place. Keep track on time and I would ask around 3-5 questions.

Service Project

If there's a service project your church is doing, such as putting together items for the homeless, use that first 15 minutes to help put together the bags.

Help/Serve/Surprise another ministry in your church

This depends on the size of your youth ministry, but what if you took your students over to another ministry and helped out with a project or Holiday prep such as coloring easter eggs or building a Christmas set.

What if you took five minutes and practiced a song and went and sung it to another ministry?

This would work for really well for smaller youth groups, but what if you did a traveling worship band, where every one played an instrument and did worship for kids or the adult service (Think Jimmy Fallon on the Tonight Show)

Video

This is most common, but, depending on what the purpose of your meeting is, maybe you could show a funny video to lighten everyone up, a worship video to get everyone focused or a topical video to get kids drawn into the topic for the night.

Food Bar

Have a taco bar or ice cream bar where kids can come in, grab some food and sit and chat. This is great if your group needs some fellowship time, to get to know new people. This could fit in the WOW category of your planning sheet, but more on that later.

Closing Ideas

What kind of closer you use depends on the purpose of your meeting. If your meeting is designed to connect with those who do not know Christ, you'll want to leave them feeling like they didn't waste their time showing up.

If your purpose is focused on discipleship or teaching the saints about a certain biblical principle, you'll want to close to emphasize your point. The closer could be connected to the Movement box on your planning sheet. What kind of movement do you want your kids to take? Movement towards God? Movement towards each other? Movement toward the hurting?

Here are a few ideas and you can decide how they fit with the movement you want them to take.

Prayer

In many church youth groups, there is the traditional altar call, where those who want to receive Christ make the journey from their seat to the front. There is a time for that, but consider a few other closing ideas

There are many ways to having closing prayer. You can have a simple closing prayer by you, a leader, or a student.

You can have people pray in groups of 2-3 or have everyone come up front for prayer.

Prayer Stations are where students visit a table designed for students to interact with. You can find many ideas for stations on Pinterest.

Gather everyone in a big circle for prayer.

Communion

Nothing binds us together like partaking of the Lord's supper. You could include scripture readings, creeds and affirmations.

The Arts

I have done several closers that involved everyone painting a picture or molding a piece of clay. The arts give God a way to interact with your students through their creativity.

Music

A closing song or a worship playlist.

A student could play or sing a special.

Close out with a worship video with lyrics.

Openers and closers are important to your meeting because they are the bookends that will highlight the purpose of the meeting. Experiment and get your kids to give you more ideas.

10 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

11

MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

12 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

13 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

14 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

What Is Worship and Why Do Your Teens Need It?

In the glossy world of church worship, it seems that unless you have a 10 piece band, cool lights and a hip worship leader, “true” worship is unattainable. I don’t dislike any of the things I listed as part of my worship experience, what I don’t like is the perception that we need to have these things to have a real worship experience and encounter with God.

Most youth ministries do not have hip/cool worship bands. I didn’t. I made the worship experience as appealing as I could with what we had. To be real honest, students would rather have an authentic worship experience to a dressed up, “let’s be like everyone else” worship experience.

Worship, in its truest form, means to redirect our eyes and hearts away from the worthless and towards that which is worthy of our worship. Let me offer you a few ideas of how you can do that with and without a band.

Worship can become formulaic. Fast song, fast song, medium fast song, medium song, slow song, slow song. If you have a band why not:

- Start out in reverse with slow songs and build up
- Let each of band have a solo (if they’re skilled enough)
- Let different band members share about a song before you play it
- Let different band members testify why they think worship is important (this can be done live or via video)
- Read scripture before each song to give it context (yes, it breaks the “flow” but you increase a students’ understanding about WHO they are worshipping and WHY HE is worthy. I don’t recommend this all the time)

“I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life with blinders on.” —John Ortberg

“You never go away from us, yet we have difficulty in returning to You. Come, Lord, stir us up and call us back. Kindle and seize us. Be our fire and our sweetness. Let us love. Let us run.”—Augustine of Hippo

21 Ways To Worship God Without A Band

Worship Bands can be a hassle. Personalities, divas, kids trying to be the next _____ (write popular worship leader name here), practice times, no commitment, etc. etc. Bands can be a headache but I've always valued them because it gives kids roles and responsibilities and ways to use their gifts and talents.

One band I had was what I would call a closed band. They were a good band but god-forbid if you should mess with their dynamics. Not everyone in the band felt this way but enough to where one girl was not allowed to join because "she would mess everything up" according to one band member.

I came to the defense of this young lady and told the band to work her in. This angered one band members so much he just looked at me and said "You're ridiculous" and walked out never to return.

I think worship has lost its bite over time. It's more about being perfect than worshipping The Perfect One. I love the quote from an article I just read on worship that says:

The Pulitzer Prize winning poet and author Annie Dillard asked: "Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? ... It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return."

Shouldn't worship have a sense of awe instead of a predictable playlist of popular songs? Maybe you should consider it a good thing that you don't have a band to manage or clutter the room with flashiness; distracting from the quiet, scary silence where God could show up and rock some kids face off.

To worship means:

lift up, adore, exalt, focus on, listen for, in Spirit, honor, focus on, respect, glorify, devote time, energy, resources to, ritual, regard, reverence, praise, surrender, ritual, adore, humility, intercession, wonder, recognition, delight, affection, and love.

None of these practices requires a band so let's look at some ways to worship band-less.

Communion

These are powerful times of remembrance. You could have a whole quarter where you take communion every week to reinforce the power and principle Behind Christ's last supper.

Prayer Stations

These are stations where kids can interact with elements and reflect on the scripture that is at each table. You can find some of these on my Youtube Channel, youtube.com/jediforhire and in my store gumroad.com/youthminresources

Responsive Readings

Teens responding, in concert with the reader, is powerful. The experience is their declarative moment to speak out loud what they will do and believe God will do.

Spotify/Apple Music/Pandora Playlist

Create a list of songs to sing that have a theme to go with your meeting or download worship lyric videos.

"Many Spirit-filled authors have exhausted the thesaurus in order to describe God with the glory He deserves. His perfect holiness, by definition, assures us that our words can't contain Him. Isn't it a comfort to worship a God we cannot exaggerate?"—Francis Chan

Small Group Prayer (2-3 per group)

Put a topic on the screen and then ask students to gather in groups of 2-3 to pray for that issue for a couple of minutes then switch the topic.

One on One Prayers

Have students pray one on one with each other.

Prayer Challenges

Have kids choose from challenging topics such as abortion, poverty, war, terrorism, etc. and let them pray out loud from the mic or quietly while music plays.

Scripture Reading

Have kids read their favorite verse, read scripture for your message or read a closing scripture blessing such as Numbers 6:24-26.

Open Mic Worship

Let kids find a quiet place, around the room for worship. Have an open mic for kids to share what the Lord puts on their hearts or have some verse from the Psalms available to read.

Recite The Creeds

Creeds tie our hearts together around core biblical truths. Creeds put into words what a student might be able to communicate themselves.

Pray The Creeds

Read them line by line and let kids or yourself offer a short prayer per line.

Example: The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth

Prayer: Thank you God for being our Father and for your creation.

Pray The Scriptures

Have some scriptures ready to go along with your messages. Use them at the end to allow kids to pray and ask God to help them live out His word.

Example: On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. John 7:37,38

Prayer: Lord I am thirsty. Fill me with your rivers.

Silence/Reflection

No music. Put a scripture up on the screen and let kids think on it for about a minute and then ask them to share how that scripture affects them.

Journaling

Grab a bunch of black notebooks from the dollar store and put them around the room. Put up a scripture or quote on the screen and let kids roam around writing/reflecting/drawing in these books while music plays. Maybe each book could have a theme.

These would be "open books" so caution students to not write anything too personal. You could give each student their own books and let them write/reflect/draw etc. on their own.

Dance (Yes, Dance)

Have a worship procession or a dance team for fast songs or maybe dance is a way to burn off some energy before the slower worship time.

Create/Art

Let kids just free flow and see what happens. It can be individual or a group project. Put up a parable of Jesus and let students draw it out, come up with a skit, etc.

Pilgrimage

Why not take the kids somewhere. I used to love taking the kids to their schools and pray over them before the start of the school year. Where else could you take them?

Jericho March

Sounds silly right? Well it worked for Joshua. What could you march around with the intent of "walls" falling down? Racism? Cliques? Addiction?

Prayer Wall

Have kids silently, or noisily, create their own wailing wall like they have in Jerusalem. Put up a banner that says Prayer Wall and put some sticky notes and pens nearby and ask kids to write a prayer and put it on the wall.

Allow kids to go back to the wall once everyone is done to pray for the requests that have been left by other students.

Put up a topic each week to be prayed for, it local or national and let kids right their prayers for that issue or topic.

15 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

16 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

17 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

18 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

19 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

20 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

A Very Necessary Evil: Announcements

This is the commercial portion of the program. This is where we or someone else make announcements about events, dates, times, etc. None of which, ok, almost none of which our kids will remember. Keeping this in mind, the question is, how much work should I put into announcements?

Some groups go all out and produce slick video announcements and offer colorful print media handouts. How you should answer this question depends on how you answer several other questions.

Can you do a better job of advertising on social media? If so, keep it simple.

What is your level of excellence? If you think everything has to be a 10, you might be in trouble, but do your best to make the announcements eye popping or engaging.

Can you give the announcements to someone else more skilled? Do it.

What is your max time for announcements? Will it eat up too much of the service time?

Can you control the time with just a 1-2 announcements? Only advertise what moves the dial in your youth ministry. Everything else is a distraction.

There are tons of ways to do announcements from fancy to slick. Do what works best for your time, skill level, culture and importance of the announcement.

Don't be fooled by the calendar. There are only as many days in the year as you make use of. One man gets only a week's value out of a year while another man gets a full year's value out of a week. - Charles Richards

The same is true of your meetings. Whether you have an hour or ninety minutes, make sure you make that time count for something.

Three Ways I Moved Students From Consumers To Creators

The Students Involved portion of your meeting planner is critical to the overall success of your youth ministry. If you can do it, they can do it, you just have to let them. If not, you're contributing to a consumer mindset.

I read a study from Common Sense Media Report on Tweens and Teens and Media and one statement, stood out to me

Everyone can be a maker, but not many are. The vast majority of kids' engagement with media consists of consuming media, with only a small portion devoted to creating content.

Yes, students create content for their Instagram and Tik Tok accounts, but how do we channel that creativity to our youth ministry?

In my experience, many youth ministries (and churches) keep kids leveled at consuming religious training but are almost never given the opportunity to create for the church. We've said for years that people in church have adopted the consumerist mindset when it come to style and preference, but the above findings with teens is true across the board; we have too many consumers and not enough creators.

Everyone can be a maker. Do you believe that statement? Do you believe that every kid in your youth ministry could be a creator, a maker, a contributor to the youth program as a whole? If you believe that; how are you creating opportunities for kids to create? To share their faith? To share their gifts?

Here are four examples of how you can change the consumer culture into a creation culture.

Let them design the T-Shirt

We planned a mission trip to Mississippi. I was fooling around with a few ideas and got stuck. I sent what I had out to a few people who were going on the trip and received some great responses. One young lady went into detail and as she sent me her proposed changes and I sent them to the designers. The designers sent me back the changes and it blew the girls mind that I had taken her suggestions and put them to work. Yes, the designers designed but my student created. She extra excited to wear the t-shirt because she had a hand in it.

Let them plan the program

Our college and high school kids did a great job of planning a Disney Costume Party for a Halloween one year. They decided the food, the games, and who would speak. The night was a huge success.

My students have planned out our Youth Sunday in a Sunday School session. We made group decisions on the theme: Gonna Be Worth It, developed a skit about technology and message through time, how we were going to deliver the message (tag team style), and what the worship was going to be like. Everyone was given an opportunity to throw something into the pot. Youth Sunday was truly youth-led Sunday.

To show you that my students weren't special (although, they were), I was asked to not only speak at a retreat but help the students plan it. I sat in an office with four students and a white board. I facilitated, asked questions and made some suggestions but they planned it. They planned the games, named the retreat and create the logo in about an hour.

If you give your students a chance to step up, they will exceed your expectations.

Let them plan the menu

In my last ministry, we had a decent cafe area headed up by a great person and cook. I call her Iron Chef. She made some great dishes over the years. I did my usual call to action for students to take a hand in their ministry and they responded. Some of the boys wanted to cook so I gave them to our Iron Chef. For two months, three boys planned, purchased, and cooked every meal and sold out of their food almost every week.

Our Iron chef could have kept on creating and our kids would have kept on consuming but she stepped aside to let students create their masterpieces and everyone else got to consume some yummy food.

If you're tired of spoiled, entitled, consumer minded teens; then change it. Believe that everyone in your group is a maker, figure out what they can make, let them make it, reward them and repeat.

21 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

22 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

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STUDENTS INVOLVED

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MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

23 MEETING PLANNER

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SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

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CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

24 MEETING PLANNER

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SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

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CLOSING IDEAS

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Prayer

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

25 MEETING PLANNER

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SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

26 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

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CLOSING IDEAS

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STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

27 MEETING PLANNER

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SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

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CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

28 MEETING PLANNER

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SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

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CLOSING IDEAS

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Prayer

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

29 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

30 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

Look How Far You've Come

You're a little over halfway through the year. Take a moment to take stock.

Where have your students come from?

Where are they now?

What kind of meeting(s) do they need right now?

Where do you want to lead them? How will you use the next 25 meetings to get them there?

31

MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

32 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

33 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

34 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

35 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

36 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

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CLOSING IDEAS

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STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

37 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

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CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

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Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

38 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

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MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

39 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

40 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

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Check List

Prayer

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

WOW! Just Wow!

"What is the Wow box for?" You ask? The WOW box is where you can take any element of your youth meeting and put some WOW in it.

How can you add WOW! to your opener?

You could do a game that has lots of props or a messy game.

It could be the way you enter the room. You could shut off the lights and run in with a sparkler in each hand. If your meetings have become too predictable, this will fix it.

How can you add WOW! to your message?

I love me some illustrations. Speaking at camp one week, the theme was Road Trip. So, I came up with the idea to enter the chapel in various ways.

Day one: walked

Day two: bicycle

Day three: motorcycle

Day four: golf cart

Day five: a real car

You can find the videos of some of these on my YouTube Channel, [youtube.com/jediforhire](https://www.youtube.com/jediforhire). The car, needless to say, was a WOW! factor.

How can you add WOW! to your closer?

You can use prayer stations or different kinds of prayer gatherings.

Everything can't be WOW! Otherwise nothing is WOW! Choose something each week to add a little WOW to it. Remember these two things

- 1) Kids add WOW! to your meeting when they serve.
- 2) God always wants to bring the WOW! If we create the space for Him to do so.

Don't Leave Out Your Adult Volunteers

I emphasize student leadership and student serving a lot but we cannot forget the loving adult who show up week after week to minister to kids. Adults need roles and responsibilities because they want their service to matter too. If we don't offer our adults meaningful opportunities, they will get their itch scratched in another ministry.

I can remember going to school dances where chaperones were in attendance. Their job was to make sure there was no kissing, dirty dancing, or smoking in the parking lot. The goal was to make sure something didn't happen. Sadly, this is role many youth leaders/volunteers take.

Youth Ministry chaperones make sure no one talks during the message, that nothing gets broken and no one dies.

Leaders, on the other hand, have a mission each week to make an impact. Volunteer Leaders see their role as proactive rather than re-active. They make sure something DOES happen

- a life giving affirmation
- a deeper conversation about life
- a listening ear is offered

My view of leadership says a volunteer should be, over time, influencing the lives of students to walk uprightly, make good decisions, and lean into the gifts and abilities God has given them; all the while making sure no one dies.

It's not either or, it's both. We should all be training our volunteers to be active participants who, weekly, makes something happen because it's hard to measure the spiritual growth of students though inaction.

Try pairing an adult and a student

- at the welcome table
- in the kitchen making food
- at the altar to pray for people

Put caring, responsible adults into roles that they are suited for but also may cause them to grow. You're not just leading students your leading leaders.

41

MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

☐

People

☐

Process

☐

ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

42 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

☐

People

☐

Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

43 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

☐

People

☐

Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

44 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

☐

People

☐

Process

☐

ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

45 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

☐

People

☐

Process

☐

ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

46 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

47 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

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ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

48 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

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ROLE:

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ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

49 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

50 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

51

MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

ROLE:

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ROLE:

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ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

52 MEETING PLANNER

DATE: _____

SPEAKER: _____

TOPIC: _____

PURPOSE: _____

CORE TEXT(S)

OPENING IDEAS

WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING IDEAS

MEDIA

STUDENTS INVOLVED

WOW!

NAME:

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ROLE:

NAME:

ROLE:

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ROLE:

Check List

Prayer

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People

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Process

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ADULT LEADERS

ROLE

MOVEMENT(ACTION TO TAKE)

MEETING EVALUATION PROS/CONS

Turn Your Meetings Into A Movement

Every meeting should be about movement. The goal of your youth meetings, collectively, is to get your students moving and growing in their relationship with God and with others. This playbook of meeting planners is designed to get you thinking about where all your meetings are going and how can you design meetings that will get you there.

You have 52 weeks a year to meet. Some of these meetings will be cancelled do to weather issues and others for holiday activities. When you're thinking about and planning a meeting, ask yourself where you hope this meeting will take students individually and corporately. Think about the overall outcome or the sum of your meetings.

I ran across Camp Pinnacle's website and what intrigued me were their "goals", but they didn't call them goals, they called them Outcomes; much like I use the word Movement. They say on their website,

"we use our adventurous program and carefully designed cabin experience to help campers improve their Great 8 Outcomes:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Leadership
- Optimism
- Grit
- Self-control

That's a great list! They seek to improve campers through "our adventurous program and carefully designed cabin experience"

Ask your self, what are your desired outcome for students? Are you carefully designing meetings that fall in line with those outcomes? Where do you want kids to move to and in what areas? You have 52 meetings a year (not including Sunday school or church service) to move kids from one level of faith to another. Plan your meetings wisely.

The Unevaluated Meeting is Not Worth Having

Let's be honest, if you're not going over your last meeting to

- see if movement is happening
- inspect what went right and what you can improve
- ask where you can get better

Then you really need to stop having these meetings. It is upon you the leader, whether you are full time, part time or bi-vocational, to ask the hard questions about where your ministry is going.

This space on your planning sheet is not for a treatise on the meeting but some quick positive notes:

- Check with worship leader if they need more practice time
- Follow up with leaders who didn't show, see if they need prayer
- Message went a little long
- Game was fun, need more supplies next time.

This is not a beat yourself up section. This is for critical analysis not a place to feel sorry for yourself or to blame others. This is a space for getting better not getting bitter.

"In evaluating ourselves, we tend to be long on our weaknesses and short on our strengths."

— Craig D. Lounsborough

No meeting is perfect. The point is not to create a perfect meeting, but a meeting that moves students within the service closer to God and their lifestyle outside of service closer to acting like Jesus.

"Even if you think you're doing well and have it all figured out, there is a voice you will always inevitably hear at some point which nags at you and says "but wait..." Don't ever dismiss it, listen to what it has to say."

— Ashly Lorenzana

31 Roles Roles and Responsibilities For Students

I like a busy though ministry. I like when kids come in and have a job; that's why I don't do everything. I leave things undone on purpose so kids will have something to do when they get to the church.

I believe in the economy of youth ministry. Youth Ministries are like small cities. When people are working and invested there is less crime, less blight, and less vandalism. Same is true for our ministries. More kids who serve weekly or monthly there are less complaints, less griping, less boredom, and more vision.

Here are some roles I have given out over the years plus a few I am still working on. By the way, nothing on this list is sacred or proprietary. If we can do it a student can do it, with a little training and mentoring.

- Create Worship Slides
- Make Announcements
- Take Offering
- Poetry reading
- Pre-Rap - intro your message with a rap
- Share a testimony
- Cafe (serve snacks and refreshments every week)
- Clean the room
- Set up chairs
- Lead the game
- Sing A Song
- Do A Dance
- Do a Drama/Monologue
- Play in the band
- Lead Worship
- Design Graphics
- Weekly Photographer
- Run Your Social Media
- Run The Sound Board
- Preach
- Teach
- Small Group Leader
- Run The Computer
- Do An Illustration
- Record the service on/for social
- Edit Video

Make Movies/Skits For The Message or for fun
Funny Video Searcher (Sends you links to funny, clean vids to show)
Greeter
Follow Up Leader For New Guests
Mentor To Middle School Students
Disciple New Believers

I just gave you 31 roles and responsibilities, but not all youth groups do or need these roles. What unique roles could your kids serve in your youth ministry?

Role

Possible Student

[illegible]

Why Every Youth Group Should Take An Offering Every Week

You'll notice that I did not put a place for offering on your planning sheet, that's because I assume you are going to take an offering, because, why wouldn't you? Let me offer you three reasons why you should.

Giving is part of God's process for blessing

Jesus said "Give and it shall be given unto you, pressed down, shaken together and running over. Students will not not the joy of receiving until they know the joy of giving.

Students need to understand giving principles

Giving is not about getting. Giving is about being a blessing to someone else. Students need to know that giving is biblical (God ordained), not religious (man made). God made us to be generous with our resources.

You could fund a special need

In most of the churches I served 100% of what the youth gave I designated to missions and missionaries. I showed videos of projects we were giving to, brought missionaries in to speak, and took kids on mission trips to show their money at work.

I supported missions, what could your kids support? A child in another country? A soup kitchen down the street? Students need to learn that money is a tool to get God's work done and not just to buy the latest gadget. God doesn't need your money, but people do.

Taking an offering is not about shaming people who have no money, the Apostle Paul said,

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:7

Give your students a chance to surprise you. On the next few pages there are giving forms for recording your students' giving. If you set a giving goal, your kids will meet it and probably exceed it.

Using Media In Ministry

If I say the word media, your mind immediately goes to, depending on your age, TV, YouTube or the Internet and eventually VR, but media is more than a video clip.

Keep your mind that media is print media (books, magazines, newspapers), television, movies, audio, video games, music, cell phones, various kinds of software, and the Internet.

If all you use is video, your meetings become spectator focused. Kids can check out on a video because they watch them all the time on their phone through social media apps.

Try using different kinds of media to perk up their attention like reading a poem, creating art to communicate a message or play a clip of audio from a podcast. Using various forms of media engages students imaginations.

One quarter I took kids through an audio book. Each chapter was, roughly, the same time as our class time. I gave them notebooks to jot down anything that stood out. The author shared lots of stories which really drew kids in.

One of my favorite messages involved me reading the children's book *The Run Away Bunny*. Students ate it up. They had flashbacks to first grade and story time. Isn't that what Jesus said we must become, like little children?

I've had kids write poetry based on my messages and share it at the end of message and I've had kids write raps to introduce my messages. Both are media but delivered by students, not a screen.

The goal of media in ministry isn't to be the coolest or the flashiest. The goal of media is to change hearts and minds, to inform and to get the imagination spinning. You have different kinds of learners in your youth ministry, take time to think through which forms of media will help them get the message you want to deliver.

Meeting#	Offering Received	Date
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
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9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
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24		
25		
26		

Meeting #	Amount Received	Date
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		
32		
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52		

How To Give An Altar Call

I closed most of my meetings with a call for kids to know Christ. Here are some general principles of what I think goes into a good altar call.

Make Sure The Call Is Clear

What are you asking kids to do? Receive Christ? To repent of sin? To call back those who wandered off? You may ask students to respond directly to the text you've been speaking on about loving your neighbor and you want kids to ask the Lord to make them more loving.

Don't Manipulate Emotions

I have given hundreds of altar calls and emotions play a part in students responding. God softens their heart and there is genuine sadness over sin that leads to repentance. I have seen speakers give clear call to action with the right amount of emotion and I have seen speakers manipulate emotions to get kids to come to the altar.

Just "getting kids to the altar" is not a sustainable growth development strategy. I have seen kids come to an altar, cry their eye out and go right back to living the lifestyle they had before with zero change. Their emotional moment did not support their decision. God wants reason and emotion to work together

Make Room For The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts and changes lives. If you use shame, anger or if you have to beg kids to come to the altar, then you are doing the work versus the Spirit.

If no one responds to your call to know Christ, don't take it personally, it could be that they're not ready or that many of your kids already know Christ. The altar/commitment time is not for our benefit, it is an opportunity to give kids a chance to respond to The Holy Spirit.

The altar or commitment time is the beginning of a disciple's journey. When students make that walk, raise that hand or bow that knee it is their first step, of many, of following Jesus. Always respect and honor that time.

Meeting Adjourned

I heard, somewhere, that

“the best advertisement for your youth ministry is your next meeting”

The time, energy, planning and prayer you put into your meetings will dictate your youth ministry’s success long term.

We can talk about this generation’s apathy for God, but somewhere in the mix is an apathy for confusing, directionless and sloppy youth meetings.

Teens want excellence not perfection. They want authenticity. They want your best. Give it to them and God will honor your commitment to excellence.

Thank you for investing in teenagers and wanting to get better. Let me close out this book with a prayer for you,

Father,

I pray for the youth worker reading this book. They love their kids enough to want to get better at planning their youth meetings so kids can encounter Christ and grow together in love.

I pray that you give them the desire to be the best they can be, I pray that others will come along side them to fulfill whatever vision You have put on their heart.

I pray that the temptation to be average or become apathetic will be thwarted and that the desire to be excellent, rather than perfect, will fill their souls.

Let every meeting become a movement, a catalyst that draws kids deeper into a relationship with God and one another.

In Jesus name, amen.

Blessings on your journey,

Paul

For more youth ministry resources, please visit
gumroad.com/youthminresources

Let's connect

Twitter @paulturnertoo

Instagram @thedproject

Facebook /paulwturner

Youtube /jediforhire

LinkedIn /[paulturnertoo](https://www.linkedin.com/company/paulturnertoo)

Blog thediscipleproject.net

Email thedproject@me.com

NOTES



If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together.

No one should do youth ministry alone. You need a team inside and outside the church to help you on your journey.

If you want to go

Further in your church

Further in your growth as a youth worker

Further in your skill development

Then consider coaching. Let me put my 30 years of youth ministry and church experience to work for you.

Ministry Minded Coaching meets online, twice a month in a group of 5-6 to work through questions about life and youth ministry.

If you're interested, send me a message at thedproject@me.com and I'll answer any questions you may have.