

# BRIDGE DOC:

How to Do a Youth Ministry Audit



CANADIAN  
BAPTISTS  
of Ontario  
and Quebec

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# PREAMBLE

An audit, by definition, is “a systematic review or assessment of something”. In the life of a church, regular cycles of evaluation can be hard to come by and it’s even harder to step back from the usual routine and conduct an audit. However, an audit allows a church to reassess a particular ministry in light of the church’s overall mandate and to determine through prayerful discernment whether any adjustments (or restructuring) need to be made in light of its current context.

## OBJECTIVE OF A MINISTRY AUDIT

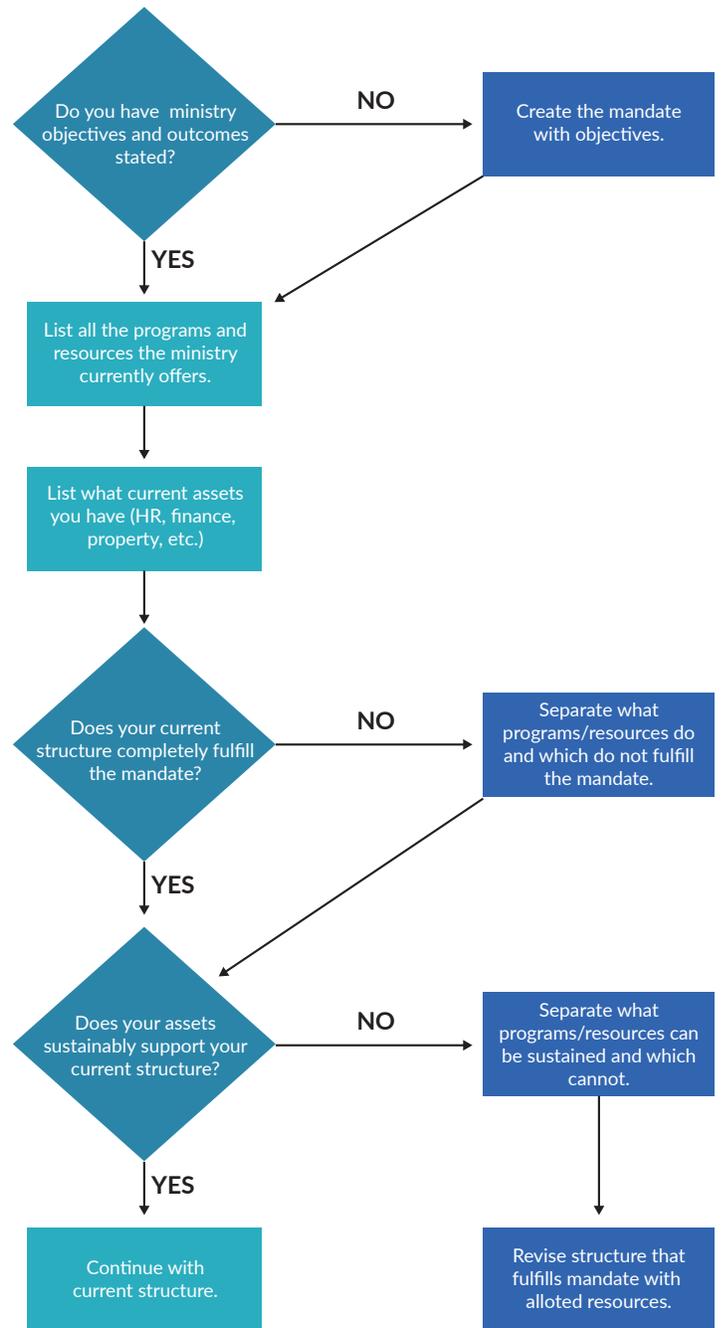
The audit is designed to reveal the state of the ministry, to reveal blind spots/areas of concern, emphasize the strengths of a ministry and flag potential issues related to the health of the ministry. It does this by reviewing the objectives, assets and strategies in a ministry context, assessing (or reassessing) that arrangement in its entirety, and recommend adaptations as needed. An audit does not indicate how we can or should respond to the challenges, identify the next steps we should make to address issues, fix a ministry. or establish a new framework for ministry.

# YOUTH MINISTRY AUDIT PROCESS

Youth Ministry Audit objective: To align the ministry's mandate alongside a sustainable structure with the God-given assets.

This is the overall process in a youth ministry audit.

1. Stating the ministry's mandate. This will include objectives and outcomes. The mandate can include the mission statement and also encompasses the stated objectives in tangible concrete terms (including measurable results) and could also include a strategic action plan. The ministry's structure will be measured against this. If the mandate is not well established, then it needs to be crafted in conjunction with the senior leadership of the church.
2. All the components of the ministry, including programs, resources and other services will be outlined as well as current assets (including human resources both paid staff and volunteers, finances, property, etc.). Alongside your structure, you'll lay out what assets you currently have.
3. The crux of the audit is the evaluation of the structure in light of the mandate. This evaluation looks at both each component individually against the mandate, and how the assets are being utilized. Adjustments may be required both in the allocation of assets and whether other structural changes could better fulfill the mandate.



Every audit is unique to the youth ministry's context. For more information, contact Alvin Lau ([alau@baptist.ca](mailto:alau@baptist.ca), 416-620-2946)

# STARTING THE AUDIT PROCESS

There are three primary areas to review.

Outline your ministry's stated and unstated objectives (ie. mission, purpose, goals, values)

- Be as specific as possible
- Make S.M.A.R.T. goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based)
- Identify why you do what you do

List your assets

- Financial
- Human resource
- Physical (e.g. building)

Write down all the programs and strategies currently used

- Include both formal and informal elements
- Include both "what" (e.g. curriculum) and "how" (e.g. small-group format)
- Include both recurring (including annually recurring) and one-time programs

In this fact-gathering stage, it's helpful to compile a wide range of insights. Within a youth ministry, include a representative sample of the following demographics in the audit process: (write down their names under each category)

Youth

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Parents of youth

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Grandparents

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Other pastoral staff

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Ministry workers (paid or volunteer)

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Elders (or other governing board members)

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Other stakeholders

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Tip: You can choose a variety of media to help you in your fact-finding stage. The choice of media depends on how the various groups you are asking for feedback (eg. youth, parents of youth) respond. Commonly used media/channels include: online/written survey, phone/in-person individual interview and group interview.

Tip: Once you have the information, compile it onto three large sheets of paper (one for each area: objectives, assests, programs and strategies) and post it on a wall so they can all be viewed at the same time

Some questions you can ask as part of your fact-finding task:

1. Describe in three sentences the current state of the youth ministry in this church.

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2. List all the elements and programs (formal and informal) that the youth ministry oversees/organizes/manages/supports.

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3. List all of the positive outcomes happening at the ministry.

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4. What are the missing elements from the ministry? In what areas is the ministry struggling to do to well? What changes would you suggest?

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5. How would these suggestions change the outcomes?

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Use the following three pages to gather and organize the data from the fact-finding stage.









Tip: Have a maximum of 9 people in this group.

## EVALUATING THE ARRANGEMENT

When you reach the evaluation phase, choose a smaller group of people who represent some of the demographics above.

*Optional:* It may be helpful to compile a list of values the ministry holds. This could be useful when distinguishing between a value and an objective.

1. Review each of the areas to ensure the information is complete. Be as detailed as possible.

### Suggested Questions/Consideration:

#### Objective

- How do the youth ministry objectives align with the church's mandate?
- Is everyone involved in the ministry (e.g. pastoral staff, youth leaders, parents, students) able to articulate the objectives/purpose/mission of the youth ministry?
- For each objective, what indicates either completion or progression? How is the ministry assessed and what are the agreed-upon criteria that measure the ministry's effectiveness?
- What objectives are missing?

#### Assets

- How much money is allocated in the budget for this ministry?
- What other monies are available (e.g. sponsors, grants, etc.)?
- What properties or facilities can be readily accessed within the church or in local community?
- What personnel (both regular staff and occasional/one-time volunteers) are available? What hours/time is each person able to offer?
- What non-monetary resources are available? (e.g. books, equipment, etc.)



Tip: When evaluating the arrangement, you might choose to use the “jigsaw” method. <https://www.jigsaw.org/>

Each of the three expert groups is assigned one of the areas (objectives, assets, strategies) to determine if it encompasses everything to the best of their knowledge (step 1).

The home groups then work together to take the data from the three areas and create the arrangement snapshot (steps 2-3). Afterwards, compare the home- group answers. Complete step 4 as a large group.

## Strategy

- What resources are required by each program? If needed, identify any sub-segments within youth ministry and list the resources needed by each.
  - How is the budget being used? Does it align with the priorities and objectives?
  - what is the necessary personnel needs for each program listed?
  - How are students, volunteers, staff, church members empowered in the leadership of the implementation of the programs to create shared ownership?
2. Mark down the programs/strategies that are directly connected to objectives.

### Suggested Questions/Considerations:

- What programs/strategies are not linked to at least one objective? Look at each one. Is that program still needed or does an objective need to be added/ revised?
  - If you are revising/adding an objective, examine if/ how it fulfills the church’s overall mandate.
  - Which objective(s) does not have a program/ strategy associated with it?
3. Determine the assets that are being utilized (and those that are not).

### Suggested Questions/Considerations:

- Which assets are not being utilized? In what area could that asset best be used?
  - If an area does not have enough assets, consider how that associated objective could be achieved given the assets available.
4. Once the arrangement is finalized, consider if it is sustainable in the foreseeable future.

# AFTER THE AUDIT

The audit gives you a snapshot of what the ministry looks like at this moment. After the audit, it is up to you to decide how you want to proceed with any revisions to the ministry.

As you discern where to go from here, some follow-up activities to help in that process.

- Gather a prayer team together. Pray is utmost in discerning God's will in this. Recruit a team to consistently pray alongside the ministry during this time.
- With the findings of the audit, gather clusters of stakeholders (e.g. youth, parents, senior leadership) to have them discuss what next steps they believe will be most helpful.
- Have an outside voice to be a sounding board. This would be a pastor from another church, a ministry friend or someone from CBOQ. Having that external voice helps to see "blind spots" or consider other alternatives.
- When the revisions are finalized, ensure all the appropriate groups of people are notified in advance. Also ensure any revisions, especially significant changes, are affirmed by your church's senior leadership.

If you require any assistance this the audit and follow-up process, contact Alvin Lau.

## CONTACT US

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