**Ten Ideas for a Successful “Youth Sunday” Service at Your Church**

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We hear it all the time--and it is not *exactly* correct: “The young people are the future of the church!” Well, yes. And no.

Yes, absolutely--the next generation will be the ones who are going to be engaged and the ones leading the ministry in the future. They will be the elders and deacons and pastors and more. So in that sense—yes, they are the future. But here is another perspective: Young people in the local church who know and love Jesus are ALREADY the church. They are not just the future. Any student who receives Jesus as Savior is as much a part of the body of Christ as any adult. They have been given gifts by the Spirit and are as much a part of God’s family as they will ever be! Some may say that is assumed—and that may be the problem. For many churches, young people (the youth group, the youth ministry, #stumin) are already the leaders—because the majority of evangelism and intentional discipleship of most churches occurs with the young people and in the student ministry.

Student Ministries in most churches have special events—winter camps, summer camps, mission trips, conferences, ministry trips and the like. Why not motivate, challenge, and encourage the adults of your church by letting the students share in a Sunday morning service what God is doing IN and THROUGH them? That could be a step in getting your ENTIRE CHURCH to live ON MISSION for Jesus!

Here are Ten Things that a youth ministry can do on a Sunday morning that could be a spark, lift, and motivator to the church body:

1. Let the students lead in the worship music. Many youth groups have a music/worship team--let them lead that particular Sunday morning. Not enough musical or leadership talent from the youth ministry? Consider mixing the students with adults and let them help lead and mentor the students, while they lead the congregation together.
2. Let the students be the greeters at the door, welcoming people. Let them pick up the offering or pass out Bibles. With proper direction, they can handle this responsibility as well as any adult. It allows the students to learn to be friendly and welcoming and to initiate. And everyone will benefit from those sweet, smiling, friendly faces.
3. Let students sing a special song or two that was significant on their trip or in their ministry. Let them teach the congregation a song. Students don’t have to sing well, but they need to express the meaning of the song, and that will encourage people of all ages.
4. Let students share what God did in their hearts through their experience. How is God changing them? Let the students read God’s Word aloud—especially passages that were meaningful while at the camp or conference or ministry trip. Have them quote theme verses that they memorized. God’s Word does not return void!
5. Let students give a testimony on what God did THROUGH them because of this experience. Some students (and most adults!) may not do well at being given three minutes to share this, so an easy way to help is to interview them. Ask three questions (that they know ahead of time) and tell the student he has one minute to answer each question. It’s easy and helps keep students on track.
6. Let the students do the special music, dramas, skits, mimes, etc. that they used on a ministry trip. Let them showcase what they did—to either gather a crowd or to share the gospel.
7. Let students help run the audio-visual and sound systems. Let’s face it—many young people are better with technology than adults—why are we holding them back? Obviously, they will need help and guidance in these area, but what a way for adults to invest in young people in areas that they enjoy!
8. Let a student share a devotional or a sermon. Have them share a passage of Scripture. Again, this is an opportunity to work with a student and equip them. Let them prepare, speak and share rather than just have to listen.
9. Allow students to share spiritual decisions they have made ie: salvation, rededications, commitments to serve, desires to go into full time vocational ministry. THAT will motive a church when the congregation gets to see how God is changing the hearts of their young people…
10. Show pictures and/or videos of the trip/conference/ministry opportunity. Many students would love to put things like this together. For the Momentum Youth Conference that CE National puts on each summer, a video is available at no cost and is professional, excellent, and fun. It shows visually what the students are describing verbally.

Do you have students in the youth ministry whose parents do not attend church? Many parents would be willing to come to a church service to hear and see their child speak, sing, or leading something in a service. Just by providing a Youth Sunday, you have an easy way to invite unbelieving parents to hear the good news!

I am convinced that many young people leave the church after they graduate high school because they only feel like they are a part of a youth group and not a part of the church. That is tragic! Having the students lead a Sunday morning service is an excellent way that will help students by giving them ownership, encourage youth staff volunteers, and has the potential to challenge the entire church body. Let ’em lead!