

The Biblical Basis for our Youth Ministry

EFCA Youth Ministries

Switch (Youth Church)

Ignite (Evangelistic Youth
Group) – Planning later

Before we start...

Why have biblical plans?

1. We need to know where we're going!

We need to be able to answer the following questions:

- What are we meant to do in our youth ministry?
- Why do we do what we do?
- How can we be the most effective in what we do?
- How do we measure or evaluate what we do?

If you aim at nothing, then you're sure to hit it!

2. If we don't have a biblical plan...

If we haven't worked out from the bible what it is that God wants us to achieve in our youth ministry, then it is unlikely our ministry - no matter how "successful" looking it is - will be of any value on God's kingdom.

Youth Ministry without a biblical plan might well follow this diagram:

The Starting Point: Our own ideas and plans "We can help solve the problems of youth"

Which leads to trying to meet the felt needs of?

- Youth who want fun, friendship, acceptance, etc
- Parents who want somewhere "nice" for their kid(s)
- The Minister who wants to attract families to his church, and for the kids to keep quiet during his sermon

- The elders, deacons, parish councillors who want numbers and results
- Ourselves who want to be successful, needed, and make a mark on the world

Therefore the goal becomes trying to keep everybody happy

Therefore the program will try and meet everyone's needs keep the kids coming / deal with the problems / resolve the conflicts / keep the wheel churning which will lead to tired, discouraged and unfaithful youth leaders

And people still aren't happy!

3. A biblical plan will mean:

The Starting Point

- Discovering God's ideas and plans
- A life and ministry immersed in prayer and applying God's word

This leads to meeting the real needs of youth to be saved, to be built as strong disciples and to be equipped as disciple-makers, to worship God ... etc.

Therefore the goals will be biblical goals, like:

- Evangelism
- discipleship
- accountability,
- shepherding
- equipping

Therefore the program will be a flexible reflection of the biblical goals

What methods does God say will meet the above goals?

Which will lead to regular evaluation i.e. are we really achieving what God wants us to achieve?

We will revise our ministry by our biblical goals, which guides all decision and programs.

4. A Biblical Plan establishes a direction

a) It is essential that our youth ministry know where it is going. If our youth ministry has a biblical plan (if we know “why” we do what we do), then our youth ministry has a purpose.

b) A biblical plan will shape and select the ministry choices and options that every youth ministry faces so as to accomplish biblical goals.

c) A biblical plan will shape the direction of a youth ministry so that the ministry as a whole will produce a product: it will train mature disciples and disciple-makers as the future leaders of the church.

d) A biblical plan will determine which activities you decide to do, and which you decide to do without. It will help you choose which programs are right for your group, and which ones are not.

5. A biblical plan defines success

A biblical plan will help us measure true success.. Numbers, fun, activity and excitement (as measures of success) will give way to biblical fruit, changed character, and lives that endure.

The true test of a youth ministry is to evaluate whether those teenagers still stand for Christ (and live totally for him) when they get out on their own after they leave youth ministry.

6. A biblical plan lays a foundation

A biblical plan (once established) will stand longer than the typical youth worker or volunteer leader. A biblical philosophy will lay a foundation that other workers can build on.

It will prevent a youth ministry from depending merely on one person.

7. A biblical plan communicates to leadership

A biblical plan for youth ministry (once established and written) will communicate to the Minister, other ministries, other pastoral staff, wardens, parish councillors, youth leaders, parents etc. what is going on in the program and what our youth ministry is trying to accomplish (and why it cannot do everything!)

Our Mission:

We exist to give glory and honour to our awesome God

Our Vision: Proclaim Jesus as Lord and equip youth to be passionate lifelong disciples of Jesus and to serve His community and His world"

1. Our Purpose - By loving Christ we seek to “Glorify (or honour) God”

Our overall aim for our lives - for any ministry is to glorify God...

To pursue God’s glory, to reveal God’s glory, to bring honour to his name

Isaiah 43:7 “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my Glory...”

Psalms 29:1-2, 85:9, 115:1

2. What is God’s Glory?

From the Hebrew word meaning: “heaviness, weight, or worthiness” It is used by men to describe their wealth, splendour or reputation.

God’s glory is where God’s very nature is revealed - when it can be shown, seen, experienced.

3. God’s glory is primarily revealed in Jesus

John 1:14 “We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father”

Hebrews 1:3 “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he

had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

4. Jesus pursues glorifying God

John 17:4 "I have brought you glory on earth, by completing the work you gave me to do"

When he shows God's power John 2:11

In his death John 12:27-33

In being raised to heaven 1 Tim 3:16

When he returns Mark 13:26

5. How do I glorify God?

a) Aim my whole life at glorifying God in everything

1 Corinthians 10:31, 6:20

b) Confess Jesus as my Lord

Philippians 2: 9-11

c) Confess sin.

Joshua 7:19 "Give glory to the Lord ... Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me"

Confession = agree with = say the same thing about sin as God does

The opposite is pride. Romans 3:23

d) By trusting God

Romans 4:20 "...about was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God"

6. So our overall aims in Youth Ministry...

John 15:8, 16 "This is to my father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples ... and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last"

Matthew 5:16 "... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise (glorify) your Father in heaven"

God is glorified when we "go and bear much fruit". The "fruit" we are to bear is the outward sign of the inward life that is flowing through us. It is the result of being a branch that is abiding in the vine. Part of the "fruit" that will last is our ministry to others. We want our youth ministry to be one where we "go and bear fruit ... fruit that will last"

What does God want us to achieve?

We will impact the world for Christ

By empowering students

To be passionate Disciples of Christ

1. The Biblical Mission

God has left one over-riding task for his church to achieve - to “make disciples of all nations”

(Matthew 28:18-20)

2. Our Youth Ministry Mission

a) We will support wholeheartedly the mission of EFCA East Lindfield - “To bring people to a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ through the gospel” (Colossians 1:28) “loving God with all our hearts, minds and souls and loving our neighbour as ourselves” (Matt 22:37-39) through, Loving Jesus, Teaching the bible, Building Community, Sharing the gospel, Loving the city.

b) We will always have as our main priority, strategy and method - to train and equip youth as disciples for a lifetime of active ministry. (Ephesians 4:12)

c) We will always have a vision for ministry that is wider than our own immediate program - so that we reach out into our community, across Sydney, and even to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

d) We will constantly evaluate both our own lives - and our ministry - by our biblical purpose and mission. (2 Corinthians 13:5) i.e. are we glorifying God? Are we making disciples? Are we Loving Jesus?

3. God has provided the methods!

We will trust God’s methods, and not our methods to achieve God’s purposes.

So.. What methods does the bible say will bring glory to God's name, and make disciples of all nations?

4. 5 Biblical Methods we will use:

a) We will grow in our personal godliness in all that we do (1 Timothy 4: 7-8). Who we are in Christ matters more than what we do in ministry. If our personal lives are not bringing glory to God, then our ministries never will.

b) We will be fervent in prayer (John 15: 7)

We will undergird everything we do with solid and consistent prayer, so that prayer characterises every aspect of our ministry.

c) We will depend on the power of God's Spirit (John 15:5)

Everything we do should reflect that without the very life stream of Christ flowing through us by his Spirit, then nothing we do will be of value in God's kingdom.

d) We will teach and model God's Word faithfully (2 Timothy 4:2)

The focus of our ministry will be to teach and preach God's word clearly, concisely, and with power in a variety of ways and formats.

e) We will trust that the gospel is God's power to save those who believe

(Romans 1: 16-17)

If we want to see people saved- and disciples built, then it is God's gospel - not our programming - that is the power to make that happens. Everything we do - our advertising our effort - our programming - our preaching - will reflect our trust in God's gospel.

3. How do we make disciples?

By bringing our friends to Christ;

By building each other up in Christ;

And by sending us out for Christ.

Start with the second step first!

Strategy 1

We will disciple and equip young Christians for a lifetime of active ministry (2 Timothy 1: 13-14)

a) This is our primary focus. We want to equip young Christians to be strong disciples and confident and faithful disciple-makers. This means we will invest a lot of effort in a relatively small number of kids, to equip them to “reach the masses” - rather than just trying to “reach the masses” ourselves from the word “go”.

b) We will build a discipling relationship with all young Christians who are faithful, available and teachable. (2 Timothy 2:2)

c) We will train and equip youth as disciples for a lifetime of active ministry. (Ephesians 4:12)

d) We will integrate and involve youth actively in our corporate worship (Hebrews 10: 24-25)

e) We will involve our Christian youth in ministry to the EFCA body.
(1 Peter 4:10)

f) We will equip our Christian kids so that they grow in dependence on God, but grow in independence from our “youth ministry”, and from their “discipler”. (John 3: 27-30)

g) We will encourage disciple making in other churches and youth ministries in Sydney. i.e Through networking, training, participation in RICE, WOL and other organisations.

h) We will never lose sight of the worldwide picture, and to foster and sponsor disciple making amongst all nations.

i) The test: How will they go in their life and ministry with Christ after they have left the sphere of our youth ministry?

Strategy 2

We will reach out with the gospel to non-Christian youth (Romans 1:16-17)

a) Our prime method of reaching unsaved youth with the message of Jesus is to train and equip our Christian students to reach their friends with the gospel. This is how the kingdom of God grows - one life at a time.

b) We will back up our Christian students in their primary evangelism by providing opportunities for them to bring their friends to a welcoming atmosphere where they will be challenged by the gospel. "A safe place to hear a dangerous message"

c) We will make gospel proclamation the focus of all we do at our Switch and Ignite Youth Ministries (Romans 1: 16-17)

d) We will evangelise at the local High Schools through SRE and other contacts or opportunities, like NTE mission teams.

(Romans 10:14-15)

e) We will reach out to local youth who currently have no contact with our ministries via missions or outreach events such as Ignite or other evangelistic opportunities. (Luke 19:10)

f) We will challenge all youth we contact to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith. (Acts 2: 36-38)

g) We will support and encourage gospel ministries throughout the world

Strategy 3

We will train Christlike students and leaders for a worldwide biblical ministry

(I Timothy 4:16)

a) We will train godly students and leaders with a vision and a passion for building a discipling relationship with others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

b) We will focus our student's evangelistic ministry in his or her own high school.

c) We will send biblically trained disciples and leaders to other St. Andrew's ministries, and to other churches and to the wider world (Acts 16: 9-10)

d) We will train and equip future Ministers through a "Leadership or Internship" training program (2 Timothy 2:2)

Now we've got the 3 key questions answered

1. Where does the program fit in?

Very simply, the program is what you see, week in, week out. This is what a young person will show up to.

- What a parent will drop them off at. This is where all our purpose, mission, vision, strategy and objectives "hit the road".

- But the program is not the important part of our ministry.

- It is only a temporary method to achieve unchanging objectives.

- That is, if our purpose, mission etc, are biblically based - then they will remain the same, irrespective of what happens in the culture we are ministering to. - But the program will change - according to what will most effectively achieve our ministry objectives at any given time.

- What worked well in 2013 may not work well in 5 years time and therefore may need updating.

2. Where do we put our energy?

Not only our ministry - but also our advertising - our program "on the day" - our emphasis - the time and effort our leaders are putting into things - must reflect our biblical goals.

3. How will we attract kids?

If the kids are coming primarily for a different reason than the reason we have in mind as to why we run the group (i.e. if we really want to teach them God's word - but they're primarily coming to have fun), then the natural result of this will be discipline problems and low interest in the bible content of our program.

Whatever is used to draw a young person to a group is going to have to be used to keep that young person in the group. Therefore we will use the gospel to attract young people to our groups - because that's what we're going to have week in week out to hold them there!

4. What is the aim of our programs?

The aim of our program is to draw a student from one level of ministry to the next. For e.g Start: Kids Church & Local Schools –Ignite on Fridays - Switch on Sundays – 11am or 5pm Service with adults and eventually connected with a Cell Group.