

Youth Ministry: 6-Year Thematic Program

Glossary

Focus: The focus is the primary objective of the year. Each year the focus shifts but is in addition to the previous years. The focus drives the lessons, events, and prayers of that year. The focus deals more with spiritual issues such as Bible study, spiritual gifts, and teaching. The goal of the focus is that by the end of the year, the youth ought to have a biblical foundation for the overall focus.

Topics: The topics of that year centers around what the youth should be learning that year. The goal of topics is that by the end of that year, the youth will have a solid biblical understanding of the topic for that term. Topics are usually more open and apply to a specific issue the youth should learn. The topics are certain applications the youth should know by the end of the year.

Bible: This section focuses on a particular book that is to be studied thoroughly within that year.

Events: This section focuses on the major events that ties in with the focus and the topics learned that year.

Year One (Sixth & Seventh Grade):

Focus: Bible Study; Connection

- As students are coming out of elementary school and into the youth group it is imperative that they begin to build a solid foundation for their faith. Again, the goal of the youth ministry is to lead them into adulthood so that they can live the best possible life. What better way to build a foundation than to get into the word. In Luke 6:46-49 Jesus tells a parable about hearing his words and putting them into action. If our youth don't understand his words how can they put them into action? Our goal for the 7th graders is to build that foundation. We expose them to what God says. And we do it unapologetically...our goal here to teach the youth how to study the scriptures for themselves. This is where we train them how to do basic biblical hermeneutics in hopes that they will be able to study the bible on their own.

Topic: Foundations

- The foundations are the most crucial at the point. As a 7th grader, I feel like they should know the basic doctrines of Christianity. Why? Well because if they don't know what sin is...then there's no way they can

genuinely come to Christ, and if they can't come to Christ...how will they live the best possible life? So here we teach them:

- Sin: that we are all sinners and it is real. Sin isn't just an action that we do or don't do but something intrinsic within us (Eph. 4:2; Ps 51:5)
- Grace: That even though we were sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8) And that grace is a free gift that we did not deserve. This is why we cannot boast before anyone else because we did not do anything to deserve God's grace.
- Salvation: Rom. 6:23; John 3-4: What is biblical salvation?
- Forgiveness: Lk. 1:77; Mt. 26:28
- Jesus: Who is Jesus? What was he like? Who did he hang around with? What was his character? Jn. 14:6; Mk 14:62; Lk 21:8
- God: Who is God? What are his attributes? Genesis; Jn. 6:29; 1 Cor. 3:6
- Holy Spirit: Who is the Holy Spirit? What does he do? What is he like? Mt. 3:11; Lk. 1:41
- Bible: What is the Bible? Basic biblical apologetics – where did we get it? Who wrote it? Is it real? 2 Tim. 3:16; Lk 8:11

Bible: Gospels; Genesis

- The Gospels gives us greatest foundation. If our goal is to live the best way – the way of Jesus...then we start at the beginning of his life and follow him through it. Genesis lays the foundation of the world; it also explains basic doctrines that students should know. These 5 books are filled with narrative to grab the interest of the students. However there is enough substance to peak their interest.

Event: Disciple Now

- It is a very introductory event for first-time youth to get interested in the greater Christian culture. Here they are introduced to a large setting, away from their parents (probably for the first time), and surrounded by their friends.

Year Two (Eighth Grade):

Focus: Discipleship

- The goal of this year is for the youth to understand and apply the concept of discipleship. I would begin to implement a discipleship program; one that involves a teacher and some youth that are to be disciplined. The way I

would go about doing discipleship is probably focus on teaching about discipleship the first half of the year: what it is? Why is it important? Biblical examples and so on... The second half of the year I would have discipleship programs in place for those youth who want to go beyond the routine church program. This discipleship program would be for those who want to learn more; maybe some don't know how to put spiritual disciplines in action and need help. The goal would be to plug each youth into a discipleship program. I would try to have at least one adult per 3-5 youth. Locations would either be at the church or in geographical locations. The curriculum for the discipleship program would be based off the topics of that year along with additional material provided by the youth pastor. For any youth that accepts Christ, this discipleship program would be a must.

Topics: Community, Church, and Spiritual Disciplines: Part 1

- Community: How do you live with others? How does the church function as a body? How am I supposed to treat my spiritual brother and sister? The goal is to get the youth to think about building a youth group. What does it mean to be a youth group? What is the difference between a youth group and a school club? Acts 2:43; 9:2; Ex. 12:47
- Church: What is church? How should the church function? What is a biblical model of a church? How do we do church discipline? Mt. 18:17; Acts 15:3; 1 Co. 5:12
- Spiritual Disciplines: Part 1: Soon after the youth join a discipleship they ought to know what the spiritual disciplines of a follower of Christ are. The goal is that they might understand and put these disciplines in practice.
 - Bible study: How to study the bible on your own & with people?
 - Quiet times: not just a block of time in the morning or at night, but how to walk daily with Christ.
 - Memory verses: Ps. 119:57; 119:160
 - Prayer

Bible: Acts; Revelation 2-3

- Acts 2:41-47: we want to model this type of community in order to form this kind of Church. We also want to see how other churches worked. What want to answer the question of how can we become a stronger body within our youth group.

Events: Joint-church program

- Possibly joint activities with other churches. Maybe a fair or a worship session where youth from several churches get together to work together to put on a program. This would help the youth to plan with other people that share a same goal and focus. This also allows the youth to develop the reputation around the community as followers of Christ. Also as they work together they begin to see that each of them contributes individual gifts...leading to year three.

Year Three (Ninth Grade):

Focus: Serve teams; Spiritual Gifts

- The goal of this year is to begin to develop all sorts of teams for the youth to plug in to. We want them to begin to see what their spiritual gifts are and combine it with their natural talents and use them for the kingdom of God. Through this we hope that they can see that this leads to a fuller life. That serving others the way Jesus served others gives them a greater satisfaction than serving themselves. We want to build a massive amount of lead teams so every single youth can jump on. It builds off of the church/community idea that they have to buy in and plug in...that they cannot just be attending.

Topics: Serving; Worship; Love

- We want them to have a solid foundation when it comes to serving, worship and love. I would probably start the semester off with serving, then move into worship and have the summer and talk about love.
 - Serving: What does the bible say about serving? Lk 16:13; 4:8; Rom. 1:9. What does serving do? How are we to serve?
 - Worship: We should show the youth that worship is not just singing a set of songs for 30 minutes, but it is a lifestyle. Ex. 8:1; Ps. 29:2; 100:2; Mt. 2:8; Jn. 4:22
 - Love: In our culture, I think the word "love" has lost its meaning. I would probably do an entire series devoted to the biblical meaning of love. Song of Solomon

Bible: 1 Cor.; Songs of Solomon; Psalms

Events: True Love Waits

- Why does God want me to be pure? I think at this point in their lives the youth have seen and heard plenty on love, sex, and dating. It's funny though...God doesn't seem to be the opponent of love & sex...it seems

like he's the proponent of it. We need to teach them the beauty of love in its rightful context.

Year Four (Tenth Grade):

Focus: Relationships; Evangelism; Missions

- Relationships follow out of the previous summer session over the biblical definition of love. The goal of this semester is to lay a solid biblical foundation of relationships – family, dating, and marriage. The youth are beginning to form friends now and grow independent of their parents...how can we address this issue biblically?
- Evangelism: By the end of this year, I want the youth to know what evangelism is...and how to be comfortable in practicing evangelism. I want to teach them that evangelism is not necessarily going out and forcing people to believe in Jesus...but evangelism is part of our everyday actions. Also they should know that it is not our job to save people...it's Jesus'. However, I do want to give them tools in order for them to be aware of potential opportunities and how to answer certain questions.
- Missions: Following an evangelistic viewpoint, the youth ought to know how to apply this. What is God doing around the world? What is God doing in our neighborhoods? We want to show them that missions occurs everywhere.

Topics: Dating; Sex; Marriage; Family; Ethics; Spiritual Disciplines: Part 2

- Dating & Sex: What are the biblical guidelines to dating and sex? What does the bible say about it? What are the differences between the Bible and the world's view? Does Jesus make sense here? This part should reiterate the True Love Waits conference. (Song of Solomon)
- Marriage & Family: This is a big topic for youth. What do we do with divorce? We want to address the topic of family early – because it also deals with dating. Is it ok to marry a non-believer? How should I treat my parents? What the roles in the family? Eph. 5; Deut. 6:5ff; Josh 24:15
- Ethics: At this point in high school they are beginning to deal with a variety of ethical issues. They are probably introduced to these issues from school or media but how do we address them biblically?
 - Abortion & contraception
 - Homosexuality
 - Euthanasia
 - Death Penalty
 - Animal Rights
 - Stem Cell Research
 - Poverty

- Spiritual Disciplines: Part 2: This is a continuation of year two. As a sophomore in high school it should be time for them to build off of the foundations that they have learned their first three years in the youth group.
 - Fasting
 - Solitude
 - Giving
 - Prayer

Bible: Songs of Solomon

Events: Level 2 missions

- By this time in the youth program, hopefully they have been on three relatively easy mission trips during the summers. My goal is to have them complete a more difficult & challenging missions trip before they enter their junior year. This missions trip would be somewhere around the nation or within North America. Just so they can be pushed outside of their comfort zone and see the sacrifice that comes with serving.

Year Five (Eleventh Grade):

Focus: Leadership

- As Juniors in High School their responsibilities are beginning to accumulate. College is starting to enter their minds and classes get harder. One of the focuses of the youth ministry during this crucial year is leadership. By the end of their fifth year, each youth should be equipped to lead in some capacity. During their fourth year they saw how to implement missions and do evangelism, now it is their time to take ownership in what they believe and begin to lead others in this path. The goal for this year is for these youth to learn the essentials of leading in a variety of ministries.
 - Youth Leadership: Implements the vision with the adult leaders; contributes planning events; teach occasional Sunday schools & bible studies
 - Drama Team: Plan skits & videos that correspond to the lesson or a promotional event.
 - Technology Team: Audio/visual team that handles all the technical aspects of youth ministry. I would get a couple of older members in the church who majored in IT or CS to mentor these students. Youth Website would also be a good ministry here.
 - Contact Team: calls people & visiting other students

- Worship Team: I would invite those in the congregation who has led worship before to mentor the youth
- Art Team: decorations; designs; youth newsletter; youth icons
- Children's Ministry
- Nursery
- Welcome Team: greet people; setup/clean up
- Research Team: Bible study helps; facts and quotes for the message
- Hospitality Team: train them – how do you talk to them; birthday cards
- Construction Team: stage props; banners
- Mechanic Team
- Parents Advisory Team

Topics: Apologetics; Money; Man & Womanhood

- Apologetics: At this point of their high school career, the youth should be able to give a logical defense for the “hope” that they have (1 Pet. 3:15). This would also include a survey of other religions & cults.
 - Biblical Foundations: How do we know that the bible is real? Where did we get the bible? Are there any inconsistencies?
 - Cosmological Argument: The beginning of the universe. Is God real? Design argument. Naturalism & evidentialism.
 - Problem of Evil: Hume; Why suffering? How do we deal with pain and suffering? Theodicy.
 - Miracles & the Resurrection
 - Other religions (Islam; Hinduism; Judaism; Buddhism)
 - Cults & Occults
- Money: How do handle finances & manage your money. Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Also their roles in tithing.
- Manhood & Womanhood: What are the biblical guidelines of manhood and womanhood? This is where I would gather couples in the church to come in a do a mentoring program. I would also schedule some father/son & mother/daughter days.

Bible: Romans; Ephesians

Events: Father/Son & Mother/Daughter outings

Year Six (Twelfth Grade):

Focus: Teaching

- This is final year for the high schoolers. I would want for them to be able to fully grasp all they have learned in the past five years and be able to process it themselves and have them creatively teach it to others. By the time they graduate they will be able to lead and teach a small bible study. I would take the first semester to train them how to teach – refreshing biblical hermeneutics from year one and teach them how to develop a lesson plan. The second half of the year I would allow them to teach younger students (probably middle schoolers).

Topics: College; Career & Work; Systematic Theology; Church History

- College: Here's where application topics are important for the students. I would probably tackle this issue at the beginning of the semester. Most of them are in the process of applying for schools. I would help them with scholarships and drawing up resumes. We should teach them what to look for in a college. How do you find a church in college? What kind of bible studies and fellowships should I join?
- Career & Work: Here is where I would get people from all different professions and have them come in and share with them. Let the youth see that you can still be whoever and still love and serve God. That God has given each of us different talents and abilities to serve him for his glory and his kingdom.
- Systematic Theology: A brief survey of introductory systematic theology. The difference between systematic theology and year one's foundation is that now they should already know and have experienced Christian living and this gives them a fuller explanation for it.
 - Theology Proper
 - Christology
 - Pneumatology
 - Trinitarianism
 - Angelology & Demonology
 - Soteriology
 - Harmatology
- Church History: Most church members are ignorant on this subject because it has either been neglected or briefly taught. But church history goes hand-in-hand with systematic theology. You have to understand where you come from – learn from past mistakes. There's so much wisdom that has been divulged in the past, we'd be fools to ignore it.

Bible: Hebrew; James; All

- Hopefully by the time they graduate, each youth would have read through the bible completely. But I hope they have studied in depth:
 - Gospels
 - Genesis
 - Acts
 - Revelations 2-3
 - 1 Corinthians
 - Psalms
 - Songs of Solomon
 - Romans
 - Ephesians
 - Hebrews
 - James

Events: College Bible Study; Internship

- College bible study: I would take them to various churches around the area to expose them to different denominations & cultures. I would also try to bring them to several college ministries to let them get a feel of what it will be like
- Internship: For those youth who are thinking of furthering their ministry career, I would try to encourage them to seek out an internship program.