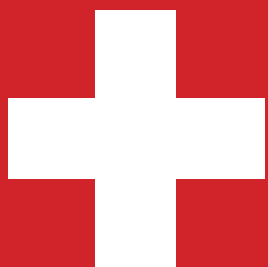


# Youth Ministry



# Starter Kit

Lead like Christ by loving and serving others



Beaver Cross Ministries

# ABOUT THIS

**This Starter Kit booklet** is designed to give prospective or current youth ministers insights into youth ministry so as to better equip them as youth leaders. This resource is neither intended to be comprehensive, nor exclusive – we are not trying to tell people about the “right” way to do youth ministry. Rather, our goal is to provide key tips into critical areas of ministry so that the prospective minister can feel confident in their ability to lead, and the experienced youth leader can gain new ideas and perspectives.

In each section of this booklet you will find some general advice and a note from John Iseman, The Episcopal Diocese of Albany Youth Ministry Director, and then a series of pointed insights from the diocesan youth ministry intern team.

# ABOUT US

**At Beaver Cross Ministries** our passion is to serve as youth leaders, and to help support and raise up other youth leaders throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Albany and the surrounding region. We long to see every church have a thriving youth ministry where kids come to know and love Jesus so much that they will feel compelled to share Jesus with the people around them, thus fulfilling the Great Commission. We pray that this booklet will aid youth leaders and churches in the mission of being disciples who make disciples!

# CONNECT

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# 1 Teaching + Ministering

## *About Teaching + Ministering:*

Teaching the Word of God is one of the most important aspects of a Bible study. However, leading Bible study for kids looks a lot different than it does for adults. Kids' attention spans are short and they often have little to no interest in theological concepts or debates. Stories are what draw kids' attention. The Bible is full of captivating characters, parables, and story lines. Use these to create a sense of drama as you work through the text.

*"My word will never return to me in vain."* Isaiah 55:11

## *Tips:*

### **John**

>Preparedness leads to yieldedness. The more you prepare ahead of time the more effectively you will be able to teach. You want to have a fun environment, but also take the teaching seriously. The more prepared you are the more you are able to listen to the Holy Spirit and obey Him during the study. Your plans may change based on His.

### **Ben**

>Make sure that no child is ignored. Some kids "NEED" to answer. While you should be happy that they want to answer, watch for others who may not be speaking up but still want to participate.

**Zach**

> Be prepared ahead of time, not just with the physical things and the lesson, but be sufficiently prayed up.

**Emily**

> Pray for the kids coming to the study before it starts. It makes the study go A LOT better.  
> Let the kids come to you with their difficulties - don't force it.

**Goh**

> When teaching, be sure to take time to study the scriptures yourself. Be a teacher, but learn ahead of time yourself. Leave room for the Holy Spirit to lead.

**Heather**

> Explain 'Christianese' terms or scriptures (eg. saved, grace, salvation, mercy) - break it down for the kids, make sure they comprehend what you're teaching. Be confident in God's Word. Stand on it firmly and be assured in your faith as you teach.

**Alex**

> Bookend in prayer. Before you arrive, offer time to God and pray for the study and wrap up in prayer as leaders, too. Yield yourself to the Lord's Spirit and direction, to address where the kids' needs are. Come prepared with a study, but be open to having those plans change.

# 2 | Worship

## *About Worship:*

Worshipping the Lord by singing praise songs, is important to a Bible study. It offers the opportunity for the kids to pray and experience God, as well as creating an environment to focus the kids in on God after a rowdy game.

*“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and come into His courts with praise.” Psalm 100:4*

## *Tips:*

### **John**

> If you are not musically talented or a worship leader, then an alternative could be just spending a few minutes listening to worship music and/or praying as a way to prepare the kids’ hearts to hear the Bible study.

> Worship can be goofy and fun – this can help to build a sense of community and loosen kids up to participate more later on.

### **Ben**

> Always pray before worship. Worship should occur prior to the lesson and after the game. Worship should be a time to wind down and mentally and spiritually get ready for the lesson.

## **Heather**

> Allow individuals who wait for the Lord's presence to lead worship. Have a leader who is willing to be still before the Lord and to listen to His leading.

## **Zach**

> Lead by example here. Genuinely worship while you're with your kids, and pay attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit - he may change your plans.

## **Alex**

> Be discerning and read where the group is at spiritually. If they're feeling up-beat, go with that and do more joyful songs that are jumpy and lively. If people come in dragging their feet, maybe do some peaceful/restful songs that can ease that burden of the day.

## **Goh**

> Worship is not about you! It's about leading God's people into his presence.

## **Emily**

> Remember that you sing and play for an audience of one. Also, kids are very forgiving when you mess up.

# 3 Games

## *About Games:*

Games are a time for socialization, community building, and joy. Be creative and strive to play games that fit the personality of your kids. Don't be afraid to be messy, crazy, or unconventional. Strive for over-the-top fun that will leave them thinking they need to come back for more the next time!

## *Tips:*

### **John**

>Always have a list of games in your back pocket for when the one you've chosen doesn't fit in well with your group or if you just have to kill some time. Be open to switching.

### **Emily**

>Try to have a good mix of active and inactive games, so the kids don't get too competitive.

### **Goh**

>Try to find a balance for all ages and also for different physical abilities.

### **Ben**

>Feel out how your game time is going. Sometimes, it's time for a new game.



## **Heather**

> Always make it about the kids. Make it a goal that they are winning over you and that they all feel included and are an important part of the game regardless of abilities or other characteristics.

## **Alex**

> Know your teens! Are they intellectual, or more physically active? Choose games that activate who they are. For more thoughtful groups, do a game that requires thinking and ingenuity. For more active ones, do games that are tag-like or running based. Not to say that there shouldn't be any cross-over ever, but you also don't want to be playing football with kids who come alive when you just sit down and talk with them.

# 3

## Games: Our Favorites!

### *Our Favorite Games!*

#### **Zip-Zap**

> Everyone in the group stands in a circle. One person starts with an “electrical charge” that they have to pass to someone else before they are electrocuted! The way you pass the charge is by pointing at another person in the circle and saying either “zip!” or “zap!” If you pass the charge to someone who is immediately next to you (that is, directly to your left or right), you have to say “zip!” For anyone else in the circle, you have to say “zap!” If you say the wrong word (if you zip someone you should have zapped or vice versa), or if you take too long to pass the charge, you’re out! The game continues until there are two people, and then the winner is decided by a duel...

#### **Psychiatrist**

> Sit in a circle. One person from the group leaves the room (they are the psychiatrist), and everyone else decides on a “common flaw” that they all share. For example, you can only speak in song lyrics, or you’re afraid of the word “the”; the common flaw can be anything, so long as it is appropriate. Once everyone has decided on the flaw, the psychiatrist comes back in the room. The psychiatrist has to ask people in the group questions to try and figure out the common flaw. When the psychiatrist correctly guesses the flaw, they win! You can then play again with a different psychiatrist and a different flaw!

### **Do you Love your Neighbor?**

> Have everyone grab a chair and circle up. One person stands in the middle without a seat, and their goal is to try and get a seat. The person in the middle asks someone in the circle, “Do you love your neighbor?” The person answering has to answer either yes or no. If they choose to answer yes, they must say, “Yes, except for the people who (insert any attribute here).” And then all of the people who have that attribute have to get up and find a new seat! If the person answering chooses to say, “No” the two people sitting immediately next to the answerer have to get up and switch seats, while the person who asked the question is trying to steal a seat. The game continues on indefinitely! For examples of an answer:

*“Do you love your neighbor?”*

*Yes, except for the people wearing jeans!”*

*Let madness commence!*

### **Seated Volleyball**

*Requires: beach ball*

The name of this game is pretty self-explanatory. Split the group into two different teams, and have them face each other as if they were set up on a volleyball court. The difference between this game and regular volleyball is that you must remain seated at all times and no using your hands to “scotch”! Have one team serve the ball, and play on!

# 4

## Other Advice

### *Other Advice*

There is no formula to youth ministry – there is no one-size-fits-all solution to leading kids to know and love Christ. However, your ministry will be most effective if your own relationship with Christ is growing and is overflowing into all areas of your life. Investing in your own spiritual growth and development is critical to being able to mentor the kids!

### *Tips:*

#### **Heather**

> Be awake, be alert, and be compelled by love.

#### **John**

> The structure of a night can vary greatly. Typically, we have a meal, a game, worship, and then Bible study. However, this can be altered to meet the needs of your group. Social time and trips or events that are just fun are great ways to bond with the kids in your group. It is through these true bonds that you will be able to minister to them more effectively. Remember, ministry is relational, and the kids will learn just as much about Christ by interacting with you and seeing Christ in you as they will be listening to you teach.

**Zach**

> Youth Ministry is about service as well as discipleship. Listen to the kids and speak God's word to them.

**Alex**

> Relax. Your teens will be genuine with you if you are genuine with them. Be real with the kids that you are still a work in progress, but be discerning and careful about the details of your life that you share with them. And be patient—you won't have an incredible relationship in the first month. Maybe not even the first year. Don't underestimate the importance of just being present.

> Above all, love Jesus first. Your priority should be to pursue your own faith in Christ first (love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul), so that you are equipped to pour out to your teens (love your neighbor as yourself).

**Emily**

> Remember that it's 100% up to God to make these kids learn and accept Christ's love. You are only an instrument that God is using.

> Get to know the kids beyond the context of the study; get to know the kids parents, know what is really important to the kids.

> Don't feel like every conversation you have with the kids has to be about the Bible. Sometimes it's good for them to see you being silly!

# 5

## Boundaries

### *About Boundaries:*

Following procedures, boundaries and regulations is vital to ensuring that both you and the kids are safe. Remember that keeping the kids safe and keeping your ministry above reproach should be one of your primary focuses. Most parishes will already have rules and regulations for carrying out ministry, but here is a list of rules that we abide by and are beginning to impliment in our ministry.

### *Beaver Cross Boundaries:*

- 1) Signed permission slips are needed if you are giving kids a ride to youth group. This will protect you in the event of an accident or any other circumstance that could arise.  
*Even with a permission slip there needs to be 3 people in the car at all times – a youth leader should never be alone in the car with a youth.*
- 2) All youth leaders and volunteers need to have background checks done and complete the Safeguarding God's Children or another similar curriculum on how to be safe and keep kids safe in youth ministry.
- 3) There needs to be 2 adults present. An adult is not to be alone with a child at any time. If there are not 2 adults there must be 1 adult and 2 kids.

4) Signed permission slips are also necessary for being friends with youth on facebook or other social media.

5) Communication via cell phones is HIGHLY discouraged. If communication through texting is necessary then a signed permission slip from the parent is needed.

*Parents need to know and approve of you being in direct contact with their children - whether "friended" on facebook or by cell phone. It also needs to be made known that no communication between the youth leader and youth is private in any way. Not that you'll gossip, but the kids need to know you might have to talk to their pastor or parent about what you've discussed.*

6) As a youth leader you are a mandatory reporter. If you encounter a situation when a youth talks about self-harm, being hurt or abused, or about them not being safe at home then you must report it to the priest or pastor of your parish.

*Youth leaders need to be clear with the kids from the start that they are mandatory reporters so the kids are not surprised or feel betrayed when you make a report.*

7) Don't put your kids in a position where they're not in control of their own bodies or surroundings.

*Never engage in tickling or wrestling, and avoid over-stimulating activities and games.*

# 5

## Boundaries

- 8) It is HIGHLY advised that male leaders primarily minister to males in the group and females primarily minister to females in the group.

*Physical contact between youths or between youths and leaders is discouraged with the exception of light hugs, high-fives, or pats on the shoulder or back (“full body” hugs are highly discouraged).*

- 9) There needs to be consistent communication and transparency between you and the priest/pastor of your congregation. It is crucial for your youth ministry team to keep them aware of concerns that you may have with the kids. Also, they may know more about what the truth of any given situation is and be able to help you more effectively minister to the young people under your care.