

ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES

Pastors and Elders

# **HANDBOOK**

for adventist youth ministries

[GCYOUTHMINISTRIES.ORG](http://GCYOUTHMINISTRIES.ORG)

## Pastors and Elders Handbook for Adventist Youth Ministries

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# FOREWORD

by **Ramon J. Canals**

**Secretary, Ministerial Association**

**General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists**

The vitality and future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church lie in the hearts and hands of its young people. Ellen G. White reminds us, "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!" (Education, p. 271). These words resonate deeply with the mission and vision of the Adventist Youth Ministries Department and the Ministerial Association of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference.

This Pastors and Elders Handbook for Adventist Youth Ministries—now in its second edition—was developed with a clear purpose: to empower local church leaders to understand, support, and lead effective youth ministries that are Christ-centered, mission-driven, and disciple-making. It is both a reference tool and a practical guide for those entrusted with nurturing the spiritual growth, leadership potential, and evangelistic passion of Adventist youth.

The church is not merely a community of elders—it is a fellowship of generations. Yet, in many churches, youth remain on the margins, under-engaged, and often misunderstood. This handbook seeks to bridge that gap by equipping pastors and elders with the theological foundations, organizational strategies, and pastoral tools to involve youth meaningfully in the life and mission of the church. From Adventurers to Pathfinders, from Ambassadors to Young Adults and Public Campus Ministries, this resource provides a comprehensive framework for youth engagement, leadership development, and intergenerational cooperation.

It is our conviction that youth are not only the future of the church—they are a vital part of its present mission. As such, this handbook affirms the centrality of the local church in shaping young disciples, providing environments where they can encounter Jesus, experience service, and develop a strong Adventist identity in a postmodern and post-Christian world.

To every pastor, elder, and youth leader who will use this handbook: you are key to unleashing the potential of a generation. Your mentorship, presence, and encouragement can shape lives, inspire service, and prepare young people for Christ's soon return.

We pray that as you read, reflect, and implement the principles within these pages, the Spirit of God will renew your vision for youth ministry, and ignite in you a more profound commitment to walk with our youth as they answer Christ's call: "Follow Me."

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward (4)

Preface (10)

Mission Statement (13)

Introduction (15)

How to Use This Book (18)

## CHAPTER I: FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH MINISTRIES (23-31)

- What is Youth Ministry
- Philosophy of Adventist Youth Ministries
- Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries
- Biblical Principles for Youth Ministries
- Functions of Youth Ministries
- Today's Challenge: Youth Ministries in a Postmodern World
- Study Guide & Breakout Session

## CHAPTER II: YOUTH MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH (32-51)

- The Importance of Local Church Youth Ministries
- Organization of the Youth Program
- Youth Ministries Organization for Local Churches
- Adventurer Ministry
- Pathfinder Ministry
- Senior Youth/Young Adult Ministry
- Master Guide

- Single Ministry
- Adventist Youth Leadership
- Suggestions for a Successful Youth Ministry
- Youth Ministries Concepts
- Financing Youth Ministries
- Youth Sabbath School
- Weekly Youth Programs
- Youth Church Services
- Major Youth Events
- Youth Federations
- Campus Ministries
- Week of Prayer
- Yearly Themes
- Study Guide & Breakout Session

### CHAPTER III: YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH (52-65)

- The Youth Pastor/Youth Leader
- Adventist Senior Youth Society Officers
- Adventist Youth Ministries Committee
- The Pastor's Relationship with Youth Leaders
- Role of the Youth Leader in the Local Church
- The Church Board and the Youth Council
- The Youth Department and other Church Departments
- Supplies for the Youth Program
- The Youth Library
- Training Seminars for local Youth Department Officers
- Training Courses
- Evangelism
- Meetings
- Adventist Youth Materials
- Study Guide & Breakout Session

## CHAPTER IV: MENTORSHIP AND YOUTH MINISTRIES (66-81)

- Youth Involvement in Church
- Empowering Youth
- Nurturing Youth
- Pastors and Elders Cooperating with Youth
- Conflicts Between Youth and Church Leaders
- Church Discipline for Youth
- Youth Baptisms and Baptismal Classes
- Transmitting Our Lifestyle Standards to Youth
- Youth and Church Business Meetings
- Youth and the Lord's Supper
- Church Leaders Need to Show Support for Youth Programs
- Youth and Worship in the Local Church
- Study Guide & Breakout Session

## CHAPTER V: YOUTH MINISTRIES AND OTHER CHURCH MINISTRIES (82-93)

- Family-based Youth Ministries
- Communicating with Youth and Parents
- Dating for Youth
- Marriage Counselling and Weddings for Young Adults

## CHAPTER VI: HELP FOR HURTING YOUTH (94-110)

- Knowing the Limits and Boundaries of a Pastor and Elder
- Pastoral and Elder's Personal Care
- Assisting the Mentally Troubled or Clinically Diagnosed Youth
- Dealing with Grief and Death
- Dealing with Illness and Sickness
- Assisting those who are in Healthy or Abusive Relationships
- Counseling LGBTQIA+.

- School Counseling
- Career and Unemployed Counseling/Mentoring
- Counseling Youth Who Are Homeless or Lacking Basic Needs
- Conclusion (106)

## STUDY GUIDE & BREAKOUT SESSION

(at the end of each chapter)

Resources (111)

Appendix A (113-122)

Appendix B (123-125)

# PREFACE

by Anthony R. Kent PhD

**Ministerial Association Associate Secretary & Elder's Digest Editor  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists**

Pastors and Elders, before you is the invaluable field-tested youth ministry handbook. It is based securely on the foundations of Scripture, refined and honed by Holy Spirit gifted youth ministry practitioners of vast experience and skill. The greatest achievement of this handbook is that it rigidly remains focused on the essential question expressed in all thoughtful and caring Seventh-day Adventist congregations around the world: How to transform our precious youth and young adults, to be disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

In other words, this is the go-to source for everything you need to know about implementing and leading an effective youth ministry in your local Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Those who wish to have an enduring legacy for eternity can do no better than carefully reading and employing the tried and tested guidance offered in this handbook. Concisely and practically, pastors, elders, parents, youth Sabbath School leaders who live in the real world with time constraints and multiple responsibilities, can readily discover the essentials of youth ministry.

This is no fickle youth entertainment guide, simply trying to occupy the attention of our young, in the wistful hope that the youth will stay in the church. Thankfully, it offers a blueprint to rightly train our army of youth so that they live and share the message of a loving, crucified, risen and soon-coming Savior.

While the handbook offers assuredly tried and tested principles, it is refreshingly contemporary, answering the current challenging questions confronting this new generation or it directs youth leaders to creditable sites for solutions.

Even now as a pastor with almost forty years of ministerial experience, I still fondly cherish the memories and training offered by the pastors, elders, deacons, deaconesses, Sabbath School leaders and teachers of the church of my youth years. They patiently invested in me as a young person. They changed my life and destiny. They disciplined me to be a disciple of Jesus.

This handbook shows you, how you can do the same for the young people in your congregation and experience the ultimate joy of being a disciple-maker.

# SECTION ONE

*Mission Statement*

*Introduction*

*How to Use This Book*

## The primary focus of the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) is:

- **AYM MISSION STATEMENT:** To lead young people into a saving and authentic relationship with Jesus and help them embrace His call to disciple-making and mission involvement.
- **MOTTO:** The love of Christ compels me.
- **AIM:** The Advent message to all the world in my generation.
- **AYM PLEDGE:** Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the youth ministries of the church, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world.

## Our task is to:

- Lead youth to understand their individual worth,
- Train youth on how to discover and develop their spiritual gifts and abilities.
- Equip and empower young people to become disciples ready to serve God, the church, and the community.
- Ensure the integration of youth into all aspects of church life and leadership so that they might be full participants in the church's mission.

## To accomplish our task:

- We will achieve a balanced service to the youth by incorporating the biblical dynamics of fellowship, nurture, worship, and mission.
- We will be committed to staying relevant and effective in Youth Ministries by ensuring that we meet the needs of the youth. We must listen to and be informed by their perceptions, concerns, and suggestions. Effective Youth Ministries becomes possible in an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

- We will find inspiration in God's Word and our history and have faith in God for the future.
- Our philosophy will find expression in various God-ordained ministry styles and programs.
- We are guided by the Word of God, Ellen White's writings, and the strategic focus of the General Conference.

### **Our purpose is to:**

- Intentionally provide spiritual and exemplary leadership to the youth.
- Produce and disseminate Bible-based, Spirit-filled resources that will equip the youth for service.
- Provide seminars and resources that are relevant and effective to the needs of the youth.
- Share information that will educate young people about the history of the Adventist Church and the importance of forming a strong Adventist identity.
- Ensure that Adventist Youth Ministries is not about entertainment but about leading young people to Jesus and encouraging them to be involved in the mission of the church.

### **To fulfill our purpose, we will:**

- Promote adherence to the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and Beliefs and Teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
- Conduct ongoing research to discover areas that need attention. We are committed to experimentation and innovation in our programs because we recognize the ever-changing nature of today's youth.
- Provide regular evaluations to ensure that our primary focus is achieved.

# INTRODUCTION

Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) is one of the mediums through which our church prepares youth to navigate life's challenges. It is designed to support the local church and is dedicated to helping Adventist youth develop to their fullest potential and use their spiritual gifts to fulfill the gospel commission. All those called to participate in these ministries must be aware of their high calling and the noble work they are engaged in.

Pastors and elders are leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the local congregation. In this role, your understanding of AYM is paramount to the implementation and development of its initiatives and programs. As local church leaders, it is your primary duty to give full attention to the youth of the church. You have not been called to entertain the youth, but to lead them. A clear and precise understanding of AYM will be of great help.

You are called to train and help local lay youth leaders discover ways and means to support the youth of the church and to assume responsibility for them. Youth Ministries in the local church should be intergenerational leadership geared to the needs of the youth. Through the youth organization the church supports and works for, and with its youth, to meet their needs today.

The primary purpose of Adventist Youth Ministries is to train and commission the youth, ages 4-30, for service. Effective Youth Ministries will employ the intergenerational and incarnational methods of ministry to transmit knowledge, skills, and spiritual mentorship to the youth.

## **The local church youth ministries must have:**

- Vibrant and effective ministries of the Youth Department.
- Trained youth leaders to equip and provide leadership to the youth.
- Resources that speak to the needs of the youth.
- Mentors who will support youth and their leaders.

In His master plan, "The Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand" (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 64).

Youth are the church's future and a part of it today! "The youth, if right, could sway a mighty influence" (*Messages to Young People*, p. 204). This army of youth, "rightly trained," can hasten the soon return of our Lord and Saviour (see *Messages to Young People*, p. 196). The minister's first responsibility is to learn how to work for young people and train them for service (see *Gospel Workers*, pp. 207, 210; *Christian Service*, p. 34; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp.435, 436).

Ministry for Adventist youth is important, because "...the spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christ-like loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor... Thus, those who exercise Christian graces will grow and become strong enough to work for God. They will have clear spiritual perceptions, a steady, growing faith, and an increased power in prayer...The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly doing the very work Christ has enjoined upon us—to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 80).

**Thus, the goals of Adventist Youth Ministries in the local church are:**

- To organize the resource of youthful energy for active service to others.
- To instruct church youth leadership in the various methods of teaching theory and give them program techniques of ministry to help Adventist youth reach their goals.
- To save the children and youth of the church by leading them personally into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and by training them to share Christ happily and skillfully, realizing that "those who thus devote themselves to unselfish effort for the good of others are most surely working out their own salvation" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 80).

God's work can never be finished without the young people of our church. The future of this cause depends upon them. The Youth Ministries sponsored by this church is to save our youth, train them for service, and involve them in the great commission, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).









As leaders in the local church, you need to help the youth under your care realize that God has endowed each one of us with talents and spiritual gifts for service. Your strength is in the Lord. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Long ago, Ellen White wrote:

- "The youth need more than a casual notice, more than an occasional word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor. He only whose heart is filled with love and sympathy will be able to reach those youth who are apparently careless and indifferent (*Gospel Workers*, p. 208).
- Churches are challenged to support our youth. Pastors, elders, teachers, and parents— everyone must unite to give our young people spiritual, moral, and financial support. If we want to see our Seventh-day Adventist heritage—our values, our dreams of carrying the Savior's message to the whole world, if we want to see those things live on in a new generation, then pastors and elders must commit themselves unreservedly to nurturing, leading and loving the current generation of young people.
- We pray that this manual will serve as a training program to equip pastors and elders of local churches for a thorough understanding of their youth and Adventist Youth Ministries. Guiding them in their roles in facilitating and implementing youth programs and activities that encourage participation and involvement in the life and work of the church.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK AS A WORKBOOK/WORKSHOP

**Each chapter is a workshop/session. Facilitator (pastor/elder) should note the following suggestions.**

-  Prepare your agenda. Structure the workshop into logical sections with clear time allocations for each activity.
-  To create a more dynamic and engaging experience combine different formats (e.g., lectures with group discussions, demonstrations with exercises)
-  Consider the time, space, equipment, and technology available for the workshop.
-  Will your workshop be in person?
-  Will your workshop be online? Will your workshop be both in person and online?
-  Adjust the workshop format and content to match the specific needs and learning styles of the participants.
-  Adapt to your audience.
-  Ahead of the workshop instruct each participant should prepare by reading the chapter/session under review. **This is important.**

# PREAMBLE

## An Introduction to The Chapter

### 01 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the objectives is to help the reader focus on what will be presented in each chapter.

### 02 WARM-UP/ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

**The purpose of Warm-Up** is to help you unwind from a busy day and get to know each other better. It also creates a dynamic and engaging learning/sharing environment that will help participants prepare for the session in a fun, interactive, and effective way.

Start with short, fun physical activities like jumping jacks, marching around the room, or simple stretches to increase energy and focus. Make sure to do a fun activity—the ability to share in fun with others is important in building relationships.

Do some type of “Getting to Know You Activity”. Use your own or choose one from the Icebreakers section in this book.

### 03 DIG IN (60 MINUTES)

It would be best if each participant is instructed to read the chapter/session under review, ahead of the workshop. This is important. This is the heart of the session. During this section the facilitator and participants will engage in the chapter and explore the Review and Think it Through sections. This is where questions are asked, and strategies/methods discussed.

## 04 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS (45 MINUTES)**

Where appropriate, use demonstrations with exercises and realistic scenarios to allow participants to practice skills. Allow feedback during this section.

## 05 **DEBRIEFING**

This is very important as it gives participants an opportunity to share their heartfelt needs and challenges with each other and with the facilitator.

## 06 **WORKSHOP FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION**

Allow participants to provide feedback on the workshop and identify areas for improvement. A sample evaluation sheet is included in the back of this book. This section is important as it will give you, the facilitator, an opportunity to improve on future workshops.

Free event feedback forms can be found at [Google Forms](#)... modify to suit your presentation.

## 07 **SAMPLE AGENDA**

- Welcome
- Prayer
- Warm-Up/Icebreaker (10 minutes)
- Dig In (60 minutes)
- Breakout Sessions (45 minutes)
- Debriefing
- Workshop Feedback and Evaluation

# SUGGESTED ICEBREAKERS

Source: *google.com*

\*\*\*More icebreakers can be found at the back of each Ambassador Leader's Guide ([gcyouthministries.org](http://gcyouthministries.org)).



## **“Human Bingo”**

Participants create bingo cards with statements about themselves, and they find people to sign their cards based on those statements.

*This activity encourages interaction and helps people learn about each other's backgrounds.*



## **“Scavenger Hunt”**

Create a list of items for participants to find in the room or building.

*This is a fun way to get people moving and interacting.*



## **“Share Your Expectations”**

Ask participants what they hope to gain from the workshop and what their initial concerns are.



## **“One Word/Phrase”**

Ask participants to share one word or phrase that describes their mood, a word that describes the workshop, or a word that describes something they're learning.

# SECTION TWO

*Chapters & Study Guides 1 – 6*

*Foundations of Youth Ministries*

*Youth Ministries Program in the Local Church*

*Youth Leadership in the Local Church*

*Youth and the Local Church*

*Youth Ministries and the Family*

*Help for Hurting Youth*

*Conclusion*

# CHAPTER I

## FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

### 01 PREAMBLE

#### Foundations of Youth Ministries

Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries is biblical and historical. Youth Ministries is that work of the church that is conducted for, with, and by young people.

As you read the chapter, develop a clear definition of Youth Ministries in the local church. Ask yourself,

“What is Youth Ministries?”

“Why do we have Youth Ministries in the local church?”

“What is the primary focus of Youth Ministries?”

### 02 OBJECTIVE

To Know...

- That the basic philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries is *Salvation, Service, and Disciple-making*.
- Youth Ministries started in the local church.
- Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries is based on biblical principles.
- The functions of Youth Ministries in the local church.
- The challenge of Youth Ministries in the postmodern and post-Christian world.

# FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

## **What Is Adventist Youth Ministries?**

Adventist Youth Ministries is the work of the church that is conducted for, with, and by young people. While many discussions and programs about youth focus primarily on ministry to teenagers, our church's Youth Ministries includes programs to meet the needs of young people from preschool-aged children to young adults. With this extensive age group range, it is important to understand and tailor programming for each age group.

## **Philosophy of Adventist Youth Ministries**

The basic philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries is one of Salvation, Disciple-making, and Mission Involvement. Our goal is Total Youth Involvement (TYI) - to lead young people into a saving and authentic relationship with Jesus and train them to serve others. Ellen G. White's best-known statement on youth emphasizes the importance of service as an essential element of youth ministry:

"And with such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!" (*Education*, p. 271).

## **Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries**

Most of us are familiar with the story of how Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries was started by two teenagers, Luther Warren and Harry Fenner, in Hazelton Township, Michigan, in 1879. These two young men, concerned about the spiritual needs of their peers both inside and outside the church, prayed together and then launched what became the first Adventist Youth Society—a small group of boys (later boys and girls) who met weekly to sing, pray, study the Bible, do missionary work, and enjoy wholesome recreation.

Other youth-led societies sprang up on a local level, and in the first decade of the twentieth century, the church, encouraged by Ellen White and others who saw the importance of youth work, began to organize a youth program. The first official Seventh-day Adventist Youth Organization was founded in 1907 under the name, Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers. The name was chosen to indicate the focus on service and outreach as an integral part of our Youth Ministries.

Though the name has been changed to "Adventist Youth" (1979), in the 100 years since then, the focus of the Seventh-day Adventist youth movement has remained one of Salvation, Service, and Disciple-making. Adventist Youth Ministries is now a worldwide movement focusing on winning young people to Jesus and training them to share His message of love with others.

In 2005, the General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church renamed the department Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM).

### **Biblical Principles for Adventist Youth Ministries**

Throughout the Bible, we are frequently urged to pass our knowledge of God's love and His principles for living on to the younger generation. While this responsibility begins with the family, in the biblical context it is also the community's responsibility. This challenge is passed to the faith community in our era: God's church.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7, NIV).

"One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4, NIV).

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, NIV).

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse" (Malachi 4: 5,6, NIV).

The Bible has many examples of how God used youth and young adults to indicate their active role in God's work on earth. Both Old and New Testaments are examples of young people who were called to serve the Lord: Joseph, Samuel, Esther, Namaan's Israelite maid, Mary of Nazareth, Jesus in the temple at age 12, and Timothy. It was to young Timothy that his mentor, Paul, wrote:

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12, NIV).

These words should be an encouraging admonition to Adventist youth today and should also provide guidance to those of us who work with youth. We should not "look down on" them but be willing to learn from their example, as we hope they will learn from ours.

### **1. Functions of Adventist Youth Ministries:**

- To raise the level of the devotional life of the individual young person.
- To help young people know their worth and identity.
- To lift the standard of attainment of the youth.
- To educate and train the youth for service and to embrace Adventist identity.
- To provide opportunities to youth for outreach and service.
- To teach the youth the principles of stewardship.

## 2. Today's Challenge: Adventist Youth Ministries in a Postmodern World

In many ways, Youth Ministries face challenges similar to those encountered in the days of Luther Warren and Harry Fenner. Now and then, adolescents and young adults go through tremendous changes and choices in their lives. They are completing their education, choosing career paths and preparing for the selection of a life partner. As always, young people need the support of a Christian community and the guidance of mature Christians while they move through these crucial years.

These elements of youth work have not changed in over a hundred years. But some things have changed. The world now operates on different assumptions than it did before. We often think of temptations such as drug abuse and premarital sex, which are far more available to youth in this generation than in previous generations. But society has also changed at a deeper and more basic level: there has been a significant shift in most people's worldview, the way they perceive truth.

In past generations, both Christian and non-Christian people tended to view many central truths as absolute and applicable to everyone. Societal standards were more generally agreed upon. Indeed, some rebels flouted those standards, but they knew they were transgressing widely accepted societal rules.

Today's society is often called "postmodern." One key identifying factor of postmodernism is the idea that all truths and values are relative rather than absolute. In everyday language, what's right for me may not be right for you. Our youth are growing up in a society that emphasizes tolerance and acceptance of everyone's views, instead of embracing the Word of God as absolute truth.

This can be positive because it can cause young people to be more open to others, flexible, less rigid and judgmental, and more accepting of diversity than those of earlier generations. The drawback, however, is that even committed Christian youth are far less likely to see biblical values and standards as absolutes that apply to everyone in every situation. This

affects the choices they make in their individual lives—it is easier than ever to rationalize, “This rule doesn’t apply to me in this situation.” It also affects how they view other people and the world around them—they are far less likely to condemn sin and seek to share the gospel with others if they believe that those others are following an equally valid spiritual path.

Another challenge facing our generation today is what is called the post-Christian worldview. While this notion may be somewhat like postmodernism, its main characteristic is to replace Christian principles with other world views such as secularism, nationalism, atheism, spiritualism, etc.

The challenge to pastors and church elders in the twenty-first century is understanding the postmodern and the post-Christian world in which our youth live. Church leadership should initiate candid conversations about these matters with the youth, while at the same time pointing them to biblical truth, which has remained unchanging throughout thousands of years of shifting worldviews and philosophies. Our challenge is introducing them to a Jesus who is as relevant and needed today as He was in the first century.

# CHAPTER I: STUDY GUIDE

Foundations of  
Youth Ministries



# REVIEW

1. The primary focus of Adventist Youth Ministries is:

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2. What is TMI and the twin goals of Adventist Youth Ministries?

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3. List three challenges of Youth Ministries in a postmodern and post-Christian world:

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4. List four Biblical principles for youth ministry:

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5. List five functions of youth ministry:

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6. What are the names of the two teenagers who started the Seventh-day Adventist youth ministry in Hazelton Township, Michigan, in 1879?

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## NOTES:

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## THINK IT THROUGH

1. What is your understanding of "Salvation, Service, and Disciple-making" in Adventist Youth Ministries?
2. Why do you think having Youth Ministries in your church is crucial?
3. Can you briefly tell the history of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries?
4. Give your understanding of:
  - Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7
  - Psalms 145:4
  - Malachi 4:5, 6
  - Ephesians 6:4

### NOTES:

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## BREAKOUT SESSION

### QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is Youth Ministries?
2. What is the primary focus of Youth Ministries?
3. How can you show that your local church's Youth Ministries program is based on *Salvation, Service, and Disciple-making*?
4. What was the original name of the Adventist Youth organization, and what was the focus of the Department?
5. What are the Biblical principles for Youth Ministries?
6. How are the five functions of Youth Ministries reflected in your church's youth program?

# CHAPTER II

## YOUTH MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Youth Ministries in the Local Church**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places high importance on Youth Ministries at the local church level. Youth Ministries is part and parcel of the whole local church program. No matter how many or how few young people attend, every local church should have an active youth ministry.

As you read the chapter, understand the organization of the youth program in the local church. Ask yourself,

1. What is the organization of youth programs for the local church?
2. Who represents these organizations on the local church board?

### **OBJECTIVE**

To Know...

The importance of Youth Ministries in the local church.

The various levels of Youth Ministries in the local church. Pointers for a successful Youth Ministries.

The place of pastors and elders in fostering Youth Ministries in the local church.

# YOUR CHURCH'S YOUTH MINISTRIES PROGRAM

## **The Importance of Local Church Youth Ministries**

No matter how many or how few young people attend, every local church should have a youth program. An active youth program with caring, committed leadership can be a powerful force to keep the youth involved in church, to reengage inactive youth, and to reach out to youth and their families in the community. Pastors, elders, and nominating committees should prioritize finding a team of leaders in the church willing to commit time and energy to building and nurturing a youth program.

## **Organization of the Youth Program**

The larger and more diverse your youth group, the more detailed the organizational structure will be required. In a small church with just a handful of young people, one or two parents of young people, or the youth Sabbath School teacher, may take responsibility for running a youth program. You will need a more structured approach in larger churches, where more youth are involved.

Whatever you call your youth leadership body, it should consist of adults and other youth committed to serving Jesus and their fellow young people. In larger churches, careful consideration should be given to elect all five leaders of the Adventist Youth Ministries (The Adventurer Ministry, the Pathfinder Ministry, the Ambassador Ministry, the Young Adult Ministry, and the Public Campus Ministry coordinator). Also, of equal importance is to ascertain that all five leaders serve on the church board (see *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, p. 114, 20th Edition, Revised 2022).

The Church Manual enjoins every church to have an Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee (see pp. 111-112, 20th Edition, Revised 2022). The AYM Committee comprises several leaders of different ministries of the local church. Everyone in your church concerned with youth work should work together harmoniously. Senior Youth Societies (SYS) officers, Sab-

bath School teachers, AYM leaders, the academy pastor or chaplain (if your church has one) and other leaders—all should meet to plan activities that will complement rather than compete with one another.

## Youth Ministries Organization for the Local Church

All the AYM activities and programs were designed to influence young people to have a closer connection with Jesus and to share the love of Jesus with others. We encourage church pastors and elders not to limit these ministries to Adventist youth only. However, these should be seen as community-based programs that have the potential to impact the youth positively.



### ADVENTURER MINISTRY

The Adventurer program is the first level of Adventist Youth Ministries within the local church. It is conducted as an organized club or society for children four to nine years old with six classes: Little Lamb, Early Bird, Busy Bee, Sunbeam, Builder, and Helping Hand.

The Adventurer program is distinct and separate from the Pathfinder program and has a different operating policy and philosophy. A separate leader for the Adventurer program is to be elected by the church; however, this leader should sit on the Pathfinder Council and coordinate Adventurer Club activities with the Pathfinder director. The church elects the Adventurer leader, who is answerable directly to the church board.

The Adventurer Progressive classes serve as the foundation for AYM and are especially designed to interest, challenge, and provide successful experiences for children of that grade level. The Adventurer explores their world through four sections: *My God, My Self, My Family, and My World*

**My God:** To facilitate the development of a growing and fruitful relationship between the child and Jesus Christ.

**My Self:** To enhance the children's care and appreciation for the individuals God created them to be.

**My Family:** To empower the children to be happy and productive members of the families God gave them.

**My World:** To enable the children to encounter God's world with confidence and compassion.



### **PATHFINDER MINISTRY**

The Pathfinder program is designed for youth 10-15 years old with a holistic approach to junior/teen ministry in a club setting. Developed to meet the mental, spiritual, social, and physical developmental needs of the specific age group, it is well adapted to meet young people's developing mental, spiritual, social, and physical needs. It operates primarily for Seventh-day Adventist youth but is not exclusive. There is tremendous potential for youth evangelism through community-based clubs.

CBCs require that each local church Pathfinder club establish a 'satellite' club in the community, monitored by the church, without dissolving the original club. Despite some fearing it will dilute the sanctity of the Pathfinder club, this project should be undertaken by the church, as it aligns with the framework of Total Youth Involvement.

The church elects the Pathfinder director, who is directly responsible to the church board and not the youth leader. The Pathfinder director is to lead all Pathfinder activities and meetings.



### **AMBASSADOR MINISTRY**

Since its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries Department has served the youth through three levels: Adventurer Club for 4-9 years old, Pathfinder Club for 10-15 years old, and Senior Youth/ Young Adults

for 16-30+ years old. However, divisions noted that the young people who complete the Pathfinder requirements are left without a program that meets their needs. They do not want to leave the Pathfinder club, but at the same time, they do not feel old enough to associate themselves with the Senior Youth/Young Adults. Without an established program/level for this group, several Divisions have been running their programs, such as Companion in Europe, Medical Brigade in the Inter-American and South American Divisions, Medical Cadets in the North American Division, etc., to fill this vacuum.

The Ambassador club seeks to plug the hole of attrition among the senior youth. At the 2001 World Youth Leadership Convention, a significant action was taken, charging the General Conference Youth Department to develop materials for the youth, ages 16- 21, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Ambassador curriculum is the outcome of this action. This new level provides a structured and organized way for 16–21-year-olds to become actively involved in their church locally and globally. The Ambassador curriculum was revised during 2010-2016 to align it with the ever-changing times and needs of the senior youth.

Great appreciation goes to the entire curriculum development team, the writers, and the World Divisions that have contributed to the material in this curriculum.



## **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

The Young Adult Ministry is geared to youths aged 22-30. The primary purpose of this ministry is to train and prepare the church youth for service.

### **Leadership Courses**

Adventist Youth Ministries has two leadership tracks: Master Guides to work with Junior Youth Ministries (Adventurers and Pathfinders) and Senior Youth Leaders (SYL) to work with

the Senior Youth Ministries (Ambassadors and Young Adults). We encourage pastors and church elders to be trained and invested as Master Guides and/or Senior Youth Leaders to increase their influence upon the youth. To enhance the leadership pool of the local church, Senior Youth Leaders and Master Guides, the conference youth director can provide the training for the pastors who were not previously invested.

Once a year, preferably soon after the churches have finished their elections, conference youth directors should conduct AYM leadership seminars (popularly known as Basic Staff Training Courses-BSTs) to explain the yearly program to church leaders, introduce materials to be used, conduct leadership training, and discuss itineraries. All manuals can be found on our website: [www.gcyouthministries.org](http://www.gcyouthministries.org)



### **Master Guide**

This class prepares the leaders for leadership roles with Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs. This is the highest leadership level within AYM for the Adventurer/Pathfinder programs of the church. It focuses on one's personal spiritual life and growth first and foremost. General leadership skills are then woven into the sharpening of those skills, which are specifically geared to leading youth in God ordained areas of development: understanding God's world of nature, outreach ministry, service to others, and a lifestyle that denotes healthy living.

As one church leader of the past put it so simply: "You can't teach what you don't know, and you can't lead where you won't go." As leaders, we must not only be good at spouting theory if we expect to see success in our Youth Ministries; we must live what we preach and demonstrate it.

Master Guides are to be active in church activities relating to Adventurer and Pathfinder age children.



## Club Ministry Training

*Club Ministry Training (CMT)* is a curriculum framework that provides in-depth training for the Pathfinder club staff in specific roles. The certifications are designed to be completed within one year and equip leaders of all varieties for the ministries they serve. They are not levels of Investiture Achievement, such as Sunbeam, Friend, or Guide, but rather opportunities for individuals to learn more about being an effective director, instructor, counselor, etc.

CMT is based on the Adventist Youth Ministry Training (AYMT) certifications, developed by the North American Division. Certifications are earned by attending workshops, working with a mentor, doing fieldwork, and preparing a documentation Portfolio.



## Senior Youth Leadership (SYL)

The Senior Youth Leadership (SYL) is the highest leadership level within AYM for the Ambassadors and Young Adults programs of the church. This course trains leaders to work with ambassadors and young adults. Training includes the ambassador club, senior youth society, youth federation, and general church leadership. Two training resources available: Senior Youth Leadership and Senior Youth Leadership Pastor Edition.

**SYL Manual:** [https://www.gcyyouthministries.org/wp-content/uploads/Senior-Youth-Leader-for-Ambassador-and-Young-Adult-Leaders\\_revised-2024.pdf](https://www.gcyyouthministries.org/wp-content/uploads/Senior-Youth-Leader-for-Ambassador-and-Young-Adult-Leaders_revised-2024.pdf)



## Public Campus Ministry

Public Campus Ministry (PCM) is a vibrant arm of Adventist Youth Ministries dedicated to supporting Adventist staff and students (16- 30+) on public college and university campuses worldwide. PCM provides a nurturing community where students and staff can grow spiritually, develop their leadership/professional skills, and engage in meaningful service while navigating the challenges of campus life.

Through Bible studies, fellowship events, and outreach projects, PCM empowers students and staff to share their faith, find fellowship among like-minded peers, and positively impact their campuses.

PCM presents a golden opportunity for Adventist students and staff to share the gospel with their peers on public campuses. The General Conference has declared all public campuses as unreached/unentered territories.

**Public Campus Ministry (PCM) Competency Levels 1-3** are designed to equip and empower young Adventist leaders on public campuses worldwide. These levels provide progressive training to build foundational skills, deepen spiritual resilience, and develop effective leadership strategies for campus ministry.

- **Competency Level I** - Local church PCM leaders, Student PCM leaders, Volunteer PCM mentors and Sponsors, Adventist Educators, Pastors, and Chaplains
- **Competency Level II** - Those who have completed PCM Competency Level I, Church- employees (division, union, conference, and mission).
- **Competency Level III** – Those who have completed PCM Competency Level II

If your church is near a public college or university campus, make sure you have an outreach to Adventist students on that campus. This might involve an organized Public Campus Ministry Chapter with yourself or the youth pastor/leader serving as sponsor or chaplain. The goal of Public Campus Ministry is to see young people grounded in the mission of Jesus Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and able to reach and engage their fellow campus students in lifelong relationships with Jesus.

Furthermore, the Public Campus Ministry is concerned with nurturing students and supporting Adventist professors and others who work on public campuses. *See Appendix B, pg. 91*

Pastors and elders should ensure public campuses receive support by electing a PCM coordinator to serve as liaison between the campus and the church (see Church Manual, p. 112, 20th Edition). The PCM coordinator should be a member of the church board.

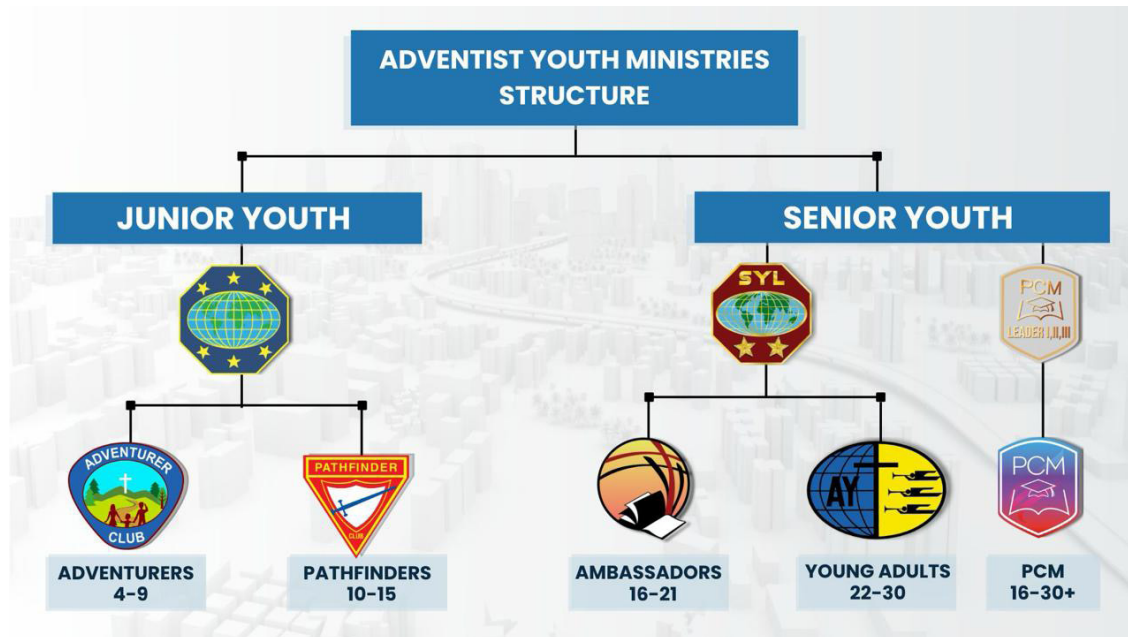
## SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL YOUTH MINISTRIES

A few pointers will help your church start a vibrant Youth Ministries or revitalize an existing ministry.

- **Find leaders who love young people.** Youth can spot someone who doesn't genuinely care about them, and they won't follow that kind of leader. A leader who truly loves God and youth will be able to learn almost any other skill they need to do the job.
- **Reach out.** Broaden the scope of your Youth Ministries beyond the children, teens, and young adults in your church family. This is especially important if you have a small church with only a few youths. Throw the doors open to non-Adventist friends of your youth, neighborhood youth, non-SDA students attending your SDA schools, and any other young person you can find. Youth Ministries is a growth ministry.
- **Place your church's resources behind your youth.** Let your young people know that they, and their youth program, have your full support. Do this through financial support, your participation, and involvement. Come out to youth activities and invite youth to your home through friendly and encouraging words, and through including youth in the church's life at large.

If your youth leaders seek guidance on building their ministry and strengths as leaders, valuable resources to suggest are *Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence*, produced by the North American Division Youth Ministries, and *Youth Ministry Manual*, produced by the General Conference Youth Department. The seven principles, in brief, are:

- Ensure that you, the leader, are growing spiritually.
- Learn leadership skills.
- Nurture relationships with the youth.
- Plan your programs and activities thoroughly.
- Empower your youth for leadership.
- Communicate with the youth, their families, the church, and the community.
- Mobilize youth for service.



## YOUTH MINISTRIES CONCEPTS

The basic organization for youth work is in the local church, and conference youth leaders should be aware of its functioning. AYM is organized for senior youth and junior youth. Conference youth directors should take leadership in promoting the entire department.

### Adventist Youth Ministries Structure

Junior Youth Ministries	Senior Youth Ministries	Leadership Courses
Adventurers	Ambassadors	Master Guides
Pathfinders	Young Adults	Club Ministry Training
	Public Campus Ministry	Public Campus Ministry Certification
		Senior Youth Leadership

Pastors, church elders, and youth directors are responsible for fostering strong Youth Ministries in all churches and companies in their territory.

Local conference youth directors should help organize the Senior Youth Societies (SYS) in their field, train their leaders, and monitor their functions. It is part of the duties of youth directors to visit the SYS, counsel with the pastors, and advise in improving the function of each society within their territory.

The quarterly Youth Ministries reports from the local SYS should be constantly monitored to help improve and upgrade their programs.

## **FINANCING YOUTH MINISTRIES**

Youth work, like every other type of ministry, requires money. Your church probably already has a category within the church budget for youth activities. If you are not currently budgeting for Youth Ministries, meet with your board and/or finance committee and make it a priority to do so.

Many youth leaders find the budget assigned to them inadequate for the task at hand. If your church simply cannot allocate a greater portion of the budget to youth work, then you should enthusiastically support appropriate fundraising activities planned by the youth group. Youth often work hard to raise money to attend youth congresses, go on mission trips, or put on special programs. If the church, especially the pastor, elders, and board, would prioritize young people and their leaders. It would send a strong message of support to the youth and would lessen apathy in the local church. It also sets a good example for the rest of the congregation. It reduces the financial burden on the families of the young people and on youth leaders, who often pay for many activities out of their own pockets when other resources run dry.

## **YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL**

The youth Sabbath School is the young people's weekly teaching and fellowship time. Some churches face problems with low attendance and a lack of enthusiasm for youth Sabbath School programs. Some youth leaders will downplay the importance of the Sabbath School class. Still, by doing so, they miss a valuable opportunity to disciple youth regularly and integrate them into the church's life. Youth leaders should be encouraged to use the church's resources to make Sabbath School attractive and meaningful to youth. Parents

should also be encouraged to make Sabbath School attendance a priority, both for themselves and their children. The General Conference Sabbath School department has produced special resources for youth of different ages. For Resources; <https://www.sabbath-schoolpersonalministries.org/sabbathschool>.

## **WEEKLY YOUTH PROGRAMS**

A church with lively youth ministries will also provide other weekly programs for the youth and the Sabbath morning class. While a successful Youth Ministries program in the local church includes a strong youth Sabbath School, there must be a specific time and place for more interaction, fellowship, recreation, witnessing outreach, and leadership training, which are all a part of the concepts to be fostered in the Senior Youth Society.

In many churches, the most critical youth program is the weekly SYS or vespers program, generally held on a Friday or Sabbath afternoon to coincide with sunset. The content of these programs varies widely by church. However, they often take the form of a youth-led, youth-oriented worship service, with a musical program, drama presentation, or group activity sometimes taking the place of the sermon. The value of a weekly youth program cannot be stressed too much. Again, encourage your youth leaders to explore all the resources available to make the SYS meeting time valuable for the youth.

Ellen G. White advocated for a lively, creative, youth-oriented approach to what are now called SYS meetings. "Do not imagine that you can arouse the interest of the young by going to the missionary meeting and preaching a long sermon. Plan ways whereby a live interest may be aroused. From week to week, the youth should bring in their reports, telling what they have tried to do for the Saviour, and what success has been theirs" (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 210, 211).

SYS meetings should be interesting and special, especially if they are held in someone's home. The host individual or family has an excellent opportunity to mentor this group of young people. Still, we should encourage a weekly youth meeting in the church and a formal young adult organization to give our youth representation in the church board and involvement in the mission and leadership of the church through the SYS.

These programs are not always formal or in the church building. They may include Bible study at a friend's house, in the park, or over virtual platforms (Zoom, etc.). SYSs are also a way for Ambassadors and Young Adults to “do life” together.

Learning about budgeting and finances, balancing relationships and work, and exploring career choices are some topics that can be explored during young people's time together in the SYS. It is also crucial for these societies to participate in outreach within their community by visiting nursing homes, hospitals, and orphanages, conducting children's ministries, distributing literature, performing street drama, or doing any of several other things to share God's love with the community.

## **YOUTH CHURCH SERVICES**

In most cultures, young people prefer a different worship style from their elders. Naturally, these preferences will vary depending on cultural practices, but younger people often prefer a livelier, less formal, more interactive worship style than older Adventists usually do.

Work with your youth and their leaders to plan a regular youth church service. Encourage the youth to take as much ownership of these programs as possible. Be flexible enough to allow these services to be different, in format or style, from your regular church services, while remaining within the boundaries of what your congregation considers acceptable for worship.

While there are many ways to accommodate the worship needs of your youth, having the youth lead your main church worship service regularly is always recommended. Besides allowing the youth to direct the worship experience, it also gives them valuable leadership and training skills. It will enable the older adults in your church to appreciate your young people's gifts and talents. A joint worship experience for all church members fosters intergenerational mentorship, which is valuable for transferring skills and knowledge.

## MAJOR YOUTH EVENTS

Events such as youth rallies or youth congresses, retreats, teen prayer conferences, junior and teen summer camps, and Pathfinder camporees bring together Adventist young people from across a wide geographical area—conference, union, division, or even worldwide. Events like these give young Adventists, especially those from small churches, the opportunity to see that they are not alone in their beliefs. As they form bonds of friendship with other Adventist young people and benefit from the planned programming at such events, their commitment to Christ and the church is deepened. Many Adventist youth make their first commitment to Jesus at such events.

If such events take place regularly in your conference, encourage your youth leaders to bring their youth to these events. Rally the church's support to help raise needed funds for travel and attendance costs. If your local conference does not sponsor youth events like these, talk to your conference youth director about planning some major events.

## YOUTH FEDERATIONS

Groups of local Senior Youth Societies from several churches form federations in many areas. These groups work to coordinate activities, plan area-wide programs, share ideas, and develop leadership skills in the youth leaders/pastors. If there is no youth federation in your area, talk with your youth leader and conference youth director about whether your church and other nearby Adventist churches could benefit from forming a federation. See *Appendix A*, pg. 69

## CAMPUS MINISTRY

Campus ministry is an essential element of Youth Ministries. Almost all youth and young adults attend school or college. Your church should have a ministry to meet the needs of these young people in their school environment.

Campus ministry can mean many different things, depending on the needs within your congregation. If your church supports a church school or is located near an Adventist academy, you, as pastor or elder, or someone on your church's pastoral team, should be involved in

some way with the school's spiritual life. This might include providing chaplain services at the school, giving worship talks and counselling with students, or, in a small school without a full-time Bible teacher, perhaps teaching Bible classes. Your church and school should be partners in Youth Ministries, so make yourself available to the school and its students as much as possible.

Youth leaders can become involved in the school in other ways—perhaps through volunteering to coach a sports team or lead an extracurricular activity. This will give you a valuable opportunity to get to know both the Adventist and non-Adventist students in the school.

### **WEEK OF PRAYER**

A Week of Prayer or eWeek of Prayer is as beneficial for youth as adult church members. Many Seventh-day Adventist schools hold a fall (autumn) and Spring Week of Prayer. Sometimes a guest speaker is invited to address the youth; sometimes the youth take leadership of these prayer programs and give the daily talks. Churches are encouraged to hold the Youth Week of Prayer for all the youth, those who attend the Adventist church, and those who do not. You can find resources for these weeks of prayer on the General Conference Youth Ministries website.

### **YEARLY THEMES**

During each quinquennium, the General Conference Youth Department develops and promotes yearly themes for the world church to be used by local Youth organizations. These themes help guide the youth department's agenda and year-long focus. You can find these *Yearly Themes* on our website, [gcyouthministries.org](http://gcyouthministries.org), to help guide your local youth agenda.

### **YOUTH MINISTRIES SPECIAL DAYS**

The Youth Ministries Department has annual special days that promote the department's various ministries. Pastors and elders are the leaders of the church who should support the AYM department by promoting the days and being present during the programs for these days.

These are the special days:

- Global Youth Day (third Sabbath in March)
- Youth Week of Prayer (third - fourth Sabbath in March)
- Homecoming Sabbath (fourth Sabbath in March)
- The World Ambassador Day (first Sabbath in April)
- The World Adventurer Day (third Sabbath in May)
- Public Campus Ministry Day (fourth Sabbath in June)
- Youth Spiritual & Mission Commitment Day (first Sabbath in September)
- World Pathfinder Day (third Sabbath in September)
- eWeek of Prayer (Sun-Friday, beginning second Sunday in November)

# CHAPTER II: STUDY GUIDE

Youth Ministries  
in the Local Church



## REVIEW

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places high importance on Youth Ministries at the local church level. Youth Ministries in part and parcel of the whole local church program.

As you read the chapter, understand the organization of the youth program in the local church. Ask yourself the question,

- What is the organization of youth programs for local church?"
- Who represents these organization on the local church boards?

## KNOW:

- The importance of Youth Ministries in the local church.
- The various levels of Youth Ministries in the local church.
- Pointers for a successful Youth Ministries. No matter how many or how few young people attend, every local church should have one!

## LEARN:

1. Every local church, no matter how many or how few young people attend should have \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ committees should make it a high priority to find a team of dedicated leaders in the church to work with youth.
3. List the five youth organizations of the local youth program:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Senior Youth/Young Adult Ministry is directed to all \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ ages.
5. The main purpose of Senior Youth/Young Adult Ministry is to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for service.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ have special needs, and these should be addressed in the context of Youth Ministries.

7. List the five youth leaders with their ministries who sit on the church board:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (director),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ministry)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (director),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ministry)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (director),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ministry)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (director),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ministry)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (director),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (ministry)

8. The church operates through \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ society to dedicate \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ time to the youth.

9. List the seven principles for youth ministry excellence:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_

10. List five major youth events:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Mention five ways you can assist youth in meeting their financial needs:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

12. List three reasons why you should establish a campus ministry program in your church:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

13. What are yearly themes?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Why is planning worship with youth important?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

15. As a pastor/elder, why do you think youth ministries are important in your church?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## THINGS TO DO

- Review the Youth Ministries organization for local churches.
- Think about the areas you need training in to learn about youth organizations in the Seventh-day Adventist church?
- How can you make a Youth Week of Prayer an event the entire church will want to attend?
- How many youth magazines can you mention that are used as resources for youth programs in your church?



### **BREAKOUT SESSION :**

#### QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is the importance of Youth Ministries in the local church?
2. How can you show that all age levels of your youth in the local church are being served according to the youth ministry organization?
3. What are the differences between Adventurer, Pathfinder, Ambassador, and Young Adult Ministries?
4. Explain the difference between Master Guide and Senior Youth Leader.
5. What are the unique needs of single church members needing Youth Ministries' spiritual support?
6. What suggestions do you have for a successful Youth Ministries in your local church?
7. How can you accommodate the worship needs of your youth?
8. Should youth be allowed to lead out in the main church worship service?
9. Why should a local church hold special Weeks of Prayer for its youth?
10. List the AYM special days.

# CHAPTER III

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Youth Leadership in the Local Church**

It is our hope that as you read this chapter your understanding of youth leadership in the local church will grow.

You will know that:

1. One of the most critical things in the local church is to ensure that there is a strong youth leadership to support the various activities of young people.
2. Pastors and elders are to support the local youth leadership, and the work connected with Youth Ministries.
3. You are to ensure that the youth's needs are met during the local church worship and weekly youth programs.
4. Young people feel committed to a church where they feel needed, valued, and respected.

### **OBJECTIVE**

You should be able to...

1. Develop a clear definition of Youth Ministries in the local church.
2. Ask yourself the question,

*"What is Youth Ministries?"*

*"Why do we have Youth Ministries in the local church?"*

*"What is the primary focus of Youth Ministries?"*

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

## **1. THE PASTOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUTH LEADERS**

A smooth relationship between the pastor and the youth leader(s) is essential if Youth Ministries is to be a viable, vital part of the church's life. Do not allow the relationship to become combative, competitive, or confrontational. Youth leaders sometimes see senior pastors as being unsympathetic to the needs of youth, out of touch with youth culture, or more interested in meeting the needs of older, more conservative church members. Do your best to disarm these prejudices by taking a personal interest in the youth leaders, the youth program, and, most importantly, the young people themselves.

## **2. THE YOUTH PASTOR/YOUTH LEADER**

Some Seventh-day Adventist churches, usually larger ones, employ a pastoral staff member whose primary responsibility is Youth ministries (sometimes shared with other responsibilities). If this is the case in your church, your youth pastor should work harmoniously with the rest of the pastoral team to meet the overall goals of the church while placing youth concerns front and center.

In most Adventist churches, a full-time, paid youth pastor is unavailable due to budget restrictions. Usually, the role of youth leader is filled by one or more committed volunteers. These might be church school teachers, parents of teens, or young adults in the congregation--anyone who has a burden for the needs of youth and is willing to help meet the needs of youth. The youth leader's official church office might be that of youth Sabbath School leader/teacher, or Young Adult leader or sponsor, but in a small congregation, one or two individuals will usually be found filling a variety of roles as they attempt to meet the needs of youth in the church.

Although your volunteer youth leader is probably not a trained and ordained pastor, remember they will fill a pastoral role for the young people. While you, as pastor or elder, should

be prepared to supplement and support the work of the youth leader, you will also need to respect their territory and the relationship they have established with the young people. A good youth leader should advocate for youth in the church and build bridges between young people and older members.

Although it is not a requirement for local church youth leaders to be qualified Master Guides or Senior Youth Leaders, it is advantageous for that person and the church if they elect a competent person or put them through youth training after their election.

### **3. SENIOR YOUTH SOCIETY (SYS) OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE**

The Church Manual and the Youth Ministry Handbook outline the official executive positions recommended for the Senior Youth Society. These are:

- The leader's role is to guide, counsel, motivate, and serve as the liaison with pastors, the church board, and the conference youth director. Usually, the Young Adult Leader is the leader of the SYS and serves as the leader of the church's Adventist Youth Ministries Committee.
- The assistant leader assists the leader and chairs SYS meetings in the leader's absence. We recommend that the other two Senior Youth leaders fill these roles: the Ambassador and the PCM Leaders.
- The secretary-treasurer's role is to record the SYS activities, send reports to the conference youth director, and keep track of the SYS budget.
- The chorister and other musicians. Since music plays such an essential role in forming the youth's character, musicians should be as carefully selected as the rest of the officers of the Adventist Youth Society (*Church Manual*, p. 103). The job of the chorister, also known as the worship leader, is important.
- The sponsor. A church elder or other qualified board member who works with the youth leader to bring the needs of the SYS before the church board. If the youth leader is a youth or young adult, it is critical to have an older adult sponsor to connect the youth program to the church board and the church program.

- The Young Adults Ministry Committee. Local churches are encouraged to have Young Adult committees and to establish Senior Youth Societies. Senior Youth societies serve as forums where evangelistic plans and senior youth issues are discussed. SYS will encompass the Ambassadors, Young Adults, and Public Campus Students. In these SYS meetings, young professionals should mentor those who are younger than them. The Young Adults Ministry Committee will manage the SYS.

The size, culture, and style of your church and youth organizations will determine how your church follows this recommended organization model. Even for small senior youth societies that would never be able to fill such an extensive slate of officers, this model is helpful as a guideline in pointing out areas of leadership that need to be filled-- although in a small church, several of these roles will necessarily be filled by the same person.

The Church Manual recommends that the SYS officers meet with the AYM Committee, which is comprised of church officers whose ministries concern the youth (*see Chapter 2 for more information on the members of the AYM Committee*). This committee should be an umbrella organization planning the Youth Ministries program in the local church. The Church Manual recommends that the pastor and the church elder be members of this AYM Committee. It would benefit you, the AYM Committee, and the church if you, as a pastor or elder, were involved in planning the youth program.

In addition to the Adventurer and Pathfinder Club directors, the Ambassador, Young Adult, and Public Campus Ministry leaders, at least one person of the SYS— either the leader or sponsor— should also be a church board member. This provides a liaison between the SYS and the board. Ideally, the relationship between the SYS and the church board should be smooth and supportive. This is not always the case; sometimes the SYS may feel the church board is failing to provide enough support (either financial or moral support), or the church board may be critical or suspicious of the SYS's programs. As a pastor or elder, you can mediate disputes and help these two bodies work harmoniously together.

#### **4. ROLE OF THE YOUTH LEADER IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The youth leader(s) should be active, supportive church members. Ideally, the youth leader or a youth sponsor should sit on the church board. The youth leader's role is to present the needs of the youth to the church and to integrate youth activities into the church's life.

#### **5. THE YOUTH DEPARTMENT AND OTHER CHURCH DEPARTMENTS**

The Youth Department should work in harmony with other church departments, and, wherever possible, youth should be involved in the work of many church departments. As noted above (Adventist Youth Ministries Committee), the leaders of departments whose work consists of the youth should meet with the youth leaders to ensure that their programs complement and enhance one another.

#### **6. SUPPLIES FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM**

Your youth leaders should have a budget to purchase needed materials for the youth program. The local conference AYM office is the only official custodian and supplier of all AYM resources and materials. AYM resources should not be purchased or procured from unofficial sources without the authorization of the conference or union AYM director. Work with your conference office to make sure your youth department receives all pertinent materials, such as Youth Accent, Insight magazines, youth Sabbath School quarterlies, Pathfinder materials, youth leadership resources, locally church-produced resources, etc.

#### **7. THE YOUTH LIBRARY**

Your church should have a library of Christian books that will interest and inspire young people. If your church uses the Pathfinder or AYM Reading Certificate programs, youth can be encouraged to choose reading material from the church library to fulfill their requirements. If your church does not have such a library, look into the possibility of starting one. If you have a library of youth materials, keep it current, adding new books as they are published. Young people enjoy reading material that is up-to-date and relevant both in content and in design.

Your youth leaders will thank you if you also include current, good-quality resources on youth leadership in the church library, produced by our denomination and vetted resources by other Christian groups.

Since we live in an era of digital media, it would be wise for the church to purchase computers and equipment to benefit the youth. Such an endeavor would inspire young people to read and do research related to their Achievement class work and other assigned topics.

## **8. TRAINING SEMINARS FOR LOCAL YOUTH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS**

Professional development is always necessary for those who wish to enhance their ministry skills and build relationships with others in their field. Your church's youth leader may be a professional, a paid youth pastor, or an unpaid volunteer, but in either case, the need for training is the same.

To make membership in voluntary organizations such as the SYS, Adventurer, and Pathfinder Clubs meaningful, leaders must apply the best skills and leadership. The Basic Staff Training (BST) courses for Adventurers, Pathfinders, and Senior Youth, properly conducted, meet this need. In addition, we encourage all Youth Leaders to undergo the Master Guide, Senior Youth Leadership, Club Ministry Training, and the Public Campus Ministry Certification courses. The requirements for these training courses are on the General Conference website and in the resources.

Youth leaders should also be trained in other Youth Ministries initiatives such as Global Youth Day (GYD), Voice of Youth (VOY), One Year in Mission (OYIM), Caleb Mission, Youth Alive, and others.

The General Conference Adventist Youth Ministries Department and its divisions produce youth resources designed to meet the needs of the youth and prepare them for involvement in local church activities and gospel proclamation. The conferences and the unions ensure that such resources reach the local church. The local pastor and elder should ensure their churches align with the higher organizations' broader vision by exposing them to official church resources and programs.

The conference or union AYM youth directors annually provide training seminars for youth workers. Encourage your youth department officers to attend and do everything you can to make it possible for them to do so (this may include persuading the church board to vote them a travel subsidy). If such seminars are not in place in your area, ask your conference/mission or union youth director to provide training for youth workers. In some regions, excellent youth leadership training programs may be available from neighboring conferences, other Christian denominations, or nondenominational groups. Youth workers should be encouraged to attend such events as a supplement to, but not a substitute for, training seminars provided by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A continuous, carefully planned training program is one of the conference youth director's most exacting and challenging responsibilities. It is also one of the most rewarding in present and long-term benefits. Your directors should include systematic training programs as part of their responsibilities and ensure that their fields will be covered annually with up-to-date training methods and materials. They must also take this time to distribute relevant materials on Youth Ministries to the local leaders.

Expecting youth leaders to be enthusiastic about their responsibilities without knowledge of resource materials is too much. The supply list should be distributed to all local church youth leaders at least twice a year. A frequent checkup on knowledge and use of AYM materials will pay big dividends and make a difference in Youth Ministries.

## **9. EVANGELISM**

The responsibility to prioritize the gospel commission is not limited to the Personal Ministries Department. AYM is about mobilizing young people for mission involvement. Youth directors must be first and invariably soul winners, directly or in related services. The pastor and elder should encourage the AYM leaders to support the evangelism initiatives of the local and global churches. AYM leaders should be inspired and assisted to be creative in offering evangelism projects that suit their communities and the youth. The hallmark of authentic youth leadership is to be a team player in supporting the AYM evangelism initiatives such as Global Youth Day (GYD), Voice of Youth (VOY), One Year in Mission (OYiM), Caleb Mission, Youth Alive, and others.

Digital Media evangelism is the way to go in this era of technological advancement. It is your role as a pastor and elder to be innovative by harnessing the natural talents and skills of the “tech” savvy youth. Let the youth be given roles in the church related to technology (operating audio/visual equipment, etc.) and social media. Train the youth to know the benefits and pitfalls of technology and digital media. Let them be taught to exploit the availability of social media for mission advancement.

## **10. MEETINGS**

Conference youth directors plan frequent meetings for young people. These will include the following:

- SY Society officers' councils (especially near the beginning of the year)
- Youth revivals
- Camporees
- Youth Bible conferences
- Youth leadership training
- Adventurer/Pathfinder Fairs
- SY rallies
- Youth congresses
- And Others

High on the schedule of priority meetings each year is the AY Week of Prayer, which has become one of the most fruitful evangelistic endeavors of the church. Every church must be urged to participate; The General Conference Youth Ministries website provides the materials for this special program.

Pastors are conference workers, and elders serve on behalf of the conference and execute duties assigned by the pastor and the conference. Therefore, pastors should support the conference AYM programs and encourage their churches to do the same. However, they

should assist the conference youth directors to recognize that Youth Ministries is not an institutional function. Churches should be afforded space and time to develop and carry out local programs. The trend of making Youth Ministries a conference program, not a church-centered one, should be discouraged. The conference youth directors must promote and foster strong local church organizations and programs. Small churches may band together in Youth Federations to achieve common goals.

# CHAPTER III: STUDY GUIDE

Youth Leadership  
in the Local Church



## REMEMBER

1. A pastor or elder is key to the success of a healthy youth program. You are a very vital link in the local youth programs. Your support for the youth leaders is very crucial.
2. Pastors, elders, and local youth leaders should work as a team. The pastors and elders should organize training seminars for youth leadership.
3. That you are not only a local church leader for adults but for the youth as well.
4. To ensure that the right leadership is elected to foster the work of Youth Ministries in your churches.
5. Pastors and elders are the spiritual parents of young people.
6. Encourage church adult members to support youth programs in any way that can give growth to Youth Ministries in your local church.

## REVIEW

1. The role of the youth leader is filled by one or more committed volunteers, who might be:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Volunteer youth leaders fill a role for the young people.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. List some of the key SYS officers:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_  
d. \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who comprises the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The youth department should work in harmony with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ departments of the church.
6. List four resources used in your local church youth program:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the importance of having a youth library (whether physical or digital)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Who should be responsible for organizing training seminars for local youth department officers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. List two training courses for Youth Ministries?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_

10. List six frequent meetings that effective pastors and elders plan for young people:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_  
e. \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_

11. The trend of making Youth Ministries a program, and not a the program should be discouraged.

12. A prime requisite of modern AY leadership is a \_\_\_\_\_  
of AY \_\_\_\_\_ and their function.

## THINK IT THROUGH

1. How can I and the local youth leaders work together to minimize friction?
2. What could I do to support youth programs publicly?
3. How can I ensure that SYS officers are appointed during the yearly nominating committee?
4. How can I disarm prejudices among youth leaders who see me as unsympathetic to youth needs?
5. Think of ways you can hold training for local youth leaders.
6. How do you build a physical or digital library for young people?
7. In thinking of the frequent meetings for your young people in your local church, how many times have you attended the following:
  - AY Society officers' councils
  - Youth Revivals
  - Youth Bible Conferences
  - Youth Leadership Training
  - AY Rallies
  - Youth Congresses
  - Pathfinder Camporees



# BREAKOUT SESSION

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important for pastors and elders to work as a team? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is it necessary to appoint specific dedicated people to serve young people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the role of the youth leader in the local church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the usual point of conflict between pastors/elders and youth leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Has your church made yearly training seminars for local youth leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How can you assist youth leaders in making evangelism the basis of all youth programs? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# CHAPTER IV

## MENTORSHIP AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Mentorship and Youth Ministries**

As you read this chapter, attempt to expand your understanding of the role of mentors, and the mentee/mentor relationship.

### **OBJECTIVE**

You Should...

- Know that the mentor/mentee relationship focuses on building relationships where older, more spiritually mature individuals guide younger believers in their faith journey, fostering spiritual growth and equipping them to live out their faith in a practical way.
- Know that empowering youth is the by-product of the emphasis on salvation, service, and disciple-making, which the Youth Department underscores in the church.
- Remember that committed adults are needed to foster youth nurturing.
- Know that pastors, elders, and local youth leaders are responsible for working as a team. Youth leaders should function as supporters of the whole church's program. Pastors and elders work alongside youth leaders, supporting and getting to know them.
- In dealing with youth leaders, where conflicts arise, church leaders should take a redemptive, nurturing approach, rather than a harsh, rigid approach.
- Church discipline is a must in some instances, but the church leaders should counsel youth in a loving and accepting manner.
- Remember, one of your functions is to transmit church lifestyle standards to youth.

# MENTORSHIP AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

## 1. YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH AND FOSTERING INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORSHIP

Sometimes, we make the mistake of thinking that youth can only be involved in the church through the youth program. This is an error. Intergenerational partnership is realized when the old and the young work together.

While there is to be an active Senior Youth Society in every church, it is crucial that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to participating in youth organizations, the young should be integrated into responsible leadership and involvement in church programs. Mentorship is an integral part of this process. There should be young elders, deacons, deaconesses, et cetera, working with experienced church officers. They should teach them about church policy and administration, understanding that the church organization is as vital as understanding the job at hand.

Young people who are involved generally feel accepted as part of the church's mission; that feeling of being disengaged and leaving the church will be significantly minimized. They take ownership—they are the church. In all lines of church work, the youth should be active. "In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause." *Gospel Workers*, p. 67 (*SDA Church Manual*, p. 101).

Encourage your church board, your nominating committee, the chairs of various church committees, and the platform elders, all to use young people's talents whenever and wherever possible. Young people feel committed to a church where they feel needed, valued, and respected.

Youth are empowered by involvement. They need to take ownership of a program if they are going to care about it and be committed to it. This applies to Adventist Youth Ministries pro-

grams and all aspects of church life. Apathetic, unmotivated young people are usually those who have never been allowed to become actively involved in the life of their church.

Trusting youth to take leadership and ownership is risky because they will make mistakes. But just as Jesus was patient with the mistakes of His disciples as they learned to serve Him, so church leaders who are genuinely committed to discipling young people will be patient with them as they move through the learning process.

Remember the New Testament story of John Mark, Barnabas' young cousin, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey, but turned back out of discouragement. When he later wanted to join them again, Paul refused, but Barnabas was so committed to giving this young man a second chance that he resigned his role in Paul's popular and successful evangelistic team to start up his ministry with the unpromising young John Mark. John Mark was so empowered by Barnabas' faith in him that he later became a leader whose worth even Paul acknowledged. In this case, the great apostle Paul is not the example we should strive to follow. Instead, church leaders should endeavor to follow Barnabas' example. Have faith in young people, have patience with them, place trust in them, and watch them grow!

The Adventist church's heritage is replete with examples of young people serving essential roles in the formative years of the Millerite movement. Ellen White was just a teenager when she was officially called into the prophetic ministry. Most of our pioneers were in their early twenties when they distinguishedly served God and the movement. It is hard to imagine what the current church would have been like if our forebears didn't see any value in involving young people in preaching the Second Coming of Jesus. The church is as strong as its young people.

## **2. PASTORS AND ELDERS INVOLVED IN YOUTH WORK**

Youth need to see that their elders and leaders work alongside them, supporting and getting to know them. Whenever the opportunity arises—a fundraising project, a community work project, even a social event—attend, roll up your sleeves, and work with the youth. Show them that you are concerned about and supportive of their goals, and willing to get your hands dirty, literally or figuratively!

### **3. CONFLICTS BETWEEN YOUTH AND CHURCH LEADERS**

Younger and older generations within the church often struggle to see eye-to-eye. Young people tend to be curious, questioning why certain traditions or practices are necessary. However, older generations may interpret this curiosity as disrespect. These differing perspectives on questioning can create tension between youth and church leaders.

If such conflicts occur in your church, be sure that you and all your church leaders take a redemptive, nurturing approach in their dealings with youth, rather than a harsh, rigid approach. It is essential to look at the big picture: being proven right in a particular conflict is less important than the ultimate salvation of the young person involved. While church leaders should never compromise their principles, they may need to be flexible in their attitudes when dealing with youth.

Your youth leader should be able to mediate serious conflicts between youth and church leaders. They should be able to talk honestly with both the young person and the adult involved and help each to see the other's point of view.

Sometimes, young people may be viewed as harsh or disrespectful towards church leaders or the older folk. Genuine love and support for the youth should underpin any discipline or corrective measures towards young people. Church leaders and the older members are encouraged to apologize to the youth if found involved in offensive behavior towards young people. This will leave a lasting impression on the minds of the youth about the humility of church leadership.

### **4. CHURCH DISCIPLINE FOR YOUTH**

While young church members are subject to the same standards of church discipline as adult members (as outlined in the Church Manual), special care must be taken in dealing with discipline situations involving youth. Young people often go through periods of rebellion against adult authority, which may include church and school authority. If they are counselled in a loving and accepting manner, these crises can often provide opportunities to strengthen their ties to the Lord and the church, rather than break them.

After leaving home and perhaps the sheltered environment of a church school, many young adults go through a period during which they do not attend church and do not actively pursue an Adventist lifestyle. However, they may still adhere to Adventist beliefs. If their contacts with the church and with older adult members are positive during this time, they often choose to return later, perhaps when they have married and begun raising children of their own. If you see this pattern among young adults in your congregation, discuss it with your youth leaders. Rather than a reason to drop the young adults from membership, this may be an opportunity for your church to begin a young-adult ministry that reaches out to these young people.

## 5. YOUTH BAPTISMS AND BAPTISMAL CLASSES

Most young people who grow up in an Adventist home choose to join the church through baptism sometime during their pre-teen or teenage years. In his book, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (2003), George Barna states, "...the probability of someone embracing Jesus as his or her Savior was 32 percent for those between the ages of 5-12; 4% for those in the 13-18 age range; and 6 percent for people 19 or older." Although the Adventist church does not prescribe the appropriate age for baptism, church leaders should encourage young people to be baptized before they reach their teenage years.

Ellen G. White also recognizes that children do make serious decisions for baptism. In *Counsels to the Churches*, page 195 Ellen White says, "Parents should explain and simplify the plan of salvation to their children that their young minds may comprehend it. Children of eight, ten, or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. Do not teach your children with reference to some future period when they shall be old enough to repent and believe the truth. If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ. Ministers are generally too indifferent to the salvation of children and are not as personal as they should be. Golden opportunities to impress the minds of children frequently pass unimproved."

Pastors should plan one-on-one studies or group baptismal classes for those interested in joining the church. Baptismal studies for youth should focus on providing a clear understanding of the church's fundamental beliefs and, more importantly, on an authentic and

saving relationship with Jesus. Young people who choose to be baptized should understand the full impact of their commitment. It is okay if this means encouraging some potential baptismal candidates to wait until they are a little older. It may also mean avoiding rushed baptisms following an emotionally charged event such as a Week of Prayer, youth rally, or evangelistic series. It is terrific if youth commit to following the Lord and being baptized at such an event, but their commitment should always be followed up with study to ensure that they are ready for baptism and grounded in the faith.

Careful consideration should be given to providing comprehensive training to the young baptismal candidates on the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Teaching young people about Adventist history and heritage will solidify their faith in God and help them embrace authentic Adventist identity.

## **6. TRANSMITTING OUR LIFESTYLE STANDARDS TO YOUTH**

Older Adventists are often very concerned when they look at young Adventists. The older generation may see youth wearing jewelry and dressing in ways their elders find inappropriate, or taking part in forms of entertainment (movies, dancing, secular music) their elders were taught to avoid scrupulously. When addressing these issues, a few facts are worth remembering:

- Some degree of rebellion is a regular part of adolescence. A young person's need to assert their individuality often takes the form of outward appearance-- choosing clothing, hairstyles, or decorations that differ from their parents' taste. This means that even Adventist young people who are sincerely committed to Christ may choose to wear and do things that will raise the eyebrows of their elders.
- Young people want to know why. This has always been true, but it is even more true in today's postmodern and post-Christian culture. Presenting young people with a list of dos and don'ts doesn't work. They want to know the values that underlie these standards, so we need to be prepared to talk about those values when we discuss lifestyle issues with youth.

- Youth despise inconsistency and hypocrisy in their elders. Youth are often sensitive to perceived inconsistency or hypocrisy in their elders, even though they are not immune to such tendencies. When discussing lifestyle issues with young people, be prepared for thoughtful questions and ensure that your views and practices align consistently with the principles you advocate.
- Provide training seminars for the youth. Sometimes we tend to condemn young people when we have not done our part to educate them on biblical principles and Ellen White's counsels about Christian standards. The Senior Youth Society is a suitable forum to discuss such matters.
- Youth-friendly churches. If our churches are youth-friendly, some of their rebellious attitudes may dissipate because young people would know we've got their backs. Let the pastor and the elder educate members to capitalize on the youth's strengths instead of weaknesses. Some of their actions may not result from rebellion, but they seek attention because there may be unresolved issues. Meeting young people at their point of need is more important than criticizing them.

## **7. YOUTH AND CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Young Adventists rarely attend church business meetings, even if they are baptized church members and eligible to do so. Of course, they can hardly be blamed for this, since adult members rarely attend business meetings in many churches. While you may be working hard to convince adults in your congregation of the importance of attending church business meetings, do not forget the youth. Take time—or have the youth leaders take the time—to explain to young people what goes on at a church business meeting and why it is vital for them to be there. Often, young people feel they have no input or voice in the church. Show them they can share their views by attending, speaking, and voting at business meetings. In some churches, adults are reluctant to have young people attend the business meeting (or even sit on the church board) because they feel the youth may be discouraged by the un-Christian attitudes that members display toward each other in these settings. If this is the case in your church, the problem is not with the young people. Church members must be educated to treat one another with Christian love even when discussing hot top-

ics. For some adults, having their young sons and daughters attend might inspire them to curb their tongues. However, suppose you sense that an upcoming business meeting may be controversial, and your young people have been encouraged to attend, in that case, to prepare them in advance for the possibility of hearing something controversial, you might ask the youth leader to give a devotional talk on the ideal of Christian love and how sinners often fall short of this goal. Encourage the youth always to fix their eyes on Jesus, not on church members, as the ultimate example of a holy life.

The AYM Department encourages pastors and elders to consider recommending and nominating young delegates to conference, union, division, and General Conference constituency sessions or business meetings. Exposing young delegates to the church's life at these levels will help them appreciate the church. This will encourage them to support the church with their talents, skills, and resources. However, let local church leaders guide these young delegates on what to expect at such gatherings. Prepare them so they do not get disillusioned when they discover tendencies alien to Christian principles and decorum.

## **8. YOUTH AND COMMUNION SERVICE**

In far too many churches, even baptized young people choose not to participate in the Communion service and, even more frequently, in the ordinance of humility (foot washing). This may be because they do not fully understand the significance of these ceremonies, because they feel adults in the church do not make them welcome during communion service, or because (in the case of foot washing) they feel embarrassed and awkward with the ritual.

If this problem exists in your church, talk to your youth leaders. You may even want to take a youth Sabbath School class or SYS program to talk to the youth directly about it. Work with the youth leader to plan a program that explores and explains the meaning of the Communion. Find out from the youth themselves why they are not participating and what would make them more likely to do so.

In some churches, offering special rooms where young people can perform the ordinance of foot washing together may make them more comfortable than expecting them to mingle with the adults during this part of the service.

Special youth communion services, often in the format of agape feasts, can be compelling. With the help of pastors and elders, youth leaders can lead young people through this service. However, services such as these should lead to full youth involvement in the main church communion service, not replace it.

## **9. CHURCH LEADERS NEED TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS**

One of the best ways pastors, elders, and other church leaders can support the youth is to actively support their programs. When youth activities are open to adults and church members, the pastor and elders should attend as much as possible. Attend youth events not in a spirit of judgment or criticism—do not sit in the back row, frowning as if you are waiting to catch the young people making a mistake—but in a spirit of joyful participation. Worshiping, playing, and praying alongside the young people will build bonds of trust and respect and allow opportunities for mentoring. Your support for youth programs will also provide tremendous encouragement to your youth leaders.

## **10. YOUTH AND WORSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Youth need to feel involved in your church's worship. While youth and adults may have different worship needs, you and your church worship committee must strive as much as possible to create a worship experience that meets at least some needs for people of all generations. While the church may not please everyone, no one, especially the youth, should repeatedly go home from church Sabbath after Sabbath feeling that the service has been irrelevant and meaningless to them personally.

Ellen White offers invaluable counsel to pastors and church leaders on how to treat young people. Let us glean lessons from the following excerpts.

Form a happy acquaintance with your youth— Very much has been lost to the cause of God because of inattention to the young. Ministers of the gospel should form a happy acquaintance with the youth of their congregations. There is a great reluctance on the part of many to become acquainted with

the youth, but it is accounted of Heaven a neglect of duty, a sin against souls for whom Christ died. The youth are objects of Satan's special attacks; and the manifestation of kindness, courtesy, tender sympathy, and love, will often work the salvation of those who are under the temptations of the evil one. The love of Jesus will win you an entrance into the hearts of the young; and when you have obtained the confidence of the youth, they will listen to your words and take your counsel. You should bind them to your heart by the cords of love, and then instruct them how to labor in the cause of God. The youth may labor for their young companions in a quiet, unpretending way. This branch of God's work must not be neglected. Our churches are not doing what they might do for the youth. There seems to be no burden for souls for whom Christ died. Why should this labor for the youth in our borders not be thought the highest of missionary work? —*Pastoral Ministry*, page 275

Why do the ministers leave the young without endeavoring to win them to Christ? Why do they not urge the young to give their hearts to God? This work will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most earnest prayer that heavenly wisdom may be imparted; for connected with the church are those who are not ignorant of our faith, yet whose hearts have never been touched by the power of divine grace. —*The Review and Herald*, March 24, 1891. PaM 275.1

Love will reach the hearts of even apparently hopeless youth—The Lord is not glorified when the children are neglected and passed by. They are to be educated, disciplined, and patiently instructed. They require more than casual notice, more than a word of encouragement. They need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor. The heart that is filled with love and sympathy will reach the hearts of the youth who are apparently careless and hopeless.—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, 77. PaM 275.2

Christ is grieved with every harsh, severe, and inconsiderate word spoken to children—Let the kindness and courtesy of the minister be seen in his treatment of children. He should ever bear in mind that they are miniature men and women, younger members of the Lord's family. These may be very near and dear to the Master, and, if properly instructed and disciplined, will do service for Him, even in their youth. Christ is grieved with every harsh, severe, and inconsiderate word spoken to children. Their rights are not always respected, and they are frequently treated as though they had not an individual character which needs to be properly developed, that it may not be warped and the purpose of God in their lives prove a failure.—*Testimonies for the Church* 4:397. PaM 276.1

In every sermon, let a little corner be left for children—In His charge to Peter, the Saviour first bade him, "Feed My lambs," and afterward commanded, "Feed My sheep." In addressing the apostle, Christ says to all His servants, "Feed My lambs." When Jesus admonished His disciples not to despise the little ones, He addressed all disciples in all ages. His own love and care for children is a precious example for His followers. If teachers in the Sabbath school felt the love which they should feel for these lambs of the flock, many more would be won to the fold of Christ. At every suitable opportunity, let the story of Jesus' love be repeated to the children. In every sermon let a little corner be left for their benefit. The servant of Christ may have lasting friends in these little ones, and his words may be to them as apples of gold in pictures of silver.—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, 76. PaM 276.2

Children should be in attendance at Sabbath worship—Fathers and mothers should make it a rule that their children attend public worship on the Sabbath and should enforce the rule by their own example. It is our duty to command our children and our household after us, as did Abraham. By example as well as precept we should impress upon them the importance of religious teaching. All who have taken the baptismal vow have solemnly consecrated themselves to the service of God; they are under covenant obligation to place themselves and their children where they may obtain all possible incentives and encouragement in the Christian life.—*Child Guidance*, 530. PaM 276.3



# CHAPTER IV: STUDY GUIDE

Mentorship and  
Youth Ministries



**REMEMBER:**

1. Mentors help mentees develop a close relationship with God through prayer, Bible study and application to their life, sharing, and personal reflections on both their faith journey.
2. As a mentor you will help the mentee learn how to apply the Bible and live out their faith as they navigate life, relationships, and challenges as they discern God's will for their lives.
3. You are building character development. The mentors and mentees develop a trusting relationship, where the mentee feels safe to share their struggles and questions.
4. Mentors hold mentees accountable for their commitments and help them develop a life of faith and integrity.

**REVIEW**

1. Young people feel committed to a church where they feel: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Mention three ways to empower youth: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Youth grow through \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The "gap" can lead to conflicts between \_\_\_\_\_ and leaders.  
Care needs to be taken in dealing with discipline situations involving youth.
5. Name two focuses of youth baptismal studies:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. List three facts worth remembering when addressing Adventist lifestyle standards:

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7. Share Ellen White's counsels on how to transform your church worship service to meet the needs of your church's youth.

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## THINK IT THROUGH

1. In what practical ways can you empower youth in your church?

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2. Come up with a sample of nurturing youth.

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3. How can I be a leader and a friend to young people?

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4. Make a program for the following:

a. Youth baptism      b. Lord's Supper      c. Youth worship

5. What are some ways to help your church effectively transmit lifestyle standards to youth?

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# BREAKOUT SESSION

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are the benefits of involving youth in the church?

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2. How can you tell that a church is empowering youth?

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3. What is the most elemental in nurturing today's youth?

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4. How should the church handle discipline for youth?

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5. What suggestions do you have for an attractive youth baptism?

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6. How can you transmit lifestyle standards to youth effectively?

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7. Explain how you can transform your church worship service to meet the needs of your church's youth.

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# CHAPTER V

## YOUTH MINISTRIES AND OTHER CHURCH MINISTRIES

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Youth Ministries and Other Church Ministries**

Youth Ministries should highlight the importance of the family structure, and collaboration with other church ministries is necessary for a successful youth program. Youth programs should be tailored to expose the youth to what other ministries can offer.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To Know that...

- Young people in your church do not exist in isolation - other church ministries are vehicles for developing spiritual maturity in the youth.
- Youth Ministries should train people to make them aware of the resources and tools available in other church ministries.
- Family-based Youth Ministry prepares them to be responsible citizens, church members, and parents. Single young people who desire to marry should be given premarital counseling.
- Ministry to single and divorced young adults must be given undivided attention within a local church.
- Mission initiatives for young people are designed to keep them in the church, as idleness is a scourge that prevents the young from being involved in ministry and mission.

# CHAPTER V

## YOUTH MINISTRIES AND OTHER CHURCH MINISTRIES

The Youth Department plays a vital role in the church, but it cannot and should not operate in isolation and does not have all the resources and ideas to raise responsible youth. Collaboration with other church ministries is essential to nurture the holistic growth of young people and equip them to thrive as disciples of Christ. Youth Ministries is not just about addressing the immediate spiritual needs of young people but also about preparing them to take on meaningful roles in their families, careers, and communities as they mature in faith.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of interdepartmental partnerships to achieve these goals, recognizing that the challenges faced by young people today are diverse and complex and require a multipronged approach. By working together, ministries such as Singles Ministry, Family Ministries, Men's and Women's Ministries, Young Professionals, Possibilities Ministries, and initiatives like Youth Alive can offer a more comprehensive framework for growth, service, and support.

These collaborations are guided by the biblical principles of discipleship and unity, reflecting the body of Christ working together as described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. When ministries join forces, they can address the unique needs of young people, from fostering resilience and leadership to building Christ-centered families and encouraging purposeful living.

This chapter also outlines various programs and resources illustrating how intentional partnerships can transform Youth Ministries. Together, we can inspire a generation to live for Christ, fulfill their God-given purpose, and prepare for His soon return.

## 1. SINGLES MINISTRY

Adventist Youth Ministries affirms marriage as a holy institution birthed by God in the Garden of Eden. The advent of sin and human brokenness has marred marriage and has also caused some of God's people to remain single involuntarily.

Singles Ministry is dedicated to supporting single youth and adults in their spiritual, emotional, and social growth as they navigate their life stages unique opportunities and challenges. Recognizing that single youth and adults are vital church family members, this ministry affirms their value, empowers their contributions, and provides opportunities for connection, growth, and service.

In 1 Corinthians 7:7-8, the Apostle Paul highlights the value of singleness, describing it as a gift allowing undivided devotion to the Lord. Singles Ministry embraces this biblical perspective, encouraging singles to see their life stage not as a limitation but as an opportunity to deepen their relationship with Christ and dedicate themselves fully to His mission.

Whether through personal ministry, community outreach, or church leadership, single people are encouraged to see their singleness as a season rich with possibilities to glorify God and advance His kingdom. Rooted in the Adventist commitment to discipleship, this ministry encourages singles to discover their unique calling, maximize their potential for service, and actively participate in the life and mission of the church.

Additionally, Singles Ministry provides practical resources and guidance to help individuals navigate key areas of life, such as career development, financial stewardship, and maintaining healthy relationships. By addressing these areas, the ministry equips singles to live purpose-driven lives that reflect God's love and grace.

Family Ministries and Adventist Youth Ministries could collaborate to offer workshops to equip single members.

## **2. FAMILY MINISTRIES**

The Adventist Youth Ministries' goal is to support the family as the primary evangelizer for children and youth. AYM can never replace the family unit, which Ellen White calls the "first school". All AYM Achievement/Progressive Classes affirm the family and teach young people about its value.

Family Ministries is dedicated to nurturing and strengthening relationships within families and equipping ministry leaders and churches to support families in their spiritual and relational growth. Rooted in the biblical model of love and unity, this ministry focuses on people in relationships, recognizing the vital role that strong, Christ-centered families play in the church and society.

Through practical tools and resources, Family Ministries empowers individuals to communicate more effectively, deepen their commitment in marriage, and develop the skills needed to become godly, intentional parents. By fostering these qualities, families can grow in love, overcome challenges together, and live in harmony as part of the larger family of God.

The family should be regarded as a primary unit for discipleship and evangelism. When families reflect Christ's love, they become a powerful witness to the world of God's transformative grace. Family Ministries seeks to uphold this vision by offering guidance rooted in biblical principles, helping families thrive in their God-given purpose.

Whether you are a parent, spouse, or ministry leader, Family Ministries offers valuable resources to support and strengthen youth and families in their unique challenges. To learn more about these tools and how to build stronger families, visit [www.family.adventist.org](http://www.family.adventist.org).

## **3. WOMEN'S/ MEN'S MINISTRIES**

The Adventist Youth Ministries trains young people to mature into responsible men and women who will bless humanity and be ready for Jesus' soon return.

The Departments of Men's and Women's Ministries exist to nurture, inspire, and challenge individuals in their spiritual journey as disciples of Jesus Christ and active members of His

global church. These ministries, in partnership with AYM, play a vital role in fostering the growth and development of young people, equipping them to become well-rounded Christians who reflect Christ in every aspect of their lives.

Too often, young people in the church are seen merely as “youth,” rather than emerging men and women of faith, with a God-given purpose and identity within the body of Christ. This limited perspective can hinder their understanding of their value and potential in the church, their families, and the broader community.

By broadening this understanding, Men's and Women's Ministries can help young people embrace their identity as future leaders, role models, and active contributors to the church's mission. By intentionally focusing on young men and women through these ministries, we can plug the gap created by “absent” fathers and mothers. Through mentorship and spiritual training, these ministries guide young men and women to recognize their unique roles in God's plan. This approach aligns with the Adventist mission of preparing individuals to live purposefully and actively share Christ's soon-coming message.

As we support and empower them in their spiritual journey, we are fulfilling the biblical mandate to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6), ensuring that they grow into confident, Christ-centered adults who will love the Lord, strengthen the church, and advance His kingdom.

#### **4. YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

The Young Professionals Ministry is designed to support young adults as they transition into adulthood and professional life, equipping them to integrate their faith with their careers, relationships, and personal aspirations. This ministry recognizes the challenges young professionals face as they navigate the demands of the workplace and establish independence.

This ministry provides guidance and support in career development, leadership, and work-life balance through mentorship programs and networking opportunities. It also emphasizes the importance of living with integrity and using one's professional platform to witness for Christ.

Young professionals are called to be light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16), and this ministry seeks to empower them to live out this calling with confidence. By encouraging a sense of community and shared purpose, Young Professionals Ministry helps individuals stay connected to the church while actively engaging in meaningful service and outreach.

In alignment with the Adventist vision of offering holistic training to the youth, this ministry also promotes spiritual renewal and emotional well-being, encouraging young professionals to prioritize their relationship with God amid the busyness of life. Through this support, they are equipped to thrive as ambassadors of Christ in their workplaces, communities, and beyond.

## **5. ADVENTIST POSSIBILITIES MINISTRIES**

It is imperative that everyone feels welcome in Youth Ministries- a place where any young person can feel comfortable and themselves. Adventist Possibility Ministries is a movement guided by the Holy Spirit to help us see through the eyes of a loving God the strengths and possibilities of seven unique people groups, the deaf, the blind, the physically immobile, those who have mental health challenges, orphans/vulnerable children, those mourning the loss of a spouse and the support of caregivers. Each of these groups represents people with special needs and provides them significant opportunities for ministry and discipleship.

Young people are also present within these groups, often facing unique challenges as they navigate life and faith. Youth Ministries must recognize this diversity and actively seek to empower and support these individuals, affirming their God-given worth and equipping them to participate fully in the church's mission.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are called to emulate Christ's ministry, which was marked by compassion, inclusion, and a profound ability to see the possibilities in everyone. This means intentionally offering practical support and creating opportunities for young people of all abilities and circumstances to thrive within the church.

In doing so, we strengthen the church and fulfill the biblical mandate to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) and uplift every member of the body of Christ. Let us work together to ensure that Youth Ministries reflect the boundless love and hope of the gospel for all young people, regardless of their circumstances.

The AYM leadership at the local church and other levels of the church should strive to be intentional about accommodating the needs of everyone when organizing events and programs and producing resources and materials. To achieve this goal, collaboration with the Adventist Possibility Ministries will ensure that we adequately meet the needs of the people.

## **6. YOUTH ALIVE**

In partnership with the Adventist Youth Ministries and Health Ministries Department, the Youth Alive program was created to address the challenges faced by teens and young adults in today's world. This initiative builds resilience and empowers young people to make healthy, Christ-centered choices. Through Youth Alive, youth are encouraged to discover their God-given gifts and purpose, equipping them to lead lives of meaning and service.

Many young people today find themselves trapped by harmful addictions such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pornography, excessive gaming, and media overuse.

These challenges often rob them of their potential and lead to emotional and spiritual pain. The Youth Alive program fosters meaningful relationships and a supportive community to help teens resist these at-risk behaviors.

At its core, Youth Alive promotes a healthy, purpose-driven life rooted in biblical principles. It encourages teens to embrace their identity as children of God and to joy in living free from the chains of addiction and emotional pain.

This initiative promotes the whole-person health, spiritual, mental, and physical aspects. It is a practical tool for young people seeking a vibrant, faith-filled life that reflects the values of God's kingdom. Local churches are encouraged to attend Youth Alive seminars to appreciate what it offers and, in return, establish Youth Alive clubs in their churches.

To access the program's resources and join the movement, visit: [youthaliveportal.org](http://youthaliveportal.org).

## 7. MISSION INITIATIVES

### a. Global Youth Day (GYD)

Global Youth Day (GYD) is a dynamic initiative that mobilizes Adventist youth worldwide to become the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities. Held annually, GYD replaces traditional Sabbath services with intentional acts of service and kindness, embodying the theme "Be the Sermon." Through activities like feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, or uplifting the marginalized, young people experience the joy of practical ministry while reflecting Christ's love. Global Youth Day is a powerful reminder that faith in action is essential to discipleship. This initiative encourages the youth to regularly offer selfless service to their communities, not as a one-time event.

### b. Mission Caleb

Mission Caleb equips young people to engage in targeted evangelistic efforts in their local communities. Inspired by Caleb's bold faith in God's promises (Numbers 13:30), this initiative challenges youth to step out in courage, trusting God to guide them as they share the gospel. Mission Caleb empowers young people to participate actively in the Great Commission through door-to-door evangelism, Bible studies, and community programs. This initiative fosters a spirit of service and deepens participants' faith, preparing them to lead others to Christ while building a strong spiritual foundation for their own lives.

### c. One Year in Mission (OYiM)

One Year in Mission (OYiM) allows young adults to dedicate a year to intensive missionary service, combining their passion for Christ with their unique talents and skills. This global program unites Adventist youth in urban centers worldwide to share the gospel through community projects, evangelistic campaigns, and innovative outreach strategies. OYiM participants gain hands-on experience in mission work, cultivating leadership skills and a deeper understanding of God's calling for their lives. By integrating faith and service, One Year in Mission empowers young adults to make a lasting impact for God's kingdom in their communities and beyond.

These mission initiatives illustrate how Adventist youth are being equipped and inspired to lead lives of active service, transforming their world for Christ.

**d. Voice of Youth (VOY)**

Voice of Youth is an initiative of the General Conference that encourages senior youth to conduct youth evangelistic campaigns. Young people should present the sermons and presentations to other young people.

While higher organizations may fund these campaigns, conferences, and local churches are encouraged to raise funds to run these meetings. Young people value what they pay for. Let us encourage them to adopt the spirit of giving and self-sacrifice.

These mission initiatives for young people should be extended and conducted in public and church institutions. Total Youth Involvement should be a lifestyle we adopt for all the church youth, irrespective of where they are.

# CHAPTER V: STUDY GUIDE

Youth Ministries  
and Other Church  
Ministries



## REVIEW

1. Youth Ministries should not operate in \_\_\_\_\_
2. List the benefits of collaboration with other ministries and initiatives. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. List at least six church ministries that Youth Ministries should collaborate with:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do not overlook youth in your congregation.
5. List the AYM mission initiatives \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THINGS TO DO

1. Explain what "Family-based Youth Ministries" means to you.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Plan a social program in which you involve parents with youth.
3. Plan special Sabbath seminar to educate members about other ministries.
4. Promote the AYM mission initiatives in your church.
5. Have you ever conducted seminars for singles and people with special needs? If not, what is your resolve after learning about their importance?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# BREAKOUT SESSION

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is Family-Based Youth Ministry?

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2. How can you assist parents in developing a favorable communication climate with their children?

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3. What are the benefits of collaboration in the local church?

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4. Why is it important to hold seminars on dating for young people?

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5. Have you ever attended a conference or seminar for people with special needs?

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6. Is your local church friendly (infrastructure and people) to those with special needs?

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7. Are your young people actively involved in youth mission initiatives?

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# CHAPTER VI

## HELP FOR HURTING YOUTH

### **PREAMBLE**

#### **Help for Hurting Youth**

As you read the chapter, consider how your church can help hurting youth. Ask yourself, “How does God equip me to help hurting youth?”

Note specifically what it involves being a youth counselor.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To Know...

- The role of the pastor as counselor.
- Ministering to troubled youth requires wisdom and patience.
- Special skills are needed for various problems youth face in their lives.

### **HELP FOR HURTING YOUTH**

In Youth Ministries, we urge pastors and elders to face the critical task of supporting youth through their uncertain journey, marked by academic pressures, relationship complexities, identity struggles, and the impact of loss or trauma. These challenges can overwhelm the young person, making the compassionate presence of spiritual leaders vital. Pastors and elders must go beyond preaching and teaching, embodying Christ's love through active listening, comforting, and providing a shoulder to cry on, while also recognizing when to refer to other professional help.

1. **Knowing the Limits and Boundaries of a Pastor and Elder.**

In pastoral care, it is imperative to navigate the boundaries and limits that safeguard both the well-being of ministers and the individuals they serve, especially the youth in need. Amidst the daily challenges, discerning these boundaries can be daunting. However, before extending aid to others, it is crucial to first understand your limits and boundaries. Seeking assistance from trusted mentors or colleagues can provide invaluable guidance, helping to effectively support those in need while maintaining your well-being. Furthermore, recognizing when your help may no longer be practical and knowing when to refer individuals to other professionals is essential. This ensures a healthy and safe environment for all involved, while upholding the integrity of pastoral relationships and the standards of care within the ministry.

*Understanding the boundaries of pastoral roles is vital.* While pastors offer spiritual guidance and support, it is essential to acknowledge your limits, even if you have received formal counseling training at the seminary. There are times when this training alone may not be adequate to deal with complex mental health issues. Attempting to provide specialized help beyond your expertise can harm those seeking assistance and expose yourself and the organization to legal ramifications. Maintaining appropriate boundaries preserves trust and integrity. Therefore, pastors must recognize when to refer individuals to professional therapists or counselors for specialized care. Clear guidelines for interaction with congregants ensure professionalism and respect for these boundaries, allowing pastors and elders to fulfill their responsibilities with integrity and safeguard the well-being of those under their care.

2. **Pastoral and Elder's Personal Care**

When providing spiritual or psychological care, pastors and elders must prioritize their well-being. Just as an injured person cannot effectively assist others, pastors and elders must ensure they have the strength and capacity to offer support. Caring for others can be physically and emotionally draining, especially when personal challenges arise. Often, when a young person seeks help, it is urgent and requires immediate attention.

Personal issues can distract you from providing practical assistance. You must be aware of your needs and ensure you are prepared to engage with those in need when they seek help. One of the best ways for pastors and elders to maintain personal well-being is through regular check-ins with a therapist or trusted confidant. With so many responsibilities, it is easy to neglect your own needs. Prioritizing your mental, physical, and emotional health ensures you are fully prepared to face any challenge. Remember, taking care of yourself is essential to effectively support and care for others.

### 3. **Assisting the Mentally Troubled or Clinically Diagnosed Youth.**

Youths who face deep and complex problems must seek specialized professional help. Trained professionals can identify the root causes of their symptoms and begin the healing process. As pastors and elders, you are vital in guiding troubled youth towards appropriate care, leveraging your personal connections to make this transition smoother. Understanding their feelings is often half the battle won for these young people. A professional diagnosis can be intimidating, but the fear can diminish with your unwavering support and encouragement, allowing true healing to begin.

Your role as a pastor or elder extends beyond spiritual guidance; it encompasses offering positive reinforcement and a stable support system. You know these youth well, have witnessed their growth, and understand the intricacies of their family dynamics. Use this deep insight to assist families in navigating complex diagnoses and the accompanying challenges. This personal connection can make a significant difference in helping families stay resilient and focused on achieving a healthy life for their child.

Being present and caring is the most valuable support you can offer struggling, diagnosed youth. Your consistent presence reassures them that they are not alone in their journey. Actively engage in helping them understand their condition, offering empathy and patience as they navigate their emotions and challenges. If you feel unprepared to handle certain aspects, take the initiative to educate yourself about

their condition. Learning alongside them provides the necessary knowledge and fosters a sense of solidarity, showing the youth that they have a dedicated ally in their corner.

In addition, open communication within the family should be encouraged, promoting a supportive environment where the youth feel safe to express their feelings and concerns. Advocate for a holistic approach to their well-being, integrating spiritual, emotional, and mental health support. Doing so reinforces the message that seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness but a courageous step towards healing and growth.

Ultimately, your role is to be a beacon of hope and stability. Guide the youth and their families with compassion, understanding, and unwavering support. By being present, learning together, and encouraging professional help, you help transform the daunting journey of dealing with a diagnosis into an empowering path towards healing and wholeness. This comprehensive approach ensures the youth feel valued, supported, and equipped to face challenges with confidence and resilience.

Pastors and elders should endeavor to read about the various mental health conditions to be able to minister to troubled youth effectively. Ignorance about these matters will render you incapable and ineffective in offering support to diagnosed youth. Let us be cautious of assuming that familiarity with these conditions makes church leaders specialists.

#### 4. **Dealing with Grief and Death**

In recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, many young people have been forced to confront tragic losses, often losing loved ones without any warning. These experiences have left them grappling with grief, uncertainty, and difficult questions about death and mortality. As pastors and leaders, we must serve as steadfast and caring pillars embodying God's love and compassionate presence.

When youth come to us with questions, it is natural to feel overwhelmed or uncertain about what to say. However, often, the most potent response is simply to be present. Words may not always be necessary—often, no explanation is needed or even helpful. What they need most is the assurance that they are not alone, and that their pain is seen, felt, and held in sacred human and divine love. Let them know that even in their darkest moments, God is a constant representation of God's love, and offering a safe space to mourn will help young people find hope, healing, and solace in their faith, even amid sorrow. Let them know that even in their pain, God is there. Moreover, like them, He feels every heartache and pain.

### 5. **Dealing with Illness and Sickness**

For many, being diagnosed with a sickness or disease can be terrifying. The uncertainty about the future and how to manage the challenges ahead can take a toll on anyone's faith and spiritual strength. This is particularly true for youth, who may already struggle to maintain their faith even when they are healthy. The added burden of illness can make them feel helpless and exacerbate feelings of pain and despair, which can negatively impact their faith.

As pastors and elders, the best way to minister to sick youth is to pay close attention to their feelings of loss and resentment. They may ask, "Why is God punishing me?" This is a critical moment to reassure them that God does not intentionally hurt His children. Instead, He suffers with them and offers comfort if they let Him. Your presence should be one of caring and listening, focusing on their feelings without trying to provide explanations, but rather showing care and encouragement.

Additionally, this opportunity will be used to educate the congregation. Emphasize that it is not our place to judge, blame, or ridicule, but rather to love, care, and exemplify Christ's compassion in the lives of these youth. Remind them that Jesus was often surrounded by the sick during His time on earth, and through them, He revealed Himself as God's Son. Being a consistent source of compassion and support will not only help the youth navigate their illness but also strengthen their faith, showing them that they are not alone and that God's love is unwavering. This approach helps build a supportive community that reflects the true essence of Christ's teachings.

## 6. **Assisting those who are in Healthy or Abusive Relationships**

When we talk about relationships, we refer to all types—family, friends, romantic partners, coworkers, classmates, and more. As social beings, youth constantly interact with others and form relationships that shape their character and future. As pastors and elders, you guide them in understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Youth are at a crucial stage in their lives, developing relationships that will significantly influence their character. Unfortunately, many learn the negative aspects of relationships too late, often from toxic environments at home. Your responsibility is to model and teach what a positive relationship looks like. A positive relationship is built on mutual respect, encouragement, and effective communication. Youth need to know how to express themselves and feel heard. It is crucial to teach them that relationships should be reciprocal and that it is okay for them to let go of people who do not respect them. This can be challenging for young people, who may struggle with letting go.

Provide a safe space where youth can learn and discuss how to manage their relationships. If a situation is severe, ensure they can access the proper authorities and support systems. Encourage self-worth and educate your congregation about the reality of abusive relationships in all forms. Be specific, clear, and non-judgmental in your teachings. When in doubt, seek further professional assistance to educate your congregation on the nuances of healthy and unhealthy relationships. This proactive approach will help youth build strong, positive relationships and understand when walking away from harmful ones is necessary.

## 7. **Counseling LGBTQIA+**

Pastors and elders face a challenging role in supporting youth navigating LGBTQIA+ issues while remaining faithful to the teachings of their faith. Our church has established a Human Sexuality Task Force to engage in such discussions and provide official responses. People can easily access the task force resources at [www.humansexuality.org](http://www.humansexuality.org). A crucial starting point is educating oneself on the church's stance within LGBTQIA+ parameters. It is vital to create a compassionate and respectful environment where young people feel secure in expressing their struggles and questions.

Approach these conversations with empathy, actively listening to their experiences, and validating their feelings while upholding the church's beliefs. It is important to emphasize God's unconditional love and maintain a balance between understanding and adhering to the teachings of the Bible and the church.

By fostering this environment, church leaders can provide meaningful support to LGBTQIA+ youth, ensuring they feel valued and respected within the faith community. This approach allows for open dialogue while affirming the church's commitment to compassion and faithfulness. Understanding the unique challenges that LGBTQIA+ youth face, such as discrimination, bullying, and internal conflicts, is essential. Educating oneself about these issues can help church leaders provide more informed and sensitive counsel. Pastors and elders should offer guidance that aligns with their faith while showing love and care for the individual.

When discussing LGBTQIA+ topics, it is important to be clear about the Bible and the church's teachings on sexuality and gender while emphasizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Encourage youth to seek support from trusted family members, friends, or church mentors who share a judgment-free mentality. Resources and referrals to faith-based counseling services can offer additional support while ensuring the guidance aligns with their beliefs.

A church culture that promotes understanding and empathy is crucial. This can be achieved through educational programs, discussions, and workshops that address these topics from a faith-based perspective. Encourage open dialogue within the congregation, helping members understand the importance of treating everyone respectfully and kindly, even amid differing views.

Reinforce the message that God's love is unconditional and inclusive, focusing on scriptures and teachings emphasizing love, compassion, and acceptance. Pastors and elders should continually affirm that everyone, regardless of their struggles or identity, is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with respect and kindness. By doing so, church leaders can provide meaningful support to LGBTQIA+ youth, helping them to navigate their challenges while staying true to their faith.

It is crucial to remember that sin has birthed human brokenness, which manifests itself in many ways. God created all of us to be spiritual, moral, and emotional beings. Sin has tarnished all these human faculties. Heterosexuals struggle with moral issues the same way homosexuals do. Any sin is grave before God, but His grace is sufficient to assist those who call Him for help. Pastors and elders are Christ's ambassadors on earth tasked with bringing hope to those struggling with some issues. The role of the church leader is not to condemn the sinner but the sin. Caring for those who have chosen lifestyles alien to biblical truth is not akin to compromise, but Christlike. Sometimes, pastors and elders are duty-bound to administer discipline where the church decides to censure a member for wrongdoing at its duly called church board and business meeting. Even in this instance, compassion should reign supreme as we lead souls to Christ.

## 8. **School Counseling**

Youth today spend most of their time within the confines of school, typically around 6 to 8 hours a day, five days a week. Most of their social interactions and behavioral development occur in this setting, making it crucial for these interactions to be positive, as they lay the foundation for their future lifestyles. As church leaders and representatives of Jesus, pastors and elders can significantly impact youth by demonstrating God's love in all aspects of their lives, including at school.

Schools can be challenging environments, with youth facing negative peer pressure, a lack of positive role models, insufficient resources, and increasing incidents of bullying. Many struggle to maintain their Christian identity in schools that do not uphold Christian values. Pastors and elders can support youth and their families in preserving their faith amid these challenges, both within and outside the church. Encouraging abstinence and having open-ended conversations about struggles can help youth navigate these difficulties. Sharing biblical and personal examples of the challenges in maintaining a Christian lifestyle fosters a positive connection, making youth more open to expressing themselves.

Pastors and elders can mentor youth in schools by creating a supportive and nur-

turing environment. Start by establishing open lines of communication, encouraging youth to share their challenges and experiences. Offer a safe space for these conversations, providing biblical and personal examples to help them navigate difficulties. Emphasize the importance of forming positive relationships based on respect and encouragement and teach effective communication skills.

Integrating pastoral or elder support into the school environment by collaborating with teachers and staff can help develop outreach programs that include regular school visits, mentoring, tutoring, and providing necessary resources. Organize workshops on coping with peer pressure, building self-esteem, and maintaining Christian values. Advocate for anti-bullying policies and work towards creating an inclusive school culture. By being present and actively involved, pastors and elders can help youth build a strong foundation of faith and resilience, guiding them to grow into confident and faithful individuals.

Integrating pastors and elders into school counseling can be beneficial. Supporting teachers and staff helps create a positive environment for youth. By guiding and communicating positively with educators, church leaders can help ensure that schools are nurturing spaces for all students. Ultimately, your involvement can reinforce the message of God's love and support, helping youth build a strong foundation of faith and resilience in the face of adversity.

Pastors and elders should ensure that Adventist students on public campuses are supported by the local church, especially those in universities and colleges. The Youth Ministries Department has a special ministry for Adventist students on public campuses - Public Campus Ministry (PCM). The Church Manual encourages pastors and elders to elect a PCM coordinator in each church who will nurture the students and serve as a liaison between the church and the university.

#### 9. **Career and Unemployed Counseling/Mentoring**

Career and unemployment counseling are critical services that pastors and elders can provide to support their young congregation. These services help individuals navigate the complexities of the job market, make informed career

choices, and maintain hope during unemployment. As spiritual leaders, pastors and elders can offer both practical guidance and emotional support, fostering a sense of purpose and resilience in those they counsel.

Start by providing a safe and compassionate space for individuals to express their fears and frustrations. Listen actively and empathetically to their struggles, showing that you genuinely care about their well-being. This helps build trust and can make individuals more receptive to guidance. Encourage individuals to network, emphasizing the value of reaching out to former colleagues, attending industry events, and joining professional groups. Church communities can be excellent networking opportunities, where members can share job leads and support each other. Remind individuals of their inherent worth and God's plan for their lives, sharing scriptures and stories reinforcing the message of perseverance and divine support during tough times.

Guide individuals in exploring career paths that align with their passions, skills, and values. Encourage them to consider immediate job prospects and long-term career goals that provide fulfillment and purpose. Help individuals set realistic and achievable career goals. Break down these goals into manageable steps, creating a clear roadmap for them to follow. Regularly check in on their progress and adjust plans as needed. Teach the importance of resilience and adaptability in today's ever-changing job market. Encourage a mindset of continuous learning and openness to new opportunities, reminding them that setbacks are often steppingstones to greater successes.

Your empathetic approach and personal involvement can make a significant difference in the lives of those you counsel. By offering career and unemployment counseling with compassion and understanding, you help individuals navigate their career journeys with faith and confidence.

The Bible (Proverbs 6:6 and other books) and Ellen White (*Child Guidance, Adventist Home, and Messages to Young People*) offer invaluable guidance to young people on how to make choices (including career choices) in life. Pastors and

elders should be aware of these resources and encourage the youth to follow counsel from these books. Youth should be encouraged not to rely on formal and conventional employment alone, but to explore other vocations and acquire skills that will make them self-employed. Pastors and elders should intentionally conduct seminars that foster close ties between professionals and young people. This will foster a transfer of skills and ideas that will open the horizons of the youth beyond their current scope of career opportunities.

Literature evangelism is a ministry that God has given to the Adventist church. When youth are encouraged to sell books by knocking on doors, this will be a source of revenue and will instill an entrepreneurial skills mindset in them. Soul winning will be a positive ripple effect of this process.

#### 10. **Counseling Youth Who Are Homeless or Lacking Basic Needs**

Counseling youth who are homeless or not having their basic needs met is a profound responsibility that pastors and elders must approach with deep empathy, understanding, and practical support. These young individuals often face immense challenges that can severely impact their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. As spiritual leaders, your role extends beyond providing spiritual guidance—it involves being a source of stability and hope in their lives.

Start by creating a warm, safe, and non-judgmental space where these youth feel comfortable sharing their stories. Listen actively and empathetically, showing that you genuinely care about their struggles. When you acknowledge their pain and validate their feelings, you build trust and open the door for further support. Connect youth with local resources that can help meet their basic needs. This includes food banks, shelters, medical services, and educational support. Having a list of reliable community resources readily available can make a significant difference. Develop church-based support programs tailored to meet the needs of homeless youth. This can include establishing a church pantry, organizing clothing drives, and offering temporary shelter in collaboration with local agencies. Mobilize the congregation to volunteer and support these initiatives, creating a community-wide care network.

Reinforce the message of God's love and presence in their lives. Share scriptures and stories that highlight hope, resilience, and divine support. Encourage them to participate in church activities to build community and belonging. This helps them feel supported and strengthens their faith and connection to God. Educate the congregation about the challenges homeless youth face and the importance of providing support. Organize awareness campaigns and encourage church members to get involved in outreach efforts. Ensure the church is a welcoming and inclusive place for all youth, regardless of their circumstances. Promote an environment of acceptance, love, and non-judgment.

By taking these steps, pastors and elders can make a meaningful difference in the lives of homeless youth. Practical support, emotional encouragement, and spiritual guidance can help these young individuals find hope, stability, and a sense of belonging within the church community. When youth know they are valued and supported, they are more likely to find the strength to overcome their challenges and move toward a brighter future.

This chapter highlights the importance of pastors and elders being aware of the social and lifestyle phenomena that assail the youth. It also brings mental health awareness to the fore. Life is full of struggles and hardships. Cumulative stress and lack of therapy result in mental health illnesses that could have been prevented. As church leaders, we are called upon to pull our heads out of the sand of stigma and denial and help the hurting and struggling youth.

## CONCLUSION

*Youth Ministries should be a vital part of any Seventh-day Adventist congregation. You, as a pastor or elder, can help make it so. You can ensure that your church has committed youth leaders who love the Lord and the young people. You can help inspire those leaders with a vision of saving youth for Jesus and training them to serve others. In countless ways, you can help the work of the youth leaders to run smoothly, mentor and connect with the young people themselves, and build bridges between youth and older adults in your congregation. You have a central role in training the mighty army of youth who will do the Lord's work in this generation and the next.*

# CHAPTER VI: STUDY GUIDE

Help for  
Hurting Youth



**REMEMBER**

Interaction is a critical need for young people, even for those with fatal illnesses.

**REVIEW**

1. As a pastor, \_\_\_\_\_ is a large part of your role.

2. List seven situations that should be referred to a professional counselor

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3. List eight areas mentioned in this chapter calling for special attention to hurting youth:

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4. \_\_\_\_\_ do not expect to die in the prime of their lives.

5. A young person with AIDS may also be struggling with feelings of \_\_\_\_\_ and, perhaps with the thought that the disease is God's \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Young people with homosexual feelings feel:

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## THINK IT THROUGH

1. List several ways you and your church might be involved and contribute to counseling hurting youth. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When thinking about counseling youth, list ways your church has succeeded in the past. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some new ways you might use to counsel youth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What structure can you implement to ensure youth can access help when needed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Write down some practical ways you can apply when counseling hurting youth.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you mobilized professionals in your church to support unemployed youth?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Mention the benefits of literature evangelism.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# BREAKOUT SESSION

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is counseling youth an important role for a pastor and elder? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How can you show youth that you are willing to help them when they are in deep trouble? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When visiting AIDS patients, if they start blaming God for their illness, what should you say to them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are some tough areas that you have encountered while counseling youth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does your church have a structure set up for counseling hurting youth? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the leading cause of LGBTQ+? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the church's position on homosexuality and heterosexuality? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# RESOURCES

In addition to the Bible (NIV) and works of Ellen White as cited, other resources used in preparing this document were:

1. ***Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence: Practical Strategies to Turn Yourself and Your Youth Into Leaders***,  
NAD Youth Ministries, First Edition  
by Jim Feldbush and William Hurtado, with Ron Whitehead,  
published by the Center for Youth Evangelism, the Church  
Resources Consortium, and Advent Source, 1999.
2. ***Adventurer Administrative Manual***,  
General Conference Youth Department, 1999.
3. ***Youth Ministry Handbook***,  
General Conference Youth Department, 2000.
4. ***Pathfinder Administrative Manual***,  
General Conference Youth Department, 2000.
5. ***Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions***,  
George Barna, 2003.
6. ***The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual***,  
revised 2022, 20th edition.

# SECTION THREE

*Resources*

*Appendix A :*

Youth Federations

*Appendix B :*

*Public Campus Ministry*

## APPENDIX A: YOUTH FEDERATION

### YOUTH FEDERATION

The concept of Youth Federation finds its inception in the Allegheny East Conference in the U.S.A. as an answer to an urgent need among the church youth. From a humble beginning in this conference, it has now circled the world.

Please note that the term “Federation” is commonly used in many parts of the world to denote a collective group of leaders from various churches in a particular district or region. Other parts of the world may use a different nomenclature to describe this body. Guided by its executive committee, the conference Youth Ministries Department initiates, organizes, and supervises federations. The youth director or their designee presides over the elections of the federation officers.

Youth federations are Senior Youth Societies (SYS) organizations within a district, city, etc., in the conference territory. Such organizations have no authority over the local church SYS but function to advise and coordinate programs in the district.

Each SYS member of such a federation is answerable to their church, pastor, and board. The federation organization should not replace the SYSs but rather promote strong youth organizations in the local churches.

Whilst the term “Federation” was initially meant to be used only for senior youth work in a larger geographical area within the conference, many organizations of Youth Ministries globally organize junior youth work (Adventurer and Pathfinder Ministries) using the same nomenclature.

Due to the high attrition rate among the senior youth, special and deliberate action should be taken to form Senior Youth Societies in the local church. The federation should govern SYS bodies under the supervision of the conference youth director.

### SECTION I : Purpose

#### A. COORDINATION

A Federation can significantly facilitate the work of the conference youth director by helping to coordinate the work within the federation territory.

By staying in touch with the Federation leadership, the youth director can gather and give information necessary for successful Youth Ministries.

The growth of the church and Youth Ministries worldwide necessitates organizing federations for effectiveness and efficiency.

#### B. SHARING

The Federation allows its member churches to share in the cumulative experience of its leaders and thus advance in greater strides. When functioning correctly, the Federation can benefit smaller churches by encouraging them to participate and create meaningful programming for their youth.

Methods and programs that are functional in other areas can be readily available for all the participating churches.

#### C. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Adventist Youth Federations provide an excellent opportunity for expanded leadership development beyond the local church level. By having the opportunity to function on a broader and different level from their local church, young people will develop skills and acquire leadership abilities that can be put to work in other areas of the church.

#### D. FELLOWSHIP

Youth Federations allow young people to fellowship with youth from other churches and thus give the awareness that there is a large

group of believers to which the Society belongs. This opportunity of growing up with a large group of believers in religious, educational, and athletic activities is invaluable.

#### E. SINGLE ADULTS/SPECIAL NEEDS/MENTAL HEALTH

Ministry to singles, people with disabilities and special needs, and those who have mental health issues should be a high priority. There is a critical need for program development for young adults in these areas of ministry. It is suggested that support groups for individuals with special needs be organized in each church, and that the SYS serve such groups. Retreats and special weekends should be organized to provide a sensitive listening/learning forum for the developing ministry to these groups.

#### F. PROGRAMMING

One of the Federation's primary tasks is to assist in developing a relevant program for each youth age group in the church. The following is a list of activities around which a dynamic program can revolve:

1. Have a membership drive to make every youth a registered member of your SYS. This includes learning the pledge, law, and motto.
2. Organize a program committee to develop ideas for youth Sabbath afternoon programs.
3. Develop Bible and denominational-knowledge programs to include all age groups. This includes Bible Bowl teams and Adventist Heritage classes.
4. Plan inter-church involvement in designated areas that will include outreach action teams, temperance action teams, Bible contest teams, and athletic teams. The goal is to achieve participation by every church in each Federation.
5. Develop leadership through junior youth and senior youth leadership training sessions.

## SECTION II

### Federation Senior Youth Society Relationship

The Federation relates to the Senior Youth Society in the following ways: By invitation only.

The Adventist Youth Federation has no rights except those granted by the local church. It is an organization whose sole purpose is to assist in developing and implementing programs beneficial to the local SYS.

Fresh Ideas: Make fresh ideas available to each society.

#### Common Objectives

The goals of the Federation and the local Senior Youth Society (SYS) are similar. Both provide projects and programs that develop Adventist youth and lead to their salvation and involvement in service to God.

## SECTION III

### Pastoral Involvement

The pastor must be involved in organizing and carrying out an effective program. A few suggestions for getting pastors involved are listed here. Add others as desired.

#### A. INVITE PASTORS

Invite each district pastor/s in the Federation by letter, email, and telephone to all committee meetings.

#### B. REQUEST CALENDARS

Request a calendar of events from each church/pastor in the Federation.

#### C. SHARE SCHEDULES

Present each pastor with a Federation calendar of events and an executive committee meeting schedule.

#### D. DEMONSTRATE INTEREST

Demonstrate an interest in each pastor's church and evangelistic program. Never assume that the Federation meetings automatically take priority. Publicize and support the special meetings in the churches within the Federation.

### SECTION IV

#### Conference Officer Visibility

Federation ideas and plans often call for encouragement and support from conference youth directors. Federation officers should take the initiative to maintain positive relations with the conference Youth Department.

- A. Your conference youth director should be invited to all committee meetings. Early notification of date and time should be made by letter, email, and/or telephone so the youth director can plan to be present.
- B. The presence of the conference director demonstrates an interest in the affairs of the Federation. It also allows observation and suggestions for program refinement in the local society or federation.
- C. High visibility breeds familiarity. This works for the Federation and the local Society. The Federation officers should demonstrate good leadership. Frequent visits from the conference office give opportunities to discover leadership development for the future.

### SECTION V

#### Relationship of Federation to the Youth Department

The duty of the Federation organization in relation to the conference Youth Department is that of processor/coordinator of all matters of promotion, development, and finance. The following list describes some activities.

A. Processes all information and reports regarding Bible contests, temperance orations, sports, evangelism, etc. This includes planning questions for interchurch Bible events, intra-Federation oratorical contests, and encouraging youth evangelism campaigns and programs. The Federation also encourages groups to promptly forward all SYS, Adventurer, and Pathfinder monthly reports to the Youth Department office.

B. Enthusiastically encourages participation by all societies in conference-wide congresses, retreats, camps, and conventions. This includes reaching delegate quotas where designated, participation in officers' conventions and leadership training programs for new youth officers, and monetary plans necessary to finance such activities. In short, the federation serves as a coordinator/promoter/developer for the churches and the conference Youth Department.

### SECTION VI

Sample Yearly Federation Activities (See page 126)

### SECTION VII

Sample Constitution for AY Federations

#### CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS of the Federation of Adventist Youth

#### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS we desire to unite our efforts in God's service and to promote unity of purpose, we, the young people of the Senior Youth Societies in [name of field] of Seventh-day Adventists, do hereby form this Federation and establish this Constitution to promote friendliness and good will among our Societies; to unite our efforts for more extensive missionary endeavor; to provide varied spiritual, social, and recreational activities; and to develop the leadership ability of our young people.

#### ARTICLE I—NAME

- This organization shall be known as the [name] Federation of Adventist Youth Societies.

## ARTICLE II—MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1.  
Any organized Senior Youth Society in the district/city shall become active upon signing the Constitution and paying the initiation fee. A Society shall remain active as long as it fulfills its duties and obligations outlined in the Constitution and bylaws.
- Section 2.  
The body of this organization shall consist of the members of the active Societies of the following churches:  
[List the name of the churches.]

## ARTICLE III—OFFICERS

- Section 1  
The executive officers of the Federation shall be a president, vice presidents (the president from each local church Society where possible. Where applicable, each of the vice presidents could be assigned the various ministries of the Youth Department), a parliamentarian, a secretary-treasurer, an assistant secretary and/or assistant treasurer (or assistant secretary-treasurer), a director of public relations and a chairperson of the planning committee.
- Section 2  
Officers shall take office in January following their election and shall serve for one year. All shall hold their offices until their successors are elected and assume their duties.
- Section 3  
No person shall continue to serve as an officer, committee chairperson, or member of the executive and/or constitutional committee who shall cease to be a member in good standing of a recognized Seventh-day Adventist church.

- Section 4  
Election of officers shall be according to acceptable Seventh-day Adventist Church procedures (see the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, chapter 10).
- Section 5  
This organization shall maintain the following standing committees:
  - (a) Executive
  - (b) Constitutional
  - (c) Planning
  - (d) Religious Activities
  - (e) Social Activities
  - (f) Outreach Activities, and
  - (g) Vulnerable and Special Groups

## ARTICLE IV—MEETINGS

- Section 1  
**Federation meetings shall be held at the time and place designated by the Executive Committee.**
- Section 2  
A simple majority (50% + 1) of the Federation membership shall be considered a quorum to process nominations and conduct other business.

## ARTICLE V—BYLAWS

The members of this Federation may make bylaws and amend or repeal them at any duly called meeting of the Federation. The scope of such bylaws may embrace all subjects consistent with the Constitution.

## ARTICLE VI—AMENDMENTS

All amendments to the Constitution must be presented in writing to the Federation Constitution Committee at a Federation meeting and ratified by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members in attendance at the next meeting.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I - THE PRESIDENT

The responsibilities and duties of the president are as follows:

- a. To preside at all meetings and executive committee meetings.
  - b. To coordinate the various activities of the Federation.
  - c. To appoint, with the approval of the executive committee, such committees as he or she shall judge necessary and expedient for the proper functioning of all Federation activities.
  - d. Supervise and manage the Federation according to the provisions of the Constitution and bylaws.
  - e. To render a quarterly report of the activities of the Federation to the conference Youth Department.
- a. To serve as the parliamentarian of the Federation.
  - b. To serve as chairperson of the constitutional committee.
  - c. To present reports of the constitutional committee to the Federation executive committee.
  - d. To interpret the Constitution.
  - e. To attend all executive committee and other meetings.

### ARTICLE II—VICE PRESIDENTS

The responsibilities and duties of the vice presidents (to be chosen among AY leaders, where possible) are as follows:

- a. To coordinate the various Federation activities within their Society.
- b. To serve in the absence or disability of the president if designated by the president.
- c. To bring a report of Senior Youth Society activities and a financial statement to the executive committee meetings.
- d. To attend all executive committee meetings and other meetings.

### ARTICLE III—PARLIAMENTARIAN

The responsibilities and duties of the parliamentarian are as follows:

### ARTICLE IV SECRETARY-TREASURER

- a. To keep all records of business items.
- b. To be responsible for all correspondence of the Federation.
- c. To send a copy of the minutes of all meetings to the Federation president and the conference youth director.
- d. To attend all executive committee meetings and other meetings.
- e. To receive and receipt all Federation funds.
- f. To disburse funds upon authorization from the executive committee.
- g. To keep an itemized account of all receipts and expenditures.
- h. To bring a financial report and bank statement to all meetings.
- i. To have all books and accounts audited by the mission/conference/field auditor at the end of the calendar year.

### ARTICLE V—THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY-TREASURER

The responsibilities and duties of the assistant secretary-treasurer are as follows:

- a. To serve in the absence of the secretary-treasurer.
- b. To assist the secretary-treasurer by recording all statistics relative to Federation meetings and other meetings, including the following items:

1. The Societies present
2. The attendance
3. Other information that the executive committee may specify.
  - To give all statistical data to the secretary-treasurer.
  - To serve in the absence of the treasurer.
  - To perform duties as assigned by the treasurer.

#### ARTICLE VI—DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS/AFFAIRS

The responsibilities and duties of the director of public relations are as follows:

1. To advertise and publicize Federation activities.
2. To attend all executive committee meetings and other meetings.
3. To attend all Federation meetings.
4. To represent the Federation at government and public meetings and events.
5. To offer support to Adventist students on public campuses.
6. To familiarize oneself with the guidelines offered by the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department.

#### ARTICLE VII—PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The responsibilities and duties of the planning committee chairperson are as follows:

- a. To chair the planning committee.
- b. To render reports of committee activities for executive approval.
- c. To attend all Federation meetings.

#### ARTICLE VIII—RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The responsibilities and duties of the religious activities committee chairperson are as follows:

- a. To chair the religious activities committee.
- b. To render reports of committee activities for executive approval.
- c. To attend all Federation meetings.

#### ARTICLE IX SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The responsibilities and duties of the social activities committee chairperson are as follows:

- a. To chair the social activities committee.
- b. To render reports of committee activities for executive approval.
- c. To attend all Federation meetings.

#### ARTICLE X—ADVISORS

The youth conference director shall be the chief advisor. All conference officers, pastors of churches within the Federation, and former Federation presidents shall serve as advisors.

#### ARTICLE XI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

##### Section 1.

The executive committee shall consist of the following persons:

- a. President
- b. All vice presidents
- c. Parliamentarian
- d. Secretary-treasurer
- e. Director of Public Relations/PARL
- f. Chairperson of the planning committee
- g. Chairperson of Religious Activities Committee
- h. Chairperson of the social activities committee
- i. Chairperson of the Pathfinder activities committee
- j. Conference youth director
- k. A church pastor and a Seventh-day Adventist school principal, if possible.

## Section 2.

The responsibilities and duties of the Executive Committee are as follows:

- a. To exercise general administration over all matters related to the work of the Federation.
- b. To set the time and place of all meetings.
- c. To appoint persons to fill vacancies, subject to the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at a duly called meeting.
- d. To appoint all chairpersons of standing committees.

## Section 3.

Quorum of the executive committee shall be set by the constitution committee and voted on at the time of acceptance or revision of the Constitution by the Federation members.

## ARTICLE XII CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Section 1. The constitution committee shall consist of the following persons:

- a. The parliamentarian is the chairperson of the committee.
- b. A secretary selected by the nominating committee.
- c. Conference youth director.
- d. One (1) elected representative from each Senior Youth Society within the Federation who is NOT the Society president.

Section 2. The responsibilities and duties of this committee are as follows:

- a. To see that the Federation is conducted according to the Constitution and the bylaws' provisions.
- b. To study proposed amendments to the Constitution and report its recommendations to a duly called Federation executive committee meeting.

c. To notify the Federation president and conference youth director when an office is not being maintained according to the Constitution and the bylaws' provisions. The conference youth director, the Federation president, and the parliamentarian shall counsel with the offending officer.

d. To take the following steps when the Federation parliamentarian, president, and the conference youth director shall decide that an officer is still negligent after counseling:

1. The parliamentarian shall call a constitutional committee meeting to send the offending officer a written notice that a recommendation is being made to the constituency that this office be declared vacant.

2. The parliamentarian shall present the recommendation to the executive committee, which shall call a constituency meeting to act on the recommendation.

3. The constitutional committee shall be empowered to call a constituency meeting should the executive committee fail or refuse to do so.

4. The procedure shall apply to all Federation officers except the president.

5. When the parliamentarian and the conference youth director shall determine that the president is negligent, the following steps shall be taken:

- 1) The parliamentarian and the conference youth director shall counsel the president.

- 2) When the parliamentarian and the conference youth director shall decide that the president is still negligent after counseling, the parliamentarian shall call a meeting of the constitutional committee to send the president a written notice that a constituency meeting will be called to recommend that the office will be declared vacant.

## ARTICLE XIII—ARBITRATION

The Youth Department of the conference shall serve as arbitrator in unresolved issues between the executive and constitutional committees.

## ARTICLE XIV—PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Section 1.

The planning committee shall consist of the following persons:

- a. The constituency elects a chairperson.
- b. The planning committee chairperson is from each Senior Youth Society.

### Section 2.

The responsibilities and duties of this committee are as follows:

- a. To plan and coordinate Federation congresses.
- b. To plan and coordinate special projects as designated by the executive committee.
- c. To render reports and submit all committee decisions to the executive committee for approval.

## ARTICLE XV RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

### Section 1.

The religious activities committee shall consist of the following persons:

- a. A chairperson appointed by the Federation officers.
- b. The religious activities chairperson from each Senior Youth Society.

### Section 2.

The responsibilities and duties of this committee are as follows:

- a. To plan and promote the religious activities of the Federation, with emphasis on the program outlined by the Youth Department of the local conference.

- b. To render reports and submit all committee decisions to the executive committee for approval.

## ARTICLE XVI—VOTING

The following persons are considered delegates and are entitled to vote in a Federation constituency meeting:

- a. Two delegates from each active Society in the Federation.
- b. Every Federation officer and executive committee member.
- c. Every conference, a Youth Department representative.
- d. The pastor(s) of each church within the Federation territory.
- e. Every Senior Youth Society leader from the societies participating in the Federation (as a delegate-at-large).

## ARTICLE XVII—ELECTIONS

### Section 1.

The following procedure shall be followed in the election of Federation officers:

- a. Elections shall be held during the last quarter of the biennium.
- b. The executive committee shall nominate a nominating committee consisting of eleven (11) persons, as follows:
  - 1) Three (3) members of the current executive committee.
  - 2) Five (5) members of the current active delegation.
  - 3) The conference Youth Department representative.
  - 4) Two (2) pastors of churches participating in the Federation
  - 5) The executive committee shall present its

report at a duly called constituency meeting, which must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present.

- 6) The nominating committee shall nominate the following officers:
- President
  - Vice-presidents—one from each Senior Youth Society
  - Parliamentarian
  - Secretary-treasurer
  - Assistant Secretary-treasurer
  - Director of Public Relations/PARL
  - Chairperson of the planning committee
  - Secretary of the constitutional committee
  - One (1) person from each Senior Youth Society to serve on the constitutional committee
- 7) The nominating committee shall present its report to a duly called constituency meeting, which must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates present.

#### Section 2

All officers shall take office on January 1 following their election and shall serve for the term of their election. They shall hold their offices until their successors are elected and assume their duties.

#### Section 3

The following persons shall serve by appointment:

As many church pastors as are deemed necessary by the conference Youth Department.

The chairpersons of the religious activities, social activities, and cultural activities committees are appointed by the Federation officers. The executive committee

shall select persons to fill any vacancies, subject to the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates present at a duly called constituency meeting.

### ARTICLE XVIII—ASSESSMENT OR FEES

#### Section 1.

Each Society shall pay the following assessments:

- a. An initiation fee of —
- b. The Senior Youth Society shall be assessed —according to membership. (See Section 2.)

#### Section 2.

Annual dues from the churches shall be assessed at the beginning of each calendar year. Each conference is to create a scale for collecting dues based on church membership.

For example: INSERT YOUR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP GRAPH HERE

### ARTICLE XIX—ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Federation executive committee shall approve the day's orders for all meetings.

### ARTICLE XX—OFFERINGS

The distribution of offerings collected at Federation meetings shall be as follows:

- a. All missionary and conference offerings shall be forwarded to the conference through the treasurer of the host church.
- b. A special Federation offering shall be collected during the divine worship hour on Sabbath.
- c. Funds collected during the AY hour shall belong to the Federation.

- d. The conference youth director, the Federation president, the planning committee chairperson, and the host church pastor shall determine the distribution of any unspecified offerings that may be collected.

## ARTICLE XXI—DISBANDING THE FEDERATION

### Section 1.

The local conference reserves the right through its executive committee to disband the Federation.

### Section 2.

All funds and assets belonging to the Federation shall be divided among the member churches on a pre-established percentage basis (see Article XVIII). This is to be done by the local conference.

## APPENDIX B PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY

### Sample constitution and bylaws for a Student Association

Public Campus Ministry (PCM) is the fifth ministry in the Adventist Youth Ministries Department. The youth director should support all student associations within the conference jurisdiction. It is important for pastors and elders to support Adventist students on public campuses. The Public Campus Ministry Manual, p. 19 (Revised edition of 2024) shares the objectives of PCM:

- a. Strengthen the faith commitment of students to Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and mission.
- b. Prepare students to deal with the intellectual challenges that arise in a secular environment.
- c. Develop the leadership abilities of students.
- d. Provide students with opportunities for Christian fellowship.
- e. Train students for outreach, mission, service, and witness on campus, in the church, community, and world.

### ARTICLE I

#### NAME

The name of this organization shall be [name] affiliated to the conference Public Campus Ministry (PCM). Each conference shall indicate its name in this section.

### ARTICLE II

#### PURPOSE

##### Section 1.

The objectives of [name of association] are:

- a. To provide the opportunity to become acquainted with and enjoy the fellowship of students, faculty, and staff who hold membership and have an interest in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- b. To promote spiritual and intellectual growth both personal and corporate.

- c. To encourage and involve members in personal service and evangelistic outreach for others.
- d. To keep members informed of recent trends and concerns of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- e. To offer support to the needs of Adventist students on secular campuses.

## ARTICLE III

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Section I.

Membership will be open to all Adventist college/ university students.

#### Section II.

All full-or part-time faculty of a college/university who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are eligible for election into this organization.

#### Section III

All full- or part-time staff of a college/university who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are eligible for election into this organization.

#### Section IV.

There shall be no discrimination in membership privileges based on creed, race, or sex in this organization.

## ARTICLE IV

### GOVERNMENT

The laws of this organization shall consist of the local Constitution and bylaws, as well as the interim actions and regulations of said college/university fellowship (or association).

## ARTICLE V

### OFFICERS

#### Section I.

The officers of this organization shall be president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty leader.

#### Section II.

The executive board will consist of the president, vice-president, treasurer, and the sponsor(s).

## ARTICLE VI

### ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND LENGTH OF TERM

#### Section I

- a. Election of officers shall occur at the end of each academic year.
- b. Terms of office will last until the following election.

#### Section II

A nominating committee should be named to study names and present these to the general assembly for voting.

#### Section III

The election of officers shall be conducted by secret ballot.

## ARTICLE VII

### MEETINGS

#### Section I

The student association [name] shall meet at least once monthly during vacation months.

The membership will determine the meeting date and time.

#### Section II

The executive board will meet when the president and sponsor(s) decide.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I

#### MEMBERSHIP

##### Section I

Membership in the student association [name] will be active after fulfilling the below-stated requirements stated below.

##### Section II

Qualifications of the membership should be registered Adventist college/university students, as well as full or part-time staff members who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Also, those not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church but who express similar interests and goals (as determined by the executive board) will be admitted to regular membership.

##### Section III

The member who has met the organization's financial (though money is needed to run the affairs of the association, it shall not be used to deny people membership) requirements and has not missed three consecutive meetings.

##### Section IV

Members will revert to inactive status after four months if interest and goals change (as determined by the executive board) or upon missing three consecutive meetings.

#### Section V

Any member absent from campus for official university business (or any situation as determined by the executive board) may be considered in active membership status.

### ARTICLE II

#### OFFICERS

##### Section I

For a member to be nominated for an office in the association, they must be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in good and regular standing and be active in the student association.

##### Section II

Nominations will be made with active members present, and the election will be by a simple majority of the quorum.

##### Section III

Any officer other than the president may resign when such resignation is submitted in writing to the president. The president may resign when such resignation is submitted in writing to the sponsor(s).

##### Section IV

When a vacancy occurs, a simple majority vote of a quorum shall fill an office.

### ARTICLE III

#### AMENDMENTS

##### Section I

A simple majority of a quorum may amend these bylaws.

## ARTICLE IV

### Section I

The sponsor(s) shall be a full/part-time college/university faculty member or pastor/teacher and shall be elected annually along with the officers.

## Article V

### IMPEACHMENT

#### Section I

Any officer who does not perform his duties as outlined by the Constitution may be impeached by a majority of the quorum at two consecutive meetings.

## Article VI

### MEETINGS

#### Section I

The student association [name] will meet at least once monthly except during vacation. The membership will determine the meeting date and time.

#### Section II

The executive board will meet when determined by the president and the sponsor(s).

## ARTICLE VII

### FINANCES

#### Section I

The executive board will determine an annual membership fee.

### Section II

All revenue shall be dispensed at a monthly meeting as prescribed by the executive board or the membership.

## ARTICLE VIII COMMITTEES

### Section I

Committees shall be appointed by the president pro tempore (temporarily) as deemed necessary.

## ARTICLE IX QUORUM

### Section I

A quorum shall be mandatory for amendments to the Constitution and the election of officers.

### Section II

The executive board quorum shall be a simple majority of the board membership.

## ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

### Section I.

A simple majority of the quorum may amend this Constitution.

SECTION VI  
**Yearly Federation Activities**  
*(Sample)*

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<b>New Year Celebration</b> <b>SYS Membership Promotion</b> <b>Executive Committee Meeting</b> <i>(planning congress, camp meeting, youth camp, Federation meeting dates)</i>	<b>Sport Activity Preparation</b> <b>Bible and Temperance Contests</b> <b>Week of Prayer</b> <i>Preparation: Secure Sites for Evangelism</i>	<b>Youth Evangelism Month</b> <b>Global Youth Day</b> <b>Youth Week of Prayer</b> <b>Home Coming Sabbath</b>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b> <b>World Ambassador Day</b>	<b>SYS Olympics</b> <i>(Physical Fitness Finals)</i> <b>World Adventurer Day</b>	<b>Camp Meeting</b> <i>(Northern Hemisphere)</i> <b>Youth Activities</b> <b>Winter Camps</b> <i>(Some parts of the Southern Hemisphere)</i> <b>Public Campus Ministry Day</b>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<b>Summer Camps</b> <i>(Northern Hemisphere)</i> <b>Camp Meeting</b> <b>Patriotism Month</b> <i>(This can be modified to fit the month your country celebrates.)</i>	<b>Singles Camp Meeting Married</b> <b>Couples Retreat</b>	<b>Better Living Month</b> <b>World Pathfinder Day</b> <b>Youth Spiritual &amp; Mission</b> <b>Commitment Day</b>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<b>Senior Youth Retreat</b> <b>Street Ministries Month</b>	<b>Ingathering Month</b> <b>eWeek of Prayer</b>	<b>Caroling Season</b> <i>(neighborhood, city corners, malls, shopping centers)</i> <b>Summer Camps</b> <i>(Some parts of the Southern Hemisphere)</i>





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