

YOUTH MINISTRY STARTER KIT CHECKLIST

This checklist is intended for both church leaders and youth ministry leaders (volunteer or paid).

The objective of this checklist is for all appropriate parties to understand what structural elements are needed to effectively. While not all the samples may pertain to your context, these elements are key in establishing a solid youth ministry structure. The scope of these elements are for you to determine.

Please note: All the attached appendices are meant as guidelines and templates for you to adapt to your context as required. These guides are provided for information purposes only and are not intended as advice to the local church. Information is current only as of the date that the guide was prepared. Readers are advised to seek professional advice for their particular situation.

These documents establish the foundation which the youth ministry is intended to be built upon.

- Church vision/mission/purpose statement

- Youth Ministry vision/mission/purpose statement: No church-based youth ministry functions as an independent entity within a local church. As an integral part of the local church, the youth ministry exists to achieve the local church's purpose in that community. Alongside the church's vision statement would be a complementary youth ministry vision statement that expresses its unique mandate within the broader scope. Note that a vision document is not engraved in stone, but rather a "working document" which requires continuous discernment in God's direction and movement. (see "vision.doc")

- Church's strategic plan: The specific measurable goals established by the church helps all participants (e.g. youth staff, parents, board members, Christian Education committee, etc.) understand what is being pursued and allows for evaluation in better understanding God's movements in this community. (see "strategic plan template.doc")¹

Before you continue, determine where you are in your "youth ministry cycle". Based on your context, identify where this ministry's position is (see the graph below).

¹ A strategic plan helps to bring sustainability to a ministry. A church's and youth ministry's structure is vital in having a long-term projection. For further study, read Mark DeVries' book *Sustainable Youth Ministry* (<http://www.amazon.ca/Sustainable-Youth-Ministry-Doesnt-Church/dp/0830833617>).

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE YOUTH MINISTRY



FOUNDATION TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH MINISTRY:

Christ-centred adults investing into teens and empowering them in their journey towards experiencing the fullness of Jesus' love and grace

If you're not sure where to begin, start at the very beginning and gradually move through the cycle. The remaining documents will help give parameters of what will be involved in this ministry.

- ❑ job description: Every position (whether paid staff or volunteer) should have an outline of responsibilities, qualifications, committed term and process for grievances or termination. It clearly establishes to whom staff are accountable and for whom they are responsible. (see all documents beginning with "job-").
- ❑ child protection/safety policy: In today's North American context, this document brings credibility in the eyes of the community. It emphasizes the church's priority in protecting both the children and youth it testifies to value and ministry staff (paid or volunteer). This document should include, but is not limited to:
 - the recruitment procedure for volunteer staff
 - a photo release waiver (granting use of photos and videos for church publications including online publications such as websites)
 - a transportation policy outlining what modes of transportation are acceptable for off-site activities and expectations for drivers as well as vehicles

- obtaining informed consent from parents/guardians (for activities that are recurring e.g. weekly Bible study, off-site activities, on-site activities and stand-alone events e.g. a concert at the church)
 - an emergency protocol that outlines how to handle emergency situations e.g. abuse claims, harm towards oneself or others, natural disasters, etc.
 - documentation pertaining to what the church is willing to assume risk, transfer risk, share risk or avoid risk
 - understanding of church's insurance and liability
 - a social media policy outlining what is allowed to be posted and how that is administered (see "socialmedia.doc")
 - guidelines on appropriate media to communicate with youth (see "child protection policy.pdf")²
- ☐ year-long calendar: Mapping out all relevant dates in year-long calendar including all regularly youth activities (e.g. mid-week study, Sunday school), relevant church events (e.g. church-wide Christmas dinner), volunteer leadership meetings, other church meetings (e.g. membership meeting, Christian education committee meeting), outreach events, etc. to provide an overview of what the "flow" of ministry will be, how will the progression of theme move throughout the year in all activities and to allow you to plan your own personal schedule. You can use <http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/basic.html> to create your own blank calendar and begin to fill in dates. (Electronic calendars work just as well and are helpful in sharing with other members.)
- ☐ event management template: Off-site activities require organization beyond day-to-day logistics, including registration forms, spreadsheet for tracking monies and budget, checklist of what areas need to be covered for the entire planning and implementation schedule. (see the folder "event prep pkg")
- ☐ budget: The management of money is a vital testimony of your stewardship of what's been given to you to use. A budget isn't just about how much money you have to spend, but providing reasons why you're spending it. (see "budget.xls"; note: This template is NOT the expectations for all churches to have in their youth budget, but rather it allows for situations where multiple line items can be used.)
- finance protocols: Discuss with your treasurer/church accountant what are best practices they expect from you in terms of reporting monies, submitting, expenses, etc. including the method of delivery and frequency.

² <http://www.winningkidsinc.ca/> is an organization who specializes in helping churches develop, implement and maintain their child protection policies. They also include as part of their membership an array of webinars and other training resources.

- ❑ contact management database: Privacy and securing an individual’s contact information is vital. Some vital statistics to track would include name, address, phone number, email address, Facebook profile, Twitter handle, blog site, family member names, emergency contact information, and any medical issues with room to expand. This could include the use of an Excel spreadsheet (password protected) or an online storage system (using an https connection and consider whether it is hosted in Canada). You need to determine who has access to this information and to maintain security.

- ❑ evaluation: Having consistent feedback helps you to grow and better yourself as a person and a youth leader. Providing those avenues for feedback helps to circumvent “back-stabbing” conversations and creates an environment where both positive insights and constructive comments can be made.
 - annual job performance review: Having a regular evaluation by your supervisor allows them to bring issues on a regular basis instead of having them “boil over” and erupt. This also helps to ensure both parties are on the same page in expectations (for both supervisor and yourself), what are short-term goals (especially if they are redefined) and an understanding of where things are to progress. Churches may utilize various review tools such as the 360 review³. Even if your church doesn’t routinely conduct them especially for volunteer staff, it would be highly recommended that one is done anyway.
 - staff evaluations: Having regularly-scheduled evaluations (whether by phone, in person, by email or other online tools) provides an avenue for dialogue between both parties to celebrate highlights/successes as well as discussing improvements for both you and that staff member. Recording it in written form provides an agreed-upon record of what was discussed. (One method is to email this to the staff member detailing what was discussed, and then having them reply back confirming all the details.)
 - youth and parent evaluations: Gathering a broad sense of what your youth and parents are thinking is helpful in seeing the effectiveness of this ministry. This could be done through informal communications (e.g. individual emails or texts with 1-2 general questions for feedback) or through a periodic online survey in which the youth/parent takes less than 5 minutes to provide feedback
 - reports: Ensure you’re aware of all the different committees/personnel you need to report to as well as the frequency (e.g. annual written report to the church board, monthly reports to the CE committee, monthly financial statements to treasurer, weekly tactical reports to senior pastor, etc.).

³ There are several online software that performs 360 evaluations. http://www.capterra.com/360-degree-feedback-software?gclid=COfw4K22_qwCFRECOAodbjHxUg

TOOLS TO ADD

These tools become significant additions as the youth ministry moves forward.

- strategic plan: Following the example provided by your church, outline key measurable objectives you're aiming to achieve. These objectives should be prayerfully discerned. The strategic plan is both a guide in what should be accomplished and an evaluation tool to review what have been the results and why.
- operations strategy: This gives an overview of what all the components at work within the youth ministry. While not all the components may intersect each other, this overview gives a big picture view of what this youth ministry looks like in its totality.
- leader package: This is a prospectus for other youth leaders to understand their role and responsibilities.
- network contacts: Knowing who's around you is helpful in ministry. Some people call this their "100 list" i.e. 100 professional contacts you know and can possibly refer others to. This could include school principals, police officers, hospital workers, crisis workers, social workers, CAS workers, counsellors, psychologists, financial advisors, lawyers, etc. Continuously building that list gives you a growing network to consult with.
- historical documents: Knowing about a church's past can help you gain a snapshot of where the church has been and where it could be going. This could be done through annual reports, membership meeting minutes, youth-related meeting minutes (e.g. volunteer staff, CE board, etc.), etc.
- time sheet: Also, find out exactly how best to keep track of the time spent (including sick days, vacation days, lieu days if applicable, etc.). A timesheet may be useful in tracking all those allocated days (see "timesheet.xls").
- continuing education considerations: On-going education is a key part of growing as a person. To map out what areas of growth you'd like to stretch in and providing such opportunities for your staff demonstrates your desire to stretch and be challenged.
- transitions: Although this ministry may just be starting, it's always healthy to consider how transitions for students, families and staff can occur. Having a process which to bring closure as someone transitions out allows for both healing and celebration. This may include an exit interview with the departing person. It is also good to plan for how

you might transition out of this role by ensuring all the relevant information can be handed over to your successor.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Sustainable Youth Ministry (Mark DeVries)
- Be With Factor (Bo Boshers)
- First Two Years of Youth Ministry (Doug Fields)
- The Theological Turn of Youth Ministry (Andrew Root and Kenda Dean Creasy)

While some people may look at this and think it's a very daunting task, to take the time and being aware of all these areas provides you with a solid basis of knowing what the expectations and responsibilities are of all parties as well as a continual discernment to where God is leading.

One note before you begin: For all persons involved in this process, ensure that your soul is directed towards Jesus. Ultimately, it must begin with the continued building of your faith in Jesus. This could involve a spiritual director, accountability friends or a mentor.

Be sure to connect with other ministry colleagues, whether in your local area or with CBOQ Youth (416-620-2946, cboqyouth@baptist.ca). You're not leading alone so lean on others around you when it feels overwhelming at times. After all, we're working together (cf. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) to reach this upcoming generation with the person and message of Jesus.