

Grace Baptist Church

Philosophy of Youth Ministry

An effective youth ministry is not only structured, but Biblically-structured. *Deut. 6* and *Psalms 78* make the need for spiritual training at the earliest age possible very clear. Most people who come to a saving knowledge of Christ, do so as a youth. Some at very early years and some later during the teen years. Very few trust Christ after age 21. In a day when youth ministries are consistently producing carnal, shallow Christians that forsake a militant stand for the faith, a return to a Christ-centered youth ministry is overdue. The following principles will guide the youth ministry of Grace Baptist Church.

- First, AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY. I believe the Bible teaches the children were given to the parents because God was seeking a Godly seed (*Mal 2:15*). God has given children as His reward to parents to train them to live for Him and impact a lost world with the Gospel (*Psa. 78/Eph. 6:4*). Parents are responsible before God for the spiritual training and education of their children. They will give account of their stewardship to the Lord. Youth ministries and programs should not replace the training in the home, but reinforce the training they are already being given. The home was the first institution that God established. The local church is the institution also ordained of God for believers to exercise their spiritual gifts in, and to be equipped by pastors and evangelists for the work of the ministry (*Eph. 4:11-16*). N.T. churches cannot exist without godly homes, and godly homes cannot come to fruition if they forsake the will of God to belong to and be equipped by the local church, the pillar and ground of the truth (*I Tim. 3:15*). Just as every child needs a father and mother, every home needs a pastor and church (*Heb. 10:24-25;13:17*).
- Secondly, YOUTH PROGRAMS SHOULD BE CHRIST-CENTERED, NOT EVENT-CENTERED. Many teens know how to have fun, but not much about the Lord or His Word. Events can be used as ways to break down walls, especially with teens, but should not dominate the youth ministry. Events without edification will not produce eternal results. (*I Cor. 10:31/Joshua 1:8*)
- Third, youth ministry can be an effective evangelistic tool, but should PRIMARILY BE ORIENTED TOWARDS EDIFYING THE YOUNG BELIEVER. In any case, the program should never be compromised to make it more attractive to the lost or get a big crowd. Being Biblical is more important than being bigger. (*Rom. 14:19/Psa. 119:9-11*)
- Fourth, youth ministry should ENCOURAGE A SERVANT'S HEART IN THE YOUNG PERSON. Children and teens should be trained to serve the Lord by serving others and their church family. This would include youth nights with all youth providing the music, and possibly even a message by a preacher boy. The church youth group should be a TRAINING GROUND FOR FUTURE CHURCH LEADERSHIP (*II Tim. 2:2*).
- Last, ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE LOCAL CHURCH such as youth camps, rallies, and missions trips, provide opportunity to fellowship with other spiritual teens, and an isolated and concentrated environment in which to seek God's face for His Will in the future (*Psa. 1/Psa. 119:63/Rom. 12:1-2*). Great care must be taken to insure that these are done in cooperation with churches of like faith and practice. These events should not make up the bulk of the youth ministry.