



Empowering Youth to be Leaders

List some of the “hats” you wear or roles you play as a youthworker

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Challenges

Lack of time

Easier to do things myself

Control freak / perfectionist

It won't be as good

Enjoying the spotlight

It is too hard

Lack of energy

Tried before and failed

Feeling ill-equipped

Lack of resources

I was hired to lead

Feelings of anxiousness

Empower

What is it?

to give power or authority to; to authorize...
to enable or permit.

source: www.dictionary.com

The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.

- Ralph Nadar

This isn't about keeping youth occupied for a couple of hours a week. This is about empowering young people to realize their full potential, and helping them to value the 'gems' inside them: the qualities and gifts that make them special." -Fidelma Meehan

How do we do it?

CALL – Everyone has been called by God into service and ministry.
- Jesus would be the first to say “Have you seen my youth group?”

1) Recognize that every youth has the **potential** to be a leader.



Who is your “Cliff?” Write the name of a young person in your ministry you believe has the potential to be a leader.

**"God has gifted every believer. It is our job to unleash those gifts."
- Tiger McLeuen**

2) Invite them into ministry **together**.

- * Youth culture is about experience and being an active participant.
- * They have access to endless information and a wealth of knowledge and gifts.

BUILD

1) Have a **plan**.

- It must be **sustainable** given your **resources**.
- It must be **your own**.
 - One model – “Four phases of ease” or “scaffolding”
 - Phase 1: I do – You **watch**.
 - Phase 2: I do – You **help**. (We do together.)
 - Phase 3: You do – I **help**.
 - Phase 4: You do – **I watch**. (or I go do something else.)
- It must be **long term**.
 - Tip: Start small. Allow them to experience success. Build on success.

2) You must **commit** to the ideal of empowering teenagers to lead.

- * Temptation to quit will be great.

3) You must model what leaders you want them to be.

People say what they think, they live what they believe.

* "I don't know. What do you think?"

5) **Hold in your mind and your heart that this is Biblical.**

* Above all, Jesus was a servant. He calls us to be the same and to empower our students to be not just leaders, but servant leaders.

Empowering youth to lead means...

* *Guiding and developing the natural leaders and strong personalities into the kinds of leaders God is calling them to be and that others need them to be.*

* *Raising up those kids to leadership who can be great, but just don't know it yet.*

SEND

1) **In our ministry.**

* Plug youth into designated places in the ministry. Small roles can be huge!

* Design new places for them to lead.

2) **Outside our ministry.**

* Christ-following leaders in their schools, on their teams, in their lives.

Acts 1: 7He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem (**youth group and church**) , and in all Judea and Samaria (**school, teams, home**), and to the ends of the earth (**everywhere they go**)."

So What?

Len Kageler research.

Studied 536 churches in 4 denominations over a two year period.

Number one factor for determining numerical growth in the youth group was the percentage of time youth members **spent in up-front leadership** at the main youth group gathering.

Of 35 possible variables, student leadership and ownership in the program was shown to be the most effective way to grow a youth ministry.

It's not all about numbers, but numbers are good, if you are using the right numbers.

Benefits

Multiplication Factor	Youth are engaged	Sense of ownership
Following Jesus' example	The long-term effect	Truck-load of servants
Positive attitudes	More givers, less consumers	Youth-led programs / events
Stretching youth's limits	Growth of students	New feel or atmosphere

Some of them will "Get It."

- Matthew 16:5-20. Jesus the youth director.

Notes, Questions, Etc.



Some practical ideas to try!

Below are some ideas that will hopefully be helpful. Remember all ministries are unique. Use these to generate ideas, or adapt them to work for your group.

- * Send some of your students to another youth group for a night. The next week, they share their experiences.
- * Have youth be your speaker(s) at your biggest retreat or event.
- * Host “show and tell” night. They could bring keepsakes, share songs, art, photos, etc.
- * Have a youth introduce visitors or introduce announcements, speakers, etc.
- * Get youth involved in helping with Vacation Bible School, coaching teams, etc.
- * Form three-week mission teams where youth plan and go on their own mission project
- * Youth make bulletin boards or displays to advertise a big event or trip.
- * Youth make a video advertising an event or trip, or as an illustration for a talk.
- * Ask your pastor for youth to be able to have a real leadership role in the worship.
- * Offer opportunities for “hidden talents” to emerge (poetry, drawing) in your program.
- * Host a volunteer appreciation night – youth tell stories or roast adults. Make service coupon books.
- * Regular “Culture Club” nights. Show popular tv commercials, ads, shows, or movie clips. Listen to popular songs. Discuss them. What is this selling or promoting? What is the message? How does this compare to the message of Jesus? How does this reach your or speak to you?
- * Use Spontaneous Melodramas to get kids doing skits without having to practice.
- * Subcontract out pieces of your talks to youth. (opening illustration, prayer, closing)
- * Host a “Random Talent Night.” Kids display talents and gifts (weird ones accepted).
- * Post trip sharing. Dedicate a program to letting youth share stories and experiences from a mission trip or retreat. Guide and organize the sharing so it flows well and fits time schedule.



SPIRITUAL GROWTH: Helping students grow in their faith should be the foundation of the youth ministry. This growth happens in many ways and through many vehicles. (Bible study, mission trips, counseling, mentoring, worship) Regardless, this should be the primary focus when it comes to youth ministry. It should also serve as the base on which to build student leadership development.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: This is the process by which you educate and train leaders. This includes concepts of leadership, practical tools, and strategies to be an effective leader. It is the nuts and bolts of leadership.

Both are important and each must be included in the process!



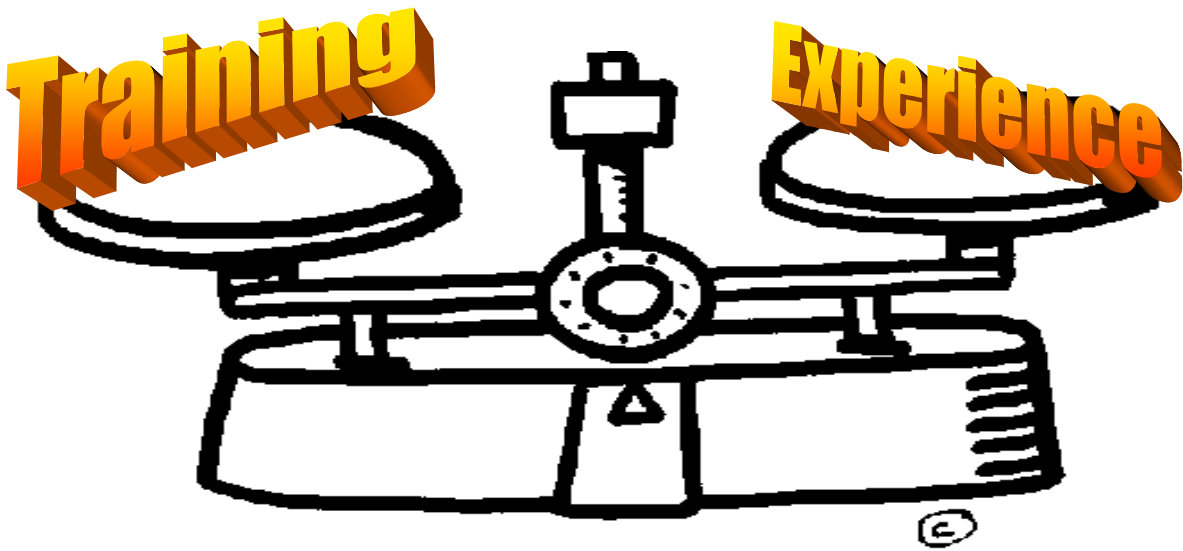
DEVELOP FIRST

- * **YOURSELF:** As a leader, trainer, and mentor. To be a leader of leaders.
- * **OTHER ADULTS:** To serve as leaders and mentors to the youth.
- * **MINISTRY FOUNDATION:** Established places where youth can lead. A clear process for developing adults and youth to be leaders. Space for leadership to grow. An atmosphere that fosters leadership development. Students know they are beloved.



EMPOWER SECOND

Once the foundation has been laid and the program is developed, empowering leaders can take off. For a cliché analogy, think of it as the soil is ready and it is now time to plant.



TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE These must be kept in balance in order to successfully develop student leaders.

TRAINING encompassed things such as monthly meetings, team-building exercises, education about the aspects of leadership, discussion, role play, etc.

EXPERIENCE is the actual leadership roles and hands-on leadership responsibilities. These include planning and organizing as well as up-front and behind-the-scenes leadership.

Too much training with lack of experience = failure.

- * You will not be able to build the momentum you need to sustain the program.
- * Youth will fail to see the big picture and buy into the vision.
- * Youth will get bored and lose focus.

Too much experience with lack of training = failure.

- * Youth will feel unprepared and overwhelmed.
- * Program they are leading will suffer.
- * Youth will be deterred from watching the others fail.
- * Leader may become frustrated or feel failure and discontinue the process.



BASE LOVE AND PRAISE ON WHO THEY ARE NOT ON WHAT THEY DO: Do not base praise, affection, or attention on performance. Focus your praise on who they are instead of on the quality of their work. They will bomb and fail and they need to know they are still valued when they do not perform well. Too often in life the attention and praise they do receive is based on performance. Be the example for them that God loves them for who they are, not for what they do.

