

Youth Sabbath School Assistant

A ministry description for local church leaders

Introduction

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Paul describes the church as Christ's "body" (Eph. 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church.

You experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church; the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world's needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation. Thus, the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is "a kingdom of priests" (I Peter 2:9). Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. A youth leader, like any other church officer, is a ministering servant of God. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

As a youth ministry leader it is important that you see teens as an important part of the present church, not just the church to come.

Duties of the Youth Sabbath School Assistant

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she agrees to help in the youth division of the Sabbath School often includes the following:

1. **Teaching.** It will often be your job to teach the youth Sabbath School lesson. In smaller churches this will probably be done with the entire group together. In big churches the large group may break into several smaller "classes," each with its own teacher. Skills in group process and learning styles are essential to this task. And it takes adequate preparation time. You cannot expect to minister effectively to the needs of teenagers if you simply glance over the teaching materials at the last minute. The North American Division Sabbath School curriculum for teens is quite demanding because it deals with the difficult issues of life: sexuality, occupations, the meaning of life, death and dying, ethics, etc. You cannot teach it with casual preparation. You cannot significantly touch the lives of your teens by finding an "easier" set of materials to use.
2. **Programming.** Perhaps once a month or one month of each quarter you will have the responsibility of planning and organizing the special features and group activities during the first half of the youth Sabbath School. This usually includes music, an opening prayer, time for the teens to share and mix, and an educational or spiritual feature such as

a guest speaker, a film or video, a role play, a panel discussion or a learning game or simulation. There are program helps in the Youth Ministry Resource Magazine and they can be found in other resource materials from Christian publishers. The best programs include a lot of participation by the teenagers both in planning and implementation.

3. **Spiritual helper.** Teenagers may come to you asking that you act as a bridge between them and their parents. Often teens are very shy and you will want to preserve their dignity. Listening skills are important!

4. **Teamwork.** Group members need to know that they can depend on you and that your attendance and participation will be regular. You must take the time to communicate regularly with your division leader and the others involved. You may be asked to attend a planning session once a quarter, and this is a significant time to share insights about the needs of your teens, get your signals straight and coordinate calendars. The youth will pick up on confusion and disagreement between adult leaders, and this will dampen their involvement.

5. **Music.** You may have special talents with the piano or guitar, or even in organizing and leading a choral group. If so, that is undoubtedly the reason you've been asked to help with the youth Sabbath School! Music is an important part of worship and fellowship for teenagers, but they find it difficult to respect and get involved in a poorly run, traditional "song service." Music ministry with youth requires creativity and up-to-date resources. Use the youth hymnal—He Is Our Song (Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1988). If you would like to start a praise team, try the Step by Step song service (see below).

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

7 Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence, by Jim Feldbush and William Hurtado.

ABZ's of Adventist Youth Ministry, editor Stuart Tyner. Everything you need to know about youth ministry.

Beyond the Edge, by Sarah Kelnhofer. Contains 52 mission stories from the front lines, plus a three-part activity section for children following each story.

Called to Stand Apart, from the White Estate. Ellen White's counsel to teens in fresh, updated language.

ChristWise Discipleship Guide for Youth and ChristWise Leader's Guide, by Troy Fitzgerald.

Do It Right, by D. C. Edmond. Answers to questions teens have about dating, love, sex, and relationships—from his popular advice column in Insight magazine.

Expect Great Things: How to Be a Happy, Growing Christian, by Richard O'Ffill. A template for successful Christian living, with the goal of being like Jesus.

Faith in the Balance by Roger Dudley and Bailey Gillespie. Reports on the largest study of Adventist youth ever completed, the Valuegenesis survey. Identifies key issues in youth ministry and how to respond to them.

Insight is the weekly magazine for Adventist teens packed with stories, features, creative youth outreach project.

Step by Step: Praise Team System for Youth Groups by 2 FOR 1 Ministries, Inc. A comprehensive, participatory resource. Contains notebook, video, CD, computer disks.
Straight Talk: How Teens Can Make Wise Choices About Love and Sex, by Loretta Spivey. Young Adventists share their testimonies about extramarital sex and resisting temptation.

The Family & Youth Ministry, by Fred Cornforth. 60 ideas on how to involve families in Youth Ministries.

Who Cares? A-Zillion Ways You Can Meet the Needs of People Around You, by Linnea Torkelsen. A great collection of services ideas.

Why Our Teenagers Leave the Church: Personal Stories from a 10-Year Study, by Roger Dudley. Find out why they leave and what keeps some of them in the church.

Youth Apprenticeship Packet. How to get youth involved in local church leadership.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org/youth for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.