

1000

TIPS FOR YOUTH WORK



Tip #1

Take pictures of your youth group activities. Hang them up on the church or youth group wall. Have kids create crazy captions for them. You may need permission from parents first!



Tip #2

Use the mail a lot. Send birthday cards and personal, affirming notes to each of your young people. Send postcards and announcements on a regular basis.

Tip #3

Use surveys and questionnaires to their best advantage. Find out what your young people are thinking on a regular basis.

Tip #4

Join a youth workers' fellowship in your area. If none exists, organize one. Meet periodically with other youth workers in your area to share ideas and problems. They can be a great resource for you.

Tip #5

Never ignore a disturbance during a meeting. When a distraction occurs, acknowledge it. It's the best way to regain the attention of the group.

Tip #6

Avoid making promises to parents you can't keep.

Tip #7

Get an automatic telephone answering device for your youth group. Have the phone company install a separate line, and use that number as an information centre or "hot line." People can call anytime and get details for upcoming events and activities. Parents especially will love this.

Tip #8

Give kids the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned after each meeting. Have them write down "I learned . . .," or discuss what they have learned in small groups.

Tip #9

Don't meet in a room that is too big for your youth group. If your group is small, meet in a small room. This gives kids the feeling of being "packed" in. Always make sure your meeting place is casual and comfortable.

Tip #10

Have the young people in your group put together a "youth group yearbook" at the end of the year. It should include photos and articles about the past year's activities. It will be a positive reminder of the good times shared by the group.

Tip #11

Prepare a good job description for yourself and stick to it, even if you are a volunteer leader.

Tip #12

If your group is small, go in with other groups on

things. Pool your resources. Share costs. Don't be afraid to invite another youth group to some of your activities, even if they are of another denomination.

Tip #13

Always deal with problems as they come up. Don't expect them to go away on their own. They won't.

Tip #14

Set up a "phone chain" to help spread the word regarding upcoming events. If you have ten young people who will call ten other kids, you can personally contact a hundred kids in one evening. Personal contact is always the most effective.



Tip #15

If your church does not have a good youth resource library, then start one. Include books for kids, their parents, and your leaders.

Tip #16

Allow the young people in your group to select adults in the church whom they would like to have as youth sponsors. It's easier to enlist those adults when they know they have been chosen by the kids.

Tip #17

Meet regularly with your volunteer staff and sponsors for training, prayer and fellowship.

Tip #18

Keep track of your time for a week to see where it is really going.

Tip #19

Always arrive at the church or meeting place early enough to greet youth and their parents as they arrive. Stay late for the same reason.

Tip #20

Develop programs that reflect the needs, interests and energy level of the young people in your group, not the adults who work with them.

Tip #21

Take two days away from the office to prepare for busy times during the year.

Tip #22

Plan some early morning or late night activities. There will be few conflicts and the kids will enjoy the adventure.

Tip #23

Develop realistic goals and expectations—the harvest is at the end of the age, not at the end of your meeting. Avoid depending on immediate results to determine success or failure. Lasting results come later—often much later.

**Tip #24**

Take a youth worker from another local church to lunch. Don't talk about youth.

Tip #25

Consider planning after school clubs. Many kids of working parents are left unsupervised in the late afternoon and have nothing to do.

Tip #26

Preview everything. Never use a video you haven't seen or schedule a speaker you haven't heard. Your young people should not be treated like guinea pigs.

Tip #27

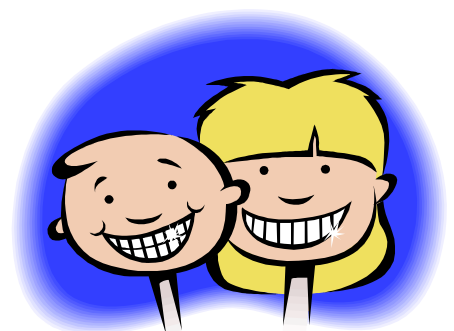
Get to know the parents of your young people. Learn their first names and use them.

Tip #28

Take time to read several new books each year. Try to read a book on youth ministry, one on time management, one on theology, one of the classics, and a couple popular novels.

Tip #29

Avoid creating a "youth ghetto." Get the youth involved in the life of the church—not just the youth group. They can serve on boards and committees, work with children or the elderly, participate in worship, and attend other events and meetings.

**Tip #30**

Don't be afraid to smile and laugh a lot.

Tip #31

Visit each of your youth in their homes. Create good parental links.

Tip #32

Print up brochures or postcards describing your youth group and its activities, and make them available to parents, youth group members, and youth who might be unfamiliar with the group. Include photos, brief descriptions, times, and locations.

Tip #33

Plan at least two retreats a year, a weekend and a 24 hour retreat. One day at a retreat is worth an entire month of Sundays.

Tip #34

Lighten up and let kids be kids. They aren't adults, so don't expect them to act like adults.

Tip #35

Never cancel an event or meeting simply because not enough youth show up. You may need to adapt your plans, but don't send everyone home. Let those who show up know they're just as important as those who don't.



Tip #36

Familiarize yourself with the music your young people listen to. Top of the Pops weekly top videos countdown and some weekly radio programs will help you stay current. Periodically discuss the music with your kids in a positive way. Youthwork

Magazine gives you great ideas on how to use this music for Bible Studies and discussions

Tip #37

Take a first aid course and encourage others on your staff to do the same.

Tip #38

Get a copy of your Child Protection Policy, read it and follow it!

Tip #39

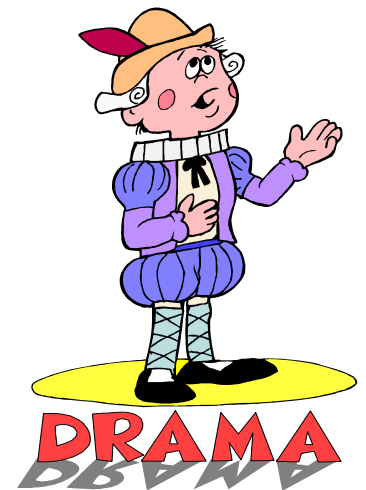
Offer to serve as a volunteer chaplain at a local hospital adolescent unit or drug and alcohol treatment program.

Tip #40

Get a set of *Ideas* books from the Christian book shop. You'll never be able to use all those ideas, but next time you need one, you'll have plenty to choose from.

Tip #41

Put together a "drama closet" full of costumes, old clothes, and props for your drama productions or even last-minute illustrations. Ask people in the church to donate ridiculous looking clothing and other items.



Tip #42

Communicate availability. Don't give your kids the impression that you're too busy for them.

Tip #43

When young people help you with a game in front of the group, don't make fun of them. Use activities to build them up—make heroes out of them, not idiots.

Tip #44

Don't do everything yourself, even though you can do it better. Learn to delegate.

Tip #45

Create for yourself an emergency box full of games, a talk, a Bible etc. It will come in handy when your guest speaker doesn't show up or you're suddenly stuck!

Tip #46

Ask adults in the church to "adopt a young person" by getting to know one of the youth and praying specifically for that young person on a regular basis.

Tip #47

If your favourite songs are not in a songbook, make your own songbook! If the songs are copyrighted, check if your church has a Christian Copyright License.

Tip #48

Don't neglect the quiet ones of your group. Give them as much of your time and attention as the sharp kids.

Tip #49

Occasionally invite the Vicar to a youth group activity to join the young people and the programme for a session. It also gives the young people a chance to see the Vicar as a real person.

Tip #50

Teach your leaders—by example—to be role models.

Tip #51

Keep parents informed. Publish a parents' newsletter or schedule periodic meetings for questions and feedback. Lack of communication with parents can seriously handicap your ministry.

Tip #52

Develop good job descriptions for your volunteer leaders. Make sure they know exactly what is expected of them and what is not expected of them. Provide them with good resources for the job you have asked them to do.

Tip #53

Make sure every meeting or activity is well organized. It lets kids know they are important and reduces discipline problems.

Tip #54

Foster creativity in your young people by having brainstorming sessions. Allow ideas to flow without criticism—evaluate only after the ideas have stopped.

Tip #55

Never use religious jargon and worn-out clichés. Say what you mean in words today's youth can understand.

Tip #56

Build self-esteem in your young people by affirming them both when they are alone and when they are with their peers. Over time make it a point to say something positive to each one.

Tip #57

Use personal illustrations when speaking to young people. Abstract ideas need concrete examples to keep the message alive.

Tip #58

Never use material without first adapting it to the needs of your group. Material writers don't know your kids; you do.

Tip #59

Don't worry about numerical growth. Size does not equal success. Health leads to growth; not vice versa.

Tip #60

Hang a personal bulletin board in your office with pictures of your friends, young people in the group, classic postcards, and other junk you collect. Kids love to look at it and they get a glimpse into your personality.

Tip #61

Don't take yourself or your circumstances too



seriously. Nothing is ever as bad as you think it is, and nothing is ever as good as you think it is.

Tip #62

Be able to say "I don't know." Then young people will listen to you better when you do know.

Tip #63

Always reconfirm any group reservations or bus bookings the day before the event.

Tip #64

Avoid all double standard rules for leaders and members. Whatever goes for the kids goes for you and your staff.

Tip #65

Deal with root causes, don't treat the symptoms. Rather than fighting or preaching on behaviour, find out what the cause of the behaviour is and deal with that.

Tip #66

Attend a youth ministry training event every year, like Youthwork the Conference for Youth Workers. Never think you've learned it all.

Tip #67

Don't make threats you can't or won't follow through on.

Tip #68



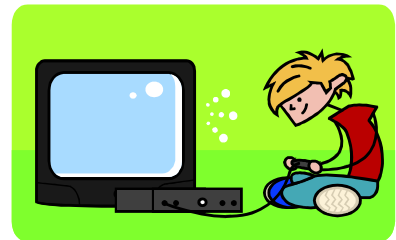
Keep a supply of games and recreational items in the trunk of your car at all times. You never can tell when you'll need a football, a Frisbee, or a few water balloons.

Tip #69

Make sure you have at least one male and one female adult youth sponsor working with your youth group.

Tip #70

Always serve refreshments at meetings and activities. It's a relatively easy thing to do and kids love it. It also keeps them around a little longer for personal contact.



Tip #71

Take advantage of the free films available from your local library.

Tip #72

Don't worry about the problem of cliques. Instead, provide plenty of opportunities for everyone to interact with and discover each other. Breaking up cliques is usually an exercise in futility and somewhat counter-productive.

Tip #73

Have your young people write a movie script and then film it! Watch it with pizza!

Tip #74

Keep a file on each of your young people. Get personal and family information, birthdays,

photos, notes from personal interviews and observations, and other information. Keep it confidential. It will benefit your ministry and make a wonderful gift for your successor.

Tip #75

When trying to improve the church, start with yourself.

Tip #76

Avoid counselling someone of the opposite sex in a private place. Prevent rumours and unfortunate misunderstandings by meeting in a public place like a coffee shop or a busy park.

Tip #77

Keep a youth ministry journal. Each week record and evaluate what you did with the youth group. Describe contacts with kids and reflect on each one. You'll be able to organize your thoughts and document important events.

Tip #78

Surround yourself with adults to whom you can go for advice or counsel. You need the accountability and support.

Tip #79

Take your junior leaders on a planning retreat. Strive to become a team.

Tip #80

Have a young person or a small group write an article about their faith for the church magazine.

Tip #81

Show big sporting events on a big screen using a data projector.

**Tip #82**

Have a BBQ in your garden, if you can use a data projector to show a movie in the garden.

Tip #83

If you have young people who play musical instruments, create a youth worship band. It will build their confidence and possibly improve your singing.

Tip #84

Visit the schools your young people attend. If possible, introduce yourself to the head teacher, the teachers. Let them know who you are. Ask them if there is any way you can serve them.

Tip #85

Make learning the names of all the kids a top priority. You'll never have a ministry to them until you know and remember their names.

Tip #86

Avoid disciplining young people in front of their peers. It's best to handle discipline problems privately and one-on-one.

Tip #87

Never believe camp or conference centre brochures. Visit the facility before booking it. Ask

questions about flexibility, and additional costs and availability of "extras." Eat a meal if possible.

Tip #88

When leading a discussion, refrain from making overly positive or negative comments when young people offer their opinions. Remain as neutral as possible to encourage openness and honesty.

Tip #89

Learn to say "no." Make time for your family and friends, your outside interests, and your personal growth.



Tip #90

Occasionally meet in the homes of church board members so they can see first-hand what the youth group is like.

Tip #91

Use TV to your advantage. Tape and discuss good programmes. Discuss and evaluate the programmes that are most popular with your youth.

Tip #92

Get a good refillable calendar so you can plan your youth group activities at least a year in advance. If you don't know where you're going, you probably won't get there.

Tip #93

Tip #94

Get your group involved in at least one service project each year. They give kids a chance to make a positive contribution to the community.

**Tip #95**

Put on a drama production once a year. It gives more kids a chance to use their talents and be in the limelight.

Tip #96

Begin a ministry at a local youth detention centre. Involve young people if possible. Offer to help the chaplain with counselling or chapel services.

Tip #97

Be a model for your young people. Whenever you can, take a young person with you. Let them witness your life as you fix the car, run errands, and interact with others. Let them see you as a real person.

Tip #98

Don't attempt to be "one of the kids." If you're an adult, be an adult. Just be an adult who loves kids.

Tip #99

Use the internet for games and resources. www.thesourcefym.com is excellent!

Tip #100 - take your day off!!!