

## **Getting Your Youth to say YES to Service** *In three easy steps!*

Whether you are thinking about a one-day project at a local senior center or a two-week trip to Africa (or anything in between), you've got get your kids to say YES to participating. Below are three steps that will produce a full sign-up sheet and a youth group that's eager to serve.

And before you get started, you as the leader need to determine two things – and only two things: the general parameters of the event (near, far, one day, two weeks, community service, home repair, etc.), and how you plan to pay for it. (You'll read more about this part below!) Although you may have lots more specifics in mind, don't force those at this point. Let the details come out of the three steps below... God just might have more in mind for this event than you could ever imagine!

### **First..... Get Key Adult Leaders on Board**

You'll need to have the support of two kinds of key adults in order to have a successful service event: Church Leadership adults and Committed Youth Ministry adults. Although you may be super-excited to share your missions and service ideas with your youth-ministry adults, it's really....*really* important to gather the support of your church leadership **first**. (They don't like to be surprised ☺.)

#### *Church Leadership*

So how do you get the leadership on board? Have personal, individual conversations with people before you have a big meeting. Share your vision for ministry, the value you see in your group participating in a service or mission project, and the general plan. Ask for their responses and feedback using questions like:

- What do you think about that?
- Are there any obstacles you see to our youth group doing something like this?
- Is there anything I'm missing?
- What would your kids (or grandkids, nieces, friends, etc.) think about an event like this?
- If the concerns we discussed were addressed, would you support this?

When you ask questions like these – and really listen to the answers – you are communicating to your church leadership that you value their opinions, wisdom, and advice. Now you're partners in ministry!

OK – one more thing to figure out – how you're going to pay for your event. Is there a budget in place or will you fundraise? If you need to fundraise estimate your total need and its impact on the church congregation. Multiple fundraisers aimed at the same audience can wear them out. Check out Group's list of [11 fundraisers that don't require any money from your church in the Fundraising E-Book](#).

Now you're ready to present the idea at your church board meeting. Make it concise, clear, and compelling. Here are some talking points:

- You're asking for their support in creating a life-changing service event.
- Here are the general parameters of what I'm looking to do...
- The specifics of the event – who exactly we'll serve, what we'll do, etc. – will be created through the input, hard work, and prayer of our youth ministry.
- Here's how I plan to pay for it.
- Do I have your support to move forward with this plan?

(Just to let you know... you've just done the hardest part.)

#### *Committed Youth Ministry Adults*

These might be your adult volunteers or parent advisory committee. Share your plans at either a special meeting, or make the upcoming service project the special focus of an already-scheduled meeting. Here's the great news – you're talking about something that already has the backing of your church leadership. These adults already know the value of your youth ministry, and need very little convincing about the good that can come from serving others. Your talking points for this meeting are even easier:

- Here are the general parameters of what I'm looking to do...
- I'd like your help – and the help of our key youth group members – in creating the specifics of the event – who exactly we'll serve, what we'll do, etc.
- Here's how I'm planning to pay for it. Any additional suggestions.
- Are there any obstacles that would keep us from presenting this to our youth? Let's get them worked out.
- Can I count on your support and participation?

During this meeting, you'll want to spend time working out more specific parameters of your service event. Make it work for your group and your individual situation. By the end, you should have a framework for the project that still leaves room for your student leaders to add their own ideas, input, and creativity. You should also have a group of committed adults that are excited about your upcoming event – and eager to spread that excitement to your youth group.

(Just to let you know... it's about to get even easier.)

#### **Second...Get Your Student Leaders on Board**

If you have an official student leadership group, these are the kids to invite to your next gathering – preferably at your home or other casual location. If you don't have an official group, invite students who are Jesus-centered, other-focused, and interested in their own and others' spiritual growth. Try to include a mix of guys, girls, athletic, musical, etc.

Here you go again... sharing the vision for your upcoming event (and all the fun that it's going to be as well!). During the meeting, cover these topics:

- The general framework of what you'd like to do. You're asking for their support – and more importantly their input so this can be all that God wants it to be. They know best what kind of event their peers would want to participate in.
- Let them know that the church leadership and the youth ministry adults are already behind them.
- Details of the event. If it's a one-day service project, what can we realistically accomplish and where will we do it? If it's a week-long mission trip, give them the choice of where they would like to go from several options. Let them create it!
- Choose a good date. You can't please everyone, but you can work together to avoid major conflicts.
- Review your ideas for fundraising. Ask for their input.
- Ask: Are there any obstacles that would prevent us from presenting this to the whole youth group? Let's get them worked out.
- Set a date for telling the whole youth group. Let your student leaders know that they can start talking about this event NOW.

### **Third...Get the Youth Group to Say YES!**

Before your meeting, you'll need:

- A flyer or handout outlining the upcoming service event. Include key details, dates, costs, and deadlines.
- A way to sign up (sign-up sheet, online directions, etc.)

Gather the group together. Say: **We're going to play a moving game of Would You Rather. I'm going to ask you a series of would-you-rather questions. If you would rather do option A, then move to the left side of the room. If you would rather do option B, then move to the right side of the room. There's no right or wrong answers. There's also no middle ground – you have to pick A or B. Ready?**

**Would you rather eat A) chocolate or B) vanilla ice cream?**

**Would you rather wear only A) jeans or B) sweatpants?**

**Would you rather live in A) the desert or B) the south pole?**

**Would you rather give up A) toothpaste or B) shampoo?**

**Would you rather eat A) a worm or B) a cockroach?**

**Would you rather be A) blind or B) deaf?**

**Would you rather live A) in total isolation or B) with 100 people?**

**Would you rather A) lose all your friends or B) lose your health?**

(You'll have to adapt the next one to fit your upcoming service event. Make it a tough decision.)

**Would you rather A) spend a week at a Florida beach or B) spend a week on a mission trip to New Orleans?**

Another example: **A) a day at an amusement park or B) a day working on elderly people's homes.**

After the group has made it's choices for the last question, say: **Turn to the person next to you and discuss why you made your choice for the last question.** Allow time for discussion.

Then say: **Join with another pair to make a foursome – preferably a pair from the other side of the room. Go ahead and share with each other your reasons for answering the way you did.** (Allow time for sharing.)

Read John 15:12-13.

Say: **Now discuss one more question – Under what circumstances would you give up something you've always wanted to do to help someone else?**

Allow time for sharing. Call the group back together and ask for feedback on the last question. Then say: **It's usually a hard choice – even if we don't want to admit it – to give up something that's really important or really fun just to help someone else. Today's we've gathered together to talk about a great opportunity for you to have the best of both worlds – something that's really fun, really rewarding, and truly life-changing for you and the people we'll help. I'd like to introduce our ...** [insert the title of your trip.] **We're going to have a blast and change lives at the same time.**

Then, share the details of the trip. For greater impact, involve some of your student leaders in sharing the trip and their excitement about it. Make sure you announce how students can sign up, as well as any important deadlines.

To close, say: **This event is going to be a highlight of our year, so you don't want to miss it. Our adult volunteers, student leadership team, and I will hang around and answer any questions you have. Or you can call me anytime. Let's pray.**

Good luck and God Bless,

Your friends at [Group Mission Trips](#)

