

The Six Components of Balanced Youth Ministry

Worship

Worship is an important and sacred part of any balanced youth ministry. Youth worship may be interactive and non-traditional. Organizing worship in a circle and inviting youth to share creates a powerful sense of intimacy. Youth may also find fulfillment in following the habits and styles of traditional Sunday morning worship in their congregations. Many youth groups worship as a group as well as lead Sunday morning worship for their congregation. Worship is a time and place where we can share our spirituality and caring with the larger community.

Leadership

Opportunities to develop leadership skills and then put them into practice are integral parts of youth programming. Learning to work together, facilitate, foster cooperation, and collaborate, youth become strong leaders in our congregations, communities, and in the larger world.

Justice and Service

Youth have passionate opinions about social issues. Justice and service programming is a way for youth to express and explore our values and put action behind our concerns. Justice and service projects are an important way for youth to put hands and feet on our principles. They can also be fun.

Learning

Almost every aspect of programming can provide learning experiences for youth. Curricula are great resources for learning. Small group ministry, covenant groups, or other venues can provide space for healthy discussion – sparked by the topic of a guest speaker, movie, or from youth's own experiences. Youth community is a safe place to expand our horizons and to learn more about the world around us.

Community Building

Honor our friends and loved ones, and the social aspects of youth programs. Community building, or socializing, is a time for people to get to know one another. This is the time to bond, share values, establish trust, generate intimacy, and practice acceptance. Community building is the time to share our liberal religious values by getting to know one another.

Youth-Adult Relations

The last but certainly not least important component of a balanced youth program is essential. Communities where youth and adults work together and have power with each other have huge potential. Multigenerational environments encourage all of the other components of youth programming. Youth and adults can learn from each other, worship together, build community, empower each other to lead, and make a difference in the world.