



Youth Programs

by Evangelist Dan Woltmann

The number one question asked by youth leaders, "Now, what do I do with them?" Many books, programs, articles, and organizations have been produced to give ideas. But what should you use?

Before starting any program or planning any activity, stop and evaluate your philosophy. Yes, that is one of those big college words. In dealing with young people four areas should always be considered. The young person should be given opportunity to mentally grow. Issues and topics of the day (local, national, and world) should be discussed. Also, the physical area should be given room to grow. He needs help to go through physical changes as well as given physical activities to allow him to use his youthful energy. In the area of social growth, the young person needs help in relating to parents, siblings, and friends (both boys and girls). Most important is the area of spiritual growth. A youth pastor should **seek five basic goals** for his young people. He should see the young person saved; separated from the world to God; consecrated and surrendered to God; hungry for God's Word; and burdened for lost souls.

A program of any kind should be centered on God's Word, whether it be any objective, method, message or theme, idea, activity, etc. The program that is Bible-based is security when discouraged, but most of all, it is commanded of the Lord. The program should allow for an oasis from the world's attacks in order to allow the young person to be fed and to practice spiritual skills. With that background, he should be given opportunity to face the world, the flesh, and Satan, and to allow God to work through and in the life surrendered to Christ. Youth meetings should be exciting and very practical. Sunday school should be used to reach out to individuals and teach them strong Biblical truths. Activities should always be a building opportunity of friendships as well as character.

Remember, all parts of a youth program should be Bible-based, even activities. The obvious first step is to get ideas for activities. These can be obtained from various sources. You can use past experiences, ask the pastor, ask the other youth leaders, or get books on games. When planning activities always be able to answer the question, "Why?". This will be crucial when planning anything. If the answer is "because we have always done this" then throw it out. Every game and activity should hold a purpose. It could be to build unity among the youth group, or maybe, to reveal the submission quality in each young person. Can you use it as an illustration to a Biblical truth. You may be saying to yourself, "How quick can we bore them?" Don't get me wrong, I want it to be fun. Only YOU need to know why you are playing this crazy game or planning this zany activity. The stranger and more "stupid" the game, the more excited the young people are. Example: play kick ball, yes, even with teens. Change the rules. Run the bases backwards (third, second, first, home), throw only with the opposite hand. But always have a reason WHY you are playing this way - what are you trying to accomplish, teach or learn? Games without purpose will form a youth group without purpose.

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