

Youth Ministry Checkup Checklist

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Introduction

Preventive medicine is always better than corrective surgery. Eating well is always better than the results of a lifetime of poor eating habits. Never starting smoking is always easier than stopping the ingrained habit. You get the picture.

This checklist will enable you to see how things are progressing in the youth ministry world you are a part of. It is intended to be a checkup where nobody but you and God are poking around. That way you can be honest. That way you don't have to defend something or someone you may not understand anyway.

Set some time aside to do this. It asks real questions so don't rush answers. An honest look will allow you to know your current health and how to improve it. If you start now you can look forward to long term health.

This applies to volunteers, part-time trained professionals, or full-time long term youth workers. It applies to anyone who is working with the goal of seeing young people serve Jesus the rest of their lives.

We have tried to remove any bias that may exist due to region, culture, church size, or the amount of time available for youth ministry. In short, this will have an application wherever you are ministering.

Once you have done the initial exam then chart out any course of change that is the result of the test results. Your personal ministry health and the health of the ministry you are a part of depend on it. Don't wait till you have a crisis to look for the cure. Start now. Truth sets you free if you apply it.

You will see many areas covered by this exam. Youth ministry isn't accomplished with five keys steps or nine programs. It is an organism, the body of Christ. So there are a lot of factors that determine the long term health of a youth group. Because there are so many factors, you can have a youth ministry that is growing and still not have one that is healthy. In the same sense, you can have one that isn't growing right now that is healthy and will grow in time. So take a look and learn.

The Gospel produces healthy people and groups. Your capacity to work alongside the Gospel and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will determine the ultimate strength, size, and health of your group.

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Skeletal Structure

Just how big and strong you get is dependent on four basic traits in your youth ministry setting. Of primary importance is the personal growth of the key leader. Are they growing in all the areas that life throws at them? Like Christ's house built on the rock (Matthew 7:24-28), any youth minister must have Christ's teachings as the core of their personal life. Ministry brings in the rain, wind, and rising waters at a sometimes alarming rate. Here are some areas that need to be explored. So if you are the primary leader, how are you doing? Mark with a check if your answer is yes, and then total the checks for each section.

- Is your relationship with God solid and challenging?
- How about the relationships you have with those in authority over you?
- Are your finances disciplined and stable?
- How is your spouse doing?
- Is your family growing in their spiritual lives?
- Are you growing in God's area of calling in your life?
- Total score for this section

If these are solid then you have something to pass on to others. As a leader, you must pass on life skills; not just how to preach a good sermon. If you aren't the primary leader, then how can you help them to succeed in these areas? All of life has to be stable and growing in order for a youth ministry leader to be long term and fruitful.

Good sermons and ministry skills are important and they are the second area of growth. Are you growing in your ministry skill levels and areas? Or are they the same as they were a few months or years ago? If you aren't involved in these areas, is someone properly trained and supported there?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sermons | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Campus ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff training | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discipleship | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Total score for this section |

Number three of the big four areas of skeletal development is the training of your staff people. You can't disciple more than a few students at a time. Somewhere in your efforts must be the equipping of additional leaders. To have a strong, long term healthy ministry you need about one leader for every 4 students you are trying to work with. Basic math says that you need about one staff for every four students.

If you are looking at numerical growth and health then you will always be training those you have and have a system in place to train additional staff.

- Do you have consistent training times?
- Do you have a system to train new leaders?
- Do you have leaders working in areas of gifting and calling?
- Do you have a functioning communication system that keep them informed and abreast of the ministry issues?
- Are you developing other leaders to replace you in a variety of areas?
- Total score for this section

For the fourth area of skeletal development let us look to the students that you are ministering to. Do they have the opportunities to grow in the levels of involvement that Christ calls them to. This means (from their beginning steps as pre-Christians to the leadership steps that budding full-time ministers need to take) that they can count on training and opportunities to grow in their faith just like you get because you're in the ministry now. Do they have opportunities in the following times of their lives?

- Pre-Christian "what is this new life?," exploration time?
- New believer's basic training?
- New believer's beginning ministry involvement-not the same things as more mature believers?
- Ministry opportunities that are consistent with the variety of gifts (this should be a large proportion of your yearly calendar)?
- Full time minister's ministry training track?
- Missionary training track?
- Vocational Christian ministry track?
- Total score for this section

As you can see this is a lot of work. That is another reason why you need so many co-laborers. Your size is determined by this. How much muscle you can eventually have is determined by this. Long term health is determined by this. So much is determined by these four factors that missing any one of them will limit what can be done in your situation.

Temptation comes when you realize that your personal growth and the growth of the staff is all unseen labor. People see your ministry skills and those of your students. They will pat you on the back for them. But you won't last long if you don't take the time to work behind the scenes and grow personally and corporately with the people God has given you to work with.

Total score _____ divided by thirty-two equals the average of _____.

Muscle

Muscles only come about by work, work, work, and more work in new ways. So here are the four key muscle development techniques that work alongside the skeletal development. If you are growing both at the same time they influence each other's development. So if your muscles are growing and developing they can increase the ultimate skeletal structure's size.

First is the area of evangelism. Biblical evangelism always begins with the "leave it all behind" message of repentance. If students aren't challenged to the full message you won't see the full results. You can't toss Jesus into their mess and see life changing results unless they give Him their lives to change.

- Is repentance a part of the invitation that you extend to the lost?
- Is repentance a part of the lifestyle the believing students and staff practice?
- Do people understand repentance well enough to share it in their message to the lost?
- Is the rest of your ministry consistent with the original "leave it all behind" call in the opportunities that are given to the students?
- Total score for this section

Next is the area of equipping. Are students and leaders equipped for all areas of life. Very few people are equipped, in as many areas, that life throws at them. Few families and fewer individuals have the capacity to give a solid foundation to anyone. You need tools for every area of life or they will be your downfall.

You need to work in harmony with families but not in ignorance of their capacity to do their job. Most parents are giving it their best efforts. Help whenever and however you can. Investing in parents will pay some of the highest dividends you can possible get. Are there opportunities for the following areas?

- Loving God-Basic training?
- Loving people-Basic training?
- Basic apologetics-Defending their faith in light of science, current events, and religion?
- Finances?
- Decision making?
- Anger and conflict?
- Thought life?
- Bible study methods?
- Ministry tools?
- Total score for this section.

Encouragement needs to be a fiber that runs throughout the muscle tissue. Developing new muscle is tiring and doesn't happen overnight. It is easier to quit than to continue. It is easier to look at the failures than the future. Hebrews 3:13 reminds us that it needs to be a daily event.

- Is everyone is encouraged to new levels of participation?
- Failures are never fatal but only stepping stones to new skills?
- Encouragement is given to all people at all levels?
- Everyone rejoices with those who rejoice and mourns with those who mourn?
- Encouragement is done through more than just verbal messages i.e. notes, awards?
- You celebrate the achievements of your students through special events?
- Total score for this section.

These evangelized, equipped, encouraged students and staff will need places and opportunities of employment in the Kingdom of God. That may end up being one of your largest challenges. How to keep all these student saints moving forward can be your biggest challenge.

- We provide opportunities for the new student?
- We provide opportunities for the established student?
- We provide opportunities for those called to church related ministry?
- We provide opportunities for those called to missions?
- We provide opportunities for those called to mercy ministries?
- We provide opportunities for those called to a helps ministry?
- We provide opportunities for those who are called to a vocational Christian life?
- We provide opportunities for those with special needs and personal limitations?
- We provide our opportunities in a timely manner?
- We provide growing opportunities for our new staff?
- We provide growing opportunities for our established staff?
- Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by thirty-one equals average _____.

Skin

Skin holds it all in. It gives you the distinctive of the location and the people that make up your expression of the body of Christ. Like any area of your body it can be healthy or sickly. These four key issues are often overlooked but they can never be ignored.

Are your students culturally relevant or are they culturally contaminated. Romans 12:2 calls us to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. In that change we still need to be able to maintain an audience with the lost. There is a danger of becoming a club that has an exclusive membership.

- We use a vocabulary that is easily understood by all.
- Our topics are relevant to the issues of everyday life.
- Lost people recognize our sincerity and genuine efforts.
- Our community knows who we are.
- Our schools know who we are.
- Our jails know who we are.
- Total score for this section.

Socially we have tried to eliminate the differences between the male and female. Biblically you dare not do that in youth ministry. You must recognize, understand, and program accordingly to see either gender flourish.

- You have separate events for the two genders.
- The two genders do not compete against each other.
- Each gender is given the opportunity to succeed independently of the other.
- Each gender has key leaders that are competent in gender specific issues and available to the students.
- Total score for this section.

Given the variety of people that God has created it becomes a challenge to help them to work together and to find their place in the body of Christ. If they are given the truth of who they are and how others are different they can function with a lifetime of service. These gifts are like diamonds in the rough. Each one starts in an immature form. But given an understanding of the gift and its place in the kingdom each student can flourish.

- Each student is given the opportunity to find their gifts.
- Each staff is given the opportunity to find their gifts.

- Each gift is honored and utilized.
- Each student is given the opportunity to mature in their gifts.
- Each staff is given the opportunity to mature in their gifts.
- Each student is given the opportunity to learn how to cooperate with those with other gifts.
- Each staff is given the opportunity to learn how to cooperate with those with other gifts.
- Total score for this section.

All of these issues come down to the point of the effectiveness of your method with the students you have (not the ones you wish you had or have had in the past). Is it all talk or do they get the opportunity to grow in their faith and ministry skills.

New converts get the opportunity to exercise their faith where their failures are not critical.
 Students have the opportunity to exercise their faith at any level of their spiritual maturity.

Your discipleship methods take into account the variety of backgrounds that your students have.
 Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by twenty gives you an average of _____.

Coordination

Coordination is not an automatic in anyone. It comes as all the body parts work in cooperation with each other. It is the same with any youth ministry. You can do an awful lot right BUT if you miss the coordination factor you can find yourself stumbling through opportunities instead of being able to take full advantage of them. You also may find yourself at odds with other parts of the body of Christ. Unity doesn't exist under those conditions and neither does Christ's blessing.

The first area of coordination is your ability to work with the whole church calendar. There is life outside of youth ministry. You must work within that framework to be a happy and healthy part of your local church.

- Do you plan the use of your local facility in cooperation with the rest of the church departments?
- Are your students involved in the other departments of your church in ministry?
- Is your youth ministry mission statement in harmony with the overall church mission statement?
- Do you utilize the existing church communication tools?
- Do you use your areas of expertise to better the other ministry departments?
- Are the big events of your local church also big events on your youth ministry calendar?
- Total score for this section.

Your youth ministry is dependent and intertwined with the local school campus calendar in a unique way. If you don't coordinate with them you will find yourself tripping over them on a regular basis.

- Do you get every school calendar event as soon as it is available?
- Do you take advantage of the scheduled school vacation days?
- Do you attend school calendar events when they further your ministry purposes?
- Are you involved on the school campus on their calendar terms?
- Total score for this section.

Stepping outside the realm of the school and the church you need to look at your local community calendar. Within those dates you may find opportunities to accomplish many of the youth ministry goals you have for your students without having to leave home.

- Do you obtain the community calendar at the earliest possible opportunity?
- Do you look for ways to further your youth ministry goals in your own community?
- Are you building on each year's use of the local calendar?
- Are you taking advantage the local events with evangelistic efforts?

- Does your church participate in local church networks?
- Do you participate in the local youth ministry network?
- Are there seasonal work issues that impact your community-harvest, mill closures, fishing seasons, tourist trades, etc..
- Total score for this section.

For each of us there exists a denomination that we affiliate with. They have opportunities that exist to further your efforts in youth ministry.

- Do you obtain the calendar opportunities at the earliest possible dates
- Are you cooperating with those opportunities that further your youth ministry goals?
- Do you seek help from the denominational resources that exist for you
- Total score for this section.

With all the great ministry plans that you have, how well do you communicate those opportunities to your students and their families? To see your students optimally involved you must inform them for each event at least six times with at least three different methods. Parents will have to be informed at least three different times to effectively secure their participation and understanding.

If you are new to a situation that number may actually increase whereas longevity and consistency will eventually allow you to reduce the number in some cases.

- Do you have an annual calendar that is given out before the new year comes?
- Do you have an annual calendar that is available on paper, web site, and through mailings?
- Do you have quarterly calendars that are full of details on the events?
- Do you mail to every student and parent/guardian on a consistent basis?
- Do you utilize personal phone calls as one of your communication methods?
- Do you have people who devote their youth ministry time to communication?
- Do you use video and PowerPoint presentations to communicate during meetings?
- Do you use drama to help promote future events?
- Do you use student testimonies to promote future events?
- Do you hand out printed materials at every possible opportunity?
- Do you advertise in the local school newspaper?
- Do you advertise on the local radio stations?
- Do you have home visitation as a part of your parental communication package?

- Do you have regularly scheduled parent information and training times?
- Do you communicate to the whole congregation through the existing bulletins?
- Do you communicate to the whole congregation through creative methods?
- Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by thirty-six equals an average of _____.

The Growth Plate

Growth always comes with a price tag. People make mistakes. Failure is written all over people's attempts in new areas. If there is an environment where that is accepted and understood the body can grow. As soon as people can't grow (as ugly as that can be sometimes) the growth plate disappears and you are destined to plateau at that height.

Peter is our Biblical example of someone who grew and what it took for him to do it. We can't expect it to be any easier or prettier today with your students or staff.

- Are people allowed to attempt and fail in their faith attempts (Mt. 14:22-23)?
- Are people allowed to attempt and fail in their progress in hearing God's voice (Mt. 16:13-23)?
- Do people experience Biblical forgiveness in line with Biblical repentance (Mk. 14:66-72)?
- Are students and leaders given the opportunity to grow beyond their past failures (Acts 2:28-39)?
- Total score for this section.

All of this growth doesn't automatically happen. We must work alongside the Trinity and their efforts on our behalf. If we do, we will establish a training regimen that produces fruit and change in our lives. Without it we will short circuit what God is trying to do with us and through us and to us.

Our services, retreats, ministry times, altar sessions, and structure must encourage the following to happen. If we don't make them a part of our structure the students and staff probably won't make it a part of their daily lives.

- People learn to respond to the promoting of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-9).
- People learn to enter God's presence (John 14:6).
- People allow God to comfort their hearts (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- People cooperate with God with the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2).
- People submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:17).
- People walk in the power of the Holy Spirit for life's challenges (Acts 1:8).
- People learn to enter God's presence (John 14:6).
- Total score for this section.

People who visit your group have overcome huge hurdles to come that far. How do you treat them? Do you have a way to follow up on their visit? These issues will determine if you take advantage of the growth that God is giving you.

- Visitors don't feel like strangers for long (Matthew 5:46-48).

- New people feel like they can participate (James 2:1-7).
- You track your visitors and do follow up with them (Luke 19:1-10).
- Visitors are put on our mailing lists and communication network (Romans 10:14-15).
- Total score for this section.

When someone accepts Christ you have uncovered a gold nugget in the stream. Don't stop there. Every new convert has lost friends. One new Christian could mean your group doubles in size in the next year.

- New converts are equipped to reach their friends (Mark 5:1-20).
- Water Baptism is utilized to reach a new converts friends (Luke 3:3-18).
- Events are regularly scheduled where the friends of a new convert can meet others from the church (Luke 14:12-14).
- Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by ten equals and average of _____.

Hearing

The more active a body becomes the greater the need to hear what is going on around it. Without hearing, problems occur. Fortunately we have been given a variety of sources of sound that enable us to hear what we need to in order to function successfully. As leaders we need to be able to hear the specific direction that applies to our group and we need to teach the students and staff the same skills.

- Do we enable people to respond to their conscience's guidance (John 16:5-11)?
- Do we enable people to respond to the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15)?
- Do we enable people to get and apply the truths of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15)?
- Do we enable people to learn from God's example of Creation (Romans 1:20)?
- Do we enable people to learn from Songs, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs (Ephesians 5:19)?
- Do we enable people to learn from those in Authority over us (Romans 13:1-7)?
- Do we hear what Donkey's have to say (for example Balaam's donkey, those unusual sources that we don't always expect to hear from)?

Total score _____ divided by seven equals an average of _____.

Vision

Without vision a body loses many of the opportunities it would have otherwise had. Vision for any part of the body of Christ is dependent on several things. Without these we won't see aspects of life the way God intended us to. With them we can see and move forward with all that God created us for-both individually and corporately.

- Do people see Jesus (Hebrews 12:2)?
- Do people walk in grace (1 Corinthians 15:9-11)?
- Do people give and receive mercy (Hebrews 4:16)?
- Do people understand biblical faith (Hebrews 11)?
- Do people seek the truth and its consequences (John 8:31-32 & Hebrews 12:11)?
- Do people understand the battle realities (Ephesians 6)?
- Do people see other people the way God does (Ephesians 6:12)?
- Do people know how to view their past?
- Do people know how to view their present?
- Do people know how to view their future?

Total score _____ divided by ten equals an average of _____.

Reaction Time

Get out of the way. Move your hand out from under the hammer. Put the brakes on before you get to the stop sign. These are all indicators of our reaction time. For a special drivers license that I had; I had to pass a test that showed that my reaction time was up to the new level of responsibility. As we grow and go we will need to sharpen our reaction time.

Without a good reaction time we are destined to heartache and trouble. With it we will miss a truck load of trouble that we never saw coming. Here are some of the key areas to examine our reaction time. Do we obey quickly (10) or slowly (0).

- How do we obey when working with new things?
- How do we obey when working with old things?
- How do we obey when working with easy things?
- How do we obey when working with difficult things?
- How do we obey when working with humbling things?
- How do we obey when working with those in authority?

Total score _____ divided by six equals an average of _____.

Endurance

Endurance is the ability to take your body to and through the next steps of life. “Looking Good” doesn’t mean anything if you can’t walk the talk. These are the issues that will impact the area called endurance. It takes time to get it and time to have it tested and proven. None of those are easy or necessarily fun. But if we have them, we have a greater capacity for life than anyone else.

- Do we provide Discipleship so people can Love God in all areas of life?
- Do we provide Discipleship so people can Love People in all areas of life?
- Do we provide Discipleship so people can succeed in all areas of Ministry?
- Total score for this section.

Discipleship forces apologetics. The deeper you go into the ways of God the deeper you must go into God Himself. He does just fine with the deeper exploration but we don’t always do it. If we don’t we will see unanswered questions become stumbling blocks instead of paving stones for the students and staff’s future.

- Do we provide Apologetics so people can Love God in all areas of life?
- Do we provide Apologetics so people can Love People in all areas of life?
- Do we provide Apologetics so people can succeed in all areas of Ministry?
- Culture verses Commands (Do people do what they do because of Christ or culture?)
- Does the group exhibit Social Maturity when they are together at the church?
- Does the group exhibit Social Maturity with other generations and genders?
- Does the group exhibit Social Maturity outside the church?
- Does the group exhibit Social Maturity with the lost?
- Does the group exhibit social maturity with other believers?
- Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by twelve equals an average of _____.

The Digestive Tract

Eating is a necessary part of living. In fact the more you do with life the chances of increasing your consumption and variety go up. We must learn how to eat in a variety of settings and situations. If we don't we won't have the quick energy we need to do the everyday things of life; let alone face the crises that life guarantees.

- Are you creating picky eaters-Those who can only listen to a certain style of preaching or teaching (usually yours)?
- Meal Plans-Do people have a personal, regular, healthy eating schedule from God's word?
- Gag reflex-If they eat something that is bad do they throw it up and out?
- Do you feed them from the full buffet of God's word or only from what's easy to prepare or your favorite dishes?
- Are they always hungry or are they content with what they know?
- Healthy Bowel Movements-Shedding the waste products of life is a needed part of life. Do they have a mechanism to do that?
- Total score for this section.

Included in the internal organs are those that draw the pollutants out of the system. They aren't pretty organs but we die without them. The liver, kidneys, and others fall into this category. They are no less essential in the body of Christ.

- Do people have regularly opportunities to confess and forsake their sin?
- Do people have regular opportunities to deal with their thought life?
- Do people have opportunities to cleanse their hearts, hands, and homes?
- Do people have the opportunities to mend relationships and maintain unity?
- Total score for this section.

Total score _____ divided by ten equals an average of _____.

Heart

Beyond endurance is the heart that beats in any human or body of Christ. The heart gets developed as the personal aspects of an individual's life come into perspective. If they are strong and developing, they can motivate a person to keep moving forward no matter what the obstacles. Without it, too many give up too soon and never see the results in life or ministry that the Gospel produces.

Self-starters are people who have it. Coach potatoes don't know where to find it. What makes them different? The following issues will enable you to see the heart become healthy in your students and staff.

- Do people have the opportunity to learn and live their personal calling?
- Do people have the opportunity to overcome their personal challenges?
- Do people have the opportunity to find and develop their personal gifts?
- Do people have the opportunity to deal with their personal background?
- Do people have the opportunity to develop their own personal networks?
- Do people have the opportunity to passionately express their worship to God?
- Do people have the opportunity to pray for extended periods of time?
- Do people have the opportunity to give sacrificially to Christ's causes?

Total score _____ divided by eight equals an average of _____.

Ribcage

Having a fragile heart forces another issue. Most of the heart issues can't be provided for in a large group context. Instead they are best fostered and grown in small groups. In one respect small groups are those protected areas (like the rib cage that protects the human heart) where people all have names and everyone can honestly know each other.

Here are some areas that need a small group's safety. There is no one way to do small groups. How you do it isn't as important as the fact that each student and staff has a place where they can work on heart issues-a protected place.

- Do small groups exist for new staff?
- Do small groups exist for existing staff?
- Do small groups exist for new students to join?
- Do small groups exist for the guys by age group?
- Do small groups exist for the gals by age group?
- Do small groups exist for the crisis student?
- Do small groups exist for parents?
- Do your Short Term Mission groups function as small groups?
- Do you have seasonal small groups for the seasonal student or staff?
- Do your ministry teams function as small groups?

Total score _____ divided by ten equals an average of _____.

Crisis Capacity

Crisis is a part of life. Each experience can be one that you grow from or they can often destroy individuals as well as the corporate body of Christ. Most of us know someone who has not dealt well with a crisis. It became their entire life instead of something that should have only been a paragraph or chapter.

A good ribcage system can minimize the impact a crisis has. In those safe settings there exists a natural group to care. Learning how to deal with these issues is an on going training process. Do you have one in place?

- Do you have people who can work with young men through their crisis issues (Ephesians 4:26-27-Anger, Etc.)?
- Do young men have opportunities to get equipped for their crisis issues before they become problems?
- Do you have people who can work with the ladies through their crisis issues (John 4:1-29-Relationships. Etc.)?
- Do young ladies have the opportunities to get equipped for their crisis issues before they become a problem?
- Do you have people who can help families deal with their crisis issues (Mark 5:1-19)?
- Do you equip students to deal with the crisis that exist perpetually in our world (Matthew 24)?
- Do staff have avenues to receive help for their crisis issues?

Total score _____ divided by seven equals an average of _____.

Adrenal Gland

This little gland makes a big difference in the human body as well as the body of Christ. It represents the capacity to activate the body to action. In the spiritual body it is too often connected to our concept of money. If we have it we are happy to do all kinds of things. If we don't have it we assume it can't be done.

A properly functioning adrenal gland helps the body to make progress no matter what kind of financial situation you find yourself in.

- When no funds are available do you still do as much research, planning, and praying as you can about the project?
- When some funds are available do you have adequate plans in place so that the money is spent wisely and in pursuit of the project?
- When all necessary funds are available do you stick to your plans and see the project through to completion?
- Do you make decisions based on faith (God spoke to you) or finances (what you can count and see)?
- Can you account for all monies spent?
- Could you help others plan and prepare for their projects from God?

Total score _____ divided by six equals an average of _____.

Danger Symptoms

These are some of the symptoms that spell danger in any youth ministry setting. These aren't based on size. They are often seen very quickly by outsiders who are observing the group. Those closest to the youth ministry may not be the ones to answer these questions. Each one is the basic question, "Do you see these traits in this group?"

- Pride
- Rebellion
- Jealousy
- Greed
- Selfishness
- Inhospitable
- Unbelief
- Immorality
- Lust-Too much too soon too fast too often
- Lazy
- Sarcasm and cynicism
- Dishonesty

Total Score _____ divided by twelve equals the average of _____.

Each one of these is the result of some other area of neglect but they do mean something is wrong somewhere. Look it over and make the necessary changes. A thorough examination will save you volumes of heartache and trouble. Ignoring these issues will guarantee problems for you and those who follow after you. Don't miss the benefits of a healthy youth ministry.

What is a Healthy Youth Ministry anyway?

A healthy youth group isn't determined by a certain size. It isn't determined by how many people are receiving Christ each month. Nor is it determined by any one factor you can determine quickly.

Healthy youth groups begin with what they have and (individually and corporately) grow towards the life that Jesus gave us to live. If we live that life, as individuals and a group, it will in time produce others who will do the same.

When that happens is dependent on the spiritual condition of the people in your particular area and the past work of others. If your area has had a generation of good watering (prayer) and planting (sharing of God's truth and love through deed and word) then you may have the privilege of harvesting a large number in a short time. If no one has worked there before you, then you have a lot of unseen work to do.

You may live in an area where there is a heavy influence from a church that isn't Christian. The last youth worker may have slept with a student or stolen money. Your community may be known for its huge transitory welfare population. All of these factors can slow the progress of your efforts.

Typically, a youth group that is only maintaining its population will have about ten percent of the church population. So in a church with one thousand on a Sunday morning having one hundred students may just be maintenance and not growing at all. Or if the congregation has one thousand (all over sixty in age) then that one hundred could be a very healthy and vibrant group.

You can't pin it down quickly or easily. You have to look at the health indicators. This checklist will help you to accomplish that. This is no time to try and polish a trophy. It's just a time to look and learn. Growing people make a growing, healthy youth group possible. Let's see how it works.

Scoring the Questions

To come away with any kind of understanding of the health factors we have established a rating scale. Each level is explained and given a number value. They are as follows:

0---Wasn't aware of the issue and haven't addressed it. (Taking this exam brought this area to your attention)

2---We are in the early stages of frustration in this area. (You aren't sure where to turn or what to do about this one but you are aware of it)

4---We are experimenting with this area. (You have begun to try and install some kind of health factor in this area)

6---This area is stable. (You have some mechanism or person that is allowing this to work at this time)

8---This area is stable and growing. (You have a mechanism or person that is proving to work consistently and with increasing health)

10---This area is flourishing. (You are reaping the results of an established Integral part of the youth ministry)

As you can see there can be a large spread between points. Good. That will allow you to see where you still have some work in front of you. Work is always involved when change and growth is involved.

You can see that it is good to average a seven or better for each area in order to see health as a long term reality. Any areas below that aren't healthy for the long term even if the group has grown in numbers. Address those areas with the lowest numbers first in the order of importance. For example, a low score in the skeletal area needs attention before a low score in the skin does. A low score in the muscle area needs attention before one in the hearing area.

Each area is critical but just as in first aid; you have to stop the bleeding before you can fix the broken leg. You will also have to look at areas you can accomplish while you are waiting for opportunities to work on the others. For example, you may not have any staff right now. Until you get some you can't work specifically on that area. You can prepare for the time when you will have them but until then you can address other areas.

Don't stop doing what has been done to work on a different area at the expense of healthy areas. The last section can help you to chart change and see a healthier ministry develop.

Christ calls His church the Bride. Getting her ready for the Bridegroom is our goal. Learn from the exam. Chart your course and get ready for the wedding!

The Prognosis and Treatment Plan

Look at each one of the areas that the exam has covered. For ease of treatment go ahead and put the averages for them here.

Average Scores:

- Skeletal Structure
- Muscle
- Skin
- Coordination
- Growth Plate
- Hearing
- Vision
- Reaction Time
- Endurance
- Digestive Tract
- Heart
- Ribcage
- Crisis Capacity
- Adrenal Gland
- Danger Symptoms

A range of 0-5 in an area is reason for concern and should place this area near the top of a priority list. Areas in the 5 to 7 range need work but may work for now. Areas with a 7 or greater may be healthy enough to help pull the other areas along for a while but can't be counted on to do it forever if the others areas are ignored.

To begin to see health come to an area you have taken the first step by identifying it. Next, you need to make quantifiable goals. For example, if you haven't had a staff meeting in three months, schedule one for two weeks and then put them on the calendar for every two weeks for the next three months.

If you haven't put together an annual calendar, then make your goal for the next two weeks of getting all the necessary information together so you can. Then have a finished calendar within a month. These are examples of qualitative goals. Without some way to measure success in your treatment it is too easy to give up and just go back to the way it was.

If you are a volunteer and you lead this ministry your progress may be slower than someone who

has more time to devote to the treatment process-but maybe not. Smaller boats turn much quicker than bigger ones do. So size isn't for you or against you.

It becomes the basic practice of prioritizing, getting a plan, planning to work, and working the plan. Then check the results and modify the plan as needed. Just don't stop working. Until you put something on a calendar and follow through on it you are just dreaming, not making progress.

When possible take advantage of your strengths to address your areas of weakness. For example if you are doing a good job of communication and coordination then let your needs be known and you may find that there are people just waiting to fill the gaps and become a part of the ministry.

If your strength is found in your muscles maybe you can change one activity to information gathering for a yearly calendar (if that is an area of weakness). For me I was not very pastoral with the students by gifting. Instead I was pastoral with the students when they were with me on the mission trips (five a year) which were an outlet for my gift of evangelism.

For my staff my pastoral contribution came because of my administrative gift which enabled me to meet with them regularly. It was in those regularly scheduled times that their issues could be dealt with and their challenges for growth could be met.

Once you have started to see health come to certain areas of the ministry then re-identify the weak areas and address them. Your treatment plan will continue until you have established health in all areas.

This process is perpetual. You aren't the only one who has to work on it either. As long as it gets done you are providing a healthy body that will begin to reproduce itself and generate its own healthy habits and traits.

Does it look like a black hole for energy and time? If you keep your life healthy and growing you will be able to do what is possible. That gives God the freedom to bring in more workers and do what you can't do. You will find that establishing each of these areas in a flourishing way will perpetuate healthy growth. Growth that in time will be translated into numbers and stories that you will relish in the telling.

Don't neglect your primary areas of personal growth and health. What we have described here is true for individuals, families, youth groups, churches, para-church organizations, ministry teams, any living, breathing expression of the body of Christ.

After all, if we don't have health what do we have?