

# Young Life Leader Training



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# Section 1: Contact Work

## *What Should Our Approach Be?*

When we talk about “contact work,” we speak of the very bloodline of Young Life. Young Life is a ministry of relationships and contact work is where they begin. It is really part of a much larger way of thinking and living known as relational, incarnational or lifestyle evangelism. In this section we will first look at what the relational or incarnational approach involves, and then look specifically at contact work and its place in the ministry of Young Life and OUR lives as well.

*“Some men want to sit within the sound of a church or chapel bell; not I. I want to set up a rescue shop within a yard of Hell.” -- C.T. Studd*

## *What Approach?*

Once we realize we want kids to know Christ, our first question is, “What should I do?” The next question should be (but all too often isn’t), “What did God do?” Imagine for fun that God at some point in time looked at this world and wondered how best He might communicate His great love for His creation. This is really much like us, as we consider how we might best approach our world with this same message of God’s love.

## *Some Possible – (but rejected) Approaches*

### **INFORMATIONAL**

Suppose God had felt that all we needed was information ... “Get them the facts! The problem is ignorance – get it in their hands.” Suppose He had decided, therefore, to drop leaflets from the sky (Nine Things God Wants You To Know).

We all know this falls way short, and that it doesn’t sound like God at all ... and yet we often try to do this in our own ministries; just get the information into people’s hands. We’ll package it better, make it more colorful, put it on our cars and on the radio and TV. Yet few people are really attracted by the impersonal facts. They’ve heard them before. They often need more.

### **IMPOSITIONAL**

Suppose God had decided instead to just impose – FORCE – His ways on us ... a big galactic “Do it! Or else!” Parents are often most guilty of this approach: “Do it – you need it – it worked for me.” To be told to read your Bible begins to sound a lot like “Eat your peas.” God might create bunch of robots who had no choice but to follow Him, but He loves us much too much for that. We need more than force; we need validity.

## **INSPIRATIONAL**

Now suppose God had chosen to try to really “impress” a lot of people all at once. Maybe He’d have used a huge armada of Air Force jets blazing across the sky (to get our attention) and then parachuted out (to excite us) and landed in the middle of the Super Bowl (to keep our attention). Wouldn’t we be impressed! Or would we? How exciting is a God who is that aloof, that far away, that “untouchable”? Our heart yearns for more than just inspiration.

And yet, here again, we ourselves so often try this same approach. We bring out the Christian Dancing Bears and the Jugglers for Jesus (to get their attention) and an ex-rock star with a gutter to God testimony (so they’ll listen) and a “pole vaulter who vaulted 20 feet without a pole because Jesus did it for him” (to inspire them). And so on. Pretty impressive, until that nobody acne-faced unathletic sophomore goes home and looks in the mirror. Where’s the music, the heroes, the thrill now? He needs more than inspiration. We all do. (Don’t misunderstand – inspiration can be great, but it’s only a starting point.)

## **GOD’S APPROACH – INCARNATIONAL (FLESH AND BLOOD)**

God chose none of the above approaches, so why should we? Rather, He sent a flesh and blood expression of Himself, His Son Jesus. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14). How simple, profound and beautiful ... God coming to live right in the very midst of His own world. He didn’t establish Himself walled inside a fortified castle where only a privileged few would be allowed in His presence. No, He chose to be with the people, available to them and their needs.

This, we realize, is what we need. This is what we respond to. We respond to the reality of a God who cares so much for us that He would come and live with us, where we can touch and hear and know Him. We read and see how Jesus spent time with and cared for the lepers, the sick, the tax collectors, simple fishermen, lawyers and prostitutes. There was no place He was not free to go. And we see the impact this man, the God-man, had on those He touched.

Why, then, do we approach ministry any differently? Why do we avoid and ignore a world that God chose to enter? Why do we wall ourselves off from a world God chose to become a part of? Why do we make others come to us, when God chose to go to them?

God chose in Christ to reveal Himself through flesh and blood; today, He still desires to reveal Himself through flesh and blood, by OUR very lives. With Christ in us, the incarnation is still at work. WE are the hands and feet of Christ.

In a simple way, God placed Christ right in the middle of a world just full of needs where He would be watched, examined, rejected, followed, loved and hated. In much the same simple way, as well as costly, God wants to place us in the middle of this same world to care for it. Like Christ, we will be watched and examined, rejected and followed, loved and hated. People will look at us to see if we “walk the talk.” They will see if our lives back up our words. In a

significant way, our very lives are the message, much more than what we specifically say. Think for yourself of people who have had a significant role in your life. How much of their actual words do you remember? On the other hand, how much do you remember about who they were, their character? Undoubtedly much more.

A ministry thought of in these terms will cease to be just a “compartment” of our life – something we do or a place we go. We would love to think of ministry like this: “Now I’m at the high school and involved in ministry ... now I’m home and I can be a slob ... now I’m in the dorm and I can be crass and rude.” No, God wants us to be His, and therefore able to be used by Him, not only around a high school, but also at home, in the dorm, on vacation, at restaurants, at work, and everywhere. Are we different people in these different places? If so, then ministry is more of an activity to us that is PART of our lives, than the LIFESTYLE God desires.

Paul saw that in God’s wise design, ministry runs on two tracks. One is content-oriented and the other is relationship-oriented. Paul told his friends in Thessalonica, “We loved you so much, that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God (content), but also our own lives as well relationship” (I Thessalonians 2:8).

Paul saw that the Gospel becomes much more real and valid when it is lived out, when it is evidenced in a life. This is why we so often speak of “relationships that communicate Christ.” This is the vehicle God chose when He spoke to us about Himself, and this is the vehicle – relationships – that God most often chooses for us to use when speaking to others about Him.

## Contact Work in Young Life

“Contact work” in Young Life describes this process of “becoming flesh and dwelling among.” A Young Life leader is someone who desires to live out these concepts of incarnational ministry with a focus on a particular arena – a local high school. A Young Life leader sees himself or herself as the flesh and blood expression of Christ to a school. Their priority is to know that school’s students and be known by them, by going to them. Young Life leaders model to kids what the love of Christ looks like and invite them to join us in God’s kingdom; it’s a tremendous opportunity and responsibility.

The Gospel message is impregnated by the life of the one through which it comes. Pay the price and keep going ... win the right to be heard. Contact work is Christ alive in you, loving high school kids.

Many will make the mistake of viewing the weekly club meeting as the focal point of Young Life. It isn’t. The “magic” of a Young Life club meeting is really not in the meeting, though it is carefully thought through. The magic is in the fact that the leaders who are up front or at the meeting are involved in the lives of kids in the room. Think of the impact a message has on a kid who arrives at club for the first time and listens to a friend speak ... someone the

kid already knows because that leader has been out at the school, at practice, or the local hangout. The reaction is often, “Now I understand a little why this person cares for me ...”. Christ is thus witnessed for in a powerful way.

So let’s imagine you are a new Young Life leader (or youth leader at a church) about to make your move onto a high school campus. Here are some things to consider:

#### **A. REALIZE THERE IS A PROCESS INVOLVED**

You are part of that process ... be patient. You must probably “win the right to be heard,” that is, to speak in significant ways with people. People will listen to a friend, not strangers. Think in terms of “building a bridge of friendship” across which someday Christ may come. Read how J.I. Packer puts it in his book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*:

“What you have to do is to take time with them. Make friends with them and get alongside them. Find out where they are in terms of spiritual understanding and start dealing with them at that point. At each stage you have to be willing to go along with him at God’s speed, which may seem to you a strangely slow speed.” (P. 120, 121)

#### **B. DON’T LOOK FOR IMMEDIATE RESULTS**

Relationships take time – years – and much of the time you spend at a school may not seem valuable at the time. But a year later you may hear someone say, “Hey, didn’t you come to practice last year ... ?”

#### **C. PRAY**

The degree we will pray will reflect the degree we think we can do it on our own. If we realize that apart from Christ we can accomplish nothing (John 15:5), then we must go to Him and seek His direction.

“It is His way regularly to withhold His blessings until His people start to pray ... God will make us pray before He blesses our labors in order that we may constantly learn afresh that we depend on God for everything.”  
– J.I. Packer

#### **D. WE MUST PERSONALLY ENTER THEIR WORLD**

It is only by us going that we can understand the complex adolescent world. Be interested in them and in the things that hold them. As one leader said who was spending time with some guys who were really into cars and he wasn’t: “I could really care less about their cars ... I care everything for them.”

#### **E. LOVE THE UNLOVELY, ACCEPT THE UNACCEPTABLE**

Just as Jesus did this, so must we. Do we only love and spend time with the lovely kids? Jesus didn’t. We must roll up our sleeves and get involved in the hardest parts of high school life. Most of all, we just need to move toward them. He can give His heart to people who are moving ahead in faith.

## **CLOSING THOUGHT**

By going where they are, we demonstrate to kids that we think they are important. By spending time with them and sharing life with them, we are able to form friendships. As our friendships grow we are able to share with them the claims of Christianity ... and they listen. Friendship means communication.

These are the dynamics of Young Life. Unless we excel at getting to know teenagers and gaining their respect and confidence, we can never be effective. Without consistent, committed and aggressive contact work, a club can become ingrown and then slowly, painfully become stagnant. Without adventurous contact work, Young Life will become a “Christian youth group.” But, with go-for-it and adventurous contact work, we can fulfill our calling to God and accomplish the purpose of Young Life to reach the uninterested, unreached, uncommitted, unchurched, underchurched, and exchurched young people with the most exciting news ever told ... the story of Jesus Christ and His amazing love for them. It will take time and hard work, but for the sake the kingdom ... it will be worth it for all of eternity.

## **The Stages of Relationships**

### *Initiating and Developing Friendships*

There are only two types of kids; those you have met and those you are trying (and praying) to meet. Once you meet them the first time, they become an acquaintance. Picture a continuum with four different stages that describe every relationship with every kid you know. The goal of contact work is to move kids from the acquaintance end (shallow) toward the discipleship end (deeper).

Acquaintance      Friendship      Deep Friendship      Discipleship

Be conscious of opportunities to move relationships to a deeper level. This might happen through a shared experience or doing them a favor and seizing the opportunity for good talk.

### **I. THE FIRST STAGE – AQUAINTANCE**

Initiate friendships in THEIR environment or on their turf. These are primarily large group events such as a football game or a school play. Conversations are geared around learning their name, their interests (i.e., sports, band, classes).

1. Be highly visible.
2. Don't come on too strong. Sometimes we over-compensate for fear or lack of ease by “blowing kids away.”
3. Be sensitive to situations where you are not welcome.
4. Stay away from places where you might compete or cause them to be “ill at ease.”

5. Don't overstay your welcome.
6. Take someone with you who helps to break the ice.
7. Don't talk about yourself.
8. Remember names. Remember names. Remember names. Refer to kids by name.
9. Remember what they participate in, what their upcoming concerns are, everything you can about them.
10. Dress properly – fit into the situation. (i.e., don't overdress or underdress).

## **II. THE SECOND STAGE – FRIENDSHIP**

At this stage you can begin asking more probing questions about home life and personal concerns they have. Develop friendships in small group settings also. Use neutral ground such as a restaurant, the mall, a movie, or Ultimate Frisbee.

1. Go places with groups rather than individuals.
2. Ask probing questions.
3. Initiate activities.
4. Leave with them wanting more.
5. Do what you say you will do. Earn their trust by doing so.
6. Don't compete against them, but with them (boys = sports / girls = appearance).

## **III. THE THIRD STAGE – DEEP FRIENDSHIP**

Take kids out of their environment. Take them camping or on a weekend trip to a nearby town. Conversations are on a more vulnerable level concerning fears, views of God and their response to Him, family problems or deeper issues. At this level they might begin sharing in initiating time together.

1. Be creative.
2. Do this in small groups or one-on-one.
3. Be consistent. You won't always "feel" like going ... go in faith and obedience.
4. Exercise good judgement in where you take kids.
5. Be concerned about their issues and problems (even if they seem silly to you).
6. Remember to follow up.
7. Write notes and call frequently.
8. Remember birthdays and significant events (tryouts for a part in a play, or cheerleading).

#### **IV. THE FOURTH STAGE – DISCIPLESHIP**

At this stage the relationship enters into a mutual commitment. You become the teacher and they become the students. This is similar to the Apostle Paul's relationship with Timothy. You serve as their spiritual mother and father (see Colossians 1:28-29, I Thessalonians 2:5-13).

1. Take kids to church.
2. Meet with them regularly each week for accountability and growth.
3. Read and memorize Scripture together.
4. Pray for each other and for the school.
5. Teach them the importance of Christian fellowship.
6. Challenge and exhort them to live a life of obedience.
7. Raise the "bar" for them to shoot for.
8. Serve at a shelter for the homeless together.
9. Become more vulnerable regarding your struggles in life.

### **Non-Verbal Contact Work**

"Proclaim the Gospel, proclaim the Gospel, at all times proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and if necessary ... use words." – St. Francis of Assisi

What do you want others to know non-verbally about the love of Christ before they hear the Gospel spoken?

1. You are real – be yourself, be vulnerable, people can see through falseness.
2. You identify with them – know where they are hurting – empathy not sympathy.
3. You understand them – few people seek to understand, hence kids don't feel free to open up.
4. You listen to them – you need to know what is behind the words they are saying ... and aren't saying. Use "active listening" skills.
5. You affirm them. Respect them.
6. You not only love them, but you LIKE them.
7. Don't try to change people; only the Holy Spirit changes people.
8. Love unconditionally. Unconditional love accepts them right where they are. Love the sinner, not the sin.
9. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know everything.
10. Don't be afraid to say you are sorry.
11. Love the unlovely – don't just befriend the "in crowd."
12. Love the ones who don't love you.
13. Pursue those who don't pursue you.
14. Be the initiator.

15. Step out of the normal; be uncomfortable. Don't be afraid to be embarrassed.
16. Challenge.
17. Encourage.
18. Care about them physically, emotionally and spiritually.
19. Know their names and their birthdays.
20. Show up at their important events.
21. Ask for an update about concerns they had during one of your prior conversations.
22. Don't be one of the crowd. Don't join in sarcasm or ridicule.
23. Be adaptable.
24. Serve them.
25. Be consistent. Even when you don't FEEL like being there for them.
26. Don't forget what it means to be lost.
27. Allow them the freedom to say "no" to Christ without you rejecting them.
28. Send them a postcard from your vacation.
29. Don't say "I told you so."
30. Pray for the chance to serve them in a way that costs you deeply. For the love of Christ.

## Contact Work Basics

This packet contains things from Young Life training tools, resources, handouts and websites compiled over several years, in addition to new thoughts and articles.

Contact work is the heartbeat of Young Life; without it, we are just a few trips and events. If you take everything else away (camp, club) but left us with the ability to do contact work, it would still be Young Life. We could still enter the world of high school kids, earn the right to be heard and then share the Gospel with them.

### I. THE THREE LEVELS OF CONTACT WORK:

**While contact work should be natural and relational, it should also be intentional and strategic.**

#### I. SEE – Being seen at school affairs and wherever kids are.

It is important for the leader seeking to build friendships to express his or her interests by attending events that are important to kids. This could be a school

*1 Thessalonians 2:8 –  
The ultimate Young Life  
leader verse: "We loved  
you so much that we were  
delighted to share with  
you not only the gospel of  
God but our lives as well,  
because you had become so  
dear to us."*

*Contact work is when we  
share our lives with kids!*

play, athletic event or practice session, or some other activity in which they are engaged. It could be a mall or street corner or park. We might not say anything to anyone, but our presence there shows interest.

- List as many “types” of Level 1 contact work as you can.

## **II. TALK – Talking to kids.**

Before long we must step up to this second level and actually talk with someone. If we just “hang around,” suspicions will grow as to our purposes. Real friendships can only be built through communication, and this communication must be more than an occasional “Hi!” We must remember to look at things from a kid’s point of view and learn to speak about things that are of interest to them.

- You may think your interests align well with those of high school kids because of your age. Do they? Where might they be different?

## **III. DO – Doing activities with kids.**

This is the best way to get to know kids. Fast friendships are built when we live one of life’s experiences with a kid. Ski trips, sporting events, golf, doing lunch, phone calls, school projects, overnights, float building, pickup games, biking, road trips, chaperoning, athletic officiating, visiting colleges, playing music, and many other things are good ways to do things with high school people. Leaders should use their imaginations and be constantly on the lookout for activities that they may share with kids.

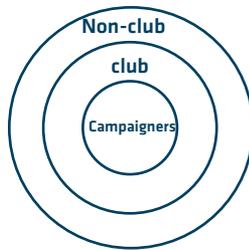
Level one and level two are fine in and of themselves, but are most important as progressive steps to level three. The thing that builds the greatest relationship is doing something with someone. Anytime you do something with a person, that relationship is strengthened. Friendship grows as a result of doing something with another person. We move forward from being seen by kids, to talking to individual kids and relating to their current life context, to doing something with them. The level of contact work that we want to move toward is doing things with kids – level three contact work.



These relationships oftentimes evolve only after a long and prayerful process, from one level to the next.

In addition to the three levels, we need to have in mind three categories of high school people. Think of it as a series of circles. The small circle consists of Campaigners kids. The Campaigners kids are the smallest segment of a high school population. A larger circle surrounding the Campaigners is the circle of

club kids. Club kids make up the next largest segment with whom we have contact. The last group of kids, by far the largest, is the non-club kids. These are individuals who for one reason or another don't come to Young Life.



As Young Life leaders, we need to intentionally make contact with kids in each of the three categories: Campaigners kids, club kids and non-club kids. We must be willing to do this with all kinds of kids, many of whom are radically different from ourselves. Often our initial reaction is fear. It is a scary thing, this whole notion of contact work. We are doing cross-cultural ministry. We are crossing boundaries and breaking down walls and stereotypes. We are going into a battlefield, and that is uncomfortable. We would be naïve to think it would be otherwise.

As a result, what frequently happens is that contact work is done with Campaigners and club kids and is not done with non-club kids on a regular basis. Seldom, if ever, do we get to level three contact work. This causes our Young Life club to be "ingrown" – much like a "Christian" clique. That's not what we're about.

What causes us not to seek out the non-club kids in level three? Perhaps a variety of issues, but the most common are: 1) fear, 2) not knowing what to do, 3) not knowing why we should do contact work, 4) the perception that there is not enough time and 5) fatigue. These common obstacles build upon each other. They soon develop what might be called a Paralysis Circle that hinders us from pursuing kids.

We need to remind ourselves every time we step onto a campus or spend time with a young person that the reality is – kids are dying for an adult friend. They are looking for healthy role models whom they can respect, admire and confide in. Don't underestimate your role. Don't be intimidated. Kids desperately want your friendship. It's often with the kids you least expect that the Lord will work most dramatically.

Have confidence in the One who calls you to those kids. Remember Christ and the reality of His presence in you, with you and for you. He will give you confidence as you trust Him and take risks regularly.

The way out of this paralysis circle is to list options of things that can be done at each level, then divide kids into categories and put names in each category. Be sure to put more names than you want to contact. Then go out and accomplish the goal.

As for some suggestions regarding what to talk about:

- Make them the experts. Ask things that the kids can talk about freely. (Sports, friends ...)

- Learn to ask about the feelings behind what they are saying. Show compassion and empathy.
- Practice the art of making kids feel special and loving them into their potential. This takes the touch of God’s Spirit and grace in our own lives.
- Always let kids know you are at school primarily because of them, not because of Young Life. We are friends, not recruiters.
- Be willing and available to go deeper and challenges the kids.
- Demonstrate servanthood in practical ways by offering rides or helping with school.
- We need to individualize friendships, which means we can’t realistically be close friends with every single kid. Constantly have an attitude of going deep and wide. We go deep with a handful of kids and wide with many kids on campus. There are always new kids to meet and to befriend.

## A Biblical Foundation

*(for Contact Work)*

This is a review from the first semester of First Year.

### A. ACCOMMODATE YOURSELF

Accommodate (Webster’s Dictionary) – to adapt or make fit or suitable; accommodating – adapting oneself to the desires of others.

- Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 out of the NIV, then read below.

#### 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 (The Message)

“Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized – whoever.

I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life.

**I did all this because of The Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!”**

1. We need to care about a wide range of people – not just the easier kids. Who are the easier kids? (No one right answer.)
2. Entering “their world” does not mean we lower our standards. When is it easy to lower your standards? (The key: be an adult, not a kid!)
3. How might we miss being in on it?

## B. AVOID UNNECESSARY STUMBLING BLOCKS

2 Corinthians 6:3

“We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path,  
so that our ministry will not be discredited.”

- Go through this verse one word or phrase at a time and apply it.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: What stumbling blocks do you need to remove? Do you accommodate yourself to high school kids while maintaining Christ-like standards? How is your contact work – is it intentional, strategic, and balanced? Are you a good listener?

## Key Contact Work Concepts

- **You may not always want to go.** In order to be effective, we must be regular in our approach to kids. It might mean going when we don’t feel like it, but because we are seeking to serve them for Christ’s sake, we go.
- **Consistency is the key.** It is essential that a leader do contact work at least two-four times a week over a long period of time. A typical week may include attending one school event, going to a practice, and doing something with kids after school, (several times a week is more important than hours).
- **Mix it up to see more kids.** Vary the time and type of your contact work. Do not give kids the idea that you are there only to build your club. Kids should not feel “used” to build an event or an organization; rather, they should know they are talking to a friend.
- **The three levels in balance.** Do all three. It isn’t good enough to only do things with a few kids (level three) and never meet anyone new or to only be seen by kids, but never talk to them.
  - They also overlap: If you go shopping with kids, you are doing level three. While doing that, you may talk to others and hit level two, and who knows how many kids saw you (level one). How many kids have you earned the right with? Who knows! That is why you go faithfully AND strategically.
- **Lifestyle Contact Work. NO PUNCHING OUT!** The more we get better at making contact work a lifestyle rather than a duty, the easier it will be to naturally invite kids to go to Young Life. Seeing kids at the mall, the grocery store, downtown, or wherever and talking to them there will make it much easier to ask kids to come. Remember, there is no “punching out” for a Young Life leader!

# How to Talk to High School Kids

*(and you thought you already knew ...)*

Learning to converse with high school folks is a challenging and often fearful area for a lot of us in Young Life. Good conversation for most of us is a skill to be acquired. There is no substitute for experience, but here are a few guidelines that might be helpful.

**1. Remember that you are appealing to what is a tremendous unmet need in the lives of most high school people.**

Just like everybody else, high school kids really want to talk. They want to express their feelings. They want to be heard, understood, listened to, accepted and cared for. They are surprisingly open to someone, like you, who will take time to hear what they have to say.

**2. The basic skill we need to have to meet this need is listening.**

Listening is the most important part of your conversation with a kid, or anybody else. Your success in conversation depends more upon your ability to listen than it does on any other single factor. Listening is not always easy. It often requires real effort, real motivation. It is not a “natural” talent for most of us; we need to work at it.

## **PRACTICAL LISTENING TIPS:**

**a) Really give your attention to the other person.**

Talk about yourself less and keep the focus of the conversation on the other person. Pay attention to what the person is saying and don't look all over while he or she is talking. Think about what the person is saying instead of what you are going to say next.

**b) Ask good, thoughtful questions.**

Your goal is to help teens, do the talking about themselves and their interests. This does not mean asking a ton of questions – your conversations should not seem like an interrogation! Ask a few good questions that facilitate a conversation like, “What do you think about ... ?” or “Tell me about ...” or “What are people saying about ... ?” or “What is your opinion about ... ?”

**c) Remember that they have a great need to know that they are loved, accepted and important.**

Our goal is to tell kids that God loves them, that we think they are important and God thinks they are significant. Jesus died for kids because He loves them and thinks they are worth it.

- Consider your own personal experience with bad listeners. How does that go? How can you avoid these pitfalls? What are your natural listening tendencies?

## **Intentional Contact Work**

### *Aligning Your Actions with Your Goals*

Contact work can be spontaneous, but the method and philosophy are intentional and purposeful. Your contact work goals are something to be considered and prayed through before you head out to find your friends.

#### **Thinking about your intentions ...**

1. Why am I doing contact work at this particular place or in this particular way today?
2. What do I expect to accomplish? Who am I trying to see and talk to?
3. What is my goal for contact work today?

#### **Developing new acquaintances ...**

Go where there are lots of kids. Try:

1. Before or after school.
2. Practices.
3. Sports events (varsity and JV; guys and girls).
4. School play, band, choir concert.
5. Pickup basketball games.
6. Pep rallies, special events at school.
7. Mall or other gathering places and hangout.
8. Places they are likely to work (movie theater, coffee shop, retail).
9. Any kid, any time. Whether it's the kid bagging your groceries or taking a movie ticket ... talk to him or her ... Matthew 28:16-20 in action.

#### **Moving into deeper levels of friendship ...**

Your attention should be focused on one or just a few kids. More than anything else, the goal is to be with them, getting to know them, caring for them and building the bridge of friendship. Where you go and what you do is secondary. The important thing is spending time together. Use our list of things to do to give you some ideas for activities.

#### **Remember the Ultimate Goal ...**

There are a million things that can be considered contact work, but the overriding factor is to allow kids to be a part of our lives and share with them the life-saving message of Jesus Christ.

Contact work can be spontaneous, but the method and philosophy are intentional and purposeful. Your contact work goals are something to be considered and prayed through before you head out to find your friends.

# Contact Work Guidelines

1. Begin with your own prayer life (and that of your support group). You cannot be successful without connection to God and a desire that His will be done.
2. Go where the kids are.
3. Learn names. Use whatever helps you: notebook, yearbook, other.
4. Pray for opportunities. Ask God to give you a sincere interest in the teenagers in your area.
5. Use mutual interests as stepping stones (music, sports, art). This isn't about you, so focus on their accomplishments.
6. Be yourself. Kids can spot a fake a mile away. Allow your own personality and gifts to draw kids.
7. Don't talk about yourself too much.
8. Strive to be an expert on your school by subscribing to the school newspaper and get a copy of the school yearbook. Study them to catch up on campus events and to learn names and faces.
9. Don't play favorites. Seek to gain friendships with all types of kids. Show attention not only to the leaders and the easily lovable, but to the followers and the "unlovable" as well.
10. Be a genuine friend. Don't just promote your meeting.
11. Be available. Strive for the reputation of always having time to talk and be sincere in your willingness to do this.
12. Spend time wisely. Quality over quantity.
13. You are an adult leader. Don't put yourself on a kid's level.
14. Be a servant. This doesn't mean buy a kid's friendship, but be willing to serve and do things to show you really care.
15. Keep an up-to-date record of significant contacts. This will help you get to know kids and be on top of things when you see them.
16. Enthusiasm and cheerfulness are contagious, but be genuine.
17. Be a person of integrity. Be above reproach in your behavior. Opposite sex leader and kid should never spend time alone.
18. Contact work is never finished. There are always new kids to get to know. Faithfully pursuing their friendship is what "wins the right to be heard" for our message of the Good News.

# Creative Contact Work

## *Some Specific Ideas*

College sports (live or TV)	Zoo	Babysitting
Motorcycling	Amusement parks	Flying
Sports fantasy leagues	Rent a movie	Hay rides
Shooting pool	Wash your car	Community service project
Backpacking	Plan a practical joke on a leader	Picture taking
Go-carting	Biking	Local parks
Camping	School plays	Tubing
Rappelling	Making ice cream	Running
Canoeing	Powder puff football	Needlepoint
Rock climbing (indoors)	Concerts	Athletic events
Tennis	Ultimate Frisbee	Fix your car
Fishing	Movies	A drive in the country
Racquetball	Kneeball	Fix their car
Softball	Putt-putt	Playing guitar
Shopping	Visit a potential college	Look at new cars
Kite flying	Scuba diving	Shared hobbies
Golf	Christmas caroling	Show them your office
Aerobics	Bowling	Macramé'
Horseback riding	Tutoring	Journal
Swimming	Make a home movie for club	Lunch
Slumber parties	Odd jobs around your house	Write letters
Let a kid teach you a skill or sport	Volunteer work	
Swimming	Ping-Pong	
Go for coffee	Habitat for Humanity	
Your health club	Board games at night	
Video games	Take them to church	
Skating	Rollerblading	

### Comments:

1. Ask kids what they would like to do.
2. Let kids teach you.
3. Listen for invitations from kids (sometimes very subtle!).
4. Drive kids someplace.
5. Ask kids into your life (wash car, go shopping, show them your office, meet your parents).
6. Don't stop during the summer.

## A Scriptural Basis for Contact Work

The Bible is literally covered with verses relating to what Young Life calls contact work. Here are just a few to get you going further into study.

The Incarnation

John 1:1-14, Luke 15:1-2

The Incarnation theme	John 17:18, Luke 5:27-31
How was Christ sent?	John 1:10-14, 20:21, II Corinthians 5:14-21
The role of a servant	Mark 9:35-38, I Corinthians 9:22
Sharing both in person and words	I Thessalonians 2:5-12, Colossians 4:2-6
Earning the right to be heard	I Corinthians 14:10-11
Not all will respond	Acts 17:32-34
Our power comes from God	Zechariah 4:6, Colossians 1:28-29
Our authority comes from Scripture	II Timothy 3:16-17, II Corinthians 4
Our resource is Scripture	Colossians 3:16, Philippians 4:13
Our wisdom is from God	James 1:5, I Corinthians 2:1-5
Our teacher is God	Psalms 32:8, Acts 4:13
We are commanded to go	Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 13-14
Our role is servant	II Corinthians 4:5-6, Luke 9:23-24
God makes us a promise	Joshua 1:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:13

### **Further verses to ponder and contemplate:**

Mark 1:17, Hebrews 10:7, Mark 10:45, Luke 6:46, Matthew 10:8, John 15:13, Colossians 3:13

### **What can you learn from the following examples set by Christ as to how we ought to relate to others?**

(Mark 7, Luke 19, John 4, John 8)

### *John 1:35-51 “Come and See” – The Biblical Invitation!*

- Jesus shows us what to say to kids. It is simple and sweet.
- This Scripture provides a great example of how to invite kids to club.

## **Club Numbers and Contact Work**

Contact work is about building sincere relationships with kids in hopes that this will help us effectively share the Gospel with them. However, contact work is also critical to club numbers and club numbers simply indicate how many kids hear our verbal presentation of the Gospel. Thus, it is important to examine the relationship between contact work and club numbers and how we can most effectively spend our time with kids in order to share the Gospel with as many of them as possible.

## *Contact work that directly impacts club numbers:*

- 1. Contact work the day of club – VERY IMPORTANT!** Contact work at the school is a great way to see kids, be seen and talk to kids any time of the week. However, no day is more important than the day of club. Most leaders should be at the school (after school contact work or lunch, if permitted) the day of club. Say “hi” to kids and invite them or remind them to come.
- 2. Level three contact work with key kids – SELLING VISION.** The best way to have a big club is to have kids invite more kids than the leaders do – they are at the school all day! (Keep in mind that kids won’t always come through, and the only way they will catch the vision for inviting classmates is by watching leaders do it.)
- 3. All contact work – CONSISTENCY.** The key to inviting kids to club is getting to know them. The best way to do this is by doing consistent contact work in all the ways that we have discussed.
- 4. Lifestyle Contact Work – NO PUNCHING OUT.** The more we get better at making contact work a lifestyle rather than a duty, the easier it will be to naturally invite kids to go to YL. Seeing kids at the mall, the grocery store, downtown, or wherever and talking to them there will make it much easier to ask kids to come. Remember, there is no “punching out” for a Young Life leader!

## **Contact Work**

### *Our practical foundation*

Christ is the foundation for everything we do in life. Contact work is the PRACTICAL FOUNDATION for everything we do in Young Life. Our time, focus, and energy should reflect this.

Great contact work and awesome relationships substantially improve everything we do in Young Life. Think about the points below and consider other ways strong relationships can help our ministries to be more effective.

### **CLUB is built on relationships!**

- 1. Competition Skits** – It’s much better to have lots of kids to choose from and know the kids well if you are going to have them do crazy and messy skits!
- 2. Songs** – Let’s face it, Young Life club “musicians” usually aren’t about to sign record contracts. The main reason our club music is so successful is that kids follow their leaders – they know them well. Obviously, the more kids that are in the room, the louder and better the songs tend to be.
- 3. Talk** – Strong relationships between the speaker and audience makes a talk easier to give and to be received. Kids tend to listen more intently

when they know the speaker, and they definitely track better with the introduction stories.

- 4. Run-on** – Young Life is very proud of its ability to make folks laugh, but if we are honest, most of us couldn't make the cast of Saturday Night Live. The laughs we get are greatly increased if the room is full of kids the leaders know (and larger numbers helps here as well).
- 5. Attendance** – This has been said above, but greater numbers of kids tend to make all the elements of club better. Relationship building through contact work is the best way to increase the number of kids who attend club.

## **CAMPAIGNERS**

- 1. Attention and Respect** – Kids are more apt to listen intently if they know and respect the person talking to them.
- 2. Sharing** – Kids are FAR more likely to open up, share and grow if they are comfortable with the Campaigners leader and have a strong relationship with him or her.
- 3. Attendance** – More kids will attend Campaigners if the Campaigners leader is friends with many at the high school. Greater attendance will enable you to do more at Campaigners (e.g., break into groups, sing).

## **CAMP**

- 1. Cabin Time** – Like Campaigners, kids will be much more honest and genuine at Cabin Time if they know their leader well.
- 2. Sharing** – One-on-one time with a kid at camp will be much more productive if there is already a strong relationship in place.
- 3. Trust** – Kids may do things for the first time (e.g., ropes) and knowing their leader well will help bring about the necessary trust for new adventures.
- 4. Attendance** – The better contact work, the more kids will go to camp.

## Section II: Club

### *Why Run Club?*

Modified excerpt from John Evans, (regional director, Mississippi)

There are many good reasons to have club. If we are honest, one huge reason to do club is that it is good for us when we “walk by faith” with the Lord. Even experienced staff feel pressure from wondering whether any kids will come and whether club will be a success.

So why do I still do it? Let me try to articulate a few reasons:

- Club still works – at least in most parts of the country. At the end of the night when club is over, I’m thankful. Kids had a great time, heard about Christ and were with people who love them. I’m convinced this is as powerful as anything we say.
- Club keeps me honest. Club and numbers are not THE critical standard, but they are a gauge. They let me know we are reaching a certain group of kids. The challenge is to keep reaching beyond clubs to the different groups of kids that club doesn’t appeal to.
- As much as I hate to admit this, club forces me to deal with the right issues – issues that I might be able to avoid if I didn’t do club. Issues like being dependent, humble and prayerful.
- Club is a structure that facilitates other activities in Young Life that then attract more and/or different kids. It’s very hard to sell camp and activities without a platform.
- Club helps others understand what we are doing. We live in a programmatic world that fundamentally doesn’t understand relational ministry. They will never understand the value of contact work (incarnational ministry), which, I believe, is the real power of our ministry. Club helps people understand what we are doing.

In spite of all the above, we must be careful not to make club a ministry), which, I believe, is the real power of our ministry. Club helps people understand what we are doing.

In spite of all the above, we must be careful not to make club a sacred cow. It may not work for some teen populations, and it may need to look different in others. Let’s stay open and always pray for the courage to stop club tomorrow if God gives us a better platform for the Gospel. Till then, I’ll see you at club.

# The Purpose of Young Life Club

– Modified excerpts from Young Life Leadership I

## What is a Young Life Club?

Young Life “club” is presently the most effective setting for the proclamation of the Gospel in word and deed. Usually the meeting is held on a consistent week night in a neutral place, such as the home of one of the kids. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. A club is under the leadership of men and women who care enough for kids that each meeting has a maximum effectiveness in expressing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A club leadership team has the grand opportunity to conduct 25 or more meetings during a school year. Each meeting should be approached as an artist would look at a blank frame of canvas. Overall planning for the year, and for each meeting, is essential to any club ministry. All leaders actively involved with kids should share in the “up-front” leadership of club.

One of the greatest lacks in Christian enterprise today is prayer. The Young Life club should be a heavily “prayed for” meeting. Even during club, the leaders should cultivate the habit of praying without ceasing. This beautiful platform of expression, the Young Life club, may become one of the most powerful influences for Jesus Christ in the entire community.

## Primary Considerations

1. Club features “planned informality” or “controlled chaos.” The leaders are in charge, but the students feel it is their club. Kids sit (or stand) on the floor, and it should feel crowded. The parents (when club is at a kid’s house) are the hosts and should be within earshot of what goes on.
2. The location of club should be chosen with care. A neutral environment is essential. Thus, club would not typically be held in a church or school, but a home or other neutral and non-threatening environment. Even the home must be chosen carefully (not all kids should have club in their home).
3. The meeting should last between 45 minutes and one hour. If club is supposed to be from 8 – 9, it should begin between 8:04 and 8:10 and end close to 9 (and not after 9:10).
4. It must be exciting, fun and attractive. It should move along and not drag. Remember: “always keep them wanting more.”
5. The meeting is designed to introduce the disinterested high school crowd to Jesus Christ. It should NEVER become a clique for Christian young people; we must always guard against this as some clubs become safe Christian sanctuaries.
6. It is open to ANY kid in school. There is no such thing as membership or dues. There are obviously misconceptions of this because of the name “club,” so make sure kids and adults know.

7. Leaders must make every effort to cooperate with the school activities and to help promote school spirit. We want school, church, and civic leaders to look at Young Life as an asset to the community.
8. Special care must be taken not to conflict with the program of the local churches and to gently correct any teenagers who might consider Young Life their church.
9. Information, both printed and spoken, must be made available to parents. This may be accomplished through a prepared brochure, personal visit, phone call or Parents' Night. Printed information is especially crucial where Young Life is new in a school or area.
10. No club may exist under the name Young Life without the supervision of a Young Life staff representative. This means an adequate reporting system on a weekly basis.
11. The club usually meets on a weekly basis, the same night each week. Continually shifting the night or calling off club will seriously impair the outreach it has in a school. Some schools may have a hard time doing club certain times throughout the year, such as the spring. While it may be OK to try some activities instead of club for a short time, leaders must remember that consistency is critical to the success of club. Club is a proven and effective tool. Just because it may be hard does not mean we should stop doing it.
12. Leaders are free to experiment with new features in club just so long as the Gospel is not obscured or club does not become mere entertainment.
13. Careful records should be kept of every club. Some type of club report card should be used to gauge the success of songs, skits and activities. In addition, club cards should be filled out by the young people themselves once a year. It is imperative that the club leadership knows what kids they are ministering to. A good club survey will reveal that information.
14. Leaders must exercise care in the protection of personal property, as well as in the conduct of the young people before and after club, particularly those driving cars. Any damaged property must be replaced and proper apologies given.
15. If at all possible, clubs should not get too lopsided with girls or guys. An even split is desirable. Each leader must be conscious of this and pray and work hard to keep the balance. (Guys are often more difficult to get to club.)
16. Refreshments in club are discouraged except on special nights.
17. The message is the climax of club. All that is done earlier should prepare the way for the verbal presentation of Jesus Christ.

# Atmosphere of Club

– Modified excerpts from Young Life Leadership I

- Should be relaxed and enjoyable, but also exciting and fun.
- Picture Christ's love flowing from you to each kid.
- Let them know you appreciate being with them.
- Bring them together. Help them to feel that it is their club. If appropriate, let them participate.
  - Have kids help lead songs. (They should be carefully coached first.)
  - Have them clap, raise hands and answer questions.
  - Have them yell for their class or team.
  - Have kids help you pass out things, give announcements and participate in run-ons and skits.
  - At certain times in the year, you may want to ask kids to share their faith by leading in prayer or giving the message (usually by giving their testimonies).
- Having kids participate should not be done at the expense of club's excellence. Do not use kids who are not properly coached, spiritually mature, or otherwise ready for whatever role you plan to use kids in.
- Keep things moving during club. Don't lose momentum. Always try to predict where things could get bogged down and act to prevent this. For example, if there is an extra-messy skit planned, have a few Campaigners kids ready to help clean it up so music can continue.
- Every leader, when not up front, should sit in the middle of a group of kids and give rapt attention to those upfront. This attitude will "catch" on with the kids around the leader. Campaigners kids should also be coached in this regard.

The K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) can help with EVERY ASPECT of club! Sometimes at club we try too hard and overcomplicate things. It's great to be creative and innovative, but always remember the great KISS principle!

## Roles at Club

### **LEADERS: How do we pick roles?**

1. Gifts
2. How many kids you know, how well you know them and whether your kids are at club.
  - We care about two primary things (that balance each other out): Excellence in club, and leaders being up front who have earned the right to be heard with the kids in the room.

- Not feeling like your gifts are being used? Tell someone!
- If you ever feel like you will never get to know kids unless you get up front more at club ... you missed the boat! Don't worry, we will come back and pick you up. We will do some setting up at club, but we aren't going to succeed unless we go get tons of new kids. Go get them – be fishers of kids! (A good rule of thumb: Club should not be the primary place you meet kids.)

**KIDS – Using kids up front at club:**

1. Do it – It is key to consistently have kids involved in the club; this is important for genuine ownership.
2. Do it carefully – Not every kid should be up front in every role. Be smart and talk to other leaders. Develop reasonable principles for using kids in key roles. (For example, you might decide it is good to use kids who are walking in their faith or kids who have no faith, but avoid putting kids up front in leadership roles who are diehard Campaigners kids but living in sin.)

**Campaigners kid roles at club:**

1. Support the leaders in every way.
2. Pray before and during club.
3. Support what is going on up front – don't talk at the wrong time (clap and sing during songs, laugh during humor, and listen during the talk).
4. Greet people before club.
5. Offer rides.
6. Be friendly to EVERYONE there!

## Campaigners' Role at Club: Kids Bringing Kids

<p><b>CAMPAIGNERS AT THEIR BEST ...</b> Campaigners (and Young Life) at its best is when high school kids love other high school kids and share their faith with them in a real and powerful way.</p> <p>Non-exhaustive list of ways high school kids might do this:</p>	<p><b>SEEING RESULTS AT CLUB ...</b> The list on the left will flow into our clubs if kids are so passionate about their friends hearing the Gospel that they fill their cars every week with classmates to make sure they are at club!</p>
<p>Reaching out to other kids at school (being nice, not doing something others are doing);</p>	<p>When you reach out to someone, it is nice to hang out with them as well – what better venue than Young Life club!</p>

Praying for their high school friends (we should be praying for people, including Campaigners' peers, at Campaigners).	Answered prayers (Campaigners kids will see people go to club and camp from their yes, no, maybe lists) – seeing God work and answering prayers is profound for young believers!
Sharing their faith (being available, answering the question of “Why are you so happy/content?”); and	Most kids need help sharing their faith – it is easy to say, “What did you think about that talk?”
Inviting others (to club, camp, and other Young Life or Christian events).	PICK THEM UP! Invitations are much more effective if followed by, “I’ll pick you up at 7:45. No seriously, be ready because I’m coming.” This is incredibly true for non-driving kids!

The kids who need to be at club the most are the very same kids who won't come unless somebody picks them up!

**A. BEWARE OF MIXED-UP PRIORITIES!**

- Kids' involvement at club – is a GOOD thing.
- Kids bringing other kids to club – is a GREAT thing!!!!

**A. DON'T GET IN THE WAY!**

Gut check time ... Is it possible WE sometimes do more harm than good? What message are we sending to kids when we put them up front in a prominent leadership way if they aren't inviting AND bringing their friends (or kids in lower grades who want to be their friend!)? What message are we sending to the younger Campaigners?

- List some negatives that could come from kids being up front in prominent leadership roles if they don't bring others with them.

**B. FIXING/PREVENTING THE PROBLEM**

1. Share vision with kids (we do this already ... hopefully) about bringing their friends and bringing others in the school.
2. Tough conversations. For example, say “Jimmy, if you are going to help at club, we need to get done at 7:30 so you can go pick people up for club.” Jimmy responds, “I’m not picking anyone up.” You look at Jimmy with concerned love and reply, “Why not?” Share vision.

3. Practical things to do:
  - a) Use kids in the right roles (many kids won't have time for high preparation roles).
  - b) Make sure kids have time to help (make sure you ask about tests, sports, family obligations).
  - c) Establish firm traditions (meet at 6:45 to practice and always finish at 7:40 so there is time to go get people).
  - d) Lead by example! Are you picking up kids (or having kids picked up) for club?

## Thoughts About Club

- Modified excerpts from the Young Life website

### Core Concepts ...

- APPRECIATE KIDS – Don't get caught up worrying about how well club is going or which kids are not there so much that you fail to appreciate and love the kids in the room.
- EXCELLENCE – Everything in Young Life should be done with excellence. We are representing Christ (in addition to ourselves and the ministry). This means executing solid music, having decent amplified sound and good overheads or powerpoint. PLANNING is essential to this as well!
- HUMOR – Club should be fun AND funny! If kids aren't laughing at Young Life, we did something wrong!
- OWNERSHIP – Always look for ways to have the kids and leaders OWN the club.
- UNITY – One of the neatest things about Young Life club is that it is one of the only ways to get some of the most diverse groups of kids (grade, sports, backgrounds) in one room for one purpose ... a Young Life club! Your club should always strive to unify the group (through laughter, songs, skits, activities).

### Considerations ...

- Mixing up the order is OK, even good, but never frustrate the purpose of club. Another way to mix things up is to throw in a theme club once a year or once a semester. Be careful not to make new kids feel left out and don't overdo theme clubs!
- Look back at past club records and reports; if you don't have any, start making them for the future. This helps you learn and improve from mistakes.
- It is very important to get Campaigners kids and any leaders outside before club. One way to accomplish this is by going outside YOURSELF. In a perfect world, every leader except one on the sound would be outside hanging out with people beforehand. Leaders should have

kids coming whom they want and need to be with! (Kids who are there solely because of YOU). If you give kids a ride, which is great, it can complicate preparing for club. Consider getting to club at 6:30, then leaving at 7:30 to give rides.

- Pray before club and be in prayer throughout.
- Love each other and NEVER criticize another in front of kids.
- Pray before club and be in prayer throughout.
- If stuff is going wrong, just have fun with it. NEVER say “this is going wrong ...” That is negative. They can tell if it’s going wrong, but they feel awkward unless you just relax and have fun with it.

## Ingredients of Young Life Club

Club at its essence is simply a forum to verbally present the Gospel to a group of kids in a comfortable and fun environment. Anything that achieves that can be “club.” Over the years, Young Life has developed certain “ingredients” that have been used in a traditional Young Life club. While only the Gospel presentation is sacred, Leaders should carefully consider eliminating any of the other ingredients. There are many reasons these ingredients have resulted in tremendous ministry experiences over the years. Always understand WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO. Everything has a purpose, and the primary purpose is always the same – Christ.

### 1. Music/Singing

This has particular value in getting the young people doing something together and in preparing them for the message. Good singing can be a tremendous asset to the meeting’s atmosphere and effectiveness.

### 2. Competition Skits/Games

This is not just a skit thrown into the program, but rather an important ingredient for breaking down barriers and making high schoolers laugh and relax in a happy setting.

### 3. Announcements

These are mainly used to break the stride of the meeting and cover any future plans for the club. Camp promotion may often be best done at this time. Often announcements are a staging point for the interrupter or run-on.

### 4. Interrupter/Run-On

Like the skit, this also breaks down barriers with humor. It is also a good way to sell camp in a creative way and involves kids and leaders.

### 5. The Message – THE CLUB TALK

The most important part of any Young Life club is when the leader has the opportunity to speak about Jesus Christ to young people who do not know Him. As one man of God said long ago: “Give them something to believe so the Holy Spirit can do His work.”

# A. Music at Club

– Modified excerpts from Leadership I

There is something special about music. All cultures worship some type of god, all cultures have their own spoken and written language, and all cultures have their own music. Music relates to almost all kids, but athletics, motorcycles, cheerleading, and school plays relate to only a few. It is no surprise, then, that one of the tools we use in relational ministry is music.

As long as Young Life clubs devote about half the time to singing, we need to be sharp in this department. Therefore, plan and practice your music prayerfully so it is not merely a preliminary to get “over with” so the message can be given.

## 1. Purpose: Why have music in club?

- It unifies a group.
- It is enjoyable.
- It sets a mood.
- It entertains.
- It disarms, breaks down barriers.
- It presents a message – some kids open their lives to Christ through the message of a song.
- It creates involvement on the part of kids.
- It can identify with where kids are.

**REMEMBER: The overall musical effort should contribute to the expression of the Gospel.**

## 2. Preparation

Since half the club is usually devoted to music, we should work to make it quality. Preparation is the key. Plan the songs that will be sung, in what key, how to start, how to end. Can the musicians play the song? Get there early enough to tune up and practice. Common sense dictates the necessity to “be ready” with the music.

## 3. Choice of Songs

- Music must be singable. A good club song is one that has an easy melody for a group to pick up on.
- Songs must be value neutral to positive. Many songs make a strong value or morality statement, so a good Young Life leader should always be aware of what songs are saying to kids. Young Life seeks to present Christ to young people in everything it does, including music. Therefore, if the message of a song is negative and opposite to the message of Christ, it cannot be used. Some songs, especially oldies,

tend to be neutral and are fine to use. Other songs can be good to use at club, even if the theme is secular (themes such as loneliness or need for love can set up a talk).

- Use a good variety. Doing the same songs over and over is a negative for club singing. Expand the repertoire. Keep a list of songs each week so you will know which songs are repeated too often or not often enough. Use of the same songs creates a clique and may alienate newcomers. After you use a song, let it sit for three to five weeks before bringing it back.
- Be careful about using current music. One of the main reasons Young Life clubs use oldies is that they tend to be uncontroversial. Music is one of the main things that high school kids identify themselves with. By using popular music, we may be inadvertently choosing sides with groups of kids. Nonetheless, a healthy mixture of older and newer songs is good for club.
- Start on a lively note, end with more emphasis on harmony, unity, and slow the tempo down to prepare for a message. It is usually wise not to open club with a new song. Open with something that will get the ball rolling immediately. The same is true after a break – come back with something they know to pull the crowd back together.

There is a broad range of opinion on songs that have negative input for a club. You need to think through your own philosophy. Some leaders refuse to sing “worship songs” because the kids in club are not all Christians. Other leaders love to sing songs to different tunes, while others feel this belittles the song (i.e., “Amazing Grace” to “House of the Rising Sun”).

Some leaders feel silliness should be confined to non-spiritual subjects. Each area or club leadership team must search out his own attitude and philosophy regarding choice of songs.

#### **4. Teaching New Songs**

Do not be afraid to teach new songs! Teaching new songs will add variety to the music ministry. However, it can also be a disaster. Make sure in advance that the leader knows the new song well. With guitars, someone with a strong voice can sing it through once. Give an extra measure of practice with musicians for new songs.

Keep an ear peeled for possible new material. But remember, doing too many new songs on any given night can hinder the tempo of a club. One new song a week may be healthy. Also, do not teach a new song just before the message. It disrupts the “spirit” of the meeting at that time.

#### **5. Song Leading**

It is certainly possible to have too many people up front, but this is a great area to get leaders and kids participating up front. Beware of “performance” orientation. Club music should support the overall club purpose, not an

individual who wants to be up front. This applies to both leaders and kids. If you currently have this problem, someone needs to take this person aside and explain the purposes of music in club. Often an individual who is an excellent musician and performer is not a good club song leader.

### **Song Leading Techniques**

In the old days, with a piano carrying the melody, you could lead songs even if you could not carry a tune. Enthusiasm and a good downbeat would ensure at least moderate success. When using guitars, however, the song leader must lead with a strong voice since nothing is carrying the melody. You must learn to be bold with the voice – particularly at the beginning of songs. Also, if you cannot carry a tune, have one of your guitar players use his voice to get the song started.

Enthusiasm and proper preparation will cover a multitude of sins. No preparation is always a quick way to failure. Give a strong downbeat so musicians and kids begin together.

### **Footnote to the Non-Musical Person**

“His gifts unto men were varied ... “ (Ephesians 4). Not every Young Life leader has to be a male, athletic, good-looking, funny, musically talented, spiritual giant. Music may just not be your thing. But you can still contribute with enthusiasm.

Do not be too quick to sell yourself short. There are a lot of good song leaders around who have little musical talent – but they compensate with good preparation and enthusiasm. However, keep learning yourself – from good musicians. You can improve!

## **B. Competition Skits/Games**

These are called “games” on the Young Life website (sometimes called “Minutes”).

Leaders must make certain skits are appropriate, in good taste and the proper length. These games, skits, or minutes should not dominate club; rather, they are used to mix things up, involve kids and loosen up the group. The whole purpose is to have fun. The Young Life website has many great ideas and resources.

### **Good Skits:**

1. Games/skits should do AT LEAST one of three things (if you don't do at least one of these, your skit will fizzle):
  - a. Wow kids (gross skits are good for this).
  - b. Be very funny.
  - c. Be a real competition with a real winner that is fun and entertaining to watch.

2. Are short – five to seven minutes.
3. Are never crude, in poor taste, or destructive to property.
4. Seldom make any reference to the spiritual aspect of club.
5. Are peppy or funny, and in this way help break down barriers that kids have regarding religious meetings as “stuffy.”
6. Don’t involve the same kids every week but involve kids who need and can handle up-front exposure.
7. Avoid involving kids who have never been to club before. (Even if you think they’d be great and you know them, it is wise to wait one week before using any new kid!)
8. Should never be used to make fun of kids or tear them down in any way (if a kid loses a competition, be sure to lift him or her up as well in front of the group).

#### Important reminders:

- After club, at McDonalds or wherever, grab the kids involved individually and thank them for going up front.
- If the skit starts to stink, just laugh and have fun with it. Kids usually do not notice how badly things are going unless we bring attention to it.
- For messy skits, have tarps and sheets ready to cover the floor, and extra T-shirts for the kids.
- Girl leaders should help messy girls get cleaned up and guy leaders help guys.

#### **ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL COMPETITION SKIT:**

##### **1. PREPARATION – Prepare in advance**

- a. Materials should be ready (but hidden) at the start of club.
- b. Pick kids out before club begins (and keep records!).
- c. Purchase all (or at least most) of the materials for the entire semester at one time. (This saves time and energy!)
- d. Line up kids and leaders to help with skit setup/breakdown.

##### **2. SELL – Always have a sell**

- a. Competition skit sells can be witty and funny, but should be very short and to the point.
  - i. Characters are fine, but remember this isn’t the run-on (although these can be merged successfully from time to time).
  - ii. Uniforms are great as well.
- b. The sell that is always “on the table” – Jock Jams, ref shirts, and high fives. Don’t kill yourselves worrying about a perfect or hilarious sell!
- c. Get key kids to help with the sell every once in a while (have a kid run out with the ref shirt on, giving high fives, and help explain it).

But always have at least one experienced leader running the show to ensure quality.

### **3. RUNNING THE SKIT: Explain it and transition smoothly**

- a. One skit seller should loudly and clearly explain the skit to the crowd, while the other seller explains details to the participants AND gets them ready. This sounds simple but is most often butchered. The person explaining should do it before the skit starts and commentate during the skit.
- b. If necessary, get help from additional leaders (prepare them before club) to help run the skit. (For example, if the skit is tough and requires a lot of assistance, you may want a third leader on the microphone commentating.)
- c. No dead time – It should go from skit sell into music, to clearly explaining the skit, to the actual skit without any substantial pause in between. This is only possible if you are PREPARED and USE HELP from other leaders.
- d. Announce the winner! End skits with clarity. Get the crowd to cheer for the winner. Then, get everyone to cheer loudly for all participants. (These people just got peanut butter all over their faces. Let's give them a huge hand!)

## **C. Announcements**

### *Who, What, and When?*

#### **1. WHO GIVES ANNOUNCEMENTS?**

This is a great opportunity to involve leaders. Team leaders must be aware of the need to spread out the leadership responsibilities to the others on the team. Kids should understand that this isn't a "one man show."

- Whoever makes the announcements should plan them so they are clear, brief, and attractive.

#### **2. WHAT ARE SOME TYPICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS?**

- Camp promotion or information.
- Club meeting place for next week.
- Filling out club cards.
- Announce special events.
- Contest results.
- Introduce new leaders from time to time.

### The Use of Humor During Announcements

Announcements can be used as a “staging point” for humor (run-ons or interrupters) and often fake announcements can be fun. However, at some point during club, a leader must get up and say real announcements, even if the program/humor announcements were real (because in theory kids are laughing at the humor rather than listening to the content).

### 3. WHEN ARE ANNOUNCEMENTS GIVEN?

At any point during club, but especially when a break is needed (for example, to break up three to four songs in a row).

## D. Run-Ons and Interrupters

*What is the difference?*

- **Run-Ons** = Reoccurring characters with some type of camp sell plot (usually lasts four to seven consecutive clubs). This is similar to what you see at weekend and summer camps.
- **Interrupters** = Any humor that “interrupts” club that isn’t a run-on. They can be top ten lists, a joke (Random Young Life Humor Break), a funny video, or anything completely random! Interrupters can often be reoccurring, but don’t have to be every week (such as Deep Thoughts or Top Ten lists).

### Why Do We Do Them?

1. Breaks up the routine of club.
2. Sells Fall Weekend or Summer Camp.
3. Gets kids and leaders involved in a positive way in front of kids.
4. Humor – Not all kids like to sing songs in a group (believe it or not); however, most kids love a good laugh. We should be hilarious to kids and give them a reason to come back.

### Who Does Them?

1. Leaders should not overemphasize being in the funny skits; it should be spread around among multiple leaders who (1) Have relationships with the kids at club and thus need to be set up, and (2) Have the talent and ability to make a run-on skit or interrupter excellent. These two are to be in balance.
  - Sometimes, leaders who don’t know many kids can be set up with kids by participating in a run-on (for example, a new leader who is going on a camp trip).

2. Sometimes leaders have to be naturally funny or talented to pull off a certain character; other times, it is easy to have a great part in a run-on but not do too much (or say anything).

## *Really Running a Run-on Right*

### **Run-On Purpose: Don't forget these!**

1. **Humor** – Breaks down walls by getting kids to laugh, drawing them into the club, and setting up the verbal Gospel presentation.
2. **Camp Sell** – A good way to keep camp in front of kids without just harping on it during announcements or a video.
3. **Leader and Kid Set Up** – Run-ons are a great time to get leaders up front who have kids in the audience. They can also be a great way to get the right kind of kids up front.

### **Run-On Requirements**

1. **Entrance/Exit Music.** All characters should have intro/exit music that are played EVERY time they enter or exit. (A good sound person is important for good transitions and to keep the club moving.)
2. **Tag-lines.** All characters should have at least one good “tag-line” (this is a line repeated at the same time every week that the audiences learns).
  - a. Tag lines are often used when the character introduces himself or herself, but it should probably be a little more than simply saying your name.
  - b. Body movements (intro dance, for example) along with the tag-lines are also impressive and funny and should be the same every week. This means practice!
3. **Camp Sell.** Run-ons must incorporate camp sell (fall weekend or summer).
  - a. This is obvious, yet easily forgotten.
  - b. Think of creative ways to really sell camp, rather than just mentioning it.
4. **Length.** Don't make run-ons too long. A typical run-on lasts just a few minutes. It might be a little longer if the characters bring kids up front, but beware of the overly lengthy run-on!

**Young Life concept to remember: “Always keep them wanting more.”**

## Thoughts about Club Humor ...

### Principles

- **People tend to over-program.** The key to a good club is not a perfect run-on or joke, but a comfortable feel that nonverbally proclaims the love of Christ.
- **Who is our target audience?** The far out, cynical kids in the back. Never forget this! If you look around and the room is full of Campaigners kids and other kids, do more effective contact work!
- **Godly humor as opposed to crass or harmful humor** – make kids out to be heroes and pick the right kids. Remember, Young Life leaders are adults AND leaders.
- **Use kids whenever possible.** This is a big deal when it comes to giving kids ownership; remember, it should feel like their club.
- **Create memories.** Talk to kids about the skit they were in at McDonalds after club or later in the week at the school.
- **Be willing to fail.** If you run a Young Life club, you will fail! Some things you do won't work and some things will. Just get used to that, keep perspective, and remember that God is in control!

### Practicals

- **Have back-up skits and materials.** Murphy's Law (everything that can go wrong will go wrong) is often proven at Young Life clubs, so be ready!
- **Know the beginning and the end.** Lame entrances and unclear endings cause great skits to just be OK (or worse).
- **Inside humor is good.** Let them know that you know what's going on in their lives and their school (inside humor that all the kids would get, NOT INSIDE Young Life HUMOR that only regulars would get!).
- **PRACTICE.** So simple, yet so important.
- **Have a coached audience** – coach Campaigners – they can make heroes of those in skits (cheering, chanting).
- **Stay in character.** This just makes funny things funnier.
- **Have fun!** This is HUGE. Regardless of what goes wrong, if the people up front have fun, then the audience will have fun.

## E. The Club Talk

### A. Helpful Guidelines

Strengthen your delivery by adhering to these guidelines.

1. Show them you are excited for them to hear this message; speak with enthusiasm and passion. Thank them at the start for the chance to share with them.
2. Talk in terms of their interests. Open with a question or story that draws them in. Show your audience you understand them.

3. Keep it short and to the point. Usually 10-20 minutes.
4. Answer the question, "So what?" Show them how this message relates to them. Leave them with a specific challenge or something to think about regarding how they should act upon this message. Jim Rayburn challenged his leaders to always give kids something to believe and something to do.
5. With the Bible open, make the story come alive. Put the audience in the story and let them experience Jesus.
6. Talk to your audience, not at them. If you know your talk well, you can even focus on individuals in the room as you speak.
7. Be creative rather than set in a predictable routine. Creativity holds attention.
  - Talk in the first person as a Bible character; role play.
  - Weave music or movie clips into your talk.
  - Interview someone.
  - Use props as illustrations, when appropriate. These are more memorable than verbal alone.
  - Have a message with a question and answer time, or have a panel discussion on a topic that interests your teenagers (i.e., What does God think about drinking or sex?).

**Remember:** Kids may come to Young Life because of the skits or the girl/guy ratio, but the message you give each week is what their hearts come to hear. The talk is not to be taken lightly or considered "just part of club." You are opening the Word of God, and it needs to be handled with respect and a healthy fear (James 3:1). This might also be the first and only time a kid hears the Gospel – make sure it is worthy of our Father.

## **B. Choosing Your Talk**

Never pick your talk topic the day of club. It should be completely prepared at least one day in advance. The earlier it's prepared the better. Below are some steps to take for preparing your talk (not the organizational order of your talk).

1. **Pray.** Pray for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in your life and in theirs. Pray about what God will have you share.
2. **Main Point.** Decide the one thing you want to share with kids. Write down this main idea of your talk before you prepare anything. Know it forward and backward. If you botch everything else, what is the one thing you want kids to remember?
3. **Body.** The body represents the Scripture(s) that illustrates the thesis. Within the body, you need to make a social application by looking for parallels in kids' lives.

**Scripture** – Choose the Scripture passage to present and know it inside and out. Don't try to make it say what you want it to; let God's Word speak to you (Hebrews 4:12). Read it several times and observe what the text is saying. Take notes on what you see, put yourself in the story and use all your senses. Personal experience of the Scripture helps you communicate with passion!

- Be accurate with the Word. Don't take liberties with Scripture just to be entertaining or to fit your point.
- Scripture comes first, not the talk. The talk is based on Scripture, not the Scripture crammed in to fit the talk.

**4. Introduction.** Come up with your introduction (concrete, often personal and always attention-grabbing).

**Illustration** – Choose a relevant illustration that supports your conclusion. Personal illustrations help kids get to know you. But be aware of overusing illustrations to the point of lifting up ourselves rather than God. The illustration should be a tool to get into the Scripture in order to highlight the thesis.

**5. Final Checklist.** When you have prepared your talk, use these questions as a checklist to ensure that you have fully developed your message.

- What's my one main point? (Have this memorized.)
- What's the "good news" in this for a high school kid?
- Big Deal/So What? (Why should a kid really know this?)
- What have I revealed about myself?
- What cultural issues have I addressed? (How have I applied the message to their lives?)
- What action have I challenged kids to take?
- How do I get kids' attention and get into my topic? (This is your introduction.)

## C. The Organization and Delivery of a Club Talk

### 1. INTRODUCTION (1-4 minutes)

- a. Two Purposes:
  - i. Gets audience's attention.
  - ii. Sets up the talk/Relates to main point.
- b. What Can It Be?
  - i. Funny story (OK if it gets their attention and makes them laugh, BETTER if it relates to the talk, and BEST if it relates to the main point).
  - ii. Interesting/engaging story (should relate to the talk – even better if it relates to the main point).
  - iii. Movie clip (should relate well to the main point).
  - iv. Physical Illustration/Props (can be used alongside other techniques or by itself).
  - v. Whatever you want it to be!

## 2. TRANSITION 1 (10-20 seconds)

- a. **Purpose** – To get you quickly and comfortably from the Introduction to the most important part of your talk – telling kids about Jesus Christ!
- b. **Memorize Transition Sentence (or two).** (“That crazy story reminds me of an event/account in Scripture that I want to share with you ... it’s in Luke ... Listen up.”) (“That may sound like a pretty amazing thing I did, but it is nothing compared to what Jesus did here ... I want to share something with you from the Bible that is way more impressive ... ”)
  - Avoid saying “story from the Bible” – that sounds like a fairy tale. Replace “story” with “account” or “event” or something along these lines. Don’t beat yourself up if you slip though, it isn’t a big deal.
- c. **“KISS” (Keep It Simple Stupid).** Transitions do not need to be so hard. Keep them simple and direct, and simply tell them you are moving on to the next part of your talk.
- d. **The Art of Pausing.** Use a confident pause, and calmly get a drink or just pick up your Bible (this is by itself a transition!) – just stare back at the kids as you drink your water and pick up your Bible. Remember, you are representing Jesus – so be confident in that!

## 3. SCRIPTURE (1-3 minutes)

- a. **Purpose** – Don’t ever give a club talk without Scripture!
- b. **Read Scripture** – The early church essentially consisted of people speaking verbatim from what later became the New Testament. If all we did was read Scripture, we’d be okay!
  - i. Read with feeling! This means you practice what you are going to read.
  - ii. Use brief illustrations while you read. Mark them in your Bible AND on your note card. A typical piece of Scripture might have three to five brief illustrations.
- c. **What Translation?** You can use whatever READABLE and theologically sound translation or commentary you want (*NIV, Phillips, The Message*, others) or even use wording from a few to make it even more understandable. Obviously, don’t walk up there with more than one Bible.
  - i. Commentaries vs. Translations – The Message and the J.B. Phillips versions are technically commentaries and not translations. Read through a real translation before using these to make sure the language reflects the meaning of the translation. That said, these versions of the New Testament are tremendous tools for any Young Life speaker.
  - ii. Do NOT ever change the intended meaning. Since few of us write and speak in ancient Hebrew and Greek, we have some flexibility with what words we can use. Never sacrifice the biblical meaning to fit YOUR point – change your point instead! (That said, it is certainly

possible for different people to read certain aspects of Scripture slightly differently – sometimes God may have multiple meanings in mind!)

#### 4. BRING SCRIPTURE TO LIFE (1-2 minutes)

- a. **Purpose** – People learn through repetition, so talk about what you just read.
- b. **Repeat Key Scripture in Your Own Words.** Yes the Scripture is that important – repeating it in your own words is important. You may not repeat every part, but the most important points should be said again. Remember, kids (and adults) have limited attention spans and focus capabilities.
- c. **Expand Your Illustrations.** Maybe if you were talking about a paralytic you added “Wow, that would be a rough life” when you first read through the Scripture. Now, you really bring that point to life (bottom rung of society, people thought it was your fault you had a disability, begging, comparing it to someone today, more thoughts). Every talk has its own points where illustrations can be expanded – discover these on your own AND by asking for input from experienced speakers.

#### 5. TRANSITION 2 (10-20 seconds)

- a. **Purpose** – To comfortably move from the easier part of the talk (reading and retelling) to making substantive points.
- b. **Memorize Transition Sentence** – This can be an awkward part where you lose your train of thought. Having the sentence or two to get you to the next phase of your talk is critical to doing this with ease.

#### 6. MAIN POINT AND SUB-POINTS (3-5 minutes)

- a. **“The Main Thing”** – Every talk should have one, clear main point. If you don’t have this, your talk has failed.
- b. **Sub-points** – Every talk should have one to three sub-points. Good sub-points are the difference between a mediocre talk and an excellent talk. Sometimes they challenge different groups of people in the room (Christian kids, non-Christian, seekers, apathetic kids). Sometimes they are just great points that come out of the Scripture (and thus would be given naturally as part of above sections three and four).
- c. **Apply Scripture to life** – The main point and the sub-points take the Scripture and apply it to kids’ lives. Scripture is full of amazing accounts about Jesus, but what does that mean for the kids in the room?
- d. **Bring It!** Don’t be afraid to use your emotions and “preach it” or “bring it” during a club talk. There should be a point you want to make with all your God-given passion – well, make it! Maybe it is challenging kids to consider whether what they are filling their lives with is really

working, or something from your personal testimony that they can relate to. Whatever it is, do it with passion and clarity.

## 7. REPEAT MAIN POINT (30 seconds)

**Leave Them With One thought to really focus on.** “If you catch any one thing tonight, catch this ...” “Everyone listen to this – I want you to get it.” “When you are brushing your teeth tonight or lying in your bed, think about this ...”

## 8. CONCLUSION (30 seconds to a minute)

**a. End It.** Too often, people do not know when or how to end. Don't let a talk drag and end with rambling. Once you repeated your main point, your talk is over, so end it. If you struggle with this, that is normal. You should memorize your conclusion line, because it is similar to a transition. Remember “KISS” – don't make your life complicated, just say, “Thanks for listening to me tonight guys; I am going to close in a quick prayer. I'll see you at McDonald's.”

**b. Closing With Prayer** – This is usually a good idea, especially for talks later on in the semester. It teaches kids how to pray (simply talk to God) and gives you one last chance to repeat your main point (you pray that they all sincerely consider whatever the main point is).

### What is the appropriate LENGTH of a club talk?

Talks should typically be 10-15 minutes in length. Introductory talks in the beginning of the semester should generally be shorter and simpler, while talks toward the end are deeper and can be lengthier (the cross talk can be about 20 minutes). A good range is 10-15, but a nine to 16-minute talk is probably fine.

**c. Closing Remarks/Repeating Key Announcements.** This is the least important point here, but worth a mention.

- i. Before praying you can repeat important announcements. (“I really want to encourage all of you to go to Fall Weekend ...”)
- ii. After you pray, and as the music is kicking in, you can still talk. (“We have camp flyers at the door. Make sure you get one!” Or, “See you at McDonalds!”) – You may be on the microphone for these.

## CLUB TALKS SIMPLIFIED:

Here is all you need to do when you ORGANIZE and DELIVER a club talk:

- (1) Introduction Illustration
- (2) Transition
- (3) Read Scripture
- (4) Bring Scripture to Life (talk about what you just read)

- (5) Transition
- (6) Make Your Points
- (7) Make Your Main Point Again
- (8) Conclusion Sentence

#### **D. Young Life's "Gospel Progression"**

Young Life club talks follow a "Gospel Progression" (or sequence of messages) that has been a proven way to communicate the crux of the Gospel to a diverse group of kids.

The progression is gone through four times per year: fall semester, fall weekend, spring semester, and summer camp. These four opportunities to verbally proclaim the Gospel differ widely in many respects, especially number of talks (and thus content). However, the basic progression and bottom line remain the same – God's plan for mankind is summed up in Jesus' ministry on earth and work on the cross.

#### **THE PROGRESSION**

- **Introduction to Club:** What is Young Life? What will we be doing at club? What will we be talking about? Why?
- **God's Character/Creation:** Is there a God? If there is a God, what is He like? Does He care about us?
- **The Person of Jesus Christ:** The claims and credentials of Jesus. Who is Jesus? What did He do? What kind of person was He?
- **Human Need/Sin:** Do we all have a need in our hearts for God? What is sin? How does sin affect relationships between us and God? Between us and each other? Between us and ourselves?
- **The Work of Christ:** (cross and resurrection) What is the meaning of what Jesus did by dying on the cross? How did this resolve the problem of sin? How does this affect our possible relationship with God? Why is it important that Jesus rose from the dead?
- **Appropriation:** Why should we be committed to Jesus Christ? What does such commitment involve?
- **The Christian Life:** What is it like to be in a relationship with Christ? What are the implications of our faith in a hurting world?

The above progression is gone through in detail four times/year, but some semesters and fall weekend will not be able to fit the some of the content in detail.

Much of what we do in Young Life is subjective and up to individual leaders and teams. However, the basic concept of this Gospel Progression IS how the message sequence is done at Young Life camp and club! (Exception: one-on-ones during the year)

#### **Why All Leaders Must Know the Progression**

It is vital that ALL leaders fully know and understand the Gospel Progression (as used in Young Life) so that leaders are ready to:

### **1. Plan club talks effectively.**

- You should have a very good idea of what your club talk will be about based solely on when you are speaking!

### **2. Explain and defend Young Life's method.**

- Unfortunately in this world, Christians don't always see eye to eye. This is a shame, and as confident as we are in our methods, we must handle criticism with grace and confidence. And we should remember not to criticize other parts of the Christian body!
- WHO MIGHT YOU HEAR IT FROM? Church kids, other ministries.

### **3. Help us be effective leaders at camp.**

- Speakers are not perfect – sometimes the Progression will need to be driven forward by YOU in cabin times! Even if the speaker is great, kids are wildly imperfect listeners – be prepared to restate and discuss every club talk!

## **Biblical Reasons for the Young Life Progression**

1. Accommodation Principles – 1 Corinthians 9
2. Peter and Paul (laying a foundation)
  - Peter's club talk – Acts 2
  - Paul's "Men of Athens" address – Acts 17
3. The Gospels themselves!
  - All four gospels go through a progression not unlike what we do at Young Life!

### Example Schedule from Leadership I and II

Oct. 5 Life to the Full, Colossians 1:15-19  
Oct. 12 Bible as the Basis, 2 Timothy 3:16-17  
Oct. 19 Person of Christ – Recognizing Him, John 5  
Oct. 26 Person of Christ – Came to Provide, Mark 8  
Nov. 2 Person of Christ – Came to Heal, John 9  
Nov. 9 Person of Christ – Came to Serve, John 13:1-17  
Nov. 16 Sin – People's Need, Mark 10  
Nov. 23 Cross – Christ's Work, John 3:16  
Nov. 30 Commitment, John 20:24-31  
Dec. 7 Kid Testimony

## **E. The High Call of Speaking at Club**

1. When speaking at club (or leading Campaigners), we are TEACHERS of the Gospel!

"Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1).

2. This is very important – what can we do to demonstrate we take this privilege seriously?
3. EVERY leader is put in a position to:
  - Give feedback to the speaker (before and after club).
  - Explain talks to kids (after club, at camp, other times).
  - Someday give a talk (it comes sooner than you think!).

## **F. Important Club Talk Reminders**

- REREAD THIS TRAINING PACKET!
- Answer the question, “So What?” Kids are going to be thinking, why does this matter to me? We need to answer that question! Apply it directly to their lives. If it doesn’t matter directly to them, why should they care?
- Make the story come alive. You are going to sound like a much better speaker if you are enthusiastic (Think about whose club talks you received the most out of – what was so good about that person’s club talks?) Being enthusiastic isn’t about being overly happy or crazy, but use your voice and pauses to really emphasize parts of the story or points you are trying to get across.
- We NEED to write out our club talks. Eventually, you can write your points on an index card, but you need to have something to refer to because it is inevitable that you will lose your train of thought or place. Email it to your team leader and area director five days before giving your talk so you have the content finished and can focus on delivery.
- We are NOT giving a speech, we are talking to our friends. Avoid “talking down” to high school students.
- Give your talk to an experienced club speaker – or if none are available, an experienced speaker (such as a pastor or teacher).
- Write practice talks! Everyone should have one person and one need talk on file!
- Use the Young Life website and other resources.

Contact work helps with many aspects of Campaigners and camp too!

### **CAMPAIGNERS**

1. Attention
2. Sharing
3. Respect
4. Attendance

### **CAMP**

1. Cabin Time
2. Sharing
3. Trust
4. Attendance

# The First Young Life Club

During the 1938-39 school year, Jim decided to take a part-time job with a Gainesville, Texas church. Jim was the assistant pastor in charge of youth work; Clyde Kennedy, a minister with progressive ideas, was his boss.

Together the two men hashed out a novel idea – that Jim would work with unchurched kids exclusively instead of those who already attended. Nothing suited Jim better than this approach. Experiences in the Southwest had taught him that most high school kids avoid church if at all possible. Besides, Jim wasn't fond of such titles as 'minister,' 'youth worker,' or 'pastor,' and he loathed black robes, clerical collars and religious garb.

Armed with a soft spot in his heart for kids, a burning love affair with God, and a salary of five dollars a week, Jim headed for the local high school. Little did anyone suspect how far reaching his efforts would be.

Jim studied every available book on youth ministries, yet failed to run across anything with which he agreed. Further searching led to a lady who was also working with high school students; she called her group the "Miracle Book Club." As the kids didn't seem to mind the name, Jim adopted it for his group too. At first, progress was slow and results were disappointing. Meeting once a week after school in an empty classroom, Jim managed to interest 11 kids. For a man who loved to think big, this was a major disappointment; his "Miracle Book Club" was working no miracle.

"I didn't know how to run a club. I started having it in the afternoon, after school. I'd talked the school people into giving me a classroom. I started with three kids. One of them turned out to be a Christian, and the other two didn't turn out to be anything. They fast faded out. I got it up as high as 11 that year, but I'm telling you it was the saddest bunch of sacks you ever saw in your life."

"If you want to really see a bunch of sad apples, just have a meeting for kids who'll stay after school. I got the biggest selections of teachers' pets you ever saw, not a red corpuscle in the whole crowd. Everybody I wanted to reach was out on the football field and everyplace else, right while we were having our club meeting. After nine months of that, I knew I had to try something else."

Jim was learning that a high school is a complex subculture of its own. A person who fails to understand that subculture will never enter it. Kids run in cliques, and cliques don't usually intermingle. There are kids who are popular and kids who aren't. Neither group thinks highly of the other. A typical high school contains 20 to 30 separate groupings of students: athletes, eggheads, socialites, dopers, the drama crowd, the motorcycle crowd, college prep students, vocation students, the hot-rod gang, the party crowd, upperclassmen, lowerclassmen, blacks, whites, chicano, and so on. A person who plans to work with high school kids had better know which ones he seeks to befriend. It is most difficult to interest all students in the same activity.

Jim hadn't foreseen this problem and didn't know how to address it.

Experimenting with various approaches led him to a simple conclusion: Attract the student leaders and they bring others; fail to attract them and attendance falls like a rock.

In the years that followed, Jim was often criticized for pursuing student leaders at the expense of equally needy kids who were less popular. But in no way did Jim view his method as beyond reproach – he had simply found a solution that produced results beyond his wildest expectations, and he rode the wave. It was not his calling to solve the sociological problems of the American high schools. Sociological problems are spiritual problems anyway. Solve the spiritual problem and you solve them both. Jim wanted kids to listen to the message of Jesus Christ and he accepted any method, which produced that result.

In January of 1940, Jim changed the Miracle Book Club format. The hour was changed from after school to early evening. And as kids preferred out-of-school activities, the meetings were moved into the homes of various students.

Jim described the beginning of his success with high school students: “What a change! I started having lively meetings. Two or three kids came out who were really sharp and could do something with the rest of the bunch. Their personal enthusiasm for the club got others to come, and it was wonderful. Right at the start the Lord took hold of two kids. One of them was Viddie Wewell. She was the very first youngster that was ever led to the Lord Jesus Christ in a club of mine. She was in that little high school society set, and she got those kids to come to club, she and a boy in the senior class.

“We decided we’d have a prayer meeting, those two kids and me. In the pastor’s study that Sunday night, we started to pray for the club. The pastor met with us. He was pushing on me all the time. He didn’t care if I did any work around the church. He just wanted to see those kids reached for Christ. He said, ‘Don’t monkey around with the people who come to church. I’ll take care of them. You go down to that high school.’ Boy, now just think of that, I wonder what would happen if there were more pastors like that, if there were some pastors in every town like that. That just said, ‘Boy, I’m not doing so bad with the people who are coming to church. The thing that’s bothering me is all those people who don’t come. Somebody go out and get them.’ That’s what the church is all about, really.

“You can’t read the book of Acts, you can’t read the New Testament, you can’t read the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, without coming to the conclusion that that’s what the church is here for, to go after others. And why it’s such a colossal flop is because it’s so ingrown. Nobody hears the message except those who have always heard it, and they’re not going to do anything about it, so nothing happens. This guy just kept pushing me and pushing me, and out I went.”

“I don’t even think the prayer meeting was my idea. We’d had 12 kids at our club meeting the night those two kids came through for the Lord, and we decided to have this prayer meeting, and the next week we had 23. And boy,

we had another prayer meeting, a prayer meeting that wouldn't quit. And the next week we had 32. In two weeks we went from 12 to 32. And then we had another prayer meeting and the school was really out then. The next night we met in the biggest home in the whole town and we had 51. And right at the end of the meeting, one of the toughest kids in the senior class got up and said, 'Wait a minute; I wanted to tell you that I accepted Jesus Christ while Jim was talking.' It was like a bomb dropped in the place. None of us had ever heard of anything like that. It was wonderful! One or two others who had gotten 'waked up' joined the prayer meeting the next Sunday night, and from 51 we went to 62, and from 62 to 75. We had two meetings of 75 and kept praying."

"A beautiful little blonde girl, the school beauty queen, came to know the Savior and joined in that prayer meeting. She had never been in a prayer meeting in her whole life. We were praying around in a circle, taking turns, and she heard us praying for Burr Nichols, the captain of the football team. As soon as we raised our heads up from prayer, this little girl piped up and said, 'I'll get Burr.' Just like that! That prayer was answered fast! She was going with him and she said she'd have him at the next meeting."

"We started the next meeting, and that night I'll never forget. It was crowded in that hall where we were meeting. It was a big front hall, but 75 people are a lot of people for a hall. They were sitting on the floor, and I was crammed up against the front door. I kept looking for this blonde girl and Burr Nichols. They weren't there."

"We went through the songs, and it was time for my message. I'd stalled as long as I could, and just as I was getting up to speak, there came a clomp, clomp, clomp across the front porch. That door busted open behind me and here was this little blond cutie and Burr Nichols right behind her. She just pranced in and sat down in front of me. That was the only space on the whole floor. And there was Burr standing in front of that whole crowd; he turned around and sank down beside her."

"Well, I started in, and I was scared to death. I was just shaking in my boots. I gave the Gospel the best I knew. Burr hadn't been at the beginning of the meeting, and hadn't heard any singing or anything, but something about it he liked. He came around afterward and stuck out his big mitt and shook my hand and said, 'Boy, Jim, I liked that. I'm coming back next week.'"

"Next week we started off with the same situation – a big crowd jammed up against the front door, but Burr Nichols wasn't there. I went all the way through and came to the message again. I saw the little blond girl in the audience and thought, 'Oh, oh, they've had a divorce this week.' But I was wrong."

"Just as I started to speak, there came the awfulest clomp, clomp, clomp across the front porch. Burr opened the front door and came in like he owned the place. He walked past me and said, 'Jim, I wouldn't have been so late, but I couldn't find some of these guys.' And four teammates came trailing in behind him."

“I found out that across the street from the high school a group of elderly women had been meeting for six years, every Monday morning, getting down on their knees in the living room of dear old Mrs. Frazier’s. They prayed every Monday morning for six years, long before I ever heard of Gainesville, Texas, for the high school kids across the street. I was there a year before I heard of that prayer meeting. I used to go over there with those five or six old ladies and get down on my knees with them after that club started to roll. That was the thing the Lord used to start it.”

“Back in seminary, a group of kids going to school there got interested in the club meeting in Gainesville. They’d get down on their knees and spend hours praying for that club meeting. It’s no wonder why we had revival in that school!”

“That’s how Young Life started. I didn’t have in my mind to start anything, but that club went from 75 to 96, and then to 100 and then 119, and 135, and the week before finals there were 170 kids there.”

“Burr Nichols closed in with the Savior about the fifth night he ever heard the Gospel. That fall, Burr went to Dallas to spot players for the announcer at one of the games. Riding back, they had a terrible accident and Burr was killed. His family wanted me to preach the funeral. They said I was the only preacher Burr had ever listened to.”

“Burr grew up on the wrong side of the tracks and was a regular ruffian. All the Lord was waiting for was somebody to get a little bit interested in Burr – a little blonde beauty queen and a little pip-squeak theological student. Burr was a precious soul for whom the Lord died. This country is full of people like that. There are thousands of people in this country that no Christian has ever said a kind word to. Most of the kids in this nation are like that. A few million more of them will graduate from high school this year. Just like Burr Nichols, they never heard the story. And I can’t stand that.”

## Section III: Camp

### *How It All Began*

– Excerpt from Young Life Staff Training Manual Leadership I and II  
(Contributed by Kit Sublett.)

Jim Rayburn grew up in Kansas, and many summers his family would vacation in the Colorado Rockies. When Jim was a young man, he loved nothing more than to sleep out under the stars. As he began to minister to young people in Arizona and New Mexico, he loved to take them on camping trips. It was a great way to get them to think a little deeper about things that really mattered.

Conferences were a very common Christian activity as Young Life began. Each spring, Young Life would hold its own conferences, what we know as weekend camps today. The program was different from today's, but the essence and the content were the same. They were held at various conference grounds and YMCA camps.

This seemed to be working so well that when Jim suggested that we buy our own piece of property, most of the members of the board of trustees balked at the idea. However, one member, H.J. Taylor of Chicago, put up the money for the first camp property that Young Life ever had. That was Star Ranch, bought in 1946 (Young Life didn't actually purchase it; Mr. Taylor did, and Young Life leased it from him for \$1 per year).

From the first day of Star Ranch, Jim wanted things done with excellence. He had had enough of using second-rate facilities. "Why should we not present the beautiful Gospel of the magnificent Lord Jesus Christ in equally beautiful and first-class surroundings?" he would ask.

One of his role models in all of this was Henrietta Mears, founder of Forest Home Conference Center in California. Much of the camping program in the early years was based on what he knew of Miss Mears' camp.

Star Ranch was an immediate success and was quickly and dramatically followed by Silver Cliff Ranch, Frontier Ranch, and Malibu Club. Within 10 years, Young Life had gone from not owning a single acre of land to a camping program that would become a hallmark of our ministry.

## The Young Life Camping Ministry

– Excerpt from Young Life Staff Training Manual Leadership I and II

The term "camping" is a poor substitute for what we actually have in mind when we speak of the Young Life ministry at the properties during the summers, and at the hundreds of camp facilities that are rented by the various areas for their weekend camps throughout the school year. "Ranching," "resorting," and a few other terms are also used, but the whole concept of "camping" really does not do justice to what really could be called a week, or

weekend, of “high adventure.” Yet, for lack of an easier way to express this type of ministry, we refer to this section as “The Camping Ministry.”

By providing a setting of “high adventure,” we feel that a certain climate of openness is created in the mind of the teenager that cannot be duplicated anywhere else. Here are a few of the camping benefits:

- We get kids out of the “rut” of their teenage environment by doing things that they wouldn’t normally do at home. Being many miles from home puts a kid in a different frame of mind so that he is excited about the setting and starts to open up and think, “I’m doing new things.” Thus, he or she thinks new thoughts.
- There is an opportunity for us as leaders to DO something with the kids not possible at home. They remember these things many months and years later.
- There is an opportunity to confront them with the Gospel message in concentrated rather than in intermittent form.
- Having staff from all the areas at the camps permits us to expose our kids to more Christian leadership.
- Our camps demonstrate God’s beautiful creation like none other, and we pride ourselves on sharing Christ (the best news) in the best possible environment.

Because Young Life’s intent and direction are to minister to kids regardless of their cultural backgrounds, flexibility in all camping programs is the most important ingredient. This goes for not only trip leaders and volunteer leaders taking kids to camps, but also to the program and speakers at the camps.

The program, to be effective, must take into consideration whether or not the camp is a mix of urban, suburban, or any other representative culture. The challenge is to create camping activity paralleled to the kids’ cultural needs in order to accomplish our goal – to afford every kid the opportunity to discover the wonderful truth about Jesus Christ.

## **Non-Negotiables of Young Life Camping**

– Excerpt from Young Life Staff Training Manual Leadership I and II

At Young Life camp, we create space where kids can encounter Jesus Christ. In an effort to create space:

- We provide a property that reflects the glory of God and serves as a worthy setting for the Gospel. This means excellence in everything, from food to flowers to facilities.
- We set boundaries that ensure the safety of each camper, including physical, emotional and spiritual boundaries. “Do not climb the cliffs behind the pool at Frontier Ranch,” is an example of a physical boundary. “Cabin time is confidential,” is an emotional boundary. And, “Never corner kids and force them to make a decision concerning

Christ,” is a spiritual boundary.

- We provide a support structure of staff, summer staff and work crew with clearly defined roles who have been trained with excellence to set leaders free to minister to kids.
- We clear away the noise, clutter, and chaos from kids’ lives. For example: Kids are strongly encouraged not to use personal music systems at camp. Kids sit down to a table to eat dinner in an orderly fashion. Kids are given opportunities to sit in silence and consider the Gospel message.
- We break down barriers through shared adventure, personal discovery, appropriate humor, purposeful music, excellent service, and an obvious respect for the things that count to kids (for example, we incorporate songs from the current culture into our program and at club).
- We provide ample opportunities for kids, leaders and cabins to bond through shared experiences, creating a safe and close community in which kids can encounter Christ.
- We create a framework for processing the Gospel message together and alone. This includes creating a cabin time setting that is confidential, kid-centered, and safe (kids are not coerced, ridiculed or lectured; leaders listen and facilitate discovery of the truth). It also includes structuring the schedule so that program decreases as the Gospel message progresses, allowing for ample free time for kids and leaders to talk. Some camps construct a framework that invites kids and leaders to gather and visit in a comfortable atmosphere after cabin time later in the week (e.g., a coffee house setting in the dining room). And, as already mentioned, most camps include one or two times during the week when kids are asked to sit silently for several minutes and consider the Gospel message.
- We provide a safe forum, free from public pressure or personal coercion, where kids can profess a public faith in Jesus Christ if they so choose (e.g., “Say-So”).
- We provide a setting where kids who have come to Christ can come together for encouragement and basic instruction in their new faith (e.g., a “New Christians Seminar”).

## The Sell: Getting Kids To Camp

### *Eight Keys to Asking Kids to Summer Camp*

- 1. RELATIONSHIPS.** Remember that Young Life is a relational ministry. You are asking kids to camp because you have a relationship with them, you know them, and hopefully they think it would be cool to spend a week with you. A good way to do this is by saying “I’m going – do you want to go with me?”
- 2. PRAYER** is always crucial to whatever we are doing. Pray for specific

kids. Make prayer lists – YES, NO, MAYBE lists.

3. **CONTACT WORK** is always strategic, but leading up to camp, this becomes even more important. When deciding where and when to go, consider who from your lists will be there. Make an extra effort to spend time with these kids.
4. **BE PERSISTENT!** If someone tells you “no,” that could mean any number of things. It could mean “I am not sure if it’s cool,” “the guy/girl I like (today) is probably not going,” “I don’t think I have the money,” or a any number of things. Even if the excuse sounds good (like vacation or family reunion), if a high school person really wants to go he or she can usually make that happen. A good rule of thumb is that if a person tells you “no” three times (over a period of time), that is probably a true “no.” Otherwise, “no” means maybe! (Same thing with YES ... )
5. **BUT DON’T BE TOO PUSHY** ... We need to love kids unconditionally. Kids should never feel like their friendship with a leader depends on whether they go to camp, club, or any other Young Life thing. Try not to walk away right after they tell you “no”, especially with kids you don’t know that well.
6. **CAMP FLYERS** must always be with you because you never know when you will see kids. Kids lose them or need one for a friend. Have a few in your car, in your pocket, in your house – everywhere!
7. **MONEY IS NOT AN EXCUSE.** If kids say the only thing keeping them from going is money, tell them we will work something out. Don’t tell them you or your area director will pay for it, but just that something will be worked out. (If kids work hard, they can raise most of it at our two fundraisers.)
8. **TALK TO PARENTS.** Be willing and able to talk to parents! This is important, especially with kids who haven’t been around Young Life very much. Parents are going to need to know where we are going and what we will be doing. This is one of the main areas where it is important for leaders to be adults and not kids. We are taking other people’s kids out of town for a week! We must come off responsible, mature, and capable. Be able to effectively describe Young Life and the camp to parents who may not know or trust you, or are skeptical of Young Life and don’t really want to give their kids \$485.

#### **OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT CAMP SELL ...**

- GUYS ASK GUYS, GIRLS ASK GIRLS ... USUALLY  
Obviously, you should be closer to members of your sex and asking them, but sometimes you will be the only leader around. Just be wise here – the wording would change. Male leaders wouldn’t ask high school girls to go with them. But at the same time, all leaders need to be open and friendly with all kids and make sure everyone knows about camp, has a flyer, has their questions answered.
- YES ISN’T YES, AND NO ISN’T NO

Unfortunately, a verbal “YES” from a kid isn’t a definite “yes” until the bus leaves. But it is a 95 percent “yes” when a kid turns in deposit money with a signed form – so the deposit is the key. By the same token, don’t think one “NO” from kids means they can’t go. Be persistent and find out why they said “no”, and don’t be afraid to ask again! (See points four and five on “Eight Keys ... ”)

- **CAMP SELL ENDS WHEN THE BUS LEAVES!**  
Please don’t forget to keep selling camp until the morning we leave – it is never too late!

## **Before We Go**

### *Putting a Plan in Place*

– Modified excerpt from Young Life’s How to Thrive and Survive...

Here is a checklist of things to consider doing before camp. Some are optional, some aren’t.

#### **PARENTS**

- Put printed information in their hands.
- Make personal contact with the parents of your kids.
- Consider inviting parents to a pre-camp party or some type of information night before camp.
- Plan a post-camp party where parents come – show pictures and videos from camp.

#### **FORMS AND FINANCES**

- Fill out and turn in leader resumé (if camp requires it).
- Help collect money and health forms from kids.

#### **PRAYER STRATEGY**

- Make a personal prayer list.
- Ask adults to pray.
- Instill a vision for prayer in Campaigners kids.
- Ask church boards and groups to pray.

#### **CAMPERSHIP STRATEGY**

- Identify kids in need.
- Plan and pull off fund-raising events.
- Plan and pull off work projects.
- Secure gifts from interested individuals.

## **TEAM MEETINGS**

- Meet with other leaders from the trip.
- Meet with kids who are going to build camaraderie, communicate expectations and tie up loose ends.

## **FOLLOW-UP PREPARATION**

- Secure follow-up materials for kids who meet Christ at camp.
- Plan camp reunion meeting. This could be in conjunction with the parents' night.
- Plan follow-up meetings for kids who meet Christ at camp (Campaigners plus additional time).

## **WHAT A LEADER SHOULD BRING TO CAMP:**

1. Everything you ask kids to bring (pre-camp mailing checklist sent to kids).
2. Volleyball uniforms (don't go too crazy ... see Treatise).
3. Bandanas, face paint, extra white t-shirts for 50s (face paint is great for side-burns, tattoos, mustaches, but good old Crayola markers work too!). Confirm it is 50s and not another tableau!
4. Bible, notebook, pen.
5. Extra towel.
6. Extra nice shirt for the kid who forgot to bring anything to dress up on the last night (girls won't forget ... this is only for guys).
7. Alarm clock (NOT YOUR OLD OR CURRENT CELL PHONE!)
8. Camera
9. Girls - mirror, iron, clothes hangers.
10. Garbage bags.

## **The Prepared Leader:**

### **BODY**

Camp is physically demanding. Exercise and good sleep in the weeks leading up to camp (especially days) will help you handle the stress to your body.

### **MIND**

Prepare yourself as early as possible for a tough week and consistent follow-up after camp.

### **HEART**

You've got to be crazy to go to Young Life camp. Riding a bus for 535 hours with a bunch of people whose definition of quality entertainment is competition involving various bodily functions? That alone is enough evidence to have you committed. But being committed is what got you here in the first place. You are committed to Jesus Christ. That's good, because nothing besides a deep love for Jesus will get you through a demanding week of camp. Two passages

to consider reading as you prepare your heart for camp are 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and Matthew 25:31-46. “The love of Christ compels us” to pursue kids with the great news that God loves them. And when those kids become too difficult for us to love, we remember that we “recognize no man according to the flesh,” and we begin to dig through the rubble to find a remnant of Jesus Christ. In fact, Christ gives us great encouragement when it comes to loving needy people. “Whatever you did to the least of these, you did it to Me.”

As you pray and prepare your heart for a week of camp, ask God to rekindle your love for Christ and to give you eyes to see Him hiding behind kids’ needs. Then the demands of kids at camp will become a sacred passageway you are privileged to walk through to bring your gift of love to Christ.

## The Opposite Sex

*From How to Thrive and Survive at Camp*

There’s something we need to talk about. It isn’t easy and it isn’t our first choice for conversation, but we can’t even get on the bus until we’ve made something perfectly clear: Our sexual behavior as Young Life leaders must be without question and above reproach.

As you prepare yourself for camp, prepare to think, talk and act in a way that honors Christ and shows absolute respect to kids and other adults. Kids are counting on you to guard their dignity. This means we respect the boundaries God has put in place around each individual. We do not subject them to inappropriate language, attention or touching.

What, then, do we consider to be inappropriate language, attention and touching? There’s the obvious stuff that is spelled out quite clearly in the Bible, and then there’s the not-so-obvious stuff that can get us quickly into trouble – humor that makes someone else uncomfortable, attention that can be misinterpreted as romantic interest, a hug that is unwanted or that generates misleading emotions.

So in the best interest of everyone involved, we ask you to comply with the following guidelines (not a comprehensive list):

- Males focus ministry efforts with males; females with females.
- Don’t go off alone with a person of the opposite sex . (No need to take a walk in the woods with that camper, no matter how much he or she claims you are the one he or she needs to talk with.)
- Don’t assume that others welcome your hug or your touch. And when hugging a person of the opposite sex, short side hugs have been voted the hugs least likely to be misunderstood. (In a pinch, you can use the “A-frame.”)

These guidelines may seem far too obvious – that it is unnecessary to spell them out. But these are exactly the situations which have resulted in accusations and in some cases, dismissals of Young Life volunteer leaders,

because their actions were either clearly inappropriate or were misunderstood by kids or parents.

As a general rule, don't say or do anything with a kid that you wouldn't say or do if that kid's parent were standing right beside you. After all, He is. And the Heavenly Father says it is better for you to be thrown into the sea with a big rock around your neck than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble (Luke 17:2).

- Read Ephesians 5, verses 3 and 8.
- May death strike you if you rub sunscreen on an opposite gender kid!
- What is flirtatious behavior? If you act differently toward someone than you would a married person in front of their spouse. (This is good to remember in general, not just at camp with kids!)

## Departure and Travel Tips

1. APPROACH parents and kids at the bus when they arrive! Meet and greet and establish from the start that YOU ARE THE LEADER.
2. Have a plan for check-in that involves help from parents or committee! You can't do it all on your own – talking to kids, getting your own stuff on the bus, taking money, health forms, calling kids who are late, and more ... YOU MUST HAVE HELP.
3. Make sure at least someone is there VERY early (leader, committee/parent helper) who will be the first one at the departure location. That person will have to be at least 30 minutes early or someone will beat him or her there.
4. Be a SERVANT. Help load luggage, take the worst seat, get in line last at McDonalds and sit with lonely kids.
5. Take advantage of the time. Camp starts the minute the first kid arrives at the bus. Make the most of the opportunity to serve kids, to listen, to break down barriers and build bridges. At the same time, don't be afraid to take a short nap. Keep your cell phones on, especially if traveling with another bus.
6. Don't overuse the TV on the bus so that the trip becomes a spectator sport. Turn off the TV and interact.
7. Leaders shouldn't spend the entire trip staring out the window, listening to an iPod and sleeping. Moderation is strongly advised.
8. Leaders should be presentable for both bus trips (to and from camp) because they will be interacting with parents at both ends. You don't need to wear your Sunday best, but don't look like you just rolled out of bed either.
9. May swift death strike leaders and second-timers who don't give up their techy devices (MP3s and cells). And may it be painful.
10. Have fun on the trip! Some fun interaction with the microphone,

interviews, bad jokes are Young Life standards. Don't over-do it or upset the driver, of course.

11. Love the driver. Your witness isn't limited to the high school kids on the bus – we represent Christ at all times!
12. Have a second-timer's meeting. Make it a treat to the first-timers to get in line first and gather the second-timers. They do this too late at camp.

## Leading At Camp

### I. Young Life “Camping” – The Ultimate Misnomer

- What do the average kids think of when they hear the word “camp” or “camping?”
- If they know it is a Christian “camp” what preconceptions do they have?

How do we answer these questions?

“Why should we not present the beautiful Gospel of the magnificent Lord Jesus Christ in equally beautiful and first-class surroundings?”

– Young Life Founder Jim Rayburn

### II. Leading at Camp – “LEADER CENTERED CAMPING”

– From the Young Life website

Leaders have a big job at camp – challenging kids, spending time together, focusing on where God is working, plus talks, program, role modeling and prayer. Camp is meant to take kids into the unfamiliar, and they will be looking to you – now more than ever – for guidance and encouragement. Keeping the tips of leader-centered camping in mind will ensure an excellent camp experience for all involved.

- 1. Out of the Rut:** Leaders are encouraged to take advantage of the environment and do things they couldn't do at home. Take kids out of their routine and create a little piece of the kingdom of God. We are hypnotized by the familiar, so challenge them, give kids a real adventure and don't put them back into the rut by making camp too much like home.
- 2. Instant Attention:** Jim Rayburn said, “Why should we not present the beautiful Gospel of the magnificent Lord Jesus Christ in equally beautiful and first-class surroundings?” Based on his vision and the Lord's provision, you and your friends will be spending a week in a top-notch facility. When the kids get off the bus, their first thought should

be, “Wow, this is just for me?” Treat them like a guest from the welcome on. We are stewards of these camps. We are the proprietors. Jesus Christ has entrusted them into our keeping and use. Keep them clean, neat and in good repair: excellent in every way. This is everyone’s job, not just camp staff.

- 3. Time:** During one week of camp, we have 70-plus waking hours to be with the teenagers we brought. Be there.
- 4. Shared Experiences:** Camp is set up so that everything is focused on enabling leaders to be with their kids and bond together. We want to make you look good, that’s what leader-centered means. Leaders live with the kids. They climb together, go horseback riding together, hit the ropes course together, eat together, laugh together, share together. Kids see leaders walk the talk. So be vulnerable, be human.
- 5. Potential Verbal Communication:** Club talks, music, role plays, small groups, around the table at meals, cabin times, one-on-one times with each camper.
- 6. Role Modeling:** These campers not only see you, their leader, they get to watch work crew (their peers), summer staff, camp staff, assigned staff, adult guests, families, everyone. This is the family of God, the body of Christ, a picture of the kingdom of Heaven. All ages, all walks of life, living, working, praying together to serve Christ as they serve each other and the campers.

All jobs are important; no job is insignificant. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The key is the attitude of servitude for all of us. We only need to play our assigned role and use our talents for the good of the body and the glory of God. This shouldn’t be an ego trip for anyone. Do not attempt to draw attention to yourself, but to Jesus. We want to break down barriers, to give kids the best time of their lives and to lift up Christ in our words, actions and attitudes.

Soak everything in prayer. Expect miracles in the lives of these wonderful teenagers. If the Lord is not in this, all is for nothing.

“The best Young Life camping is still yet to be done.” – Jim Rayburn

# Six Rules for Leading at Camp

## I. PRAY CONTINUALLY

- a. For particular kids.
- b. For every aspect of the week or weekend (program, speaker, meals).
- c. For yourself.

## II. PREPARE FOR WEEK

- a. Know relevant Scripture (TMS).
- b. Go to the camp filled with Christ.
- c. Know the agenda and purpose behind it (why we do what we do).
- d. Go well rested!

## III. LEADERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- a. Be more excited about everything than kids are!
- b. Be flexible.
- c. Be a servant (in cabins, at meals, with other leaders).
- d. Have quiet times.
- e. Love all kids (not just your cabin or your high school).
- f. Be an adult who is ready to discipline (the Young Life way – be wise here; we didn't sign up to be leaders so we could have authority over kids!)

## IV. KEEP UP WITH KIDS INDIVIDUALLY

- a. One-on-one time with kids in addition to cabin time.
- b. Find out where each kid stands with Christ.
- c. Get to know every kid on a deeper level.
- d. Share yourself with every kid.

## V. GET KIDS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE

- a. Getting kids to meals on times (and yourself there five minutes early).
- b. Keeping kids in the dining hall at the table until the program directors give permission to leave (ALWAYS follow the program).
- c. Getting kids to rides and activities on time!

## VI. LOVING FELLOW LEADERS

- a. Spend time (whenever possible) with the other leaders from your area, so you can better serve and pray for one another.
- b. You are a team! Always build other leaders up and seek to set them up to be successful with kids. (Handle any problems one-on-one or with the trip leader).
- c. Love leaders from other areas (this comes up when their kids are less than perfect!).
- d. Serve each other in every way possible (saving tables at meals,

getting information at leader meetings, making sure other leaders remember meetings).

## **The People Who Serve and Support You at Camp**

– Taken from Young Life's *How to Thrive and Survive at Camp*

### **ASSIGNMENT TEAM**

Includes the speaker, the program directors, the head leaders, the work crew bosses, the summer staff bosses and the camp manager. These people are staff and sometimes volunteers from areas around the country who come to camp to work for a month and then go home.

### **PROPERTY TEAM**

The people who work at camp all year long. This team includes supervisors, administrators, mechanics, carpenters, cooks, housekeepers and store clerks.

### **WORK CREW**

Is the team of teenagers who serve your meals, clean your cabins, landscape the lawns and do the hard, manual labor of camp. These kids are believers from all over the country who come to camp and serve for a month with no pay. You can minister to these kids as they minister to you by paying them proper respect, encouraging them and communicating your thanks.

### **SUMMER STAFF**

Includes the college students at camp who run the ropes course, lifeguard at the pool, wrangle the horses, staff the snackbar and store and staff a number of other more specialized areas of camp.

### **What you can provide for the assigned team:**

- A positive, helpful, team-spirit attitude.
- Support and encouragement.
- Punctuality to meetings, meals and events.
- Enthusiasm.
- Secrecy: we let the schedule surprise kids as it unfolds.
- Positive leadership of your kids.
- Wise discipline of kids when necessary.

Keep in mind that there is more than one way to skin a cat. And no, cat-skinning is not one of the team activities at camp. That's just a politically incorrect colloquialism to say don't get bent out of shape if the speaker doesn't tell the story the way you would or if the program directors play songs differently than you do at home. The assignment team has prepared long and prayed hard for their responsibilities at camp. Please refrain from making insensitive or rude comments to these servants.

If you have constructive criticism for the assigned team, your first and best line of communication is the feedback form you fill out every morning of camp. Your next step would be to run your concerns by the head leader and ask him or her to guide you from there.

## **Remembering Who You Are Not:**

### *Personal Boundaries*

– Taken from Young Life's *How to Thrive and Survive at Camp*

John the Baptist said it best when the religious leaders asked him who he was and he answered, "I am not the Christ." YOU are not the Christ either. You are a window kids can look through to see Jesus, but sometimes you need to draw the shades.

Take a nap. Get away by yourself. Talk with another adult. Be sure and make it to every leader meeting. Those times are created especially for you. If you find you are taking no time for yourself, then perhaps you are relying too much on your own strength and putting too much weight on your own importance in kids' lives. Perhaps it is time to tell yourself, "I am not the Christ."

By the way, you aren't the Holy Spirit either. It isn't your job to convict kids or to convert them to Christ. You are a tool the Holy Spirit can use to facilitate the process, but if you are manipulating or using guilt or pressure, you need to tell yourself, "I am not the Holy Spirit." Besides, you don't really want that job. The hours are killers.

One last thing: you are not a kid. No offense. You may look like a kid, you may feel like a kid, you may even act like a kid much of the time. But at least for this week of camp, YOU ARE NOT A KID. You are the adult. Take leadership from the start. Kids expect you to act like an adult. They need you to act like an adult. It makes them feel secure to know someone else is in control. So be firm but friendly. On the edge but in bounds and under control. Be an adult.

OK, then. Stand up, put your right hand over your heart, and repeat the Young Life leader's motto:

**I AM NOT THE CHRIST  
I AM NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND I AM NOT A KID**

**I AM AN ADULT YOUNG LIFE LEADER  
WHO IS PRIVILEGED TO POINT KIDS TO JESUS CHRIST  
WITH INTEGRITY AND RESPECT**

**In an effort to help kids encounter Jesus Christ:**

– Written and Approved by the Young Life Mission Field Team, March 2002

- We begin, end, and surround every camp with personal, private, and corporate prayer behind the scenes. Since we are working with kids who do not know Jesus Christ, we exercise sensitivity and offer public prayers only when they are deemed appropriate by the staff and for the group.
- We create the entire camping experience as a tool to facilitate the ministry of the adult leader in the lives of kids.
- We provide a clear picture of Christ through the sacrificial service of the staff, summer staff and work crew, which is their spiritual service of worship (Romans 12:1).
- We proclaim Christ through everything we say or do. From the way we greet incoming campers to the way we say goodbye; from the announcements before the meal to the dessert at the end; from the first song to the last dance, and everything in-between – with a warm spirit of hospitality, we reflect Jesus Christ.
- We involve kids daily in the exercise of adventure. We believe that if kids see new sights and try new activities, they may think new thoughts as well. External adventure leads to internal discovery and helps kids to discover the truth about themselves and, ultimately, about Jesus Christ.
- We work hard to make club the best hour of the day. This includes the excellent use of music and humor as well as a well-prepared message that captures the attention of kids and clearly communicates the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- We communicate the Gospel in terms kids can understand with a winsome spirit, speaking clearly from the Scriptures, bringing Christ to life in the clubroom. We introduce kids through a progression of the messages to the person of Christ, the nature of humanity, the work of Christ on the cross, the hope of the resurrection and the opportunity for reconciliation with God. In addition, we often reinforce the verbal proclamation of the Gospel through dramatic presentation (e.g., role plays and “The Broken Heart” play).
- We provide kids a clear and personal invitation to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

## Everything Has A Purpose

One of the keys to being an effective Young Life leader is understanding the purpose behind everything we do. Broadly, the purpose of everything we do is to effectively tell kids about Jesus Christ; however, there are many little things we do that still have a purpose. When combined together, the result at camp (both weekend and summer) is an extremely effective introduction of the Gospel to all high school people, regardless of their prior understanding of Jesus and their condition in life.

The ministry with kids is largely a matter of communicating various aspects of the Christian message. It falls into two main categories:

**1. Verbal Communication** (give them something to believe)

- a. Club talks
- b. One-on-one discussions
- c. Cabin times
- d. Informal conversations

**2. Non-Verbal Communication** (“win the right to be heard”)

- a. Recreation
- b. Entertainment
- c. Total atmosphere and impression
- d. Friendship of leaders

Verbal communication is essentially a teaching ministry done in the same way that club work is carried on throughout the year (talks and cabin time).

Non-verbal communication conveys other aspects of the Christian message:

- It is exciting, interesting, and enjoyable.
- It is relevant to real life.
- Its people (Christians involved with Young Life) are likeable and good demonstrators of the product.
- It is for everyone.

**Non-Verbal**

Activity	Purpose
Welcome	Create excitement for what is to come; make kids feel at ease
Dinner Atmosphere	Good food, friendly work crew, fun time, talk as a group
Program Interrupters	Break down barriers
Field Games/Obstacle Course	Cabin unity, school unity, sets up leaders
Free Time	Kids do what they want, don't feel tied down by rules
Entertainment Night	Leaders set up to be heroes

**Verbal**

Activity	Purpose
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Informal Conversations	Establish friendships
Club	Establish point of contact, message forum
Cabin Time	Talk to kids about Jesus where they are at.

This is just a rough idea of the activities and purposes at a Young Life camp. Obviously, many activities have multiple and overlapping purposes. An effective leader needs to understand the purposes of everything going on at camp in order to fully understand their role at each activity. Leader meetings at camp will further help leaders know exactly what to do.

## Section IV: Campaigners

### What is Campaigners?

A weekly Bible study where students can ask real questions and hear honest answers about their struggles, their faith, and God; a group of students committed to growing in their relationship with Christ and sharing this relationship with others. (In short, a weekly discussion-oriented Bible study.)

**Why does Young Life call this “Campaigners?”** In the 1940s, some people referred to Young Life as the “Young Life Campaign.” Somehow, this phrase got carried down to our modern day Campaigners – basically a Bible study.

### I. Who is Campaigners for?

- A kid who wants to be challenged and to grow spiritually.
- A kid who agrees with what they hear at club and wants to learn more.
- A spiritually-open seeker kid who has been to camp or many clubs, and who wants to know more about Christianity.

### II. Who is Campaigners not for?

- Any kid who has never been to club.
- A kid who disagrees with Christianity and is looking for a debate.
- A kid who is looking for a second meeting a week to laugh at skits and have club.

### III. Committed to Sharing

- Campaigners is more than a Bible study where we want kids to gain biblical knowledge.
- We desire all kids to reach out to other students. In doing this, Campaigners becomes the backbone for our club work.

#### **IV. The “Heart and Soul” of Campaigners:**

- Mark 12:28-31
- The heart and soul of Campaigners should be to help students (and ourselves) obey the Great commandment to:
  - Love God above all else and with everything we have and are.
  - Love our neighbors – friends, family, peers, people of different backgrounds, class, and culture – everyone!

#### **V. How Do Leaders Accomplish All of This?**

- Good teachers take time to design lesson plans.
- Good coaches take time to prepare their strategy for game day.
- Good builders work closely with their blueprints.
  
- Good Campaigners leaders:
  - Are motivated out of their love for Christ and His truth.
  - Are going somewhere – they have a plan and are working on it.
  - Are developing their own leadership and discipleship skills.
  - Are prayerfully dependent on the Lord to produce His fruit.

Our discipleship needs to be marked by biblical teaching, open sharing of who we are, and the challenge to walk our talk among our friends and family. But none of these is the primary goal.

**The primary goal of Campaigners is to help students love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love their neighbors as themselves.**

#### **Acronym for SMALL GROUPS:**

S – Share your life (struggles, joys, fears, sorrows, victories).

M – Ministry (What is God doing? What are we called to do?).

A – Ask questions (and answer questions about life and faith).

L – Listen and learn.

L – Love one another.

G – God (Matthew 18:20 – for where two or three come together ... I am with them).

R – Relationships (healthy relationships with other Christians).

O – Opportunity (to have a deep relationship with a few).

U – Unity (1 Corinthians 12:25-26; love and care for each other).

P – Prayer (Matthew 26:36-46 – Jesus models small group prayer).

# Getting Kids to the Next Level is Our “Campaign”

- When did you go to the next level? Think back to your Young Life or youth group experience. Was there a point in high school where you took your faith “to the next level?” Why or why not?
- Our experience. Evaluate your experience in any Bible study you have ever been in – what was good? What could have made it even better? (No “bad” Bible studies!)
- Level Three Contact Work. Doing things with kids. Do you use this enough? How often do you have spiritual conversations with kids when hanging out with them? What is appropriate for a Young Life leader?
  - 1) How exactly do we “make disciples?” – Matthew 28: 16-20  
*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*
  - Preaching the Gospel.
  - Conversion is not enough! We must teach them to obey.
  - The essence of discipleship is becoming like the master, and this is brought about by a systematic teaching of, and submission to, the Word.
- 2) Paul shows us how to love our Campaigners ...  
Philippians 1:1-11
  - Apply this to our Campaigners and discipleship ministry. What can we learn from this?

*“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.”*

# Outline for Preparing a Campaigners Meeting

(This is the order that works best to prepare, but not necessarily deliver, the Campaigners!)

## I. MAIN POINT

- a. Brief – you should be able to say it in one short sentence.
- b. Your main point is simply the one idea to you want to impress upon this group of high school Christians.

## II. PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

- a. Almost every Campaigners should have one main piece of Scripture that we go through (four-20 verses).
- b. Why do we do this? This is the safest way to reliably interpret Scripture (reading it in context); more importantly, we are showing kids how to read the Bible so they can do it on their own!

## III. SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

- a. If you have lots of small supporting verses, it can be nice to have it all together on the page, and it can take kids a while to find things (use biblegateway.com). But this isn't necessary. Also, it is good to get kids familiar with finding things in the Bible.
- b. Supporting Scripture is great because it adds a sub-point, or it can emphasize the main point by saying it in a different way.

## IV. SUB-POINTS

- a. Don't go overboard here, but generally one main point is not quite enough. Usually one to four sub-points are effective.
- b. This may flow from the Scripture or come from your head.

## V. QUESTIONS

- a. Introduction Questions (Have you ever been in a situation where you said something and later regretted it?)
- b. Questions Related to Scripture (What was Jesus doing here? Why do you think Paul writes this to a young Christian church?)
- c. Thinking Questions (Have you ever thought about what you would do in this situation? What does that word mean?)
- d. Vision Questions (Do you think you could ever write a letter like this to your friends? What would it be like if the people in this room all did this at the high school this week?)
- e. Application Questions (What from the this study can you work on this week?)

# Practical Things to Remember

- 1. Keep the balance between asking questions and “preaching.”**  
Campaigners should be mostly a discussion. However, we are not always blessed with kids who participate. Have good questions ready, but be prepared to give the answers yourself in a comfortable way. Even if you are doing 95 percent of the talking, it is important to still have a discussion “feel.”
- 2. Make sure leaders don’t talk too much.** It’s easy for enthusiastic leaders to share a bit too much, and some leaders really have to fight this. Practice making important points before Campaigners (try doing it in under a minute). Don’t ramble!!
- 3. Choose wisely when asking someone to read Scripture.** We need to read the Bible with feeling and passion when reading it aloud – it is the most important message ever! Thus, if asking someone to read, try to be careful about letting kids read who are not great readers. Also, become a competent reader yourself and be willing to reread the important parts of the verses.
- 4. Be prepared for “off the wall” questions and comments.** We need to be skilled at affirming silly, crazy and stupid answers and comments. It may also be necessary to talk to a kid after a few Campaigners and mention to him or her to try and stay on topic when offering points.
- 5. Stay on point and fight off distractions.** This can be very difficult, from kids coming in late to kids (and leaders) cracking jokes or telling unrelated stories. Have extra handouts ready for late kids, control your own urge to jump off topic, and skillfully and forcefully get everyone back on track.
- 6. Open and close in prayer.** Opening in prayer sets the tone, asks God to help you and focuses everyone’s attention. Move immediately into the Bible study after you pray. Closing in prayer (by first taking prayer requests) is a great time for kids to share needs and learn how to pray. (Often kids are not comfortable praying aloud, so ask who wants to take the prayers, and the leaders will volunteer when the kids do not).
- 7. Remind kids about Campaigners and invite kids who have never been when appropriate.** Email and phone calls are great reminders if you don’t see kids when doing contact work. And if you think some kids are ready for Campaigners but are not yet going, INVITE THEM! (This would be someone who you know is a Christian, has made a recent commitment, or who is thinking seriously about Christianity.)

# Length and Schedule of a Meeting

## *How long should Campaigners last?*

Short answer: one to one-and-a-half hours. This largely depends on the kids, leaders, and numbers. Some Campaigners have very little discussion and thus will move fairly quickly. Some leaders are less verbose than others. Here are some rules of thumb and principles to keep in mind:

- a. It should NEVER be longer than 90 minutes from Campaigners' announced start time.** If Campaigners is supposed to start at 7 p.m., you should finish by 8:30.
  - It is immaterial how late you start – the only relevant factor is when parents and kids are told it starts.
- b. It should last at least one hour from the scheduled start time.** For example, a typical short Campaigners would be one that has arrival and introduction (music or other) for a half hour, and then the lesson takes a half hour. If the lesson starts at 7:15 and kids are leaving at 7:40, it's probably too short. It is good to have kids stay for one to one-and-a-half hours, even to hang out and talk.
- c. Parents and kids should know what to expect.** During busy times in the school year, it might be smart to tell people Campaigners will take about an hour. However, summer Campaigners often last longer for a variety of reasons: more hangout time, increased participation (cabin time continuation), and the material is vital to the new Christians.

A good time to tell parents to pick up their kids is one-and-a-half hours from the announced time during the year and two hours or so during the summer. This gives you some flexibility if discussion is going well AND gives some hang-out time if Campaigners is shorter.

### Sample Campaigners Schedule

7-7:10	Arrival
7:25	Worship music OR mixer if you have enough kids (have everyone name their favorite cereal, cartoon, movie lines ... you can do different ones every week and this honestly doesn't get that old if you have fun with it).
7:30	Pass out pens and Bibles to those who don't have them (and the Campaigners handouts unless you prefer to wait until after your introduction question); split guys and girls (if you have the numbers and the leaders).
8:00	Open in prayer
	Campaigners lesson

# Campaigners' Role at Club: Kids Bringing Kids

<p><b>CAMPAIGNERS AT THEIR BEST ...</b>            Campaigners (and Young Life) at its best is when high school kids love other high school kids and share their faith with them in a real and powerful way.</p> <p>Non-exhaustive list of ways high school kids might do this:</p>	<p><b>SEEING RESULTS AT CLUB ...</b>            The list on the left will flow into our clubs if kids are so passionate about their friends hearing the Gospel that they fill their cars every week with classmates to make sure they are at club!</p>
<p>Reaching out to other kids at school (being nice, not doing something bad others are doing);</p>	<p>When you reach out to someone, it is nice to hang out with them as well – what better venue than Young Life Club!</p>
<p>Praying for their high school friends (we should be praying for people, including Campaigners' peers, at Campaigners).</p>	<p>Answered prayers (Campaigners kids will see people go to club and camp from their yes, no, maybe lists) – seeing God work and answering prayers is profound for young believers!</p>
<p>Sharing their faith (being available, answering the question of “why are you so happy/content?”)</p>	<p>Most kids need help sharing their faith – it is easy to say “what did you think about that talk?”</p>
<p>Inviting others (to club, camp, and other Young Life or Christian events.)</p>	<p>PICK THEM UP! Invitations are much more effective if followed by, “I’ll pick you up at 7:45. No seriously, be ready because I’m coming.” This is incredibly true for non-driving kids!</p>

# Planning the Year:

## *Campaigners/Discipleship Ministry*

### **I. Every Group is Different: EVALUATE YOUR NEEDS**

#### **a. What is your overall goal?**

The primary goal of Campaigners is to help students love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love their neighbors as themselves.

#### **OTHER GOALS:**

- Informational Goal: If we can just get Campaigners to read the Bible and learn biblical truths, we have succeeded.
- Sharing Goal: We need adults to create a safe place for kids to be able to talk about what they are feeling in a non-judgmental way.
- Building Goal: Kids need a form of outreach to learn how to serve the Lord among their peers, and club provides this opportunity.

#### **b. What are your current numbers and meetings?**

- Campaigners only?
- Small groups plus Campaigners?
- Small groups only?

#### **c. Where are your kids spiritually? Consider these factors:**

- Young Life background
- Church background
- Age
- Type of community

#### **d. What are your practical goals?**

- Start small groups.
  - Start a new club.
  - Increase club numbers.
  - Increase Campaigners attendance.
  - Split a combined Campaigners (cast a school vision).
- The answers to the above questions will help guide your plan for the year, how you lead individual Campaigners and small groups, and what topics you decide to emphasize!

### **II. A 12-Month Plan: SEASONS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

#### **a. SUMMER: Immediately after summer camp – THE START OF THE DISCIPLESHIP YEAR! Reasons:**

- More new Christians
- Typically, the core of the next year's Campaigners begins attending the summer before that school year.

- Kids function on an academic calendar – build a foundation before the school year begins!
  1. Campaigners after Camp – Cabin Time Continues
    - A good time to separate guys and girls.
    - Go over the basics of what it means to be a Christian:
      - WEEK 1: “New Life in Christ” (Revelation 3:20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:1-6; 1 Peter 1:22-23)
      - WEEK 2: “Time Alone with God” (Mark 1:35; Psalm 5:3; 2 Timothy 3:15; Psalm 42:1-2)
      - WEEK 3–8: “The Wheel” (Covers Christ the Center, Obedience, Prayer, Fellowship, Witnessing, and the Bible)
  2. Before club and the school year – Casting a Vision
    - Encourage kids to have a heart for the friends, classmates, school, and town!
      - WEEK 9: “Run the Race” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:14)
      - WEEK 10: “Leaving a Mark” (Matthew 25:14-30)

**b. FALL: The school year begins – kids need PRACTICAL help to take on the tough issues.**

- Your group will likely become a little more consistent (but perhaps smaller) when the school year begins.
- After club is going for a while, you might get an injection of new kids.
- Practical things are great for this time of year. Kids are still often new in their faith, and they really need to begin to apply their faith in Christ to their lifestyle.
- Here are some great topics:
 

o Gossip	o Importance of Words
o Temptation	o Making Decisions
o Relationship with Family	o Getting Through Tough Times
o How to Treat Others	o Why do Bad Things Happen?
o Humility	o Self-worth
o Expectations	o Stewardship
o Serving	
o Forgiveness	

**c. WINTER: Yikes! Fewer clubs, holidays, school cancellations ... – A GREAT TIME TO MIX IT UP!**

- The toughest time of the year to do Campaigners – but stick with it!
- This is a great time to use some other ideas you’ve had.

ALSO CONSIDER:

1. Sermons from Church
  - Give credit to getting the idea at church – this models to kids listening/applying church sermons.
  - If you attend the same church as some kids, take the sermon in a different direction.
2. The Calendar/Holidays
  - Do one to two Campaigners on thankfulness around Thanksgiving.
  - December is a great time for one to two Campaigners on the birth of Christ, the Incarnation.
  - New Years – resolutions/goals
3. Fall/Winter Weekends and club new believers? Review some stuff from the summer.
  - If more kids start attending because of club talks or weekend camp, consider a review Campaigners or a special meeting for them.
4. No School? Try Young Life breakfasts!
  - Momentum and contact with kids can be damaged by holiday breaks, no club, and no Campaigners.
  - Strategically plan two to three Young Life breakfasts in November and December. You can have a parent/committee host it or do it at a restaurant.

**d. SPRING: Theology – Studying traits of God and learning more about Christianity.**

- This is a good time to really delve into Scripture so kids grasp some key tenets of Christianity.
- This doesn't mean you abandon practical things – good theology is VERY practical!
- Some key topics to consider:
  - o Biblical Faith
  - o The Holy Spirit
  - o The Trinity
  - o God's Sovereignty
  - o Heaven (and Hell)
  - o Eschatology (be careful here...)

**e. SPRING – It's longer than the other seasons for Young Life!  
A Great Time for a Series.**

- Break up the theology with a good series.
  1. Sex and Dating – Tackle this tough issue annually!
    - Perhaps no issue causes more kids more stress.
    - Perhaps no issue is easier to avoid.

- Haven't separated guys and girls yet? Another great time to start!
2. A Book of the Bible.
- Try giving kids stuff to read, but make Campaigners such that you can operate if they don't read.
  - This is excellent for small groups.
  - All of the above (Section II) is ONE EXAMPLE of what you could do in a 12-month span. However, there are other models.

### III. Other Campaigners Considerations ...

#### a. NEXT YEAR? Okay, so should you do the same thing every year?

ALL OF THIS DEPENDS UPON YOUR KIDS AND YOUR SITUATION!!

Campaigners TOPICS to do every year:

- Foundational stuff to walking with God after camp (The Wheel).
- Sex and dating.
- The big practical issues (temptation, gossip).

PLEASE NOTE: You shouldn't do the exact same thing from the previous year – just cover the same topic. You might use different illustrations or emphasize different Scripture.

#### b. Small Discipleship Groups

- Kids who are around after a year or two will start to need more than Campaigners – give it to them! Try starting small groups with key older kids to take them to deeper levels of their faith.
- Go through Acts, *Run with Him* (Buda's Book), *Closer to Jesus* (sequel to *My First 30 Quiet Times*) or any other Christian book.

#### OTHER RESOURCES:

Resources available from [younglife.org](http://younglife.org) (Staff Resources Site):

- Campaigner Handbook
- *The Walk* – Stephen Smallman
- *Cross Centered Life* – C.J. Mahaney
- All the stuff right on the [younglife.org](http://younglife.org) staff and leader resources website!