SUBMITTED BY
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Keine Stimmen

Young people's group and community youth work



You youth leaders do an outstanding job! I think it's great to see the passion and commitment with which you often fight Saturday after Saturday for children and teenagers in your age groups!

Congratulations!

How you try to make them into disciples in a very experiential and imaginative way and how you struggle to ensure that they develop as such in a strong and healthy way. I congratulate you on this exemplary and admirable commitment.

Overview

However, when you work and fight with such total concentration and all your strength, there is a danger lurking. The danger is that you lose sight of the big picture and only see yourself and think you are fighting alone in the field. It was similar for Elijah. He threw himself completely into the fight. He spared nothing. In a weary phase, he reckoned with God: I alone stand up for you in a skillful, qualified and enthusiastic way. God had to correct him: there are others besides you. I value them too.

Let us remind you: besides you, there are others who are working in their own way and just as passionately for children and young people.

For example, the staff in the childcare service. You laugh. What can they contribute to the kingdom of God? Think about it: children experience church for the first time in the crèche service! It is said that the strongest imprint is made in the first six years, i.e. at the age at which the children romp around in the crèche. This means that nursery work, which is often held in such low regard, has an extremely important strategic function. The child experiences community for the first time in the crèche. And what do they experience there? A cozy atmosphere? A warm and welcoming nursery staff? Is it always just older women or also men and young women and men?

In addition to you, the Sunday school staff are also committed to children. At the teen, youth and young adult level, there are others who are concerned about the lives of young people. So you are not alone. You don't have to carry the burden alone. There are others. Some others! They also only want one thing: to fulfill the mission.

One goal - different paths

And all in their own way. Just to their level. Sometimes there is a danger that we idolize one way, one methodology, one type. I, for example, am an action person. Something always has to happen. Experiences, adventures, that's where I feel right at home. In that sense, of course, I'm a youth club

type and fit in well with you. But not everyone is like me and you. There are young people who feel overwhelmed when I show up with my punch. They value peace and quiet, intellectual adventure, discussion, dialog, leisure and the arts more. But they also want to be taken seriously and accompanied in their own way. That's why it makes a lot of sense and accommodates the different characteristics of young people to work in a different way in the youth group than in the teenage area or at the young adult level in the youth group.

But everyone wants and should want one thing: To make disciples!
Therefore, all these considerations have consequences!

RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER

This will have a positive influence on the climate in church youth work if the teams show each other the necessary appreciation. Why not invite each other to a meal from time to time, give each other gifts and approach each other in a respectful and appreciative way. And don't forget the crèche service and Sunday school.

Accept differences

Active people and high achievers are in demand today. They are in demand. There are many such highly esteemed rippers and leaders in the young people's teams. But what would a "community world" full of doers be like? The hectic pace would become unbearable. God does not only work through leaders. We should also practise accepting and appreciating quiet young people, dreamers, the artistically gifted and those who are not so willing to take risks.

Joint planning

We have said that everyone is pulling in the same direction. So that everyone is pulling in the same direction, it makes sense to plan together. Organize one or two planning meetings per year. Agenda ideas are presented but before everything is finalized. Goals are set and coordinated. In 1993, for example, the focus is on a smooth transition from one group to another with as few losses as possible.

Employee coordination

Sometimes there is a useless scramble for capable potential employees. Unnecessary, because such tug-of-war usually leaves unpleasant traces. Especially in the area of collaboration, cooperation is urgently needed if the common goal is to be achieved. Think about it: what good is it if excellent work is done by top-class people at the youth level, but it becomes dull at the teenage level? The result will be that many will drop out after the youth group. But the other side of the coin can also often be observed: flourishing youth groups or teenage clubs with brilliant teams. But in the area of youth groups, there is a complete lull. The goal is not being achieved there either.

Be prepared to pass on staff

If youth groups are too intellectual and well-behaved, it may be because there is no "youth group type" in the team. You can grumble about this for a long time. Things will only change if a young person with the right gifts joins the team. Why not replace employees? An experience-oriented action type in the JG and a JG'ler in the JS. Both will broaden their horizons. Why not borrow employees for certain lean periods? In any case: Talk to each other about staff shortages and staff problems.

Cooperation

There is still a lot of ground to be gained in this area. Let's return to the childcare service. Young schoolchildren, teenagers and youth greeters could get involved. The young children would get an early impression of a young, dynamic community that is attractive to men and women. Youth greeters take over a youth service afternoon to relieve the youth service team.

Such mutual services strengthen the sense of togetherness to an unimagined degree.

Especially in the areas of evangelism and social services, cooperation can be realized quickly. A youth group chops up all the Christmas trees in the village. The youth group is involved. Another helps to clear up a forest. Here, too, YG members and TC members can lend a hand. A youth group organizes a village games festival. The JG and the TC are there to help. The members of the individual groups would meet early on and again and again in a natural way.

Prayer meetings

Tensions repeatedly arose between a JG and a JS team. They decided to meet together for prayer. The friction stopped immediately. They began to pray for each other, fight for each other and serve each other. This is the best prerequisite for achieving the common goal.

I would like to touch on one topic in particular: Transitions. Time and again, young people drop out between the individual groups. This does not always have to be the case. How can transfers be made easier?

Transfers

Cooperation

One of the simplest means is the aforementioned frequent cooperation and joint activities. In this way, the children and young people get to know each other early on. For example: JG members come along to the Whitsun camp and help with the organization and design. Or older youths are invited to a TC or JG weekend. This is how relationships grow.

And relationships are the best prevention against dropping out.

However, this does not only apply to JS-TC or JS-JG. Relationships already grow in the nursery. JS employees who are present in the nursery or Sunday school from time to time build bridges to children who have not yet joined JS.

1. **Open door evenings**

   The JG organizes evenings to which TCers or Jungschärler are invited. The parents present themselves to the youngsters in a humorous, eventful way.
2. **Taster sessions**

   For some time before transferring, the youngster visits the next higher group from time to time. The leaders accompany him. Ask how he likes it. Absorb any frustrations. Stay in contact with the leaders of the next higher group and pass on feedback. In this way, you gradually get used to the climate and dynamics of the new environment.
3. **Mailing**

   Three months before transferring to a new group, funny, appealing mail is sent to those joining under the motto: "90 days to go, then ...". Perhaps combined with a competition about the new group. Mail again two months before transfer, etc.

   Or the group prepares a small brochure in which it introduces itself. This is sent out some time before the transfer date.
4. **Visits**

   A tried and tested method is a visit. All participants in a group swarm out and visit those who are about to transfer. Some time after the transfer, they are visited again and asked how they

like it.

5. **Transfer festival**

   Then I suggest actual transfer festivals. Every year, a big festival takes place on a very specific date (similar to confirmation).

   JS students in a certain year join the TC or the JG, and TC students join the JG. We say goodbye and welcome them in a cheerful, humorous way. Junior staff can also be deployed at this festival.

6. **Role model**

   The role model is important. Where youth group members attend the youth group regularly and enthusiastically, the youth group members will do the same. You are also a role model when you talk. How do you talk about the TC or the YG? Depending on this, the willingness to transfer is encouraged or hindered.

7. **Concept**

   All these suggestions are of little use if there is no clear concept for overall youth work. Which group covers what? How is the year divided up? There are various possibilities.

Management responsibility

One final note:

The ultimate responsibility for everything that happens in church youth work lies with the church leadership.

Where this responsibility, this coordination and cooperation described above does not take place, take the first step. First to the church leadership, then to the other groups.

6 Youth club and community youth work

References:

Contents: Annual focus 1993 "Community", Peter Blaser, Siegfried Nüesch, Martin Bihr, Hansruedi Tanner, Ueli Obrist, Johannes Wallmeroth, Peter Schulthess

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Material
A lot of work

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