



West Indies Union Conference
Youth Ministries Department



VIBRANT AY SOCIETY AWARD



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The Philosophy

The Vibrant AY Society Awards is based on a philosophy of acknowledging excellent and dedicated service and team work. It is recognition of the hard work and commitment displayed by AY Leaders and their young people in achieving the criteria stipulated by the Youth Ministries Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It seeks to foster a spirit of unselfish service, unity and harmony in the growth and development of the organization.

It seeks to inspire and motivate young people to fulfill the mandate of the church's mission in every sphere of labour and responsibility. The Youth Ministries Department has the task of empowering youth to work for the salvation of other youth. No other joy can surpass that of seeing young people making a commitment to follow Jesus as a result of the ministry of their peers. The Vibrant AY Society Award serves as an added

incentive to this feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction for those who are so engaged in labour for the salvation and nurture of their fellow young people.

The Award is also born out of the need to encourage improved performance among Youth Leaders to revive and restore the place and function of the AY Society in the life and ministry of the church. It is observed that many churches no longer have AY Meetings, and even where they do the programmes are quite drab and uninspiring lacking focus and meaning. This document also gives a number of ideas to add spice and variety to the AY Programme and a menu of programme ideas which may be employed to achieve positive results and interest in the AY Meeting.

Criteria

In order to receive the respective awards AY Societies will be required to achieve the following Standards in each category of service:

4 per category = 100% or Gold Award

3 per category = 75% or Silver Award

2 per category = 50% or Bronze Award

1 per category = 25% or Zinc Award

Categories

Fellowship:

- Book Club – 50% participation
- Conduct Monthly Socials
- Conduct Weekly Youth Fellowship/Forum
- Annual Recreational Outing
- Annual Educational Expose/Tour

Service:

- Minimum of two youth witnessing training programmes each month
- At least one Community Project Annually
- Annual Voice of Youth Crusade
- Tract Distribution Programme or other Organized Witnessing Activity
- At least 2 Baptisms annually from youth witnessing activity

Worship:

- 90% AY Programmes annually with 75% average attendance
- Conduct Annual Youth Week of Prayer
- Morning Watch – minimum 50% participation
- Bible Year – minimum 50% participation
- Bible Bowl – minimum 50% participation

Discipleship/Nurture:

- Active Adventurer Ministry for the 6 – 9 Years
 - Active Pathfinder Ministry for 10 – 16 years
 - At least one Participant in AY Leadership Training
 - At least one participant in Master Guides Leadership Training
 - Active Master Guide Club or AY Leaders Association
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- ❖ Most outstanding Field in West Indies Union receives President's Trophy
 - ❖ Most outstanding AY Society receives the Director's Trophy
 - ❖ Society of the Year will receive the Conference/Mission Youth Department's Trophy
 - ❖ Outstanding Societies receive plaques
 - ❖ Others receive certificates of merit or recognition

You are the AY Leader!

(A simple start-up Guide for AY Leaders)

So you are elected to serve as AY Leader for the first time! Or may be you are going on another stint after a break in service! Your predecessor has left little or nothing for you to work with. What do you do? Where do you start? Here are some simple start-up ideas for a fairly smooth transition in your new responsibility.

Pray – The work of the AY Leader is a spiritual one. You are the spiritual leader for the youth of your church. Always seek God's guidance before you venture to plan your programmes. You will need a daily source of strength and power which comes by constant prayer and the study of God's word.

Ask – There are many persons of experience and wisdom who mean you well, in your own congregation and in other churches. They are more than willing to offer their assistance as long as you ask for it. Start with your pastor, elder, former AY Leaders, church confidant and AY Leaders from neighbouring churches. Your Conference/Mission Youth Director should also be helpful in providing resources and guiding you as it relates to the overall objectives of the department.

Meet – You have been given a team of officers to work with for the year. Meet with these persons as soon as possible after your appointment. You must tactfully win their confidence and solicit their support for the task. This is going to be a team effort so engage them in brainstorm sessions and get their ideas and goals for the year.

Share – Share your own vision and major objectives with your team of officers and other well thinking individuals. Get their feedback and endorsement. Remember you will need the support of the entire team and the church at large to implement your plans. Do not attempt to go it alone.

Approve – Your plans must be discussed and approved by your AY Council during your monthly meetings and then submitted to the church board for final approval and vote. You will find it easier to get support and cooperation from your officers and the church when your programmes are voted and approved at each level.

Review – Once your plans are approved then go back to your team of officers and review the major objectives and goals. Ensure that these are clearly grasped and understood by all. Make adjustments and alternative plans where necessary.

Delegate – Identify persons who are capable of getting the job done and delegate responsibilities to them. Avoid giving too much responsibility to one set of persons. Identify the skills and talents of your team members and assign them accordingly.

Implement – The most challenging aspect of any organization is the execution of the plans. Here is where constant checks and balances are needed. Go over the details and ensure that all participants have a clear understanding of assigned tasks.

Evaluate – Always do an evaluation after each programme to determine whether your objectives were achieved. Meet with your team and review the programme and get their feedback on the strengths and weaknesses. Use these observations as guidelines for future planning.

Organization and Structure

Here is a simple outline of the organizational structure of the AY Department of the Seventh-day Adventist church. For a detailed outline of your role and function please consult the Church Manual and the Youth Ministry Handbook. These are available through your pastor or local conference and also online at www.adventist.org and youth.gc.adventist.org.

AY Leader – Elected by the local church body. Your function is therefore local and you answer to your local church board. You are responsible for all youth related activities at the local level including pathfinder and adventurer ministries which are part of the three levels of youth ministry. Please consult your Youth Ministry Handbook and Church Manual for your complete job description.

AY Council – This is your team of officers and workers comprised of a wide cross-section of other elected church officers including your assistant AY Leaders, AY Secretary/Treasurer, Pathfinder and Adventurer Director, Personal Ministries Leader, Youth Sponsor, Sabbath School Superintendent, and a number of other officers as stated in the church manual. This council meets at least once per month and is responsible for strategically planning the annual programme and must approve and make recommendations for all activities, including those for Pathfinders and Adventurers, to the church board for its approval. The AY Leader is the chairperson for this committee.

Church Board – As a member of the local church board the AY Leader represents the youth and their interests at this level. All activities for the department must be approved by the church board. The AY Leader should work closely with the Pathfinder and Adventurer Directors who are also members of the church board to ensure that their programmes are approved by the AY Council so that you can speak with one voice on all youth related matters at the church board meeting.

Conference/Mission Youth Department – The next level of organization is the Conference/Mission Youth Department from which you get your broad agenda and strategic objectives for implementation and execution at the local level. The church is one united organism and we are bound together by a common thread. It is imperative that leadership at each level follow the programme that is voted and recommended by the higher organization. In that way we preserve the integrity of the programme and the organization and you will not be out on a limb all by yourself. Your pastor is the link between you and the conference/mission and is to provide you with regular updates on trends and developments from the Conference/Mission Youth Department. In addition your Conference/Mission Youth Director will host workshops and seminars from time to time where he or she will present the broad strategies which you will use to guide your local strategic plan.

AY Federation – This is an auxiliary arm of the Conference/Mission Youth Department which has been very effective in some local fields in assisting AY Leaders and Officers in the implementation of the objectives of the Conference/Mission Youth Department. This body comprises all the AY Societies within a designated geographical area, and its officers are elected by the Youth Leaders in that area. It is very important that where they exist AY Leaders align themselves and become active members of the federation as most of the conference/mission strategic activities are implemented by this body.

Union and General Conference Youth Departments – The next levels beyond the conference/mission are the Union and General Conference Youth Departments. A similar relationship exists with the Conference/Mission and Union Youth Departments as exist with the Conference/Mission and Local Church AY Society. Your conference/mission is a part of the West Indies Union Conference and will make its strategic plans based on the strategic plans of the Union Youth Department. The highest level of organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the General Conference. The General Conference has several Divisions which supervise the work in large geographical world regions. In West Indies Union we fall under the Inter-American Division from which we take instructions and voted recommendations to be implemented in all our Conferences/Missions and then by the Local Church AY Society.

AY Programming

The following are excerpts on AY Programme ideas from the Youth Ministry Handbook – 2006, prepared by the General Conference Youth Department. We also recommend the locally produced publications “*Potpourri*” by Michael Henry and “*Stepping Stones*” by Sannette Bramwell as additional excellent material for practical programme ideas and suggestions. These may be accessed through your local BNC/ABC or Youth Department.

The Success Formula for Youth Programs

Clearly Define the Purposes and Objectives

Have a reason for holding meetings. If there is no motive it is better not to meet. Many times youth programs function like a carousel: people move in a circle of activities, and when the meetings ends, despite all the action, one feels that nothing has been accomplished.

Make Plans

Good meetings are not mere accidents. They don't just happen. Good programs demand much planning, time, and effort.

Publicity

If attending the youth meetings is worthwhile, then it is worthwhile for others to know about them. One may ask “Why don’t more people attend the youth meetings?” It could be that meetings are not well publicized. Sometimes someone announces in church, “There will be an AY Society meeting this afternoon at the usual time.” If we have nothing more interesting to say, then maybe it is better to say nothing. The more appealing the program announcements, the more people will attend.

Effort

No team in the field of sports wins without putting forth a great effort. The team that does not prepare well, rarely wins the game. Success is the result of arduous work. In sports the coaches do not do it all. Each member of the team has a responsibility and has to put forth real effort; if not, he or she will soon be off the team. The youth program will be a success only if all are ready to pay the price of hard work.

Punctuality

Good programs begin on time and end on time. If members know that they will be on time, too. Should we keep the Lord waiting on us when we conduct meetings to meet with Him? Let us honor the commitment of our members by committing ourselves to beginning and ending meetings as scheduled.

Participation

No youth program will survive with the participation of the leader alone or with the same three or four young people week after week. Meetings are better when various young people take part, and when the leader of the AY Society finds it possible, he or she should encourage the participation of all the members in some way. Better attendance and a growing enthusiasm for the program will result.

Planning Programs

The program contributes to the continuing life of the AY Society, or to the dwindling of its members. If you want interesting and beneficial programs follow these recommendations

1. Make Christ the center of all meetings.
2. Provide variety. Do not repeat the same kind of program over and over again.
3. Avoid long pauses or gaps during the program so those present do not lose interest. Each participant should know the program schedule and promptly move

into position to begin his or her presentation. If movement on and off the platform is required, an off-stage person should be appointed to move groups or individuals to their proper places at the right time.

4. Provide attractive, vivid, and interesting meetings, always within the proper spiritual framework and purpose.

Preparing the Youth Program

1. The task of planning the program belongs to the program committee.
2. Use the material received from the local conference/mission office and adapt it to your society's needs, if necessary.
3. Keep in mind the needs of your members. Do not plan merely for entertainment. The AY Society should prepare youth for service.
4. Discover the different talents and skills of the youth in your church and put them to work, in accordance with their spiritual gifts.
5. Try to use all the youth, not only those who can be easily persuaded to participate. Have youth encourage their peers who are reluctant to take part.
6. Explain each part—the purpose of the meeting, the specific limits of the subject to be discussed or presented, its relation to other points of the program, the principal points and the duration of the program. Give each participant a copy of the program with the order of events, and if possible a time-element schedule.
7. Motivate and stimulate initiative, but use planned programs to demonstrate available resources.
8. Plan ways to tie the different parts of the program together, in the program maintain movement toward a goal. Stimulate those thoughts of the listeners that will lead to a positive response.
9. Try to obtain a positive contribution from each participant in the program. The comment that the program “was interesting” is not enough.
10. Exchange ideas and methods. Do not follow an established ritual.
11. Have those in the audience participate as often as possible.
12. Make plans for future presentations.
13. Carefully consider the meeting place: general appearance, cleanliness and order, visual aids, sound system, lighting, ventilation, song books, etc. Avoid confusion while people are arriving (See Duties of Ushers.)

Development of Program

1. Have ushers at the door to greet people and help them find a seat.
2. Begin on time even when some who attend may come in late.
3. Maintain an atmosphere appropriate to the program.
4. Present a short introduction, unless the program is a complete surprise.
5. While the program is being presented, the following questions should be answered in the minds of those present.
 - What is the purpose of the program?

- What is going to happen?
 - How does this relate to me?
 - What is expected of me?
6. When the public is expected to take part, the objectives and procedures should be carefully explained. Repeat complicated instructions.
 7. If there is to be a forum or a time for questions, it is best to create an informal atmosphere free from prejudice.
 8. Look for opportunities to make brief comments based on your own impression as to what the program is all about.
 9. If the program includes a call for dedication; make it an attractive and voluntary opportunity.
 10. Act in a spontaneous and natural way. Avoid compulsory methods. The program should always smooth the way and encourage those present to participate.
 11. End the meeting on a high note. Do not allow the public to leave in a frustrated attitude. The end of the program should be its climax.

A Creative Program

Youth Ministry Accent **magazine contains material for programs. It is not necessary to follow** the program models to the letter. These program outlines serve only as a base to stimulate ideas from which you may prepare your own program.

Program Suggestions

Promotion of books: Provide a place on the program to promote good books for youth, such as those recommended by the AY Book Club.

Temperance: Many subjects on temperance lend themselves to good programs of interest to youth in these days when so much focus is on problems with drugs, alcohol and tobacco. All that needs to be done is to plan, organize, and select those who will take part in the program. Resource people from the community can be invited to participate.

Favorite hymns: Experiment. Present a program on favorite hymns, or “The Hymn of My Life,” inviting participants to tell how the hymn influenced them or some other person. Encourage the congregation to participate. Stories of the origin of hymns are always of interest.

My conversion: Find out about the conversion stories of two, three or four young people, and present them in an inspiring program that includes pantomime scenes, hymns, and oral testimony. This could be quite thrilling.

The history of my life: A subject much like the above, true stories of God's leading, could touch anyone's heart. We all like to know things about the lives of others. Do not forget that a "This is Your Life" story has to be inspiring.

Favorite texts of the Bible: Ask several young people to be prepared to read their favorite text and tell why it is important to them. Inviting the audience to share favorite Bible verses can also be interesting.

Practical instruction: Having an instruction seminar once in a while could be rewarding and could provide a change in the routine. Celebrate two seminars a year where the Bible is studied, and conduct at least one Week of Prayer.

Questions and answers: Youth enjoy this. It gives the timid person an opportunity to participate. Select a good coordinator and several capable persons to answer the questions. The coordinator will read the question and will ask someone to give an answer. The audience also may be invited to join in the discussion.

Letters Write letters to other AY Societies in different parts of the world. Ask for items of interest from those places, especially missionary experiences. After you receive the information, invite the church to a program by saying something such as, "Next Sabbath the AY Society from Indonesia will be visiting us."

Outreach: Distribute literature or food such as homemade bread in the area around your church. Divide the young people into groups of two and work for 30 or 40 minutes. Then return to the church and have them tell of their experiences.

Mother's Day and Father's Day: Ask various young people to talk about the qualities they appreciate and respect most in their parents. Honor parents at a special recognition service.

Colporteur program: How long has it been since a colporteur has told experiences to your church members?

Professional orientation: Interesting programs can be given by professionals and career people. For example: "Why I am a lawyer," "Why I am a secretary," "Why I am a doctor," "Why I am a nurse," "Why I am a mail carrier." Encourage participants to tell how they can represent Christ in their work.

Time to mediate: Dedicate at least five minutes to meditating with God. Have a young person talk for one or two minutes on prayer, and choose two young people ahead of time to pray. The prayer should have a purpose: pray for the poor and

forsaken, the rulers of the nation, the young people who have left the faith, students, etc. The congregation should kneel while praying.

Present a report during the program: Refer to news items from the *Adventist Review*, union papers, or tell of some interesting scientific discovery or advances that can be related to the Christian life, the signs of the times, or the Second Coming.

Interview young people, adults, or visitors: Be sure your questions are discreet and of interest to those who listen.

Friendship program: Have the young men organize a program for the ladies the first quarter, and young ladies do so for the men during the second quarter. A short social in the evening will help to unite the youth.

Prepare programs by groups: Professionals, youth, young ladies, married couples, program on hobbies, program on nature, etc, may be interesting topics.

Interchange with other AY Societies and youth: Present programs in other churches and invite other churches to give programs in your church.

Symposium: Have a round-table discussion on marriage, drugs, entertainment, education, etc.

Historical program: Present a program on the history of the Bible, some historical event from the Bible, denominational history, or the history of your own local church.

Sponsor a contest on nature subjects in the Bible: Topics such as trees, rivers, mountains, flowers, and birds make good subjects.

Other contests: Use questions based on the Morning Watch devotional book, *Messages to Young People*, Bible texts and verses, beliefs of our church, etc.

Motto, Pledge, and Aim: Have a program on the purpose and meaning of the Motto, Pledge, and Aim. During the program have the members repeat these together and have someone tell what each means and how each might be applied in his or her life.

Read selected passages from books such as *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Messages to Young People* at the end of the program before the last hymn. Select young people who read well and have a good voice to do this. Perhaps this could be a regular feature in your meetings. This part of the program could be featured as "Minutes of Inspiration."

Program contest: Choose a date for a special program. Invite the church to submit their ideas for a program concerning prayer, love, Jesus, friendship, the Bible, etc. Name a board of judges. Choose the best ideas and present these during the special

program, giving the name of the contributor. Present a prize to the one receiving the highest score according to a point system established before hand.

Tag or surprise program: Decorate a cardboard box and place inside it the various parts of the program printed on strips of paper. The leader calls on someone from the audience to come up and choose a piece of paper from the box. To the best of his or her ability that person immediately performs the part of the program suggested on the paper. For example, “Read the Scripture Psalm 23.” When that individual is through, then he or she calls upon the next person to go to the box and select a piece of paper.

Conclusion

You will be responsible for 52 programs during the year—a time of great importance for Adventist youth. From these programs they will receive spiritual strength, learn to develop their skills, and prepare to win spiritual battles for the week. May the Lord guide and give you wisdom, perception, and courage to do your work. May you dedicate your time and efforts to perpetuate the values of Adventism in our youth.

How to Add Sparkle

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance” (Ps. 89:15).

Someone mathematically inclined once determined that there are at least 326,880 different batting combinations for a baseball team. With such limitless possibilities, no baseball manager need ever get in a “rut” with his team’s batting lineup. In fact, even without any conscious striving for it, he is quite certain to achieve considerable variety in the batting order used with the team during a single season.

Similar possibilities for variety are open to alert leadership in planning the weekly youth meeting, with a minimum of a dozen basic meeting elements and numerous others that can be introduced for added sparkle and variety.

The youth group’s “batting lineup,” if so desired, need not be the same any two weeks in a row. If the baseball calculations mentioned earlier apply here, the order of any one meeting would never have to be repeated for the next 6,286 years.

The possibilities then for varied lineup of meeting features is virtually unlimited and should be given serious consideration by all who plan the Adventist Youth Society meetings week by week.

Variety, for the sake of variety alone, is not valid enough reason for expending the time and energy to achieve it, but when variety can be introduced for legitimate reasons—such as increasing attendance, sparking new interest, driving home spiritual truths with increased impact—then it should be freely employed. Quite standard with many AY Societies, and all too often “worked to death,” is a meeting order like this:

- Song service
- Opening song
- Prayer
- Scripture
- Announcements and offering
- Special music
- Evening message
- Closing song
- Prayer

For occasional use, it will serve its purpose well, but let’s consider two primary ways by which it can be given new luster and appeal.

1. By varying the order of the program elements.
2. By introducing new variety into the individual meetings themselves.

Sample Programs

First, let us consider possible ways to vary the order of the AY Society meetings, bearing in mind that all features should accent the theme, whatever it might be. Here are several suggested lineups:

Program 1

Vocal solo (unannounced—planned to set the theme and mood at the meeting)

Sing time

Scripture reading

Newscast

Announcements and offering

Prayer time

Message (several youth speakers)

Vocal solo (closing musical challenge to motivate to decision)

Sponsor’s summary

Song

Prayer

Program 2

Scripture reading (unannounced and chosen to set the theme of the meeting)

Hymn time (two or three hymns)

Skit (raises and leaves unanswered a problem to be considered during discussion period)

Chorus time

Prayer time (planned to prepare young people for a decision to follow immediately)

Discussion of the skit (youth participating)

Scripture reading (several passages, each read by a different young person shedding spiritual light on the problem)

Sponsor's closing summary

Announcements and offering

Congregational song

Prayer

Program 3

Surprise interview (with missionary, exceptional or successful personal worker, or anyone wise whose main activity or work parallel the theme)

Sing time

Announcements

Bible quiz (gifts to be given away)

Reports (on previously assigned subjects that will help to prepare the group for the message to follow)

Sponsor's two minutes (provides opportunity for sponsor to introduce the message)

Message (by person interviewed at start of meeting)

Special music (carefully chosen to follow message)

Offering (encourage giving to a worthy cause as suggested by meeting theme and message)

Special music

Closing prayer

Program 4

Surprise feature (special instrumental number, gospel magic, unique object lesson). Let this be of an unusual interest in order to make "on-timers" glad they were not late and "late-timers" wish they had been on time. Again, tie this feature in with the evening program theme.

Theme Introduction

Sing time

Special music

Chorus time

Scripture reading

Prayer time

Hymn (to lead into next feature)

Dialogue (skit)

Sponsor's message or summary

Announcements
Group benediction

Program 5

Poem or monologue (unannounced)
Theme introduction
Scripture reading and sing time, interwoven (a verse or passage of Scripture is read to introduce each song to be sung)
Music time: (two or three short specials, vocal and/or instrumental) [Announce this music period, but let separate features proceed without interruption.]
Prayer time
Discussion (round table, open forum, or panel)
Sponsor's minutes
Special music
Closing prayer

Program 6

Theme introduction
Questionnaire: (Devise a question sheet to be completed by the young people at the start of their program. It should be designed as a basis for the message part of the meeting.)
Scripture reading
Announcements (newscast style)
Bible quiz (awards to be given away)
Sing time
Testimonies (centered on meeting theme)
Dialogue
Sponsor's summary
Vocal solo
Congregational song
Benediction

In the foregoing program listing, 21 different features are used, and they produce a plan of procedure for six different meetings. It could well have been a hundred, or a thousand, without any two being identical in order. So, through the simple expedient of varying the order of the meeting, it is possible to produce endless variety.

Now let us consider a second way to introduce new sparkle into your AY Society meeting.

Variations of Content

Sing time

Sing different songs—don't get into a rut with the same old favorites every week. Learn new songs regularly. Build your sing time around a hymn quiz occasionally.

Use hymn slides now and then.

Spark new interest in stories of hymns or gospel songs.

Build your song service around favorite songs of your church leaders, such as your pastor, choir director, AY Society leader, etc.

Use instrumentalists.

Have a series of “alphabet” songs—one week use songs beginning A to F, follow on the next week from G to K, etc.

Vary the type of songs used:

- Some hymns addressed to God
- Some gospel songs
- Testimony of fellow Christians
- Choruses

Take a poll of your group’s favorites. Sing the top five. Ask someone to give a testimony—tell why the song is a favorite.

Survey your community in a similar way and invite the community to come and sing their favorite songs during a “sing along” program.

Scripture reading

Have three or four readers alternate.

Have one or more individuals memorize verses or parts of a passage to recite for the Scripture reading.

Have a passage read responsively (by fellows and girls, or by the two sides of the room).

Sing your Scripture reading by devoting this period to singing Scripture choruses. Use different translations of versions.

Prayer time

Call for volunteers if your group is spiritually advanced enough to respond.

Call for sentence prayers.

Secure prayer requests from the group and list them on a chalkboard.

Don’t always call on the limited few who usually lead prayer. Encourage others to participate.

Prepare for your prayer time in different ways:

- By reading selected scriptures.
- By sharing prayer promises.
- By sharing prayer exhortations, etc.
- By singing an appropriate prayer hymn at the start and close of the prayer period.

Announcements

Use publicity skits or pantomimes.

Present in newscast style.

Use two people, giving announcement in unison, or different parts of it alternately.

Use flash cards.

Project them on screen.

Short chalk talk by your group artist.

Plan interruptions—make without introduction over public-address system with hidden microphone. (Be sure to use good judgment in spotting these so the devotional spirit is not broken.) Planned interruptions can also be made from the floor as young people stand up and speak audibly.

Special music

Use vocalists and instrumentalists separately and together.
Use soloists and ensembles occasionally.
Have special music woven into the program unannounced.
Screen special music to avoid unacceptable musical renditions.

Message time

Dialogue
One speaker
Interview
Discussion (round table, open forum, or panel)
Object lessons (even for teens, when geared to their level)
Chalk talk
Charts
Question box or quiz
Gospel video or DVD
PowerPoint

Closing Thoughts

Leadership is hardship. Leaders are not born, they are made. If leadership is hard then leading youth is even more difficult. But everyone who has ever been involved in youth ministry finds it difficult to leave. It is the most exciting and rewarding experience. We who have been there can testify that there is nothing quite like it. You will feel very drained and frustrated after the first year, but when you try it once and again and again you realize that the rewards far outweigh the challenges.

No work is more honourable and fulfilling than work done for young people. Results in youth ministry are not achieved in the short term. You will only understand the true value of your labour when years or months later some young person comes up to you and reminds you of the impact you made on his or her life. In fact only in eternity when you

see them standing on the sea of glass, and one by one they come to you and with a big heavenly hug and huge smile they say, “Thank you for giving to the Lord, I’m a life that was changed...” will you fully appreciate the extent of the impact you made.

So fellow youth leader let me be among the first to say thank you! “Thank you for giving to the Lord”! You have no idea how many lives will be blessed by your ministry. So make the best use of this opportunity. “Give of your best to the master, give of the strength of your youth.” Remember this is all about the youth. You must work and plan with them if you are going to work for them. Give it your best shot and let God through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit do the rest. I wish you well on your new and exciting journey. Oh and by the way, “You just cannot give up now. Meet me in heaven!”