

Effective Youth Ministry Press

Free Resource

Dear Youth Leader,

Welcome to Effective Youth Ministry Press free resource!

This resource is provided to you at no charge to be a blessing to you and your youth ministry from:

www.effectiveyouthministry.com

You may make as many copies as you need for your personal use or for your ministry and you may share it with others. However, the downloading of this resource is with the agreement that it will not be sold, uploaded to a website or made available in any other format.

Copyright and distribution of all parts of this document remains the property of Ken and Julie Moser.

Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

www.effectiveyouthministry.com

Starting a youth group from scratch

written by
Ken Moser

Based on Appendix 3 of *Youth Evangelism* by Ken Moser.

Starting a Youth Group From Scratch

Five Key Principles to Guide You as You Begin:

1. Work with those who are inside (closer to the church) before you seek to reach those who are not associated with the church

The classic model of growing a youth ministry is to try at first to attract a number of youth who have little or no involvement with your church. This is a difficult strategy that may hinder your goal of running a group built on spiritual activities (Bible study, prayer, worship etc.). Groups that do this tend to get bogged down with the activities that were used to attract them (usually “fun things”) and not move on to activities that promote spiritual maturity.

With this in mind, it is vitally important that you begin with those youth who are inside. You then slowly move out towards those who are less inside. Are there any youth at all in the church? This is the obvious place to begin (even if there are only one or two youth). You will then want them to invite a friend or two whom they believe would like to come to a group that is designed to help them get to know God more deeply.

Move outward to find any youth who have left the church for whatever reason. Have they moved to another church or simply dropped out? Contact these youth and tell them about the new youth group. Find out if there are any young people who are related to the older members in your congregation. Are there any children or grandchildren? Visit them.

Finally, you must go through your old rolls and find any young people who went on camps, were confirmed or baptized, came to a Vacation Bible School etc. and contact them.

2. Set a kickoff date and get your prayer warriors to begin to pray

It is important that you set a date to actually start the group. Too often the hoped for youth group can dwell in “dreamland” and never get off the ground. Once you have a list of possible youth, set a date in the not too distant future—maybe 4-6 weeks at the most.

Once this is done, get those people who pray to begin a prayer campaign. Have them pray for those youth that you are hoping to come, have them pray for specific things to happen and pray for God to do a miraculous work by having youth show up, stay, grow and invite their friends. Remember, God brings the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6). You need his help!

3. Visit all the possible youth on your list from #1

You should have a list of youth from point #1. Visit them, meet with their parent(s) and talk with them about the new group. Your goal is to allow them to get to know you a little bit and develop trust. This will go a long way towards getting your group off the ground.

Hopefully the prayers of the saints will open up some doors for you as well. Your prayer is that God will move the hearts of these youth to come to this new youth group.

4. Begin a program that closely resembles what you want to have in the future

In other words, don't start with one type of program to attract a lot of un-churched youth and then hope to change it into a solid Christian youth group in a few months. If you want a program built around activities such as Bible study and prayer (and maybe a meal) then begin with Bible study and prayer!

5. It is much (MUCH!) easier to start/run a youth ministry if you have a children's ministry

Good youth ministries tend to be built on the backs of good children's ministries. You want to create a natural flow from the children's work into a youth ministry. For some churches, it will be much more profitable to throw your energy into a children's ministry before you begin a youth ministry. This can then move to a youth ministry as the children grow up.

Starting a Youth Group from Scratch: A Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Make sure that your church has the resources to actually run a youth program
Do you have people to run it? A building to house it? Money to support it? Is your church already stretched too thin running other ministries? Answer these questions before you move on to number 2.

Step 2: Pray

As mentioned earlier, get all who are involved, and all who love to pray to pray for this endeavor. For it to really work it needs God's help.

Step 3: Training

It is important that everyone who is involved in this venture is prepared. Set up a structure of training for everyone who will help out. Run through the why's and how's of a youth program. Teach them how to run a small group Bible study and lead a time of prayer. Run through a few sample programs together and give them a trial run. The better your team is prepared going in to this new youth group, the better it (should) run.

Step 4: Make Contact

Begin a program of contacting anyone and everyone who may be interested in this new youth group (Key Principle #1 above). Begin with any youth in the church and visit them. Ask if they have any friends who will be interested. Go through confirmation records, baptism records etc. and contact those youth as well. Finally, ask congregation members if they know of anyone who may be interested.

Step 5: Consider starting with a kids club/children's ministry and then start a group for the children who move on to Junior High/High school

If you feel that a youth ministry is out of reach at this time, think through forming a children's group (Key Principle #5 above). Use this group to feed into a new youth ministry in a year or two.

Step 6: Join a local ministry that you can use to start your church-based ministry
If you find that there is simply no one you can gather to begin your youth ministry you may need to move to another source. You may find that there is a parachurch organization that could use your help. Many of them will be eager for you to join them and then help the youth to connect with a local church. In addition, some people may be able to run a lunch-time Bible study in the local Junior High/High School. Your hope is to move these youth into your church. (Please note: you only want to do this if the youth are not going to a church already—do not seek to move these youth from another church to your own.)

Step 7: Door knock

If you cannot find anyone to join this new youth group. Hit the streets and knock on doors. A long shot, I know, but worth a try.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR “STARTING FROM SCRATCH”

See also, “Writing a Youth Bible Study” in “Free Resources/Training”
www.effectiveyouthministry.com

See also, “Writing a Youth Group Talk” in “Free Resources/Training”
www.effectiveyouthministry.com

See also, collection of articles on running effective youth ministry in “Articles”
www.effectiveyouthministry.com

Recommended reading: “Changing the World Through Effective Youth Ministry”.