



AUTHENTIC IDENTITY

A VINEYARD YOUTH PASTOR'S GUIDE TO
BUILDING A CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY

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Vineyard Values in Youth Ministry

Preface

Perhaps you've noticed that we don't have to travel to distant lands in order to find huge obstacles in youth ministry. Far too often, I hear these words echo in our gatherings: overwhelmed, unqualified, discouraged, and unappreciated.

As a National Youth Task Force Team, we are dedicated in our partnership with you to overcome these obstacles by way of relationship, networking, and resources. We hope this first edition of the Welcome Booklet will benefit new and seasoned youth pastors/leaders alike.

As we partner in youth ministry, we take the guesswork out of our future, and by God's grace, become the conduit in developing them. For some, the future is uncertain; for us in youth ministry, they stand before us. My prayer is that you will find the information contained in this booklet as useful as we have.

Blessings,

Craig Beyer

National Youth Ministry Task Force Leader

Intro

Every year, the Greater Rocky Mountain Region hosts a regional youth conference in Buena Vista, Colorado, and it is always a highlight for our ministry because we get to experience Vineyard youth ministry in its fullest form. Last year, Gary Best, the National Vineyard Director for Canada, was our speaker, and during one of the evening sessions, he held a "prophetic workshop" where he challenged each student to practice the gift of prophecy in a natural and not "weird" way, something that I previously thought impossible. One student from our church went forward to participate in the exercise, was prophesied over, and was so encouraged that he decided to change the entire direction of his life.

In the Vineyard movement, there are some distinct values that dictate the way that we do things. However, it seems that there is often a disconnect between the way we live out those values in the church at large and the way we live them out in youth ministry. In fact, it is easy to contextualize how we will do our "big" church services, yet we have no idea how to make those core values a driving force for our teenagers. My aim for this article is to provoke thought on how the core values of the Vineyard could become a driving force for your youth ministry

What's a Vineyard?

So what is a Vineyard youth group supposed to look like? Recently, I represented our church at a job fair for high school students at the local college gym. When I showed up, I found out that the organizer of the event thought that we were a winery and had tried to group us accordingly. Although I thought this was pretty funny, it reinforced what many people think about our church on a daily basis. “Really? I thought you guys sold wine!”

Our name, building, services, events, and mannerisms show what our core values are. If someone walked into your youth group, what would they see as your “core values”? The following is a list of the five main principles (called Core Values) that drive the Vineyard Movement:

- The Theology and Practice of the Kingdom of God
- Experiencing God
- Reconciling Community
- Compassionate Ministry
- Culturally Relevant Mission
- Kingdom of God Theology

Kingdom of God Theology

The Kingdom of God is the central theme of the entire Bible. Therefore, everything we do in the Vineyard is based on the now and not-yet Kingdom of God here in this world.

The other day, a friend of mine was telling me about a book that he is reading called *This Beautiful Mess*. It's all about God's now but not-yet kingdom and the tension of living in the brokenness of this world while still rejoicing in the

hopefulness of God. If I could sum up my experience in youth ministry, and really humanity at large, I guess I would sum it up that way: a beautiful mess. I don't think that there could be a better analogy of youth ministry or the world that teenagers live in. Some moments they feel so close to God they can reach out and touch him, hear his voice, know he is there—that is the “now” part of the kingdom. Other times they feel that God is so far away that he doesn't even exist; they feel the pain of divorce, the loss of friends, or the rejection of their peers—that is the not-yet part of the kingdom. You can relate, can't you? I sure can.

Knowing that we live in a tension between the now and the not-yet kingdom, we must help our students walk through this. We need to be honest with them that not every day is pain-free or a camp spiritual high when you believe in Jesus. That when things get tough, it doesn't mean that God has abandoned us. It's important to help them understand that not everything happens now and that God's perspective is so much wider than we can see through our limited view. We must also be bold in challenging them to press into God and ask him for his kingdom to come now as it is in heaven. We must encourage them to take risks, have huge faith, and know that God wants to intervene in their daily lives.

Part of incorporating the Kingdom of God into your youth ministry is being bold and having faith to ask for and practice it. God's Kingdom is all about huge faith, healing the sick, binding up the broken, and believing in the miraculous. As a practice-centered movement, we have to invite students to join us in inviting God to do his work. As John Wimber said, “Everybody gets to play,” and that includes teenagers. Oftentimes, I think I am too scared to challenge students to do the crazy things because I'm scared that they will fail.

The world that our teenagers live in is a beautiful mess, but we must press hard to help them find the beautiful part, the part that is God's kingdom here on earth.

Experiencing God

The Vineyard has always been known for its worship, which I think is a reflection of the value the movement calls *Experiencing God*. Experiencing God is the importance of welcoming God's personal presence and incorporating the Holy Spirit as an integral part of ministry.

So what does this look like at a practical level for youth ministry? If we want "everyone to play" and experiencing God is a key value, then do we always want to be the ones praying for kids, speaking, and leading the whole ministry? No. We want our students to be the leaders in Experiencing God and then lead their peers into that same experience. They are the ones praying for their friends, leading worship, speaking into each others lives. We are there right alongside them, showing them how this can be done, not reserving it for a trained member of the church staff, but rather opening it up to students who are earnestly seeking God.

We also want to lead our students in Experiencing God in a way that we affectionately call the Radical Middle. As humans, our tendency is to go to the extremes, and it is no different in the case of Experiencing God. Either the Holy Spirit has no role, is dead, and can no longer be real and active in this world, or the Holy Spirit is employed to such an extreme that it brings chaos, disorganization, weirdness, and uncomfortableness for all who are witness to its display. Striving for the Radical Middle means that the Vineyard strives to live in the tension between the two extremes.

Reconciling Community

Every youth leader wants tons of students to come to their ministry. During my first couple of years in youth ministry, I let the "numbers game" control me. I remember the excitement of having an idea that we would give away a car as a prize for a game that we were doing on Wednesday night. I waited in expectation for the hoards of students that would come to that month's services: it was awesome. But then there were other months where our numbers dropped in half during the middle of the school year. I was thinking, "What have I done?" It was awful!

Here is the problem that so many youth ministers become disillusioned with: what is the purpose of our programs? It's the tension between being Mission vs. Attraction.

Attraction says, "Hey, come to our church because we have lots of cool stuff. If you come, you will be entertained! You can play video games, eat food, and hang out with your friends! We are all about you having fun!!!"

Mission says, "Hey, come to our church because we are going to meet Jesus and change our world. If you come, you will be joining us in LOVEing the world."

The Vineyard movement values having a mission, and an important part of that mission is a community where teenagers come into a real relationship with Jesus. God wants every person on this earth to be reconciled to Him, and as vessels of God on this earth, we too must be concerned with every person being reconciled to Christ. In our case, that means bringing teenagers into a real community that is searching for Jesus. It also means a community where

students are free to be themselves and will love and be loved in return. Jesus said there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, and the same should be true for our youth groups. There is no nerd or jock, no popular or unpopular, no in or out, only reconciled together as a community to God.

Instead of youth group being about games and hype, it is a place where students are becoming reconciled to God. Not that games aren't an important tool to open students up to God, but they are just that, a tool, not the end mission. The end mission is a community where teenagers from all walks of life can come together and find a relationship with Christ. That relationship with Christ will change their life to the core, and then they will continue to invite others into the same community to find Him.

Compassionate Ministry

This generation of teenagers is concerned with the welfare of the poor, needy, and oppressed around the world. They are possibly the most globally aware and socially conscious generation yet. Growing up with access to the “world wide web,” they have been introduced to global awareness on a whole new level. With social networking tools such as MySpace and Facebook, they have ability to connect with friends and teenagers across the world. Whether being socially conscious is just the trendy thing to do or a genuine concern for the welfare of others, we can tap into this passion that they have to make a difference in the world.

The Vineyard values being a church to the least, the lost, and the last. We believe that ministry should involve bringing Jesus to the world, and this is a perfect place for teenagers to come on the scene. I don't have to be convinced that

the youth are the hope of the world because I've seen their passion, their willingness to sacrifice, their optimism, and their unfading exuberance. Look at some of the current social movements such as Save Darfur and Invisible Children; they were started by youth and took the nation by storm. They have reached out, raised millions of bucks, and touched lives all across the globe. What if we could start a fire in each youth group across the nation—a fire to be Jesus to the world, a passion to love like Christ, a desire to make a tangible difference in the lives of people locally and all over the world?

The Vineyard does not want to exist as a church for itself. Instead, we want to be a church to the broken, needy, poor, and hurting. As youth pastors, let's help raise up a church that cares more about others than they do about themselves; a church that is passionate about being Jesus to the world. It starts with being “clothed with compassion” from the halls of the local high school, to food drives for the city's homeless, to trips across the world to encounter the world. It starts with teenagers who decide to be Jesus to their community and world. This change will breathe new life into the Church.

Culturally Relevant Mission

There's nothing more painful than sitting through a youth service that seems totally irrelevant. It's a list of rules and religiosity instead of a real Jesus who meets students where they are at. Being culturally relevant doesn't mean knowing the latest slang or wearing fashionable clothes, but it does mean knowing high school students' worlds so that you can meet them where they are. It means understanding the generation you serve, the problems they face, the things they are thinking about, and the roads they are walking.

Translating the Gospel into a 15-year-old's world takes a bit of work. It may not come naturally to turn your style into something that is appealing to an adolescent. So how do you get there? Probably the very things you are already doing: spending time with kids, really listening to what they are going through, not making assumptions about their world or what they are dealing with. Rather, approaching them with an inquisitive and curious spirit that wants to truly understand the life they live. Go eat lunch at the local high school, walk the halls of where they live each day, go to a soccer game, hang out at the movies on Friday night, browse through Facebook, walk around at the mall. Soon, relating to 15 won't seem like such a stretch.

Be creative about how you present the Gospel message. Make it come to life for teenagers and make it real to who they are. Jesus understands where they are, who they are, and what they are going through. Make sure they know that Jesus is real today, just like he was 2,000 some odd years ago.

Contextualizing the Gospel

A couple of weeks ago, a teenager named Karen told me about some of the demons haunting her. Yikes! One of these demons was Jason, her “soul mate,” who had dumped her to date someone else, and she was devastated! She went on to tell me of how she began to cut herself as a way to deal with the pain of a life lived in the absence of hope. As the conversation developed, I realized that she had no context for who Jesus was other than the figurine she had seen at Catholic Mass. As I shared with her the dramatic love story written about us, I re-experienced the first-time power of the Gospel.

Do you remember the first time you realized that you had no hope living your life your way? I do. My ninth-grade year, try as I might, I could never get away from the wrath of the upperclassmen, constantly picking on me, calling me names, making my life miserable. Murrell the Squirrel they called me. Let me tell you from my experience, no one wants to be called “Murrell the Squirrel!” It was in my worthlessness that I realized that I could trade my life for the opportunity to join in Jesus' life.

Five years ago, I would have had no clue what to tell Karen. I could not have imagined what I would have said to her. Contextualizing the gospel for any age group is crucial, which is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”

Engaging Students Where They Are At

The first challenge of a youth worker is to engage students where they are at. In the life they live. In the world they live in. A world of popularity and insecurity. A world of new styles and throwbacks. A world that develops new slang every six months. There is no way for us to live in their world, but the more we understand it, the more we will be able to connect them to Jesus.

One of the most frustrating comments I continue to hear out of adults are these famous words, “I am too old. Kids don’t like me.” Many times, the problem is that adults are far more concerned with changing students rather than learning about them so they can understand them.

MTV Isn’t So Bad After All

Jay Kessler, a long-time president of Youth for Christ, would spend an hour a day watching MTV, even in his sixties, so that he could better understand the generation that he served. Donovan Lorenzen, a youth pastor in a Vineyard church for many years, gave me the best advice I have received as a youth pastor: “When you walk into a room full of students, you have two options. Will you be the type of person who says, ‘Here I am! Look at me! I am so cool!’? Or will you be the type who says, ‘There you are! Look at you! You are so cool!’?” If we are going to have any influence on the students around us, we must devote ourselves to putting them first and dedicate our attention to learning their world.

Honesty Is the Best Policy

We live in an age where cynicism is almost as prevalent as air. Students are surprisingly good at seeing right through us. Really, it’s a scary thing. To think that they can see when we are afraid, insecure, wavering. But then again, it’s kind of freeing as well. If they already know, we don’t have to try so hard to prove that we are cool or spiritual, we just have to love them in our own way, with our own personality. I have learned that serving as a youth leader means truly caring about the students I meet and genuinely (even desperately) wanting them to experience the kingdom of God.

One of the most positive comments I hear from students is how much they appreciate me for being open about my failures. They say it helps them feel the freedom to be themselves, which in turn helps them to get to the heart matters instead of staying on the surface. I make it a point to share my weaknesses and shortcomings. It is one thing to be authentic and another to be intentionally authentic. That doesn’t mean I share all of my deepest sin and brokenness, but I try to go out of my way to share stories where I wasn’t the exemplary model. We cannot lose our unique identity in the process of learning about the teenagers’ world. Loving them, while retaining our authentic identity, will serve as an excellent example in living out their relationships with unbelieving friends.

An Accurate View of the Gospel

Contextualizing the gospel requires that we have good theology of what the gospel actually is. Growing up, I can remember singing a song in children's Sunday school you might have heard. It went "Revelation, Revelation, 21:8, 21:8, Liars go to hell, Liars go to hell, burn burn burn! Burn burn burn!" As you can imagine, I loved yelling the "burn, burn, burn" part at the top of my lungs. Now I look back at what that was teaching me, and I cringe.

The List

The church is known for creating a long list of goods and bads. Today, many youth groups are still teaching students not to drink, smoke, cuss, or hang out with people who do. If the generation that we are serving is going to have a genuine relationship with Christ, we have to get beyond the rules and focus on the heart of things.

Rather than having a couple of nights a year where we work in a gospel presentation, we must consistently present God's relentless pursuit of his children in as many ways as possible. At a recent youth conference, Gary Best compared God's love for us to his love for his teenage daughter. He explained how he wrote his daughter a song of his great love for her, but she would not let him sing it to her. So for a period of years, he stood outside of her closed bedroom door and sang this song to her nightly. It wasn't until she was in her twenties that he learned that his song was the thread of hope that kept her from taking her own life.

Gospel - Good News

The gospel, after all, still means good news. In an age where it is harder than ever to be a teenager, students need to hear that there is such thing as good news. Divorce rates are rising, and our students have greater levels of brokenness. Our world's economy is crashing, and students are not immune to the fear of diminishing security. The majority of people's relationships are severely hurting.

We have the good news that people are desperately missing. Let us make sure that we do whatever we can to contextualize the good news so that people hear it.

The End

The worldview that students develop is constantly influenced by the people and ideas around them. It doesn't take a gifted prophet to see that America is quickly running away from a Biblical worldview. Many kids grow up not understanding the simple story of the gospel. Unfortunately, Karen's story of the demons that haunt her is too common. With God's leading, we have our work cut out for us. Jesus said, in Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." LORD, may you call workers to meet the overwhelming majority of students who do not know you, and may you give us the ability to effectively communicate the power of your story to the next generation that is dying for your love.

Contextualizing Kingdom of God Theology to Vineyard Youth Ministry

The Primacy of the Kingdom of God Theology in Youth Ministry

My strong conviction is that kingdom of God theology needs to be the foundation upon which our youth ministries are built. Youth ministry is multi-faceted, much like planting and raising a church, and each of these various aspects must be grounded in a commitment to the kingdom of God. Raising our young people in the kingdom of God will not happen without intentional and strategic action on our part as leaders.

Some questions to ask as we attempt to shape our ministry around the truths of kingdom theology are as follows:

- Is our ministry driven by an ongoing expectation of the any minute arrival of the kingdom of God in power?
- Are we creating space for our students to participate in and experience the kingdom of God on a regular basis or just at special events?
- Am I, as the leader, living and operating the adventure of the kingdom of God? Am I setting an example of kingdom living both in character and in power?

Philosophy of Youth Ministry

There are many philosophies of youth ministry. Many youth workers do not intentionally choose a philosophy; they just start doing the work of youth ministry. It is worthwhile, though, to give thoughtful consideration to the philosophy of your

youth ministry. Why are you doing youth ministry? Why do you hold the meetings you hold? Why youth group? Why small groups? Why worship? Why teach? Why have prayer ministry?

One philosophy I would strongly suggest for your consideration is this: youth ministry exists to raise up the next generation of Vineyard Christians in the kingdom of God.

Youth ministry is not a place to entertain youth and keep them out of trouble. That is a very defensive posture about life and the world. Youth ministry is a chance to go on the offensive. Rather than trying to pry them from the world, let's engage the world with the power of God. Let's give our students a chance to see what it's like to have the healing power of God flow through their hands, the saving message of the Gospel roll off their tongues, the prophetic word proclaimed through their voices, and the voice of God heard in their spirits.

The goal of youth ministry is to train, equip, and release young people into the adventure of living in the kingdom of God. And it is our pleasure, our delight, to be part of that story with them. As Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2:19, "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?" Our joy will be the fruit of lives given wholeheartedly to following Christ!

Teaching for Teens on the Kingdom of God

I believe that all of this can begin with sound teaching on the kingdom of God. I have sat in on more youth teachings than I care to recount where I could not pick out a main point, a main scripture, or a cohesive thesis. I believe teenagers can be challenged. The topics they are talking

about with their friends, and thinking about on their own, are the difficult questions of faith. And we owe them honest, carefully planned, and well presented teachings. Many of their questions can be answered through some simple teaching on the kingdom of God. I would encourage you to build in (maybe every year) some time to teach on the understanding of the kingdom of God.

Training / Equipping

The next step is moving from general teaching to specific training and equipping. If our goal is to produce fully functioning, well-gifted Christians, then we need to give them the tools. There are many ways to do this:

- Gift testing—There are many tools available for spiritual gift testing and personality testing. Whether your group is large or small, this can be a great tool to help your students gain confidence and purpose.
- Training to hear God’s voice—This can and should be accompanied by times to practice this and then discuss the experience.
- Training for prayer ministry in the Vineyard prayer model—I have taught the 5-Step Prayer Model to my entire youth group and encouraged them to practice it on each other.
- Basic Prophetic Training
- Training in leading someone to Christ
- Training in praying for physical healing
- Training in preaching and teaching

And this list can go on with whatever other areas you can think of for your particular group.

Experiencing the Kingdom

Perhaps the most important of all of these aspects is the experience of the kingdom of God. The disciples heard many teachings and parables, but what really grabbed their attention was when they were sent out to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. They came back amazed by the power that worked through them, and I believe that should be our aim—for our students to be amazed by the power of God working through them.

This will not happen unless we make room for the Holy Spirit. Below are some very important areas of youth ministry where I believe we have great opportunities to create space for our students to participate in the kingdom of God:

- Gifts of the Spirit—Where can our students practice prophesying, giving words of wisdom and/or knowledge, praying for healing, etc.? Do we have room for that in our youth meetings? I exhort you to actively and intentionally create room for this to happen. I regularly stop our worship times at youth meetings and ask for God to speak to us. I then wait and invite anyone who is hearing God to come forward. Invariably God speaks powerfully through them. This is really where the rubber hits the road. Are we preaching healing in our churches? If so, we must be practicing it at our youth meetings.
- Hearing God’s Voice—This is such a fundamental part of the kingdom of God. Jesus said he only did what he saw the Father doing, and said what he heard the Father saying (John 5:19-20). Several of the other methods on the list can be used for this as well—prophetic ministry, prayer ministry, worship, leadership meetings, etc.
- Worship—One of the greatest ways to experience the kingdom of God is in worship. Creating a safe and genuine space for worship allows for our students to truly begin to engage with the Lord.

- Prayer Ministry—This is one of the highlights of our youth meetings. This is a chance for our students to use their gifts, practice hearing God’s voice, and reach out to others. Once trained, we can release our students to “do the stuff” of ministry, and God will bless it. Creating space and time in our meetings and establishing healthy guidelines will promote a flourishing prayer ministry right inside your youth group!
- Outreach through Service, Evangelism, Social Justice, and Missions—While it is vital to encourage our students to participate in the kingdom of God inside our youth meetings, often the most powerful experiences of the kingdom happen outside. As you plan your youth ministry for each year, be sure to plan regular times of outreach where your students can learn the importance of putting others first, as well as experiencing the power of God working through them to touch and change lives.
- Leadership Meetings—As we are raising our young leaders, experiencing the kingdom must be part of our strategy. Leadership meetings are great opportunities to experience the leading and voice of the Holy Spirit.
- Adult Church Meetings—Finally, I believe we can create space in our regular church services for our students to participate in the kingdom of God. Are there teens on our regular church worship team? On our church prayer ministry team? Greeting at the door? Going on our missions trips?

Dealing with Mistakes and Moving On

Raising our Vineyard youth in the kingdom of God is an adventure that requires intentionality, courage, and perseverance. There will be mistakes. Young people will do things that we, as adults, have learned are not the “best” way. I have found, and firmly believe, that these “messes” are worth far greater rewards to be reaped later in life.

Recently two of my teens (both 18 years old) headed out to the mission field—one in Europe and one in Africa. While there, they both corresponded with me and expressed their gratitude for my willingness and determination to create space for them to use their gifts as young teens. They let me know that no one else on their teams was prepared, trained, or therefore ready, when asked to preach the Gospel on the mission field. As a result these two each carried their respective teams in preaching. They saw many people saved and physically healed as the kingdom of God moved powerfully through them. Praise God!

It is my strong conviction that kingdom of God theology is not only relevant for youth ministry but should be foundational. Through teaching, training, equipping, and experiencing, the youth of the Vineyard can begin to participate in the coming of the kingdom as fully as any adult. As you begin (or continue) your journey in youth ministry, I encourage you to persevere for this goal and “seek first the kingdom of God” in your youth ministry.

In Order to Be Up, We Must Learn How to Be Down

In Mark, we see over and over again that Jesus seeks time to reconnect with God. Discipleship isn't just about learning; it's also about forming new habits that help us draw new life from God. When I first started my discipleship journey with Jesus, I saw Him as Superman, always making the right choices, always full of power. But as I have taken time to discover Jesus in the Gospels, a new portrait of Jesus has emerged; it's the image of someone who was in intimate contact with the giver of life:

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35

“Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.” Mark 3:7-9

“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Mark 6:31

“Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.” Mark 6:45-46

We need to understand that “Jesus combined an active engagement in the world with a rich inner life, through spiritual practices like prayer, stillness, silence, and solitude.”

I used to get frustrated whenever Maria, my wife, would tell me that she needed time to dial down. I'm an extravert and draw energy from groups. I didn't understand what I perceived as her almost constant need to be alone and to reconnect with God. But I realized that I needed to do the same: I needed time to withdraw, to dial down, and to figure out how to connect with the Life-Giver on a daily basis.

I always thought that my connection with God was strong and stable, but after my wife and I suffered a miscarriage with our first pregnancy, I quickly discovered that my rhythms weren't stable enough; they couldn't handle the pain and sorrow I was experiencing because of the miscarriage.

I needed more.

And if you're like me, someone else telling you that you need to increase your daily contact with God isn't going to work, unfortunately. If you are like me, you need to experience your need of God on your own. And that's exactly what happened to me. I realized I needed more of God in my everyday, but I didn't know how to do it. Really... I thought I did. But what worked for others didn't work for me, and I desperately needed God: I needed Him just like I needed my next breath.

So, I took a retreat to the desert, and it was there in the desert that I discovered a new way to life and connection with God. And the funny thing is, the Bible is full of stories of new life from the desert. John the Baptist is coming from the desert, announcing that the Good News of God is on its way. Calling all of us to prepare the way for him, to make a space in our lives for the King of Glory to find a home. What follows are a few suggestions to get started on improving your contact with God through stillness, silence, and solitude.

Stillness, Silence, Solitude

As Dallas Willard writes in his book, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, the spiritual disciplines are simple ways for us to connect with Christ because we need him. Our need for God's presence and power drives our pursuit of spiritual disciplines, not our ambition to be spiritual.

Still, ad. 1. remaining in place or at rest; motionless; stationary; to stand still. 2. free from sound or noise, as a place, persons, etc.: silent: to keep still about a matter 3. subdued or low in sound; hushed: a still small voice. 4. free from turbulence or commotion; peaceful; tranquil; calm; the still air.

Stillness is meant to be practiced as a spiritual discipline. It counts for something! Non-urban life has stillness built in (hunting or fishing for example), but stillness is missing from most of our modern existence—unless we make a point to practice it. Anthony Bloom, an Orthodox writer, says the kind of stillness to aim for is the stillness you adopt when you're out in the woods bird-watching. Quiet and still even down to your fingers and breathing. But also alert. At any moment that bird may light on a branch near you. The practiced bird-watcher learns to love the stillness as well as the bird. Bloom was a physician and a leader in the French Resistance during World War II—a real activist, who understood the power of stillness.

Stillness and silence are regularly commended in Scripture as a way to refresh your spirit:

“He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.” Psalm 23:2 (The stillness restores.)

“In quietness and trust is your strength.” Isaiah 30:15

“The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silent before him.” Habakkuk 2:20 (We are the temple. God is present in innermost being: holy of holies; in/beyond body; in/beyond mind.)

“And there was silence in heaven for half an hour.” Revelation 8:1 (Imagine the stillness of heaven!)

“When you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.” Psalm 4:4 (A psalm of refreshing sleep.)

“I have stilled and quieted my soul.” Psalm 131

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Different Goals of Stillness / Silence

- Be still in order to hear yourself think. (Payoff is concentrated thought.)
- Be still in order to hear God's still small voice “whisper.” (Payoff is hearing.)
- Be still in order to listen to the silence. (God is in the silence. Silence is his first language. Our first experience of love is silence. God's presence does not require talking—on your part or his.)
- Be still in order to appreciate God. (Payoff is God's presence.)
- Be still in order to wait. (Payoff is patience. There is the stillness of simple waiting. Waiting can be an expression of reverence for God. Because he is God and we are not, we wait for him.)

Ways of Being Still

- Appreciation-beholding: Of music or a painting, e.g. Rembrandt's *Prodigal*
- Anthony Bloom: Still in a room, present to the room (environment).
- Soaking in a prayer: Jesus Prayer; “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” Paced with one's breathing.
- Waiting: Expresses a form of reverence by waiting (because he is God, we wait for him).
- Stilling: Slowing the pace of one's thoughts.
- Wordless prayer: Contemplative prayer.
- Beyond “I think, therefore I am”: Something deeper to me than my thoughts. When my body stops, when it flat-lines, “I” will continue.
- Different than a straining “to hear God's voice.”

Try It Out

Begin with a brief period of physical stillness (the simplest response to the command, “Be still,” just stilling what you can, beginning with your body). Try one of these ways of being still:

- Appreciation
- Soaking in a prayer
- Waiting
- Wordless prayer

After being still for a time (10-20 minutes) write a letter to God.

Be in a Room Exercise

“I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they are unable to stay quietly in their own room.” –Blaise Pascal

1. Prepare a place to sit and relax: Straighten it up, remove any distracting elements, add any relaxing/inspiring elements (candle, music, art, fountain).
2. Set aside protected/undistracted time to sit in the space. Turn off everything that could interrupt your time.
3. Sit quietly in the space and practice physical stillness for as long as you can tolerate.
4. At first, open your eyes and enjoy the room/space/view.
5. Select a text of Scripture, read it over slowly a few times. Pick a scene from the text that you are drawn to. Close your eyes, and with the eyes of your heart, picture the scene in detail, then add yourself to the scene.

OR

6. Slowly repeat (as if memorizing, but don’t worry about “successfully memorizing”) a short passage of Scripture, savoring each word.

Example:

“Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner” (The Orthodox Jesus Prayer)

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46

Centering Prayer Guidelines

1. What about this “wordless prayer” business? If you want to read a helpful book, try *Intimacy with God*, by Thomas Keating.
2. Choose a “sacred word” as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
4. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word (as the chosen expression of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within).
5. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Note of Explanation: Use the sacred word as the expression of your intent to be open to God, rather than meditating on the meaning of the word, per se. A simple word works well, such as “Lord,” “Jesus,” or “Abba” (it is not a “mantra” to be concentrated on). Expect, especially as you begin, to be assailed by thoughts, some of which will simply pass (like boats on a river), some of which will interest you (you will “get on the boat”). As soon as you realize that you’ve “gotten on the boat,” simply return to the sacred word. “Thoughts” refers to any thought, feeling, impression, or insight (good, bad, or indifferent).

Additional Resources



The Divine Hours, by Phyllis Tickle, is the first major literary and liturgical reworking of the sixth-century Benedictine Rule of fixed-hour prayer. This beautifully conceived and thoroughly modern three-volume guide will appeal to the theological novice as well as to the ecclesiastical sophisticate. The trilogy blends prayer and praise in a way that, while extraordinarily fresh, respects and builds upon the ancient wisdom of Christianity.

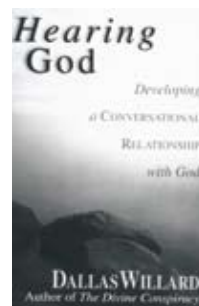
Online at <http://thedivinehours.annarborvineyard.org/>

A brief case for *The Divine Hours* and how it may help with daily prayer:

- It is a manual for prayer. A manual! Something that shows you how to do the thing you want to do, step by step.
- It makes use of the Psalms in manageable portions.
- It employs some dynamite prayers like the Lord's Prayer.
- There is an artist's hand in selecting and combining readings, refrains, and prayers. The payoff, when you get into the rhythm of this thing, is that God talks to you through these psalms and refrains and readings, like he's just been waiting to get a word in edgewise, and now that you're giving Him half a chance, he's got some things to say.



The Spirit of the Disciplines, by Dallas Willard. Dallas Willard, one of today's most brilliant Christian thinkers and author of *The Divine Conspiracy*, presents a way of living that enables ordinary men and women to enjoy the fruit of the Christian life. He reveals how the key to self-transformation resides in the practice of the spiritual disciplines, and how their practice affirms human life to the fullest. *The Spirit of the Disciplines* is for everyone who strives to be a disciple of Jesus in thought and action as well as intention.



Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship With God, by Dallas Willard. Being close to God means communicating with him—telling him what is on our hearts in prayer and hearing and understanding what he is saying to us. It is this second half of our conversation with God that is so important but that can also be so difficult. The key, says best-selling author Dallas Willard, is to focus not so much on individual actions and decisions as on building our personal relationship with our Creator.

Discipleship

What Is Discipleship?

Discipleship is life modeling; it is letting others see firsthand how God interacts with his people. It is focused on disciplines and activities that are the trademarks of followers of Christ. It is growing closer to Christ in relationship through imitation of Christ's behavior. Discipleship is what took place with Christ's disciples day to day, on the road from place to place working and living with Christ. They learned who Christ was and what he wanted from them.

What Is the Goal of Discipleship?

The goal of discipleship is spiritual reproduction!

“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:7-9

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” 2 Timothy 2:2

“Discipleship succeeds when the strength and wisdom of the teacher is reflected in the disciple. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 11:1

Discipleship is about becoming more Christlike. If you are not becoming more Christlike yourself, you cannot teach another to do it. You cannot disciple anyone who isn't interested in being discipled. It isn't bad to want to try but don't be

disappointed when they aren't interested. Discipleship is more “caught than taught.” You should exhibit the following characteristics:

- Know God personally and passionately
- Love to talk about your relationship with God
- Have a separate accountability relationship
- Think about discipleship and look for teachable moments or opportunities
- Be willing to invest time in sharing your life with someone else

The Discipleship Process

Step 1: Identify

This happens primarily in formal settings. Training at this level is informational and inspirational; it helps students see things that some of them will want to do. Your task is to identify those who are ripe for discipleship. Look for motivated, eager, growth-oriented people who have the following qualities: are thirsty for mentor or peer connection, are willing to sacrifice for discipleship, and exhibit signs or forms of leadership (this can be in many different forms).

Although some discipleship takes place in formal settings, most of the remaining steps will happen in informal settings. Training at this level is formational; it shapes and molds the student into the man or woman God has called them to be. In John Wimber's words, “Pour your essence into people; it's bigger than what you're training them for.”

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Step 2: Recruiting

Recruiting happens as you identify those who are ready for discipleship and invite them into relationship. Spend time in prayer for them. Assign them a task and look for faithfulness and attitude. Do they have a servant's heart? Challenge them to a higher level of commitment/maturity personally and spiritually. Take them with you as you do ministry ("Never do ministry alone!" – John Wimber). Involve them in the process. Observe them and encourage them—the training process has begun.

Step 3: Connecting

This continues as you discuss and interact with the student. This is the "meat and potatoes" of discipleship. Spend time in prayer for them! Spell out goals and expectations, as well as timelines, with the student. Ask key questions: What do you enjoy doing? Do you know your life's calling? How are you following God's plan? Find ways for them to use and grow their gift set and give them responsibilities. Give them access to resources, such as books or staff to feed their need of knowledge. If the student is too busy to be involved, discuss if this is the right time for his or her discipleship. Encourage them to service and work—Jesus made the disciples clean up after he fed the 4,000 (Matthew 15:37).

Step 4: Deployment

This happens when you have confidence that the student is ready to be released into ministry and begin the process with a student of their own. Spend time in prayer for them! It's important that you, as discipler, build in an evaluation process

and are continually asking: How are they doing? Are they ready for more? What kind of training is needed? Give them benchmarks of success as they move forward.

Step 5: Monitor and Nurture

These are completed as you provide ongoing feedback, constructive criticism, and generous encouragement! Spend time in prayer for them! Schedule times to check in and review benchmarks.

Standard Discipleship Cycle

- You do it
- You do it while they watch
- They do it with you
- You watch them do it
- You release them to do it

Key Passages on Discipleship

Psalm 71:18

Proverbs 11:25

Proverbs 13:20

Isaiah 58:6-12

Matthew 10:9-10

Mark 3:13-15

I Thessalonians 1:4-8

I Thessalonians 2:1-12

II Thessalonians 2:1-2

Recruiting Volunteers

Youth Pastors serve two important functions in their roles as team leaders. We serve God through our ministry to students, and we serve other Christians by helping them develop the gifts that God has given them. Ministry is not just about tasks to be done; it's about relationships in the body. When Jesus called people into ministry, he asked them to "Follow me..." There was a discipleship role going on.

Sometimes one of the biggest challenges we face when recruiting people for youth ministry is forgetting that we are actually presenting an opportunity for people to serve God. It is not that they are doing a us a personal favor.

Remember...

God created us for works of service: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

People grow spiritually when they are serving the Lord—"You only get to keep what you give away."

Healthy families expect that each member of the family will help out. "From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Ephesians 4:16

Helping people say "yes" is to be sensitive to where people are and helping them overcome obstacles they may be facing, not trying to manipulate or convince them. The best way to see God at work is to be serving him.

Understanding Your Ministry

Before talking to someone about joining your ministry team, it is necessary to prepare or review the key aspects of your ministry. To be able to impart to someone else a vision of the ministry, you need to know it extremely well yourself. People are very hesitant to commit their time to a "cause" when they are not sure what it is about or what is expected of them. It can be helpful to ask a friend or family member to let you describe your ministry as if they have never before heard of it. Do they catch your enthusiasm? Do they see the worth of the ministry? Do they understand what the ministry does and whom it serves?

Vineyard Youth Mission Statement

Our mission is to help students become fully devoted followers of Christ who love Jesus, reflect his kingdom, and respond with abandon to his personal call. This mission statement speaks to the heart that the Lord has given us for the students we have the privilege to serve. Some of these young people are far from God, and it's our hope to introduce them to a God who loves them unconditionally, a Savior who's offering them hope, and a Spirit who has power to bring the life of heaven into every part of their lives. Others know God but are struggling to decide what role he's going to play in their lives. And still others want to surrender everything to Him but need some help learning how or some partners to encourage them and help them walk a difficult path. We try to minister to all of these students by investing in genuine relationships with them, not just well-done programs.

Create Good Job Descriptions for Team Members

- What would they need to do?
- When would they need to be there?
- How much time will it take?
- What level of skill do they need to have?
- Will someone teach them?
- How are new team members incorporated into the team?

Identifying Potential Team Members

The challenge of successful recruiting is not simply to find any available person to do a particular task, but to help people express their individual gifts, abilities, and desires in a way that glorifies God. As pastors and youth leaders, our job is to find those people to whom God has given the heart and talent to serve in youth ministry. Unless you happen to personally know hundreds of people in your church, this can really be a challenge!

Use all available resources in your church. These include information from an annual survey, advertising, such as the weekly bulletin, flyer inserts, emails, and the announcements. But the best way to identify potential team members is through word of mouth, by talking to people who might know good candidates.

Top Ten Things to Know About Your Potential Team Members

- They love God a lot
- They want to serve Jesus
- They don't know you
- They probably think you are some kind of church big-shot
- They don't know what youth ministry is
- They don't remember filling out the survey
- They don't feel like they have any time for anything
- They probably don't have time for anything
- They don't know how to do you youth ministry
- They don't have a heart for teenagers (yet)

Inviting Potential Team Members

Start simple. Invite them to one youth activity or to meet with you one on one. Show them and share with them what's happening in youth ministry. Communicate what God's doing in your heart and in the lives of the students you minister to. Let them know what needs youth ministry has and how they could serve Jesus by helping fill those needs. Invite them to join you in discovering if serving in youth ministry is part of God's call on their life.

Tips...

- Use the telephone to invite a potential team member to (preferably) join you at your next ministry event or to meet with you one on one (for coffee, or at church).
- Pray before you make the phone call.
- Don't use a letter or a general team meeting as your primary strategy at this stage.

- If you get an answering machine, leave a message something like this:
“Hi Peetyem. My name is Jesse. I’m involved in the youth ministry at the Vineyard. Michele from the church office mentioned that you might be interested in helping out with the youth ministry, and I’m not sure if you have any idea of who I am, or if you’ve ever worked with teens before, so I wanted to invite you to come and join me and the rest of the youth ministry team at laser tag next Friday at 7:00. No pressure, but it would be a great chance to meet you, and you could get a feel for what youth ministry is all about. Call me at 1-734-GoYouth and let me know if that will work for you. Looking forward to meeting you! Thanks! Bye.”
- Keep the pressure to join low, your expectations consistent, and your enthusiasm for their relationship with God to grow high.
- Let them know that they are needed.
- Your potential team member needs prayer from you and your team, and needs to understand that the “Yes” that’s most meaningful to you is the “Yes” they give to God.
- Leave the meeting where you lay out your specific expectations and request for commitment until later, until after they’ve had the opportunity to observe, soak, and pray.

Letting Them Try It On / Demonstrating

When you go to buy a car, one of the things you’ll invariably want to do is try it out before you buy it. Nobody wants to commit to three years of monthly payments and then get stuck with a car they don’t want. That’s why people take a test-drive. The same principle applies when someone considers becoming a youth ministry team-member. Nobody wants to make a commitment to a team before they’ve tried it out and have made sure that it’s for them. So before we ask people to make a commitment, we should give them the opportunity to “try it on for size.” Seeing the ministry in action

is a time when God can really begin to give people his heart, so encourage your potential team members to pray and ask God for an openness to his Spirit. This is also a great chance just to get to know the person, so be relaxed and have fun!

Potential Test-Drive Opportunities

- Come along and just watch
- Watch you demonstrate how it’s done
- Come to help the team out (arrange chairs, set up supplies, etc.)
- Participate along with experienced team members
- Participate under supervision
- Demonstrate their abilities in a test scenario

Helping Someone Commit to Serving Jesus with Your Team

Once someone has had the chance to catch a sense of the vision of your ministry, and you’ve observed God giving them a heart for the ministry, it’s time to invite them to join the team. At this stage, you’ll want to get some feedback from their experience so far, so that you can confirm that they are actually ready to be invited. Give them feedback based on your observations.

Also, make sure to ask what God’s been saying to them, or showing them, as they’ve been praying. This will help you see what particular role or position you’d like to invite them to commit to (if you have more than one option). Communicate what’s expected of the members on the ministry team, and ask them if that’s in line with what God’s put on their heart. If it is, ask them to join the team.

Tips...

- Pray before the meeting.
- Jot down positive things you've noticed during the "trying on for size" period and share them with the person.
- When you communicate your expectations for team members, be as clear and up front as possible (it can help to have it in writing). Include the expected time frame (from when to when), the time required (so many hours per week, if applicable), any regular events or responsibilities (including team meetings or training), any optional events or responsibilities to grow into, and the particular role or position you'd like them to fill.
- If they are married, make sure they've talked to their spouse about their commitment first.
- Pray with your new team member at the end of the meeting.
- Pick up the tab if you've got room in your budget to do so.

Developing Volunteer Leaders

"May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd." Numbers 27:16,17

- Leader first, friend second: Authority comes from taking the high road, making wise and responsible decisions and drawing clearly defined boundaries for youth. Leading in this manner will develop trust and security in young lives.
- Model appropriate behavior: Your actions really do speak louder than your words. You're fooling yourself if you don't think they watch everything you do.
- Confidentiality: Never promise confidentiality (be careful what you commit to).
- The limits of confidentiality: Personal harm, harm to another, and Illegal activity.
- We have a moral and ethical responsibility as well as a legal liability; there are no exceptions! When in doubt in any situation GET HELP! There are no lone rangers in ministry. Always ask; "What's best for the big picture"?

Caring for Volunteers

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey reminds us of Aesop's familiar fable of the goose and the golden egg. A poor farmer realizes that one of his geese is laying golden eggs. Day after day, the farmer discovers a new sparkling solid golden egg under the goose. But, eventually, he gets tired of waiting for the next egg to be produced. So he cuts open the goose to get more, only to discover that the goose is empty.

We often focus on what gets produced rather than what or who is doing the producing. We concentrate on the outcomes themselves rather than pouring our efforts into the source of those outcomes. Translation for youth leaders? Often, we care too much about having more kids showing up, or even upon kids growing spiritually—but we aren't always willing to give proper attention to our youth ministry partners.

Yesterday, I interviewed seven prospective leaders for youth ministry. Probably three or four of them will pan out for the fall. This is the first step in caring for geese: we need to actively pursue them. Youth ministry isn't supposed to be a one-man show, and we definitely don't need all of the attention. Having more leaders around will not only help keep us from burning out, but they'll also help keep our egos in check. Since we don't want to overextend the leaders we already have, constantly recruiting more leaders also shows that we value the adults we're working with.

I've also found it helpful to spend enough time with individual leaders to help them find their specific areas of giftedness. Like a good coach, I want to make sure my players are in the right positions. Even the best quarterback in the world will get pummeled when he plays linebacker instead of the position he's most suited for. I try to get to know my leaders' interests, passions, and gifts—and help match those up with needs within my youth ministry. When a leader finds his perfect match in ministry, he is most fulfilled and most effective. He will begin to lay golden eggs (figuratively speaking, of course!).

We must not only think of them once a year. Throughout the seasons, it's important to look for opportunities to build them up. I've seen youth pastors take their leaders out for lunch

fairly regularly. Some give them a great annual retreat that pampers and refreshes them. Many offer training that helps them be more effective in their ministry roles. I like to send thank-you notes for a job well done. You could have them over for dinner at your home or go to the movies with them. The bottom line is that if you treat the goose right, she may just stick around for another year of fruitful (golden) ministry.

I have a pet peeve: I don't like the term "volunteers." I refer to our youth leaders as "ministry partners" because it's a title that elevates. They're partners with me in doing ministry, not subordinates to dump work on. I think it's important to allow the language, and even the title I give them, to reflect the value I see in them. (You could call them youth ministry geese...er, maybe not.)

Adult youth workers who partner with us in ministry really do provide golden eggs for our kids. Let's take care to not kill the geese in our midst.

Screening Youth Workers

As we recruit volunteers to assist in the journey of investing in students, it is crucial that there be a game plan as to what types of people are given the privilege and entrusted with the responsibility of modeling faith to the young people. This means we want to know who they are, why they are volunteering, and how we can best utilize their gifting on our leadership teams.

Step 1: Background Check

The first step in screening youth workers is always to do a background check. (If your church does not already have a system for background check, a simple Google search will give you all the information and options you would need.) No matter if the person is well known by you or others, every single volunteer should have a background check. This is not only to protect the students from potential harmful abuse and to protect you from a big mess, but also to protect the volunteers themselves from committing to an area that would be a potential pitfall. For example, a background check may bring up an issue of sexual assault, misconduct, or some other crime that would give you the opportunity to point them to some other area of service in the church.

Step 2: Interview

Once they have cleared a background check, you will want to make an appointment to follow up with them. The goal of the interview is to hear their heart, answer any questions that they might have about the student ministry, and cast the vision of where the ministry is going and how they might help. Always

begin the interview with lots of listening (it is easier for you to get a feel for who they are and IF they would be a good fit for your team if you listen first). We make it a point not to promise any ministry at this first meeting. Encourage them, share with them the expectations you have for your leadership team (meeting times, character expectations, commitment time, email response expectations, etc.). If this interview has gone well, invite them to the next step.

Step 3: Meeting the Students

They may have great hearts, a great desire to minister, and all the right stuff, but if they can't connect with the students, it's not going to work. Invite them to come to a few of your gatherings simply as a guest. (Tip: Don't introduce them as a leader or anything; just watch how they connect with the students. Introduce them to a few of your student leaders too. Students have an amazing ability to discern if someone is not legit; their feedback should be sought and considered.) You may ask them to attend anywhere from one to four meetings before they make a decision.

Step 4: Leadership Team Meetings

Have them attend one of your leadership team meetings. This is when I watch to see if an "agenda" comes out or if they are able to interact in a positive way with the rest of the leadership team. If you sense that they will not mesh well with your team, you might want to have a conversation with them about it before they sign up for a year! This will save you, your team, and them from headaches later.

Take it a step further: Read *Better Safe than Sued* – Jack Crabtree

Games

Freedom

Form two teams of two. Have them blindfold their partner. You take the blindfolded person somewhere on the other side of the room so they don't know where they are in the room. The partner who is not blindfolded will stand on the other side of the room and give their partner instructions on how to get to them. Have the rest of the kids cheer so that it is hard to hear instructions.

Barnyard

This is a good game to divide into teams for the day/evening. Have pre-made cards for more than enough kids. Come up with as many animals as you want teams that night (if you want four teams, have four animals). If you predict 35 kids that night make 40 cards, four groups of 10. Each group of 10 cards will have a particular animal written on it (so you will have 10 chicken cards, 10 cow cards, 10 donkey cards and 10 pig cards). Hand out cards randomly to the kids and tell them to not tell anyone their animal. When you give the signal, have them make the sound of their animal as loud as possible until they find their entire group. First group to totally find each other wins.

Variation: Put a twist on the game by putting in only ONE card that says “donkey” and giving it to a very secure student (but don't tell him/her they're the only donkey). After all of the animals have found each other, there will still be one poor kid out there hee-hawing his head off to no avail!

Clumps, and Clumps with a Twist

This is an easy game used to divide your group into teams, that can be played in any size room. Simply yell, “Form a group according to... (see “Clumps” suggestions below).” If you're looking for a certain number of people per team, just say, “Form a group of 7!” If you end up with a remainder, then have staff go around and divide the leftovers on teams.

Clumps: height, hair color, # of cavities, # of siblings, shirt color, number of people in your immediate family, month of birth, favorite color, grade, middle initial, school you attend.

Variation: Once in their groups, the game leader reads a question from the list below (or write your own) and everyone in the group answers. When the majority in the crowd have answered, leader directs them to mingle again.

Questions:

- What is your favorite cartoon (or cartoon character)?
- Who do you most admire?
- What animal is most like your personality?
- What would you do with \$100,000?
- What do you hope to be doing in 10 years?

Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur

The goal of this game is to work your way up by beating other players at Rock-Scissors-Paper to the “position” of king or queen. Everyone starts out as an egg. You find another egg and play Rock-Scissors-Paper. The winner “grows” into a chicken who finds another chicken to play against. Whoever wins “grows” into a dinosaur. The loser returns to being an egg.

Once a dinosaur, you must find another dinosaur to play against. If you lose you step down to a chicken. The next step is becoming a prince or princess, which of course means playing against another prince or princess. If you win you become a King or Queen and stand off to the side. If you lose you return to a dinosaur. The game is played until there is one egg, chicken, dinosaur and prince. All other players will be kings or queens.

The fun in all this? Eggs waddle on the ground in a little ball, chickens walk and squat while flapping their wings and “clicking,” dinosaurs “roar” standing up. Princes/princesses “prance” around holding an imaginary scepter while kings and queens stand off to the side victoriously.

Jelly Bean Trade

Every man for himself. Everyone is handed 10 jelly beans. They are to try to get 10 of one color by trading with other people one at a time. First person to get all ten of a color they want wins.

Name Game 2

The point of this game is “getting to know you.” This is a small group game. Provide pencils and index cards. As each person arrives have them write their name clearly on an index card. Tape card to their back. Give everyone another index card. On “Go!” with hyped music in the background, everyone copies names off backs of other people, while trying to keep them from seeing the card on their own back.

Determine a time limit and give a prize to the person with the most names on their card.

Real Identity

This is a great “getting to know you” and memory game. Everyone is in a circle and each takes a turn saying their name and something about themselves (example, “Hi, I’m John and I play football”). The next person needs to say the previous person’s name and item of interest before saying their own. (Example, “He’s John, he plays football and I’m Mary and I torture small animals.”) As this game moves on, people need to remember more and more information.

Variation: With bigger groups you can have them only repeat the names to save time.

Recommended Reading List

Leadership

Heroic Leadership – Chris Lowry

Raising a Modern Day Night – Robert Lewis

The Way In Is the Way On – John Wimber

Theology

Gospel in the Kingdom – George Eldon Ladd

Continuing Conversation of the Church – Daryl Guder

Breakthrough – Derek Morphey

Mere Christianity – C. S. Lewis

God's Relentless Pursuit – Phil Strout

Naturally Supernatural – Gary Best

Blue Like Jazz – Donald Miller

Velvet Elvis – Rob Bell

Desiring God – John Piper

Conspiracy of Kindness – Steve Sjogren

Messy Spirituality – Mike Yaconelli

Jesus Brand Spirituality – Ken Wilson

Bare Bones – Jim George

Youth Culture 101 – Walt Mueller

Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture – Walt Mueller

God of the Possible – Gregory Boyd

The Last Word – N. T. Wright

The Challenge of Jesus – N. T. Wright

Evil and Justice of God – N. T. Wright

Practicing Passion – Kenda Dean

*Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity
Otherness and Reconciliation* – Miroslav Volf

Relationships

Finding the One – Christian Dunn

Dateable – Justin Lookado

Purity

Think Before You Look – Daniel Henderson

Every Young Man's Battle – Steve Arterburn and Fred Stoeker

Every Young Woman's Battle – Shannon Ethridge and Steve Arterburn

Uncensored – Jeanne Mayo

The Game Plan – Joe Dalla

Small Groups

*The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and
Small Groups* – Joseph R. Myers

Community

Life Together – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Communication

*Communicating for Change: Seven Keys to Irresistible
Communication* – Andy Stanley and Lane Jones

Love and Respect – Emerson Eggerichs

Youth Ministry

Purpose Driven Youth – Doug Fields

Thriving Groups – Jeanne Mayo

Postmodern Youth Ministry – Tony Jones

Presence Centered Youth Ministry – Mike King

Revisiting Relationship Youth Ministry – Andrew Root

The First Two Years in Youth Ministry – Doug Fields

Youth Ministry Revolution – Ron Luce

Soul Searching: Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers – Christian Smith

Hardwired to Connect – Kathleen Kovner Kline

This Way to Youth Ministry – Duffy Robbins

Becoming All You Can Be – Richard Huelsman

Crisis Counseling

Handbook on Counseling Youth – Josh McDowell

Youth Workers Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis – Youth Specialties

Echoes of Mercy – Nancy Alcorn

Social Justice

Deep Justice in a Broken World – Chap Clark and Kara Powell

Good News about Injustice – Gary Haugan

The Justice Mission – Jim Hancock and International Justice Mission

Terrify No More – Gary Haugan

Not for Sale – David Batstone

Be the Change – Zach Hunter

Discipleship

Seizing Your Divine Moment – Erwin McManus

Celebration of Discipline – Richard Foster

Outbreak – Greg Steier

Becoming All You Can Be – YWAM

Apologetics

Case for Christ – Lee Strobel

Reason for God – Tim Keller

Preaching

Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die – Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Teaching as a Subversive Activity – Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner

Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith – Shane Hipps

Telling the Truth – Frederick Buechner

Biblical Preaching – Haddon W. Robinson

Adolescents Gender Issues

Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls – Mary Pipher and Ruth Ross

The Spiritual Life of Children – Fred Craddock

Real Boys – William Pollack

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“Vineyard Values in Youth Ministry” by Daniel and Vanessa Jergensen

“Contextualizing the Gospel” by Daniel Jergensen

“Contextualizing Kingdom of God Theology” by Christian Dunn

“In Order to Be Up, We Must Learn How to Be Down” and
“Recruiting Volunteers” by Donnell Wyche

“Discipleship” by Matt Worley

“Recruiting Volunteers,” “Developing Volunteer Leaders,” and
“Caring for Volunteers” as adapted from *Taking Care of Adults in Your Youth Ministry* by Rob Tucker

“Screening Youth Workers” by Jenna Stepp

“Games” by Craig Beyer

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