

Dear Youth Leader,

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Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

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“Welcome to Youth Group” Ideas

(Ways to start your youth group meeting)

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The way you start your youth group can set the tone for the rest of your group time. It can also send out a clear message about what your youth group is all about. The welcome will also make it clear that youth group time is starting.

The main goal of the welcome is to communicate that you are a group who wants to get to know and encourage each other as you get to Jesus. Therefore, these welcomes will encourage positive relationships and will always include an opening prayer.

For more “Welcome” ideas see *“Creative Christian Ideas for Youth Groups”* (chapter 2, pp 9-17) and *“Programs 2 Go”* by Ken Moser.

If you have a great welcome that you have created – send it to us and, if suitable, we will update this document to include it along with your name.

Make sure that all “welcomes” listed below are accompanied by a prayer to kick off the meeting. This can be done before or after the welcome, depending on which is more appropriate. Some ways to open in prayer can include:

- the leader says a prayer for youth group
- the leader asks a volunteer to pray for youth group
- the leader asks for 3 people to say a prayer for youth group
- the leader nominates someone to open in prayer (another leader or someone they know will be confident to pray)
- the leader asks everyone to say a silent prayer and then after a short moment the leader says a prayer for youth group

Open in Prayer

A nice simple way to begin youth group is for the leader to simply say “welcome to youth group” and then ask everyone to bow their heads and join them as they pray for God to bless their time together.

High five (Idea by Jared, Briercrest College student)

The leader tells everyone that in a moment he/she will say “Welcome to youth group” and that as soon as they hear those words everyone needs to jump out of their seats and go and high-five everyone else and say to them “welcome to youth group”. If the group is very large the leader can tell them to go and high-five 10 other people and say “welcome to youth group”. When they are done they take their seats and the leader opens the night with a prayer.

How was your week?

The leader asks everyone to share with the person next to them by answering the question: “How was your week?” Once they have had a suitable time to answer each other, the leader asks volunteers to introduce their partner and share their answer with the group. The leader then opens the night with a prayer.

How was your week out of 10?

Similar to how was your week but with the following variations...

Variation 1: How was your week out of 10 – share with person next to you.

Variation 2: How was your week out of 10, hold up the number of fingers that represents your answer. Find someone with the same number as you and share why you chose that number. Then ask a few volunteers to introduce their person to the group and share why they chose the number they chose.

Variation 3: All numbers that match get into the same group. If group is small all odd numbers together and all even numbers together

Weather terms

The leader asks everyone to share with the person next to him/her by answering the question: "describe your week in one word using weather term" and explain their answer. Once they have had a suitable time to answer each other the leaders ask volunteers to introduce their partner and share their answer with the group. The leader then opens the night with a prayer.

International welcome

Ask three volunteers to come to the front and welcome everyone in a different language (they need to be three different languages). The leader then asks them to sit down and says welcome to youth group and opens with a prayer. [Optional the leader can also ask if any other volunteers has a welcome in another language they would like to use to welcome the everyone to youth group.]

Highs and lows

The leader asks everyone to share with the person next to them the highlight and the low point in their weeks. The leader then asks volunteers to share their partner's answer with the group.

Variation: after everyone has shared with the person next to them ask a volunteer to come to the front of the group to share their answer then high-five relay tag someone in the group to share their answer and continue until everyone has shared (or if the group is large limit to 5 people).

Highs and Lows by height

Ask everyone to stand. Have the group members show what kind of week they have had by their height position (Standing on tip toes and reaching high is the best week ever, as low to the ground as possible is the worst week ever). Ask some volunteers to share their reasons.

Act it out

The leader asks everyone to share with the person next to them something about they did during the week. Once everyone has had time to share ask volunteers to come to the front and act out what they shared and have the group guess the answer. They can act out the answer to their partners answer on their own or they can both come to the front and both act out each answer one at a time.

Variety greeting

Put the text below on Powerpoint and ask everyone to stand up and welcome each other using the instructions.

Welcome each other by standing up and then:

HUG 1 person

SHAKE HANDS with 2 people

HIGH FIVE 3 people

Then sit back down.

Stand up

Explain that you are going to read out a set of statements one at a time. Each time you read a statement, if it is true for them they stand up. Everyone needs to then sit down before you read out the next statement.

Stand up if...

1. *If you had a good week at school*
2. *If you had a good weekend*
3. *If you love the [insert a name of a local sporting team]*
4. *If you were asked to clean your room this week*
5. *[Stay standing if...] you actually cleaned it!*
6. *If you saw [insert name of current popular movie] one or more times*
7. *If you love winter [or insert season currently approaching]*

Sing a note

This idea comes courtesy of my 2013 Briercrest YM 397 class!

This welcome is helpful for both a group that is comfortable with each other and a group that is a little less comfortable.

The group stands in a circle. Have each person make a musical note that describes their week. High = good, low = not so good. Go around the circle and have each person make the sound of their musical note. When everyone is done, have everyone make their sound in unison (hopefully it will make a great sound!)

If the group is comfortable with each other, go around the circle one at a time and listen to each other's note. If the group is not so comfortable, you can have everybody make the note at the same time. You could then ask particular people why they made the note they did. (If you want the group to do it one at a time, you could give each person the option to pass if they felt uncomfortable.)

Sing a note (variation)

Instead of a musical note, you could have, "make a noise that describes your week/day/weekend."