

Youth Task Force Report

Item 17-3NB

A report from the Youth Ministry Task Force to the 219th General Assembly regarding youth and the Presbyterian Church (USA) with a recommendation of the Youth Task Force on a new vision statement for youth and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The Youth Task Force recommends that the 219th General Assembly adopt the following as the new vision statement for the church and youth in the Presbyterian Church (USA):

In the midst of a beautiful and broken world, we have a vision for ministry with young people that unites youth in Christ with all other generations and proclaims the love of God that is without end. This vision gives us hope for a Church that:

- is authentic, comprised of communities of faith that live what they proclaim;
- participates in, and pays witness to, the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God for the whole world;
- helps young people to understand what it means to be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will, as God does, view all people with love and possibility;
- expresses God's boundless love by embracing young people as they are and where they could be, inspiring them to share their ideas, dreams, and unique gifts with the world and the church;
- acknowledges and celebrates youth as the keepers of God's world, capable of serving as agents of healing, friends to the friendless, and leaders along the path of Jesus;
- encourages young people to live and lead with humility, but also with confidence and joy;
- accepts that it may be changed, even re-made, through the power of the Spirit by youth's energy, freshness, and vitality.

Rationale

Our task as commissioned by the 218th General Assembly was “to continue the dialogue begun at this assembly; find and present model programs; and focus on the needs and development of youth ministries, and report back to the 219th General Assembly (2010) specific recommendations for designing and conducting various youth ministries under a ‘new vision’ for youth.” “Youth” or “Young people” as described in this report and understood by the GAMC, Office of Ministries with Youth, includes adolescents, age 12-18 years old and pre-adolescents (for some tween programs) 9-11 years old.

The task force convened for the first time in person in Atlanta in the summer of 2009 during the Big Tent event from June 11-15. Through discussion and prayer we discerned that the best way to “continue the dialogue begun at [the] assembly” and to “seek information” was to interview Presbyterians of all ages and from varied roles in the church (youth, educators, national staff, pastors, youth workers, elders, etc) about the role of youth in the church using

a list of eleven questions that we prepared as a group. This wide-reaching interview process was the manner in which we gathered a large mass of information, approximately four hundred interviews in all, to offer the most comprehensive picture of the church as possible. At the Atlanta meeting, we collected the first 135 interviews. We felt that this process was very fruitful, and we decided to continue our data collection as we returned to our home congregations and as some of us traveled to Presbytery meetings, camps and summer youth conferences. We also conducted interviews using a variety of electronic and social media networks (e.g. Facebook).

Every member of the task force participated in the interview process. However, we felt increasingly that our GA appointed task was a two-pronged assignment: one was creating a “new vision for youth” and an accompanying publicity campaign to raise awareness of youth in the Presbyterian Church and of the theological significance of youth ministry and the other to “find and present model programs” for youth. Thus, the task force divided itself into two work groups: the “vision” team and the “model programs” team.

Vision Team

Once formed, the vision team decided to focus on the responses to question numbers 9 and 11 from the master interview question list, which read: “What basic ideas, issues, or concepts does the church need to pass on to young people? (As opposed to school, family, friends, etc...) What is the church’s role in youth ministry? The young person’s local Presbyterian church?” (9) and “We learn from scripture that “Where there is no vision - the people will perish.” If the Presbyterian Church were to try and capture a vision for its young people - what would be important to YOU to include in this vision? Words, concepts, ideals, scriptures, statements?” (11). We felt these pertained most specifically to the Vision Team’s task of gleaning the church’s vision from the interviews, yet all responses were considered and utilized in the process of creating the Vision Statement.

After the meeting in Atlanta concluded, we had several Go-To or online meetings over the summer. This brainstorming, combined with our extensive information gathering through the interviews, prepared us for the second and final in-person meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania from September 18 - 21st. At this meeting, we looked at the 1990 Vision Statement, and found that while it contained visionary language for 1990 and the subsequent years the task was to come back to the 21st with a “new vision” for the church and youth. While the 1990 statement has served as an excellent foundational vision for youth ministry it did not adequately represent the youth of the Presbyterian Church today. Thus, guided by prayer, we were able to synthesize what we found to be the most recurrent themes in the interviews. We, a task force of youth, young adults and adult mentors, also drew from our own personal experiences, Christian practices and faith journeys to contribute to the vision statement.

This synthesis process consisted of creative and careful sifting exercises to narrow down the list of a hundred words and phrases that spoke to the overarching sentiments of the

interviews and our discussions, to thirteen words. We then took those words that inspired us, and had a discussion about our interpretation of the core meaning or principle behind each. Finally, we created one sentence for each word, and through an editing process post-Harrisburg, we honed the statement down even further for conciseness, rhythm, and clarity. The editing process was conducted by a writing team and approved by the larger vision team at a Go-To meeting on October 13th, 2009. We collectively agree that the new statement incorporates essential elements of the reformed tradition, expands on the statement from 1990, honors the information, insight and opinions we collected from youth, educators, pastors, professors and elders throughout the denomination and truly points to a church that embraces the youth of today.

During this time, the whole task force was apprised of our progress and offered feedback through Facebook, e-mail, Go-To meetings, text messaging and Twitter. Consequently, our work was done in a manner that best allowed all of us to delve into our work, while not requiring numerous face-to-face meetings.

A Campaign for Visibility of Youth and the Presbyterian Church (USA)

As a result of the aforementioned sifting process that occurred during the Harrisburg, PA meeting, we also came up with a tag-line or motto for youth in the Presbyterian Church. The phrase, “Who’s Gonna Be There?” spoke to us in a plethora of ways. Taken literally, “Who’s Gonna Be There?” is the question that youth and young adults frequently ask when attending youth group or other church events. It reflects their need for community and strong relationships at church to encourage their attendance. More figuratively, this phrase embodies questions concerning the future of the PC(USA). Who is going to be there for the church in the future? A young person asking the question could be met with the answer “We will be there!” A parent asking could find comfort in the answer “We will, adults who care about your child’s faith and place in the world!” The church is asking as it ponders its future livelihood and might find, as they look to the youth room that young people are saying “We will be there!” One could answer, “I am!”, “We are!”, or “God is!” We felt that this somewhat enigmatic question was very open ended, and thus could foster discussion among church members, and draw attention to youth issues in the church. It is our hope that this campaign be financially supported, visually accompanied and denominationally circulated through the work of the members of this task force, through the commissioners at the 219th General Assembly and in the work of the national Ministries with Youth office and the national Presbyterian Youth Workers’ Association.

A word about young people and their vision for the church ...

We found that it was challenging to interpret the responses given by youth during the interview process. In many ways this mirrors the normal disconnect between what a young person feels about being a Christian and how they then articulate their own personal belief. By and large, the youth interviewed had difficulty verbally articulating the specific shape of their faith or of their belief in Jesus Christ. Most of the youth that were interviewed were very clear and, for the most part, enthusiastic about the centrality of their home

congregation (or a congregation with whom they are connected) in their life. They were able to describe how a particular congregation welcomed them, helped them learn, nurtured them, and taught them but they had difficulty describing what the result of this nurture was. As we reflected on these interviews we thought it was important to identify this pattern. We also recognize that it is very common among youth that they acknowledge they believe in Jesus Christ and desire to follow Christ but have difficulty expressing this as a job for the church or for their family or for themselves. Adults who were interviewed, however, had much to say about youth, youth in the church and their (the adult being interviewed) vision for young people. We mention this pattern because we believe it is important to hold up to the Assembly that while young people yearn to be a part of the church they are, and the adults called to accompany them are, unsure about how to fit into an institution so historically situated and confessionally rich as the Presbyterian Church (USA) when the faith of many/most young people is more fluid, developing and still developing in its shape.

Model Program Team

The Model Programs team approached the task of finding and presenting model programs with open minds, enthusiasm, and most of all, excitement to see the ways in which youth across the United States are developing their faith, participating in fellowship, giving back, and praising and worshipping God together.

The interviews that were collected at the Big Tent in Atlanta, and continued to be collected in the following months, were the initial and primary source of information for the beginning of the process of seeking out model programs. The model programs team paid special attention to the responses to the following questions: “If you are involved in a congregation, youth group, or another source of Christian ministry - what is the best thing about that ministry? Why do you say this is the best?” As this question was directed purposely at youth and young adults, it allowed the model programs team to get direct input from youth about the standout programs and ministries in which they are involved and from which they are learning and growing. Also, the team was able to learn a great deal about what youth believe are key elements for effective youth ministry, and what can make or break a youth ministry. See ATTACHMENT C for a list of patterns that were identified in the interviews; programs and practices that are and are not working in youth ministry. Common threads included good, committed leadership, a safe place for questioning and developing faith, the importance of being known and valued by the larger church, and the value of the sense of purpose gained through youth group and community outreach/mission events. As one young woman stated, “I love the connections you make with people. It allows you to get to know other teens in your congregation and denomination and spend time with them having fun and being there for each other. It also connects you with the adults of your church and the community through service projects done in the church or outside the church in your area.” Other youths cited openness, learning about Jesus, being instantly welcomed, and the family-like atmosphere. According to a high school-aged boy, the best thing about youth ministry at the level of his presbytery “is that it takes a great interest in its youth and their opinions. As

a youth myself, I have learned so much from serving on a Pastor Nominating Committee to serving as a Youth Advisory Delegate. In all the things I have participated in, my opinion has always been valued and for this I have loved serving in all these ministries.”

Another question to which we paid special attention was: “Does your church have a strong youth ministry program? If so, what do you think they do that is effective? If not, what do you think is not working?” This question was not asked exclusively of youth, but rather of all people of all ages and roles. Oftentimes it provided a unique perspective of adults and their impressions of youth ministry in their church, as viewed from the outside. A member of a congregation in his forties, for example, said that what makes his church’s youth ministry program especially effective is the attention to developing relationships with the whole church. In spite of this, however, he pointed out that there is still room for improvement: “We have two youth on session but they are called youth elders and that ruins the call. I think that they aren’t called simply because they are youth. It’s the same way with ‘Youth Sunday because I think the church thinks we have one Sunday to feature youth and then we are done with them the rest of the year. I want every Sunday to be Youth Sunday.” This call for greater inclusion of youth was echoed throughout many interviews.

The last interview question that the model programs team targeted was: “What organizations could give Presbyterians a good lesson about youth ministry? Are any organizations doing things that might help us?” In regards to the last part of the question, the answer was almost unanimously “yes”. In support of this view, people cited existing Presbyterian entities, such as Montreat Conference Center and programs like Young Adult Volunteers, as well as ecumenical organizations such as Young Life. A few people mentioned the Coca-Cola Corporation due to its highly effective method of varying marketing according to audience, even across cultures, and overall, any organization that is successfully able to get people to rally behind its cause. Interviewees cited Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, the Susan B. Komen campaign for breast cancer awareness, and initiatives like Invisible Children that inspire people to make a difference in the world. The value of these statements was not that Youth Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA) should be concerned with multi-million dollar marketing campaigns, nor that we should start recruiting youth to form a bigger voting constituency, but rather that there are facets of all of the above programs/campaigns that we would do well to adapt and/or model and implement.

The information that we garnered from the initial Big Tent interviews, as well as our personal interviews in the following months, formed a solid foundation for the beginning of our work. Next followed the assignment of finding and documenting specific programs, a task that we were admittedly somewhat unsure of how to approach. The Atlanta meeting at the Big Tent ended with a charge to each work group member to find two model programs that he or she would be able to present at our next face-to-face meeting in Harrisburg. Although this was a seemingly small step, it served as a way to get the ball rolling and begin the process of discerning what to do with our incoming information, which was one of the first questions we would tackle in Harrisburg—where to go to find model programs, who would know about

excellent programs, where to store the programs, what to search for, how to organize them, etc. Also, what would we hope to do with the final body of information?

During our second face-to-face meeting in Harrisburg, we were able to bring together and review the programs we had collected independently. It seemed that we had all encountered a similar difficulty: many youth, youth workers, etc. struggled with the ambiguity of the term “model program”, and were often hesitant to label any of the ministries that they had created or were involved in as model. Our team, then, reflected on how to better define what, exactly, a model program is, how to continue to make our search for model programs known, and how to best encourage people to respond.

We began by drafting a letter that could easily be disseminated via many channels and assigned work group members with specific tasks of distributing it to certain contacts. The letter was sent to all members youth-related Presbyterian Facebook groups, including the Presbyterian Youth Workers Association (PYWA). The letter was posted by Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow, on his blog, and by Gina Yeager-Buckley, Associate for Ministries with Youth, on the GAMC Ministries with Youth website. And as all task force members are from geographically diverse parts of the United States, we were each responsible for sending the letter out to personal contacts and our respective presbyteries so that they might forward it to interested and connected individuals.

The letter included directions for sending information about model programs to an email address that was created for collecting suggestions, and that all work group members could access. The email submissions were then added to a wiki website:

www.modelprograms.wikia.com. The wiki proved to be a great way to store all of our information in one place, especially since we could all edit the page and make our own additions of model programs. For each program, we felt it was necessary to provide a description, contact information, and suggestions for adapting a program to a specific congregational demographic (e.g. larger or smaller groups of people). Our rationale for providing adaptations was that while a church may not be able to implement a certain program in its entirety, it could possibly adopt a part of it or use an idea as inspiration for a new program better suited to fit their needs.

The programs were categorized under labels that were created based on careful reflection on the interviews. We looked for patterns in responses to the question “What distances young people from the church?” A few common answers included youth not having voice in their congregation, the church not being open to change, and a lack of mentoring in the church. We referred to these answers, along with sixteen other commonly occurring responses, as “needs” or “issues” in the church, and they helped us to categorize model programs according to what need or issue they addressed. Using these needs, we formed eight basic categories that all the model programs seemed to fit into: Empowerment, Worship, Leadership Development, Fellowship/Outreach, College Ministry, Mentoring, Stewardship/Fundraising, and Interfaith/Ecumenical. We placed forty-seven model programs that we collected into the eight categories. These programs can be found in ATTACHMENT B.

Please note that the full description of the programs as well as ideas for adapting them to various sized congregations, governing bodies, budget, etc... can be found by viewing the following link: www.modelprograms.wikia.com

Chairperson's Final Remarks

As mentioned several times in this report, the task force chose to meet both face-to-face and using electronic media. Due to a limited budget, it was not feasible to fly the task force members to a meeting more than twice. Knowing that we were charged to meet four times, we chose to meet face-to-face twice although broke our first face-to-face meeting at the Big Tent up into two parts, counting it as two meetings. Our Harrisburg meeting served as our second face-to-face but was counted as our third meeting. The limited budget and few opportunities to gather the task force, meant a great deal of our work had to be completed while living and working thousands of miles apart. The task force chose to use Go-To meetings, which are meetings conducted over a computer. Participants are able to speak to one another as well as see a common screen so editing could happen on the spot. We felt this form of working together, while not as ideal as face-to-face meetings, was extremely effective and important in completing our assigned task. Using Go-To, the task force as able to hold eight separate meetings and accomplish our work in a relatively short period of time. We as a task force would like to encourage the use of this technology to the 219th. As resources are increasingly limited and in demand, we believe creative use of media will be essential in the way our denomination moves forward and conducts its business in the future. It is also a language young people understand and can use effectively in order to lead in the church and in the world.

As chair, I would like to thank this task force. As mentioned, it was comprised of ten youth and young adults as well as five adults. We were able to model what we hope the church will live out as the young people on the task force gave of their ideas, dreams, and unique gifts leading us in our work and finally offering what we believe to be a helpful report, inspiring model programs, and a fresh vision statement. And finally, I would like to thank Gina Yeager-Buckley for her guidance, wisdom, and faithful work with this task force. We are fortunate to have such a faithful servant in our denominational offices.

Attachments:

- A Interview Questions used by the Task Force
- B Full description of model programs included in the report
- C What Works and What Doesn't Work in Youth Ministry: General Patterns identified
from Interviewee Responses

ATTACHMENT A

Youth Task Force

Interview / Survey Questions

(Questions might be specific to youth or adult - interviewer should communicate this)

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of person being interviewed: _____

Age / Role of person being interviewed: _____

Location of interview: _____

1. What attributes make youth unique disciples of Jesus? Unique members of the church? What is the unique “thing” about youth in our church?
2. What attributes should an adult youth worker (volunteer, youth minister, educator, pastor, teacher, mentor) or mentor have?
3. What, in your opinion distances young people from the church? Or, causes them to feel disconnected from the church? Or from God? Or from the Presbyterian Church? Or from the Christian faith?
4. If you’re a youth- if you are involved in a congregation, youth group, or another source of Christian ministry - what is the best thing about that ministry? Why do you say this is “the best?”
5. How is that ministry helping you be a more mature Christian? A better person?
6. Does your church have a strong youth ministry program? If so, what do you think they do that is effective? If not, what do you think is not working?
7. What is **ONE THING** that **you** can do to strengthen and/or support youth in the church? (Please note whom is answering: e.g. youth, adult, older, younger, etc...)
8. Why do you think youth ministry is important for the Presbyterian Church? What is it specifically about our denomination our “flavor” of Christian discipleship that needs young people connected to it?
9. What basic ideas, issues, or concepts does the church need to pass on to young people? (As opposed to school, family, friends, etc...) What is the church’s role in youth ministry? The young person’s local Presbyterian church?
10. What organizations could give Presbyterians a good lesson about youth ministry? Any organizations doing things that might help us? (e.g. Disney, Facebook, CNN, etc....)
11. We learn from scripture that “Where there is no vision - the people will perish.” If the Presbyterian Church were to try and capture a vision for its young people - what would be important to YOU to include in this vision? Words, concepts, ideals, scriptures, statements?

ATTACHEMENT B

Youth Task Force

Model Programs

Empowerment

Trinity Presbyterian of Boise, Idaho—Oregon Mission Trip: Youth camped on the Lostine Presbyterian Church yard in Oregon for a week, helped to run VBS and a local mission project, did some maintenance work on the church grounds, and helped the elderly church members and friends. A sign up sheet was posted a few weeks in advance, and folks wrote down what they needed help with... washing windows, pruning trees, weeding a garden, or anything they could not do for themselves. The youth took it seriously and deeply. Leadership stated that in their opinion, in the field of "mission trips", this was much more effective and useful than a trip to Mexico where the youth do not speak the language or understand the culture. It was a highly relevant and on-target expression of mission.

- Adaptation: Use this model for a mission trip in any local community of need. Explore areas near your church or in your presbytery and connect with a church within a community of need. Connect to local families and join together in a mutual mission.
- Contact: Trinity Presbyterian Church, Boise, Idaho. tpcboise@qwestoffice.net,

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice: Rebuilds the neighborhoods of Bronx River and Soundview/Bruckner in the South Bronx by preparing young people to become prophetic voices for peace and justice. This is accomplished through political education, spiritual formation, and youth and community development and organizing. It also uses art as a medium for social and political transformation.

- Adaptation: Create or participate in an urban setting mission program.
- Contact: <http://www.ympj.org>

‘Youth Urban Immersion’, Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia: A broad-minded Christian Community that cherishes creativity, fosters and nurtures artistic expression, extends hospitality and works for a more just world through civic engagement. Broad street hosts a number of programs including the Homeless Cafe (and a number of other services for the homeless), No Barriers Community Dinner, and offers an immersion experience for youth mission trips.

- Adaptation: Create a space of welcome in your church for those who are in need in your neighborhood. Host other youth groups at your church and plan mission days in your community together.
- Contact: <http://www.broadstreetministry.org>, Rev. Erika Funk- Youth Initiative Minister. (215) 735-4847 or info@broadstreetministry.org
Also see: Cross Program in Charlotte (Myers Park Pres.), Presbyterian Social Ministry in Jacksonville, FL, Government Street Youth Mission program

Mission Possible, Harpeth Presbyterian Church, Davidson College Presbyterian Church and Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church: A joint venture mission experience for middle school youth. In the past participating churches have

included Swarthmore in PA, Davidson College in NC, and Pleasant Hill in GA, and more. These churches travel to one another's towns and participate in mission projects in which the local congregation is involved. Youth share the love of Christ by serving in these mission organizations; learning about urban poverty issues; participating in worship, Bible study, and spirituality practices; engaging in fellowship and recreation; and reflecting on the experience with other youth. They also visit important landmarks and sites in the downtown area where they are serving. "Mission Possible" is a wonderful way to engage youth in mission, as well as educate them about the nature of the connectionalism of Presbyterians.

- Adaptation: Your youth group visiting different cities and different churches (not necessarily a pre-set partnership) and working through the specific ministries of that congregation
- Contact: Alan Bancroft, Associate Pastor at Harpeth Presbyterian Church. alanbancroft@comcast.net
- Also See: PDA (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance)

Invisible Children Night Commute: Youth in the United States join in solidarity with children in Uganda who walk to city centers to avoid being kidnapped by rebel soldiers. These youth promote awareness of the 23-year-long war in Uganda while experiencing walking to a city center and sleeping outdoors.

- Adaptation: Awareness walk for a cause, Crop Walk, Box-a-thon. Contact invisible children to see if your youth group and church can provide a base of support for their yearly awareness experience in your city. Host the night commute in your sanctuary one evening for the entire church or local youth groups.
- Contact: <http://www.invisiblechildren.com>

Presbytery of St. Augustine, Box-a-thon: This is an overnight event that helps raise awareness about hunger and homelessness. Youth pledge to spend 24 hours in a cardboard box, thus learning how it feels to be homeless. The leadership of the event plans related activities, such as "working" (can be turned into a volunteer project) for food stamps, which the youth can then use to "buy" and ration their limited amount of food. Also, movies such as "Homeless to Harvard", "Pursuit of Happiness" and "With Honors" are appropriate to show, as well as games/activities that help youth learn about the realities of homelessness and hunger, and what they can do to help. The box-a-thon can also be used as a fundraiser—youth can get their fellow church members to pledge a certain amount of money for every hour spent in their box. The Presbytery of St. Augustine does the Box-a-thon annually as a presbytery-wide event.

- Adaptation: The Box-a-thon could also be done on a smaller level, such as with one youth group, as an intergenerational church activity, or by combining area youth groups, if numbers are small.
- Contact: Katie Day, Palms Presbyterian Church. katie.day@palmschurch.org
- Also see: "Homeless for the Homeless"- A similar program in which young people are invited to spend 24 hrs in the shoes of a homeless person. They sleep in a local park, and are allowed to use cardboard boxes and nothing else. After spending 12 hrs (7pm-7am) in a local park, 12 more hours (7am-7pm) are spent volunteering at homeless ministries.

No More Deaths: Since 1998, over 2000 Mexican men, women, and children have died trying to cross the US-Mexico border, a situation that has been brought on by economic inequality, ill-conceived US border policy, and the harsh conditions of the Sonoran Desert. No More Deaths is a direct action program that seeks to stop these deaths by preventing and raising awareness about the violence and cruelty to migrants, as well as by providing water, food, and medical assistance to migrants walking through the Arizona desert. They also monitor US operations on the border and work to change US policy to resolve the “war zone” crisis, and to bring the plight of migrants to public attention. No More Deaths has a number of volunteer opportunities; volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

- Adaptation: Check to see where migrant workers are in your area. What are their needs? Contact them to see how you or your church can help--perhaps even something as simple as English language training/tutoring.
- Contact: <http://www.nomoredeaths.org>, action@nomoredeaths.org
- Also see: Frontera de Cristo (a specifically Presbyterian border ministry)

Eco Stewards: Seeks to train and inspire young adults 18-24 in the ways of eco-stewardship within the wider context of our Christian faith. The Eco-Stewards Program is actively recruiting passionate, dedicated young people to join our team of inspired citizens, pastors, camp directors, and environmental professionals to help plan our 2010 Eco-Stewards Program in southern West Virginia. Our intention is to co-create an 8-day program in early summer with a core group of 18-24 year olds that is attentive to where God is working - through both people and places - in southern West Virginia. We will learn from and work alongside Christians who are answering God's call to protect and restore local communities, mountains, streams, and human relationships.

- Adaptation: Explore eco-stewardship as part of any summer retreat or as part of your sunday school program.
- Contact: Brian Frick, Brian.Frick@pcusa.org

The Presbyterian Church at Tenafly Light bulb Project: The youth of The Presbyterian Church at Tenafly gather monthly for youth group. They are a smaller group, and after dinner, they go into the homes of the elderly of their community and change all of their light bulbs to more environmentally friendly light bulbs. The mission committee of the church provides the light bulbs.

- Adaptation: Join with the deacons or other appropriate committee of your church to bring environmentally friendly light bulbs into your church buildings and then into the homes of shut-ins in your congregation.
- Contact: Presbyterian Church at Tenafly, www.tenaflychurch.org

Adopt-a-Family for Christmas: The senior high youth group (PYC) works with the government agency called Headstart (a preschool program for low income families) to adopt families in need and provide Christmas gifts for them. The agency director provides the church with the family's names, ages, sizes and any special requests for gifts. The youth

invited the entire church family to help contribute to this project by donating gently used or new household, clothing or toys. Whatever is not donated the youth then supply through a fund raising event or their own contributions money to shop as a group for the items yet needed for this family. They also wrap all the gifts always including a Bible for any of the children and then deliver the gifts to the home. Over the years food baskets and even a live Christmas tree have been delivered. It is a very meaningful mission and stewardship project.

- Adaptations: Talk with local agencies that work with those in need to discover what items are needed around the holidays or throughout the year. The youth group can serve as the clearing house for items donated and be responsible for delivering the items collected.
- Contact: contact pending

Free-for-All: Last year recognizing the economic hardship brought on by the collapse of the economy, one of our folks said we should host an upscale yard sale, but instead of charging for the stuff, simply give it away. We started collecting goods one week before the Free for All. We had contacts with a local morning show host who agreed to do a live remote the Wednesday before the event. Unbelievable amounts of stuff came in from all over the community. We literally had people driving thirty and forty miles to bring us stuff to give away.

The youth decided that their part in this event would be to take care of the kids that came with mom's and dad's who were in many ways selecting Christmas gifts. They planned activities, and crafts. They set up coffee stations to give coffee and hot chocolate away to folks. They carried stuff out to cars and they sang Christmas carols. The youth made the place fun.

It was the first event we had done in years that included every age group of the church, but the event was transformed by the excitement and energy of the youth. 700 people came through the doors that Saturday morning, and there was absolutely nothing left at the end of the day.

- Adaptation: Free-For-All can work in a small or large community because the goods donated are likely in proportion to the need of the community. Hold the event inside the church building or outside on the lawn so people driving by may be intrigued. Place large "Free" signs around the Free-for-All to encourage passers-by to stop and "shop."
- Contact: Chris Jones chjones@grace-pcusa.org

Worship

Columbia Theological Seminary - Anna Carter Florence: As the assistant Professor of Preaching, Anna Carter Florence offers a course in Preaching and Youth. This course offers an opportunity for seminary students to learn how to preach to young people.

- Adaptation: Have preaching professors from each seminary to gather with youth from the PCUSA and imagine worship for a new church.
- Contact: Contact: FlorenceA@CTSNET.edu

Pioneer Memorial Presbyterian Church, Jeff and Kerri Peterson-Davis: This is a model for interactive worship. Preaching takes place as a dialogue between Jeff and Kerri; they don't stand behind a pulpit but rather in front of the congregation. One discusses the biblical story, and the other tells a story relating to the story.

- Adaptation: A pastor of a church could preach in a way that is more conversational.
- Contact: Jeff and Kerri Peterson-Davis, <http://www.pioneersolon.com/>

Youth Sunday on Wheels in Grace Presbytery: This program is designed to provide a Youth Sunday for congregations that wouldn't otherwise have one, whether due to low numbers of youth or other reasons. There are several model services that are used repeatedly, complete with music, scripture, and a sermon.

- Adaptation: If your youth group is planning a Youth Sunday, offer to do it the week before or after for a local congregation without youth in your presbytery. Connect with a smaller church that has a few youth and offer to assist in creating a youth Sunday. After youth Sunday, have your youth use the same format and partner with another youth group to guide them on youth Sunday at their church.
- Contact: Grace Presbytery, Rick Carus rick@gracepresbytery.org

Presbyterian Campus Ministry at Vanderbilt - "Stories we live by": After a sermon, one student every week tells a difficult story from their life, which helps not only build community, but also create a safe, trusting environment. This adds depth and meaning to the sermon and opens up dialogue after worship about daily life and places where the message might be helpful or relevant.

- Adaptation: Have youth (who are willing) tell stories at youth group and talk about how this has impacted their faith. A theme for your youth year might be "Our story, their story, God's story." and focus on the art of storytelling as a way to open up the word of God in powerful and dynamic ways.
- Contact: Jennifer Fouse, (615) 343-4213, <http://www.psfncashville.org>

Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church, Youth Group Model: Uses the parts of worship to structure youth group. As youth arrive there is fun and recreation- this is the "Gathering" time. In the time of "Encounter and Respond", there is study and prayer. In the "Send" portion, there is a charge or something missional.

- Adaptation: Incorporate activities into your youth ministry programs that help teach young people about the structure of Christian worship and the importance and significance of each part.
- Contact: Teri Peterson teri@rclpc.org, Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church <http://www.rclpc.org/youth2007.html>

Leadership Development

West End Presbyterian Church, 5th Sunday: Every fifth (5th) Sunday, the youth lead the Worship Service. They perform all the items listed on the Bulletin, except the Pastoral Prayer, Scriptures, Message & Invitation to Christian Discipleship.

- Adaptation: This might be done once every other month or slightly less often than that, but the intention is that the youth lead worship more than once a year.
- Contact: West End Presbyterian Church - wepc@sbcglobal.net

Pathways: A day-long conference in which youth and adult leaders learn games, activities, and fun and different ways to do bible study. What they learn at Pathways is taken home for use in their youth groups.

- Adaptation: Go back to home churches and lead a workshop for your leaders on what you have learned. Create a one day leadership event for your youth, with leaders from your local church or presbytery.
- Contact: http://www3.ptsem.edu/offices/coned/iym/IYM_09secondPage.aspx?pic=1782&left=1660&right=1783

K-Life: It is not the theology or program that makes K-Life a model program, but rather its leadership development. K-Life is a small group program that operates through the development and training of college-age leadership teams. They begin with 10-12 couples who will support their ministry, and then provide space, financial resources, and prayer, but not always direct leadership with the youth. Teams of college students trained by devoted couples then lead small groups for teens. This decentralized ministry focuses on mentoring, coaching and discipling today's teenagers.

- Adaptation: A church could use this decentralized ministry to invite a core of individuals to assist in creating the youth ministry of their church.
- Contact: <http://www.klife.com>

Playology: A day event from the Annual Recreation Workshop at Montreat. Playology is designed for pastors, educators, youth workers, church volunteers, and anyone interested in developing more creative leadership skills in ministry settings.

- Adaptation: Invite local recreation leaders to provide a one-day recreation workshop at your church. Use this format for a one-day advent workshop for all ages, having the youth host and lead.
- Contact: Montreat Conference Center, Deb Guess, 843-442-1791

Mid-Town Columbia Church Summer internship Program: Youth and young adults assist pastors and church workers in developing sermons for young people and assist in other ways at the church.

- Adaptation: Invite youth or young adults to be a church worker for a week. Develop a summer internship program in which two or three high school youth assist the pastor for 10 hours a week. During the year, invite young people to assist one day a week in

the every day ministry needs of the congregation. Have the pastor poll or seek input from youth to include in the upcoming week's sermon.

- Contact: 803.477.7962,
<http://www.midtowncolumbia.com/2009/index.cfmSummerInternProgram>

Presbytery of Wabash Valley, L.O.G. (Love of God): A year-round program for high schoolers that centers around a 3 day student-led retreat. Teams of previous student participants meet for 6-8 weeks prior to each retreat to plan and implement the next retreat for a group of their peers. In between retreats, they meet for fellowship, worship and prayer. This program reaches out to youth of many churches and schools in the South Bend, Indiana area. It has been located in a church before, but is now a validated ministry of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley.

- Adaptation: Use motivated youth to plan events for other youth or as small group leaders for events.
- Contact: Rev. Terry McBride, website: <http://www.michianayouth.org/>. Email: LOG@michianayouth.org

North Park Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry Council: The North Park youth program is designed to equip youth to lead in various ways, from leading a game/activity at PYC (evening fellowship - Presbyterian Youth Connection) to leading a Sunday evening youth worship service or small group discussion at our annual fall youth retreat. The Youth Leadership Team has representatives from every grade level, which makes them part of the Youth Ministry Council (with adult sponsors). Their experiences leading short activities raises their comfort level to work outside the youth program on a session committee or to serve as a Youth Elder or Deacon.

- Adaptation: Encourage your committees of session to have two young people serve on their committee.
- Contact: Jann Treadwell, North Park Presbyterian Church, 214-363-5457 X34,
jtreadwell@northparkpresbyterian.org

Fellowship/Outreach

Presbytery of St. Augustine, Broomball League: Four Friday nights in a row, 6-12 churches gather from 10-11 pm at the local ice rink to play broomball, a combination of hockey and lacrosse. Youth play wearing tennis shoes and using their own broom. Using the same logo, they get team shirts in different colors. This program offers fellowship with different churches in the presbytery. Smaller churches combine to create a team of 8. Larger churches form 2 teams.

- Adaptation: Bring local churches together for any sorts of sports events--these can serve as evangelism for young people not in a church. Create a kick-ball league for your presbytery or churches in your community. If you are in a community that has Whirleyball, create a whirleyball league (bumper car lacrosse-indoor).
- Contact: <http://www.staugpres.org>, Robert McCrary, Community Presbyterian Church in Atlantic Beach Florida (904-249-8698)

Village Presbyterian Church, 8 In A Van: As described by Lindsay O'Connor: 8 in a Van was designed as a way to reach students where they are instead of trying to get them in the doors of a colonial looking church. My hope in starting this program was to simply provide a fun, easy way to connect with students in a non-threatening way. The concept is, just as it sounds, driving our church van to one of the local middle schools, picking up around eight students and heading to something fun for about an hour. Because of the location of many of our middle schools, we typically get Starbucks, ice cream, Sonic or go to Quick Trip and then head to a local park. We let the kids decide what they are up for that day and have them pay for whatever treat they pick. Depending on the size, we can stay and chat and just share life at one of these locations, move to a park when the weather cooperated to play frisbee or return to church to play Wii or other games in our youth loft. I think one of the essentials of the program is to keep it small, but keep it fun. They know I'm not going to trick them into Bible Study, but rather simply get to know me as their leader, in addition to other students, on a smaller scale. Also, it is a must to take the kids home at the end. Parents are asked to RSVP if their student is coming to help me know who to expect and to remind them I will be taking their middle school youth home. Our 8 in a Van lasts from 3:45, when school is out and I have all kids home by 5-5:15. It's short, doesn't interfere with homework and provides a relaxed, positive environment.

The time spent with students during 8 in a Van has been invaluable. Many of my middle school leaders have emerged during this time where I am intentionally being present with them, where they feel comfortable. Additionally, students have felt comfortable inviting un-churched friends. These relationships have then flowered into great relationships, with some students coming to youth group and even Sunday morning programs. It is easy to reflect Christ in these hour to hour-and-half long outings without having to do Bible study. Students always get in the van talking about the events of school and it is a perfect way to find out about their culture and trends. During its three years, it has yet to be cliquy and often gathers students from many different social circles.

One advantage we have is our own youth van, which actually has a pretty cool reputation among students oddly enough. The vehicle to be used seems to be the main obstacle I see in adapting this program to other churches. It's simple and straightforward otherwise. Different Middle Schools go on different days of the week. Normally, it is 1st come 1st serve, but if one person goes all the time, a person that has never gone or hasn't gone in a while, then that person will go, depending on the van space.

- Adaptation: If a van is not available for use, parents or volunteers can drive and take kids home, etc. Parents (if a van is not available) can pick kids up from different middle schools and meet somewhere central where all the kids can hang out together.
- Contact: Website: <http://www.villageyouth.com/youth/eight.html> or email Lindsay O'Connor at lindsay.oconnor@villagepres.org

Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, Man-Camp/Girls Retreat: On a long weekend, the presbytery camp provides a middle school retreat. It begins on Sunday afternoon and ends on Monday afternoon. Although the girls and boys might have the same content, it is on different weekends. Sr. high youth provide leadership for small groups and to mentor.

- Adaptation: Provide a girls retreat or man-camp in your local church with young adults and older youth.
- Contact: Cal Findeiss, email: cal@montgomerycenter.org

The ORB: A Christian church in the heart of Red Bank, NJ. In addition to Sunday worship, ORB has outreach ministries to middle schoolers, high schoolers, young adults, adults, and older adults. ORB's ministries with youth emphasize openness and welcome for all. The programs for high schoolers on Thursdays, for example, stresses that you don't have to be a Christian to come, and that while the leadership will certainly communicate their Christian beliefs and love for and faith in God, they will never tell you that you have to believe something in order to be a part of ORB. By not driving young people away through evangelism or attempts at conversion, the hope is that through showing the true nature of Christ's love and inclusiveness, young people will be inspired by example.

- Adaptation: Open your youth room and be intentional about hospitality to young people in the community, regardless of their current religious affiliation (or lack thereof).
- Contact: Jared Murray, jared@theorb.org.
Website: http://www.theorb.org/?page_id=4

MOSAIC at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church: As described by Andrew Wong: Throughout Fort Worth there are many smaller Presbyterian congregations and unfortunately most of us could never get critical mass to maintain a youth group. To solve this, we created MOSAIC (Many Outstanding Students, Always In Christ), a youth group that rotates meeting at each of three different participating churches once a week. We go to presbytery, synod, and GA level events together. We rely on volunteer sponsors from the three congregations, but we often have more than enough leadership. The leaders meet once or twice a quarter to plan and fellowship apart from the youth. The group functions like a traditional youth group except that the kids are from three different churches (and actually many of them do not go to Sunday morning worship anywhere) and the location changes every week. We believe this model of partnership is easily adapted to any number of churches, but does require that the churches are fairly close together. The really brilliant advantage of this model is that it allows for a lot more opportunity to generate a critical mass of sponsors and youth for a youth group session than if each church were trying alone. Theologically, it also reinforces the idea of the one body of different members. MOSAIC embodies the idea that we exist to serve God's church as a whole, not just the church that we belong to. We demonstrate that other churches are not our competitors, but our family and that God calls us to reach out and work with other churches.

- Adaptation: Combine smaller groups or churches to form a larger group. Perhaps meet only once a month (rather than once a week).
- Contact: Andrew Wong, Pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, TX. Email: RevAndrewWong@gmail.com

Youth Week: As described by Shannon Guse- "This summer, we tried out our first youth week... basically an evening VBS for youth. The youth came to the church from 6-10 Sunday - Thursday and participated in dinner, fun and messy games, and Bible Study/Activities, and

worship each night. The youth band played, a mini-sermon was given, and discussion, mayhem, and fun ensued. Last year's theme was "Sticky Faith" and included a Velcro wall, duct tape night, messy games, tie dye t-shirts, making sticky buns for the Shelter, bubble gum sculptures. All discussions/sermons were inspired from the book "Messy Spirituality". The theme for 2010 will be "Faith in a Box". We will have a blow up boxing ring and bounce house, meals from boxes (lunch boxes, pizza boxes, Chinese food, etc.), and a night of sleeping in a box where there will be an emphasis on homelessness.

This was a great experience and well attended. It truly was a lot of work, but totally worth it. We cut out almost all of our short day trips during the summer and used this as our focus activity. I think other groups/churches of any size could do this."

- Adaptations: Ask the youth to assist with Vacation Bible School for younger children and then have them remain for their own "Youth Week." Youth Week might include service projects, games, Bible study, a meal, and preparations for the next mornings VBS.
- Contact: Shannon Guse, Director of Christian Education for Youth at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, FL. Email: Shannon@faithpcusa.org

Tween Events: Our newest model is what we call a Tween Bash. This is a 3 hour fellowship event held in the church's Christian Life Center open to anyone in middle school. For a \$5 fee we offer a safe place to hang out with friends in a Christian environment. Music, dancing, basketball, ping pong, cards, video games and lots of extras including a concession stand and plenty of adult chaperones. We average over 150 youth and easily clear \$1000 at each event. Parents have expressed their appreciation and it has been an outreach ministry feeding our after school program and Sunday worship.

- Adaptations: If a church is not able to open their building up to the entire community, parents on a rotation basis might provide a safe place for youth group kids to hang out on weekends.
- Contact: Laura F. Stover, DCE at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Dodge, Iowa. 515-576-2091; www.firstpresfd.org.

Café 907: Fellowship and gathering time before Sunday school. During Café 907, youth and parents are invited to spend time in the youth suite and catch up. The goal is to bring the parents and members of the congregation to the youth suite, making the youth area a hospitable place for the whole congregation. A specific family volunteers to provide breakfast for the youth that morning; announcements of up coming events are shared and a simple/brief devotional is done (one or two songs and a closing prayer). Following the closing prayer, the youth move to their respective Sunday school class.

- Adaptations: An opportunity for parents to gather with the youth might also be provided at the beginning of youth group or afterwards and include a shared meal. For example, the youth might meet from 5:00PM to 7:00PM with parents arriving at 6:30PM to join the youth for dinner.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, Director of Youth Ministries Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY.

Downtime: Weekly summer program. In the midst of busy lives and tight schedules we often forget to take time to rest and be reminded of God's presence and gift of rest (Sabbath) in our lives. During Downtime, youth gather to discuss a theme of their interest, movies, and books from a spiritual perspective. The purpose is to provide a laid back atmosphere to introduce and develop spiritual practices that are in line with our Christian tradition, the realities and issues that our youth face on a daily bases.

- Adaptations: Downtime in which young people are encouraged to participate in a variety of contemplative spiritual practices could be added to the weekly youth group gathering. This can also be an intergenerational event encouraging adults and youth to find quiet time for prayer and spiritual practices together.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, Director of Youth Ministries Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY.

Youth Group Rotation System: Alternative Sunday night approach to youth group. The rotation system allows the youth group program to provide games, outings, fellowship dinners, workshops and spiritual driven activities on a monthly base. The idea is to assign one Sunday a month for each event and follow that model every month. For example; every 1st Sunday of the month the youth gather for games. The 2nd Sunday of the month, youth have their regular spiritual driven activity. The 3rd Sunday the youth will have an alternative activity and every 4th Sunday of the month the youth will meet at somebody's house for fellowship dinner. The idea is to follow a pattern that allows for more creativity.

- Adaptations: Easily adaptable to meet the needs of a local youth group. Service projects might be added one Sunday a month. This can also work even if a youth group meets only twice a month.
- Contact: Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez, Director of Youth Ministries Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY.

Club 45: A program for 4th and 5th graders. They meet on Wednesday nights for 30 minutes of Children's Choir and an hour of program. Their Sunday school class is also called Club 45, but much of what makes this group who it is happens on Wednesday nights. This group is specifically designed for preteens, children that are older than the "little kids" and younger than "youth." It is designed to help preteens transition between programs. It is NOT meant to be youth group or to expose the preteens to youth curriculum, rather it embraces their age and experiences as upper elementary students. In order to prepare preteens for youth programs, Club 45 meets at the same time as middle school youth group, so in 6th grade only a little bit changes. They have a club 45 t-shirt which is youth-like, but like many kids, they wear them every week. They get to vote on which real-life faith based topics they want to study each semester (peer pressure, faith and family, pressure to succeed in school, etc). They have their own room that only they meet in, filled with age-appropriate Bibles, their art, and their photos. They have game nights and 3 outings a year in order to get to know each other (two play outings and one mission workday). Their teachers are not their parents so that their teachers can function as mentors.

Youth group in 6th grade can be really hard, but not for our Club 45 kids. They know the kids that are in 7th grade (from the previous year of Club 45), they are used to meeting on Wednesday nights, they know the expectations of challenging Bible study, they are willing to

participate mission work, and they feel known by name and by personality by our Church and by God. Club 45 is a group of friends, so they are more willing to go on youth group trips because they have good friends there. Transitions need to be smooth, easy, and a positive experiences and Club 45 is definitely that transition for our Church.

- Adaptations: Within a small church, preteens might be encouraged to meet with a couple of adult mentors to engage in Bible study, service projects, and fellowship activities. The interaction with other young people their age is as important as the interaction with caring adults willing to walk beside them.
- Contact: Brittany Harrold, HarroldB@faithpcusa.org

College Ministry

Montreat College Conference: Offers college students the chance to come to a place set apart once a year to continue their faith journey and enjoy fellowship with one another. Each year the conference is structured around a different theme and has dynamic leadership and speakers. The college conference serves young adults of all denominations, in campus-based or parish-based groups, or as individuals.

- Contact: www.montreat.org, or specifically at <http://www.montreat.org/current/2010-college-conference>. For questions, contact the registrar at 800-572-2257, ext. 335 or email susieb@montreat.org.
- Also see: similar college conferences- Mo Ranch, College Connection: <http://www.moranch.com/index.php?c=12&sn=123&conf=8> and Forest Home College Briefing. <http://www.foresthome.org> (909) 389-2300.

Faith Presbyterian Church, Church Mouse: This program is intended to keep college students connected with their home church (Faith) when they go away for college, or as a way to offer students not local to Tallahassee (who come to FSU) an invitation/encouragement to become involved/feel welcomed at Faith. The church obtains the college students' contact information, as well as email address, year and major, hobbies, favorite snack, favorite kind of cookie, caffeine consumption, what they look forward to in life, and a photo. An individual refrigerator magnet is then created for each student, which contains all of the above information. Members of the church volunteer to "adopt" a college student and be their "Church Mouse". They are given the refrigerator magnet for the student that they adopt. The Church Mouse is encouraged to invite their adopted student to attend church with them, send them care packages, have them over for dinner, etc, in order to help the student feel connected and welcomed. But more than anything, we want the college students to be prayed for. Church mice also take part in the college/young adult Christmas reunion.

- Adaptations: Create a secret pal program connecting a church member to a college student. Create a devotional blog for your college students and invite church members who have played a significant role in the life of your young people to write the devotional.
- Contact: Shannon Guse, Director of Christian Education (Youth) at Faith Presbyterian Church, Tallahassee, FL. email: guses@faithpcusa.org

Mentoring

Central to Our Faith Youth Mentoring Program, First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City, UT: This ministry works with young people who leave Foster care at age 18 and helps them survive and thrive as they begin to live independent lives. Eight mentors began the project and worked with the Salt Lake Transitional Program for Foster Youth to recruit eight youth and match them with mentors. After working together for two years, three youth were attending college, one joined the Marines, one finished a GED and training at Job Corp, one was still in high school and two were living on their own. Based on this success, The Utah Youth Mentor Project, a non-profit organization, was formed to recruit and train other mentor groups to use the mentor model. After five years there are four-church based groups, one sponsored by a group from Juvenile Court and two groups sponsored by The Christmas Box organization. There are currently over 40 youth with mentors in the project, a number that is expected to double over the next year. The mentor groups become a community of support for youth, helping them access resources for safe housing, job placement or postsecondary education. Mentors often assist youth who face barriers to success such as drug use, legal issues, debts or family issues. The real success of the project, however, rests on nonjudgmental friendship and love given by volunteer mentors.

- Adaptation: Contact your local foster care agency and invite youth in foster care to join your youth group.
- Contact: Dorothy or Bert Dart at (801) 329-0846 or email: bandddart@netscape.net

Reaching Up Ministry, The University Presbyterian Church of Toronto Mission Group: Impoverishment, school drop-outs, gun violence, and teenage pregnancies rob many of the children and youth of the Jane-Finch community of their potential to achieve, to be heard, and to excel. Reaching Up provides free academic and art programs for school-aged children in the Jane-Finch community in the name of the Lord. The program is three-fold: Homework Club, Music School, and Youth Mentoring.

- Adaptation: Facilitate a homework club on Saturdays to help students get ready for their state testing.
- Contact: <http://www.reachingup.ca>

Parent Confirmation Sundays: While the confirmation class meets with their mentors each month, parents gather with the confirmation teachers. During this time, they take a short course, learning from the teachers key points from their child's confirmation class. It is important to have it be a class and not just a time to pass on information from the previous month. This program is a great opportunity for parents to not only be more involved in their child's confirmation journey, but also to grow in their own faith.

- Adaptation: Provide a parallel class for parents in confirmation with different teachers, same topics. Invite parents once a month to join the confirmation class for their study and fellowship.
- Contact: Nancy Myer, Knoxville, TN, nancymyer@gmail.com

Prayer Partner Program: A small group of women involved in the Prayer chain ministry of the church also organize a prayer partner program. Each youth in grade 5 through 12 are partnered with an anonymous adult in the congregation and prayed for every day. Using a mail box in the church library notes of encouragement and prayer requests are exchanged between the youth and adult. Once the youth becomes a member of the church in 9th grade the adult prayer partner has the option to share who they are with the youth so a deeper relationship is possible. The adult can choose to wait and share their identity with the youth when they graduate from high school. This has been a very powerful ministry for both the youth and adults.

- Adaptations: Congregational prayer partners might also be assigned when youth leave on mission trips or other church related trips. Let the youth know on the way to their destination that someone is praying for them, for their faith development and enjoyment of the conference or work trip. Midway through the week, the youth can be asked to write a postcard to their prayer partner thanking them and telling them what they had learned.
- Contact: First Presbyterian Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa, lauras@firstpresfd.org

Confirmation Covenant Partner Program: During the 8th grade year confirmation class is taught and many enrichment activities are offered. Each confirmand is paired with a current elder or adult church member with the goal to meet several times over a simple meal for faith discussion and encouragement. Get acquainted activities and questionnaires are completed. Great friendships have developed. The adult partner offers a personal prayer for the confirmand on Confirmation Sunday. Other enrichment activities offered during the Confirmation years is visiting other faith denominations. The class goes to the church to meet the pastor/priest and learn about that faith including a tour of the church. The group then attends a worship service. A trip to a nearby Jewish Synagogue is included.

- Adaptations: The Confirmation Covenant Partner might be encouraged to attend a youth group activity, assist with a service project, or provide food for youth group or Sunday school. The intent is to offer adults who might not normally interact with the young people an opportunity to get to know and work and learn beside the youth of the congregation.
- Contact: First Presbyterian Church, Fort Dodge Iowa, lauras@firstpresfd.org

*A number of people responded to the request for model programs with a Covenant Partner program example.

Stewardship/Fundraising

The Pentecost Offering: A denomination-wide special offering that enables a congregation to keep 40% of the offering to be used for whatever they want or need! Great resources, simple to do, and a good way to raise funds and awareness. The Pentecost Offering is working really well for many congregations

- Contact: <http://www.pcusa.org/pentecost/lgmaterial.htm>

Special Youth Offering, Goodwill Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, SC: As a supplement to the normal offering, one Sunday a month, 2 youth accompany the regular ushers with different tray's baskets and collect money from members specifically for the

youth ministry of the church. This encourages people (and youth especially) to contribute to the ministry of youth.

- Adaptation: On Stewardship Sunday, encourage the youth to give their commitments as well as a monetary offering.
- Contact: Ellaree Hampton, Goodwill Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, SC.

Cookie & Ornament Exchange Fundraiser: An insert is placed in the bulletin a few weeks before inviting people to bake at least 3 dozen cookies of a variety of their choosing. They are asked to deliver their cookies and the recipe as well as any gently used ornaments they'd like to "exchange" the morning of the Fundraiser. The youth then arrange the cookies on trays and make fun signs to accompany the cookies (for example, "Jane Do's super fabulous chocolate chip oatmeal cookies"). All the cookies trays are then placed on tables and the ornaments hung on Christmas trees in the fellowship hall. After worship, members are invited downstairs to fill a tin that they bring or a plate (to be covered with plastic wrap afterwards) with a variety of cookies. They are also able to select ornaments they'd like to take home. Donations are accepted for both. The fundraiser works well because there is almost no expense incurred by the youth program so all donations can be put towards fundraising needs.

- Adaptations: This works in a small or large church because the number of cookies made is based upon the size of the congregation and those willing to bake. In recent years, we have added cookie baking as a youth group activity. Youth divide into teams and bake cookies at different member's homes. It gives the youth an opportunity to interact with members of the congregation who do not usually participate in youth group activities. These cookies are then frozen and brought to church the morning of the Cookie Exchange Fundraiser.
- Contact: Kelly Wiant-Thralls. 717-257-1270 ext. 12. wiant-thralls@marketsquarechurch.org

Interfaith/Ecumenical

Interfaith Sailing Trip: This program occurs through a partnership of the South Coast Interfaith Council and the Los Angeles Maritime Institute. It is an educational adventure of connectionalism with youth of different faith backgrounds, including a combination of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Bahai, Hindu, and Quaker faiths. Youth work alongside one another onboard a tall ship, setting sails, steering the vessel, searching ahead for any perils, and discuss their experience over a meal. There are opportunities for day trips, and also week long trips during summer months. Team building, problem solving, decision making, planning, self-reliance, and leadership are just some of the skills gained on this day-long sail on the Pacific Ocean.

- Adaptation: Cooperative activities such as long term service projects would also provide an opportunity to gather young people of different faiths. Find a project that is meaningful to all gathered so that the shared experience will build bonds of friendship and understanding.
- Contact: scic@charterinternet.com or <http://lamitopsail.org/LAMI/index.html>

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, My Faith/Your Faith: Brings together 20 high school age teens from Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities in the New York City area for 15 sessions over the course of a year. Participants teach each other about their traditions, observe religious services at houses of worship, observe home rituals at each other's homes, and engage in service together. The goals of the program are: to encourage religious understanding through dialogue, learning and experiential

programming; to build friendship and understanding among the involved communities across lines of religious difference; to experience each other's faiths as they are lived in community; and to participate in service learning as a shared experience, exploring ways to put faith into action.

- Adaptation: This type of program might also be developed across denominational lines building deeper understanding among the various Christian communities in your town.
- Contact: Jacob Bolton, Director of Family Ministries at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, NY. Email: JBolton@fapc.org

Auburn Seminary's Face to Face/Faith to Faith: A year-long international, multi-faith youth leadership program sponsored by Auburn Seminary. During one phase of the program, teens from four different continents are brought together to work on interfaith issues at the NY Presbytery camp for 2 weeks.

- Adaptation: Use a local camp as a site for a week long gathering of young people from different faith traditions or denominations. Participate in regular camping activities as well as provide opportunities for each group represented to "teach" the other young people about their faith.
- Contact: Website: <http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/faithtofaith.asp?nsectionid=4&pageid=4>. Program Director- Manar Fawakhry. Phone: (212) 662-4315, Email: maf@auburnsem.org

ATTACHMENT C

Youth Task Force

What Works and What Doesn't Work in Youth Ministry?

General Patterns Gathered from Interviewee Responses

What Works (Is of value)?

- Inclusion of youth in all aspects of church
- Good communication to youth, parents of youth, and to congregation about youth
- A good, dedicated youth leader paid, educated, trained in most responses
- Real conversations without an authoritarian atmosphere
- Honest care for young people for acute youth experiences and feelings
- Good adult to youth ratio
- Youth share power and are nurtured into leadership positions
- Involved in worship through reading scripture, liturgical dance, and sharing with the congregation about special trips
- Food ministry (gatherings that include a meal, snacks or goodies)
- Youth plan activities themselves or assist in the planning and implementation
- Retreats (programming away from church and home)
- Well-organized; structured, prepared programs or ministries
- Non-judgmental, non-hypocritical atmosphere (as modeled by adults)
- Bridge from youth to young adult ministry—keep college students/young adults connected with “real” programs, opportunities, and communication
- Opportunities for fellowship offered on a regular basis where the church encourages simple conversation and gathering (this appears to be separate and in addition to planned programs)
- Not limited to walls of the church

What Does Not Work (Or is limited in value)?

- Too many commitments for youth; parents/families have not prioritized church for the family rhythm and schedule
- A changing landscape of how church should “occur” (e.g. It is not always the case that youth group should happen on Sundays or Church School on Sunday mornings)
- Youth not involved in all church activities—only youth activities (hinders exposure to the full spectrum of ministry and discipleship)
- Parents not involved in the church or not kept abreast of what’s happening in the church
- No training, support, nurture, care for volunteer youth leaders
- No real structure of support, compensation or accountability for professional youth workers (their call is seen as “second tier”)
- Adults not committed to transferring/sharing their faith and faith formation
- Adults who don't value their own faith or who feel intimidated by the possibility of sharing their faith, Christian experience or spiritual process.
- Too much play, not enough spiritual substance
- Too many different “visions” (opinions) about what the youth ministry should be