



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

The Diocesan Youth Advisory Team

SMART GUIDE to Starting a New Youth Work

We are assuming, because you are reading this document or have downloaded it, that you have a desire to work with young people...and we aim to help you turn that into a reality!

What do we mean by 'a new Youth Work'?

Anything – it may be an organised youth activity, a weekly or other regular group; it may be engaging with young people in the choir or as servers. It may be church based, home based, school based, street based or uniformed groups – the possibilities are endless! Anything that connects with young people - by which we mean roughly those aged 10-20 years.

An active youth ministry is a realistic possibility for *any* church, provided that the church is prepared for it!

We believe that youth ministry is fundamental to the ministry of every church, because young people are the church of today AND tomorrow. Obviously we're delighted that this is something you, your parish, your community are considering! Youth Work is a challenge and a wonderful opportunity and when done well can be transformative, life enhancing and faith building. However, it is also a huge responsibility and this Smart Guide aims to assist you in avoiding the most common pitfalls and ironing out any issues as you develop your vision and put the practicalities in place.

As an initial document, this Guide aims to support you in the thinking, planning and dreaming and to signpost you towards other appropriate resources. It will also help you to decide as to when you could call on the resources available to you from the Diocesan Youth Advisory Team.

We advise you to get in touch with one of the Youth Advisory Team by email initially (see link at the bottom) to let them know your plans and seek advice and so they can pray for you! Depending on their other commitments they can then be involved at different stages, according to your needs.

Where to Start?

Every youth work idea starts somewhere – it might be an individual's idea or a sense of vision from the whole church. It might be a parent who requests that something is done for their child or a group may develop organically. Youth work may respond to an obvious need or you may need to seek out that need with a bit more research. This guide won't be able to address every different context but the principles are often similar, regardless of where you start from.

So firstly: Do you know your area? What are the needs? What is a relevant and appropriate response to those needs?

Pray and seek God...obvious but often forgotten in the excitement!
Identify those who may want to be involved in youth work.
You might like to host an event to invite people to (parents, young people, other churches etc), canvassing opinion. A Diocesan Youth Adviser or other outside support could help to facilitate a vision day or evening.

As your plans take shape, you need to ensure you have considered some of these issues:

- Define the purpose of the group - What is the group for? Age bracket, content, aim. What are you trying to achieve and who has decided that?
- Who should be involved? How can you recruit people to help? What training and support might you offer? What skills do you have or what skills do you need?
- Venues for meeting and equipment required.
- Staffing and CRB requirements – how will this be managed?
- Policies and Procedures – Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Behavioural Policy, Membership etc.
- Finances – where will it come from? How much might you need?
- Programmes – is it a discipleship group, a open club, or centred round a sports or food related activity?
- Keeping in touch and keeping up momentum – ongoing training and development for leaders, communication and publicity to attract and maintain members.

What next?

Diocesan Youth Advisers are available to support you as you consider and launch new youth work projects.

The Equipping and Engage courses run within the Diocese are ideal for continuing training and development and for meeting other youth leaders and gaining support and ideas. <http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/equipping.html>

Other Useful Resources

A Guide to Youth Ministry – Exploring the Needs of Your Church, Katie McDaniel, National Society 1999

Christian Youth Work, Mark Ashton and Phil Moon, Authentic Media 2007

No Guts No Glory – How to Build Youthwork that Lasts, Alan Stewart, Matthias Media

Young People and Mission – A Practical Guide, Ed. Alison and David Booker, Church House Publishing 2007

Starting Right – Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry, Ed. Dean, Clark, Rahn, Zondervan 2001

This Way to Youth Ministry – An Introduction to the Adventure, Duffy Robbins, Zondervan 2004

<http://www.europe.anglican.org/resources/starting-ym-web.pdf>

Youth Adviser contact details can be found here:

<http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/youth-advisers.html>