

CANADA YOUTH 2018

July 2-7, 2018

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver

Canada Youth 2018 – Youth Ministry 101

REV. JACQUI FOXALL - FACILITATOR

Overview

Jacqui Foxall was the workshop facilitator for *Youth in Ministry 101*. She is the minister at Knox Presbyterian Church in Oakville.

Introduction

The workshop began with some basic questions which should be asked at the start of every workshop:

- Who are you?
- What is your context?
- What are you hoping to learn today?

The Situation Facing Many Youth Leaders & Churches Today

Jacqui Foxall then presented some basic facts:

- We tend to **entertain children/youth in Sunday School** more than anything else. We are very good at hyper-entertaining the youth and then expect them to (1) sit in the pew when they turn 18; and (2) be contributing members to the congregation
- 48% of youth confirmed leave the church afterwards
- In the 18-29 year-old range, 58% of young adults drop out of church attendance.

(Note – this is not a new problem and was the main reason why I skipped Sunday School when I was growing up. At the same time, activities that complement or re-inforce the learning are extremely useful. What qualifies as “activity” or “entertainment” often depends on the leader.)

Combined with that tendency is the fact that congregations are often unrealistic in their expectations of youth leaders. Too often, the youth leader is seen as a **mythical superstar**:

- Really understands the youth
- Is an enthusiastic leader
- Knows all about contemporary music
- Can keep up with the youth – i.e., physically fit – gym – knows video games, etc., etc., etc.
- Can inspire youth and get them committed to coming.

According to Ronald Martinson, “The history of primarily calling inexperienced and inadequately trained young people to do youth ministry reflects the myth that youth ministry is a beginner’s job that doesn’t require much education, experience or skill. Nothing could be farther from the truth. **Youth ministry is one of the most demanding ministries.**”

The result, unfortunately, is that churches put *too much* pressure and expectations on their paid staff which causes ministries to fail and worse yet causes **youth leaders to burn out. The average length of time in a church is 18 months!**

The sad thing is that anything that happens in 18 months can be undone.

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One Response

What churches need to do is re-think youth ministry – or rather approach the ministry *systematically*.

- Every youth should have 1 adult in the congregation who is committed to them.
- Hand responsibility to youth before the plan for youth ministry is in place. (can't remember if this is a good idea or not – think it is good to get their input before finalizing any plan, but responsibility? Maybe not until after the plan has finalized.)
- Youth ministry is the **church's** ministry, not just that of specialists who can “relate” to young people.
- “The mandate to be **there** for young people belongs to the **Christian community** not to any individual or group of individuals” (Kendra Dean)
- “Youth ministry is not an event but a **process**” (Barry St. Clair).
 - Someone may play soccer when they are healthy, and then quit – this is an activity
 - Church is a life-long experience, however – not an activity.

What we need to do is develop a system that supports youth ministry. Systems require two basic components:

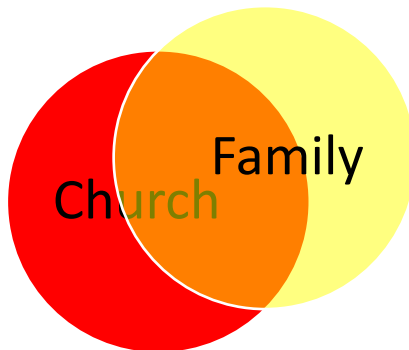
- Architecture – creating the structure that will sustain the ministry
- Atmosphere – this is the culture, the climate, the ethos

This system has measurable structure – and is done by the congregation, not by youth leaders.

The Orange Model

This “Think Orange” model was developed by Reggie Joiner – see the website (<http://thinkorange.com/>) – they even have curriculum.

- In this model, the church is red – the family is yellow. Look what happens when, together, they work to reach youth.



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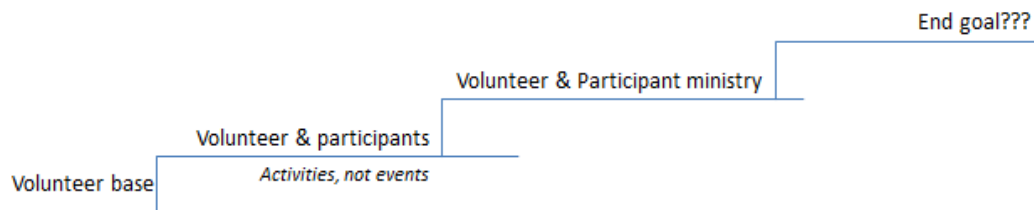
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The Lock System

You can google “ministry architects” for more information on this and other systems but think of locks governing travel in the seaway.

- **Lows** – where we are
- **Top** – where we want to go – and this is *not* the number of youth we have in 5 years!



Reminder (or note) – **Events** have **covenants**, not values. **Processes** have **values**.

Building Your “Home” (Youth Ministry)

Introduction

You need both **control documents** and **visioning** statements.

Control Documents

- Youth directory
- 12 month planning calendar
- Recruiting needs and lists
- Job descriptions – what is expected of each volunteer
- Org Chart

Visioning Statements

- Vision / Mission statement
- 3-year goal
- Clear statement of values

Building Youth Ministry

- Blue Prints These are the Control Documents and Visioning Statements
- Concrete Do we know our youth? Do we know our values?
- Wallpaper Curriculum

What do you want your house to look like?

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Sample Vision Statement (with goals)

Mission Statement

The Youth Ministry of Joins Jesus Christ on a life-long journey that seeks to actively engage each other and our community in fun, faith formation and learning.

Long-Term Goals

By 2012, we expect:

- 1. That we will establish a training program for our volunteers and leaders.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Establishing a deeper volunteer base of individuals who are interested in attending youth ministry conferences locally and nationally; explore in-house, local, national and international training options.
- 2. That all willing and eligible participants and leaders of our youth ministry will register for Canada Youth 2012.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Explore particulars of the event, identifying the number of participants who will be able to attend, and determine need for fundraising.
- 3. That we will implement ways of involving the interests and gifts of Youth in the worshipping life of the congregation and community.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Determine the interests and gifts of the youth ministry team and participants, and then engage worship opportunities available through trial-and-error.
- 4. That we will participate in ten (10) programs and organizations in the community.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Explore the outreach opportunities available and participate in at least 3 such opportunities.
- 5. That we will employ a Full-Time Director of Youth Ministry and equip them with two volunteer “co-leaders” for Youth Ministry.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Advocate for the employment of a Full-Time Director of Youth Ministry and, in the meantime, suggest an increase in the hours of the part-time Youth Leader by a minimum of 5 hours per week. Youth Ministry Team will identify two potential co-leaders to support the Youth Leader.
- 6. That we will seek to deepen the relationships between the Session and our Youth Ministry.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: Implement a joint Session and Youth event, featuring the sharing of a meal, which fosters the creation of new friendships.
- 7. That we will have 25% of the church’s database indicating youth (grades 6-12) participating regularly in Youth Ministry.**
 - Year One BENCHMARK: That we will have 15% of our database indicating youth (grades 6-12) in our church that participate regularly and conduct an informal survey of the youth database to determine reasons for participation and non-participation. Continue encouraging youth to “bring friends”

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Values

- **Christ Centered:**
 - Using Scripture as our foundation, we seek to be more like Jesus, living out the fruits of the spirit, remembering that God is the centre of everything we do.
- **Fun:**
 - Enjoying ourselves in our work, play and while learning about Jesus Christ.
- **Growth:**
 - Growing in faith and knowledge as it relates to Jesus, ourselves, and the world around us.
- **Love:**
 - We show compassion, concern and care for others because we first have been loved by Christ.
- **Mission:**
 - We express our faith in specific, tangible acts of service, particularly to those in need.

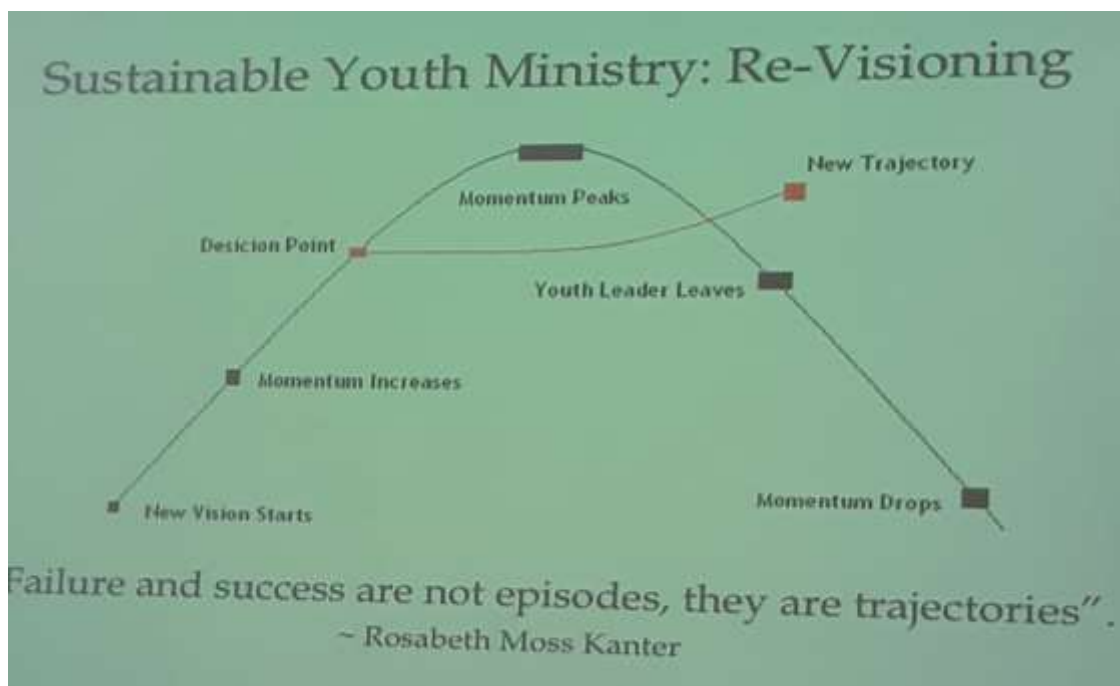
Everything should be filtered through the Vision/Mission. For example:

- If the youth are doing something at a Bazaar – ask why? – What is the goal?
 - Perhaps to strengthen *relational* bonds – one older person plus three youth
 - Perhaps *financial* bonds – to raise money for CanadaYouth 2020.

Sustainable Youth Ministry

“Failure and success are not episodes, they are trajectories.” (Rosabeth Moss Kanter)

Regardless of how successful your youth ministry is, it will start to fail after a number of years. What you want to do is *Re-Vision* your ministry *before* the decline sets in.



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Be innovative.

Always think back to what has been done (be reflective). Always look ahead to where you want to be.

Remember – this is not just for the Youth Minister but for the **Congregation (Session)**.

The “Numbers” Game

Good Numbers / Bad Numbers

According to Wayne Rice, “We count people because people count.”

- Youth go where the numbers are. A room with nobody there is far less inviting than a room packed with friends and energy.
- BUT a BIGGER Youth Ministry ≠ A BETTER Youth Ministry

Some numbers *are* important to get but others actually distract us from youth ministry:

Good Numbers

- How many youth are “ours”
- How many adult leaders do we need to provide enough capacity for all the kids who are “ours”
- How many youth do we want to have active on a weekly basis in our youth ministry?
- How many contacts have we made with visitors and inactive youth in the past month?

Bad Numbers

- How many youth are active at... Friday Night Youth Program at the popular church down the street?
- Do we have more kids coming this year than last year?
- How many different Sunday School classes do we offer?
- How many visitors did our youth group have back in the glory days?

What Size of Youth Ministry Would We Like to Have?

Having one foot on the accelerator and one foot on the brake doesn't work in driving and it doesn't work in youth ministry.

We can't say, “We don't care about numbers” and, at the same time, seek to grow our youth group.

The 5-to-1 Ratio (Web of relationships)

- No one can know everyone else equally. There will be some youth that we are particularly close to and other youth that we know but only somewhat.
 - This is why it is so important to have more than one person involved in youth ministry.
- The “ideal” ratio is 1 adult for 3 youth. We can know only 3 people well.
 - So, if there are 18 kids, then we need 6 others involved.

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Loose Ends

1. What is the END goal? Make sure EVERYONE understands!
2. Transition plan IN TO youth ministry.
3. Transition plan OUT OF youth ministry.
4. Choosing curriculum (No program is perfect)
 - Deal with Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTTD)
 - Connect with/to congregation (resist the “silo” effect)
 - Engage parents and other adults in the youth’s life
5. Succession planning – *nobody is irreplaceable!* (My favourite: *If you are irreplaceable, then you can’t be promoted!*)
6. YOUR Self Care (rhythmic week) and Spiritual Growth

Final Words for Youth Leaders:

- **Insist that the Church support and train you.**
- **How do I become a better leader – train me – mentor me.**
- **Change the focus from programs to relationships**
- **Make the curriculum fit with your values – don’t try to fit your values into the curriculum.**
- **Web of relationships**

Sources

- Google “ministry architects”
- *Sustainable Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries
- *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Peter L. Steinke
- *Grown Up Digital* by Don Tapscott
- *Soul Searching: The Religious & Spiritual Lives* by Christian Smith
- *Taking the Cross to Youth Ministry* by Andrew Root
- *Partnering with Parents* by Burns & DeVries
- *Family-Based Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries
- *Relax, It’s Just God* (video) by Wendy Thomas Russell
- *Think Orange* – curriculum and website (<http://thinkorange.com/>)
- *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide* by Reggie Joiner