



## Young Life Australia 101 Training

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Young Life Australia

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## Table of Contents

<b>THE HEART OF THE MISSION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CULTURAL STATEMENT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>YOUNG LIFE IN 30 SECONDS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF OUR MINISTRY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>YOUNG LIFE AUSTRALIA MINISTRY MODEL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>THE SIX "C'S" OF YOUNG LIFE</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RESPONDING TO CRISIS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>THE FOUNDATIONS OF YOUNG LIFE</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP FROM A SERVANT PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>THE SIGNATURE OF YOUNG LIFE</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>THE SIGNATURE OF YOUNG LIFE – PART II</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>GENERAL SUGGESTIONS AND PRINCIPLES FOR CONTACT WORK</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>OVERCOMING FEARS IN CONTACT WORK</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>THE CONVERSATION STACK</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>THE TRADITIONAL YOUNG LIFE CLUB</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>THE TRADITIONAL YOUNG LIFE CLUB – PART II</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>GIVING AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CLUB COMPONENTS</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LEADER</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>A PRAYER STRATEGY FOR CLUB</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>CAMP SELL CALENDAR</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>40 WAYS TO GET KIDS TO CAMP</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>WHAT IS CAMPAIGNERS?</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>THE VALUE OF SMALL GROUPS</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>THE FOLLOW-UP MINISTRY</b>	<b>55</b>

## The Heart of the Mission

(A letter from Jim Rayburn to donors)

Dear Friends,

I want you to read this letter!

I am going to try to tell you something about Young Life's strategy for reaching high school young people for the Saviour.

It is easy for me to assume that you know more about the work of the Young Life Campaign than you actually do. I am so close to it. I have watched the progress and the changes that the Lord has indicated from the very start. Some of you who receive this letter know of these matters perhaps as well as I do, but many friends have suggested that they would like to have me tell them a little more about the inside working of Young Life. We do have a unique approach to the problem of reaching young people.

You see we are after the **unreached**. From the very beginning, the burden that the Lord placed upon us was to *reach young people who were not being touched by any other methods*. The vast majority of young people are not in church and never hear the truth about the Saviour's love, so we are after them particularly. To reach them we have had to break with some traditional methods and, I am sorry to say, we have had to sometimes be misunderstood.

For example, take our **contact work**. By that, we mean the hours and hours that our leaders find it necessary to spend with the kids, meeting them where they are, going along with them, living with them. Now this is recognised procedure on any foreign mission field, but many well-meaning Christians have felt that we are wasting time. And yet it is this time spent with the youngster, before and after his confession of Christ, that has made Young Life something far more than the ordinary youth movement. Not only do we win a hearing among the most difficult and hardest to reach, but after reaching them, we stay with them, as a true missionary should. *The winning and establishing of a soul for Jesus Christ cannot be done on a hit-and-run basis.*

**The Lord Jesus Himself is our example** in this. His heart was tender toward sinners. He longed for them. He was not ashamed to be with them. His compassionate approach to the lost is what we are after. We try to be kind in our approach to the lost. We insist that gentleness is essential if we are to properly represent Him. I am afraid we are often times criticised for no other reason than that we are honestly seeking, under the Lord's guidance, to be as He was, the 'friend of publicans and sinners.'

Many people ask us about our 'Bible Clubs.' We do not have any! In Young Life, we have given years of prayerful study to this matter of the right kind of a Christian meeting for kids. What we call a young Life club is actually a Gospel meeting for high school

young people. It is perhaps different from any meeting you have ever been in. But the differences are in small things. We sing, pray, and preach the Gospel in an atmosphere of friendly informality. The meeting is deliberately placed at their level. The language is that which will be understood and impressive to a modern adolescent. We avoid the clichés of evangelical terminology and *present the sweet story of how Christ died for our sins in simple terms, which young people can understand and appreciate.*

The Young Life club is but a phase of this work. There are weekend camps, parties, rallies, high school assemblies and our intensive Bible study units. Then there is our summer ranch program conducted on our three nationally famous Colorado ranches where more than one thousand young people are winsomely challenged with the Saviour's claim on their lives.

There are the leaders. We maintain a **high standard of our leadership**; all of them carefully trained in our own approach to evangelism. These men and women are not selected because of some personal charm or magnetism. There is *a deeper quality that makes for a successful Young Life worker.* It is sincerity, warmth, a personal walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, a desire to see this hard job done for His glory!

There you have the three important phases of the Young Life strategy:

- The emphasis on the direct and friendly contact with the high schooler. The emphasis on follow-up, follow-up, and follow-up.
- The leaders; trained, skilled, dedicated people willing to put up with kids, to live and play with them.
- The gracious, informal gospel meetings featured especially in our Young Life clubs, our camps and summer ranch programs.

There is much more to be said about Young Life strategy, but *the most significant thing is not the technique or the people. It is, this true compassion that comes from above.* Much of the gospel work today is hindered by the severity of its attitude toward the lost.

In Young Life, we try never to forget that Jesus 'looked on the multitude and had compassion on them.' We keep always before our minds that when He mingled with sinners, He did not condemn and judge. He treated them as friends. He longed for them to be His friends. We do too! He has led us that way. That is why a Young Life leader knows more young people than anybody in town. That is why he or she spends hours and hours sitting around soda fountains, going to ball games, wandering around the campus – doing things that may look kind of silly! But they are not silly, they are essential. We go where young people are. That is where they can come to understand a Christian leader and love him and respect him and want to listen to him.

Because we are dedicated to such principles, we will never become a statistically prominent movement, but we know of no other way to reach young people for the Lord and get results in lives that will stand the test of time. Already, in the first eleven years

of our work, the Lord has honoured us with an outstanding host of young men and women who have been reached in high school and are taking a prominent place in Christian circles. Most of these would not even have heard the Gospel if the Young Life leader had not *deliberately* gone after them. The quality of these young witnesses across the nation is sufficient demonstration that God is doing a unique work through Young Life. Scores of these young people are vitally associated with us as staff and volunteer leaders, going after more kids like they were when they were in high school.

We feel no sense of superiority nor do we feel that we have a patent on a special kind of evangelising. We know that the Lord has used these methods in every age and throughout the world. But we also know that these truly scriptural methods for reaching the lost are sadly neglected in America today. We trust that more and more of God's people will re-discover how basic and important it is to 'walk in wisdom toward them that are without' making friends and helping people for the glory of God and for the purpose of making known the Saviour and His love.

I hope that this brief review of some of Young Life's methods will help you to understand better our work and explain it to others. Pray for us.

Sincerely in Him.



*Jim Rayburn*

## **Cultural Statement**

### **Psalm 34:1-3**

#### **Three Foundation Stones**

##### **Christ – Take up His cross - Matthew 16:24-26**

Yearn for the vast and endless sea – Luke 12:31,

Treasure the Kingdom - Matt 13:44

The Holy Spirit given – John 14:15-18

##### **Community – Give to anyone as he had need - Acts 2:44-47**

Prayer for workers – Matthew 9:38

Authentic in sharing our whole life – 1 Thessalonians 2:8

One body in Christ – 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

##### **Kids – Little children come to me - Matthew 19:14**

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders – Colossians 4:5

Excellence is profitable for all – Titus 3:8

Relevant to all men – 1 Corinthians 9:22

#### **Strategy – Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman**

Beginning with the selection process, Coleman looks at how Jesus developed this core group to carry on His divine plan when He would no longer be physically present to lead them. In the same way Young Life will select and nurture leaders that will “carry on” the message, work, ethics, ministry, and the love of God as revealed Jesus Christ.

#### **Priorities**

1. Leadership: Formulate and implement an intentional strategy and vision to reach every young person in the local area.
2. Ministry: Lead, train, equip, mentor and resource staff (paid/volunteer) to provide excellent programs which are fun, relevant and Christ centred.
3. Partnerships and Networks: Be pro-active in developing partnerships with churches and other organisations and engaging in networks that will build the profile of Young Life in the community. This will be both Christian and secular.
4. Competent: Relate competently, professionally and promptly to all enquiries (internal and external) and ensure that we are appropriately dressed for all meetings to the individual/organisations expectations.
5. Communication: Communicate clearly and regularly with key stakeholders about the work of Young Life. Our key stakeholders are both internal (volunteers, staff, board, etc.) and external (donors, schools, government, churches, young people, parents etc.).
6. Disciples: Present young people perfected in Christ by equipping them to be life long disciples and leaders ready to reach the next generation.

## Young Life in 30 Seconds

One of the first questions that you will be asked when you tell people you're involved with Young Life is this: "So, what's Young Life all about?"

At this point, you have about 30 seconds to explain and engage this person with the vision and heart of Young Life. It is also the point at which we struggle to find the right words to sum up the highs, depths and mess that walking with young people entails.

The following information will help you explain the essence of Young Life when that question arises.



### Our Mission

To build confidence, values and resilience in Australia's young people through significant relationships with adult role models who model the love of Christ.



### Our Vision

To be the most influential model for positively impacting Australian high school aged young people for Christ, with resultant transformation in the wider community.



### Our Tagline

Connecting with young people in their world.



### Our Position

Young Life is a non-denominational, non-profit organisation committed to impacting young people's lives and preparing them for the future. Since 1972 in Australia, Young Life has been providing strong, positive influences in the lives of young people.



### Our Foundation Stones

Christ  
Community  
Kids

## **Scriptural Foundations of Our Ministry**

*By Glyn Henman*

### **Introduction**

Our lives are often filled up with the “doing” piece, so much so that we rarely slow down to think about the “why” piece. We move from one relationship, program, or event to the next, and we rarely take the time to ask ourselves why we are doing all these things, and why are they important? It is often the same in Young Life, and it can be so as we do contact work, run clubs, camps, small groups and simply do the work of reaching young people.

It is as important to stop and ask the “why” questions in ministry as it is in life. Jim Rayburn, Young Life’s international founder, keyed in on four foundational scriptures that helped him coin a few guiding phrases for his burgeoning ministry. These phrases have continued to help us think about reaching the unreached young people with the message of hope in Jesus for over 75 years internationally and over 40 years in Australia.

### **4 Key Scriptures**

I first remember hearing these scriptures being taught by John Miller as a young volunteer leader in 1986. John was a personal friend of Jim Rayburn up until he passed away. John was visiting Australia and over the subsequent years we had many opportunities to talk about the significance of these scriptures upon our lives and ministries.

- Colossians 4:5: “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.”
- 1 Timothy 3:7: “Have a good report of them that are without.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:12: “That you may walk honestly toward them that are without”.
- John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

In our fast paced and instant world, we often reduce life to little more than an information swap. But these scriptures call us to slow down and engage in relationships deeply and walk with integrity toward people, especially toward those who do not know Jesus.

To walk in wisdom, to have a good report and to walk honestly before people takes time, energy and patience. Whether we are dealing with young people, their parents, school authorities or any other government or community group, we are called to exercise wisdom in how we relate and communicate with them. So when the opportunity to share our faith does come along, it is shared with mutual trust and respect.

We need to honour our word and follow through with people - to do what we say. This is fundamental if we are going to build trust and respect. That means turning up on time or calling if we are going to miss the appointment or are running late. We need to watch our language and not use big spiritual/church words when sharing the gospel or



communicating what Young Life does. Lots of people may not understand the big words you want to use.

## **5 Fundamentals**

From these four scriptures Jim Rayburn coined some key phrases that have helped us remember who we are as an organisation and have continued to bring direction to all that we do with young people, their families and the wider communities where we work.

- Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.
- It's a sin to bore a kid with the gospel.
- Win the right to be heard.
- Assume our young audience does not know anything about the Christian faith. Therefore, always be in the posture of a teacher, never a preacher. There is tremendous difference.
- We need to go and dwell with young people in their world.

These ideas have helped shape Young Life through its entire history and continue to do so today.

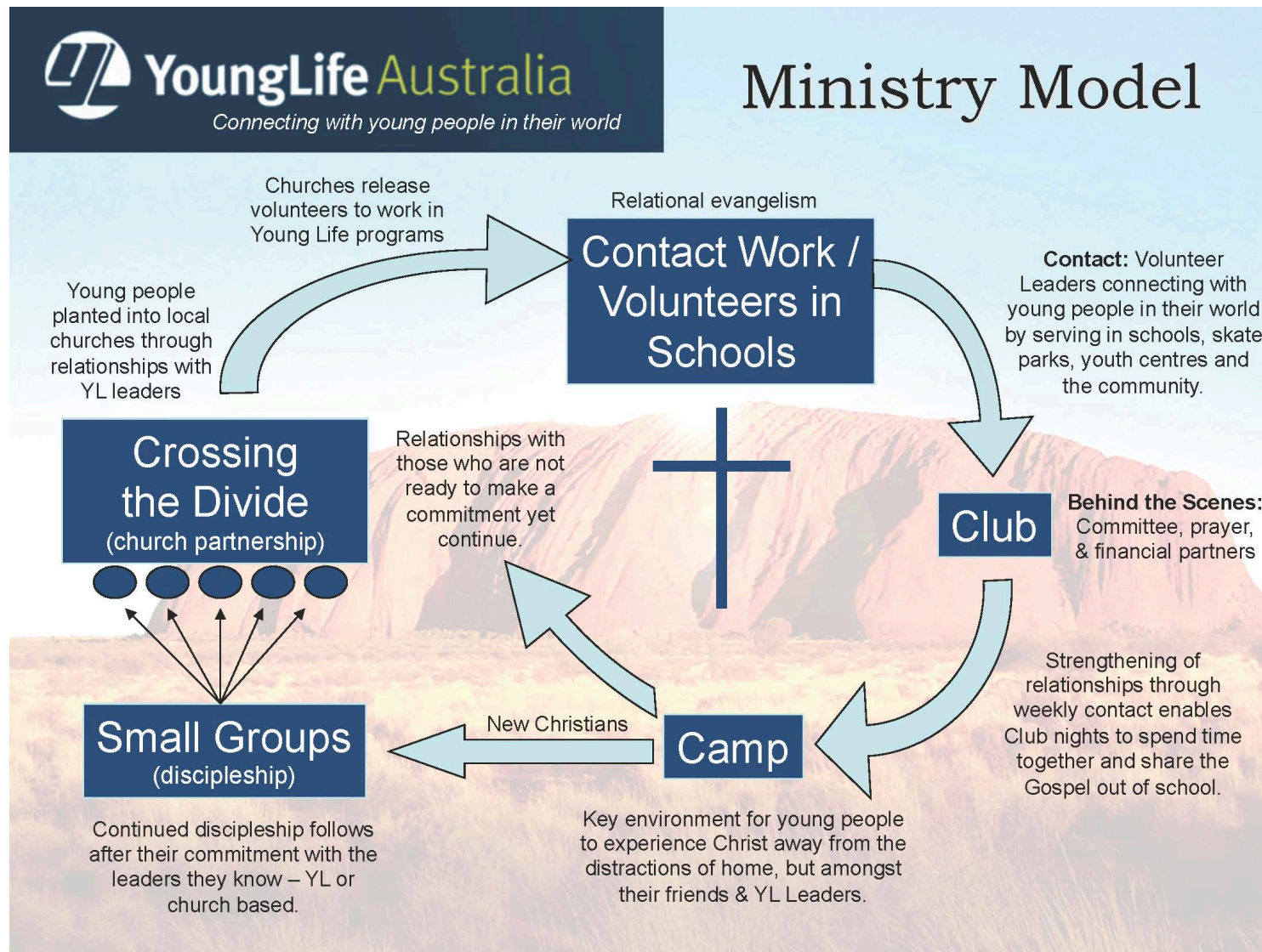
The idea of leaving our comfortable environment to enter the world of young people is radical in nature; our model for this is Jesus himself. He left the comfort of heaven to come and dwell with mankind in order to be known and to make himself known. To leave our world and enter the world of young people, we are following the model of Jesus.

To walk in wisdom and win the right to be heard is a powerful idea no matter what age group you're trying to reach. If we think about it, we all like to be treated with respect.

If the best we can do is bore people with the gospel once an opportunity presents itself, then we need to get better acquainted with Jesus. He is the most influential and interesting person to ever walk the planet.

Most people we meet will tell you they know something about God or Jesus at some basic level. However, it seems that the information that most people have is misinformation. You may also find that their experience is with religious groups who have alienated them. Once we have won the right to speak, and to be heard, it is important to not assume too much knowledge. Start with the basics and build from there. Remember, in most cases you will get a second and third opportunity if you have built the relationship well. Mutual respect and love will also cover many of the mistakes we may make.

## Young Life Australia Ministry Model



## The Six “C’s” of Young Life

**Christ** – Every aspect of Young Life is rooted in Jesus Christ. Following His model of going into the world to build relationships, we go into the world of adolescents carrying His message of hope. And as teens enter a relationship with Christ and grow in their faith, His legacy leaves indelible imprints of thousands of lives – enabling kids to impact the world around them.

**Contact work** – ‘Seeing young people and being seen by young people’ is how some people define contact work. Leaving the comfort zone of their adult world, Young Life leaders cross over to the world of adolescents to build relationships and ‘earn the right to be heard’. Young Life leaders go anywhere teens hang out, including sporting events, plays, concerts, fast-food restaurants – simply to spend time with them.

**Club** - Often described as ‘controlled chaos,’ club is a place where teens come to laugh, sing, hang out, have fun and hear about God’s love for them. Combining humour, games, skits, songs and a brief talk, leaders are given a unique platform to share the truth about Jesus in terms young people can understand.

**Campaigners (Bible Study)** – When teens know they’ll get real answers, they’ll ask real questions – about topics like sex, drinking, death, relationships, and God. And small group Bible studies are safe places where teens come together to ask such questions and learn more about God. The name, ‘Campaigners’ is rooted in our history, as Young Life founder Jim Rayburn coined the term from Young Life’s original name: The Young Life Campaign.

**Camp** – Young Life’s camping program is one of the hallmarks of the ministry. At camp, campers are given the opportunity to get away from their usual surroundings, experience God’s beautiful creation, and participate in exhilarating activities. Countless young people are forever changed by the thrill of meeting Christ during one of these weeks – making it truly one of the best weeks of their lives.

**Committee** – Committees are the backbone of local Young Life ministry, composed of caring adults who pray for and support the local area. Committee members encourage staff and volunteers, assist in fund-raising efforts, and serve as the community mouthpiece for Young Life.

## **Responding to Crisis**

### **Knowing where to get help/Refer to Support Services**

*(By Glyn Henman)*

Working with people is always a messy business because we are people, and young people are no different and that is what makes Young Life both fun and challenging. In recognising this, we need to understand that we are not in a position to provide suitable care for every possible situation that we encounter.

As a result, we need to be aware of our limitations in the service that we provide young people. We are not health care professionals, we are not mental health professionals, and we are not professional counsellors or family therapists. We are concerned adults who believe that all young people need to be introduced to Jesus by someone they know and trust.

### **When do things get beyond the service that Young Life provides?**

Situations that often go beyond the realm of Young Life's expertise are: drug addiction, eating disorders, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, criminal activity, depression, suicide, homelessness etc... All of these plus many other issues may fall outside the skill level and capacity of individual leaders and Area Directors. At that point, you need to know what to do and where to turn for help.

### **What do I do when the issue is bigger than I can handle?**

1. Tell the young person you are working with that you will need to get outside advice on what to do next. This builds trust with the young person.
2. Go and speak with your Senior Leader or Area Director. They often have had more experience and will know if outside help is required.
3. Develop an action plan with your Senior Leader or Area Director and share that plan with the young person you are working with. Depending on the issue, you may need to include parents in the action plan.
4. Action the plan together and involve the suitable external services as required.

**Note:** Young Life Policy states it is mandatory to report all cases of sexual or physical abuse against a young person. Failure to report in some states and territories is a criminal offence. If you sense that a young person is about to disclose this type of information, you need to inform them of your responsibilities before they disclosure.

### **What services should I seek out?**

1. **Local GP:** Establish a relationship with a trusted GP in your community. This relationship will pay huge dividends on physical health issues in general and may be a first point of call for mental health issues etc.
2. **Community and Family Services:** This office will be able to provide correct procedures and responsibilities for reporting abuse of young people in your state

or territory. The how, when and why will be covered. Each state and territory will need to be acquainted with local laws.

3. **Police:** Often they have a Youth Liaison Officer who deals with youth and community issues dealing with young people.
4. **Accommodation:** Research any crisis, medium or long-term accommodation facilities in your community for young people who find themselves homeless.
5. **Professional Counsellors:** Research any youth and family counsellors operating in your community.
6. **Local Council:** They often have a youth interagency meeting once a month, where all the local youth agencies meet together to share information. Many also have a community grants program to help support local work.
7. **Phone Help Lines:** These are not only useful for young people, but can be great resource for you in your leadership. There are some of these numbers listed on the web page. [www.younglife.org.au](http://www.younglife.org.au) and click on resources.
8. **School:** The school you are working in may already have many of these relationships established so that may be a good place to start. If they do not have this established, it may be a great way to serve the school by compiling this information.
9. **Church:** Some local churches have set up community support programs that you can tap in too. They may also have suitable professionals in their congregation who may become an invaluable resource for specific areas of training for you and your area.



## **The Foundations of Young Life**

In 1938, Jim Rayburn, a young Presbyterian youth leader and seminary student in Gainesville, Texas, USA was given a challenge. A local minister invited him to consider the neighbourhood high school as his parish and develop ways of contacting kids who had no interest in church. Rayburn started a weekly club for kids. There was singing, a skit or two and a simple message about Jesus Christ. Club attendance increased dramatically when they started meeting in the homes of the young people.

After graduating from seminary, Rayburn and four other seminarians collaborated, and Young Life was officially born on Oct. 16, 1941, with its own Board of Trustees. They developed the club idea throughout Texas, with an emphasis on showing kids that faith in God can be not only fun, but exhilarating and life changing.

Young Life's mission remains the same — to introduce adolescents to Jesus Christ and to help them grow in their faith. This happens when caring adults build genuine friendships and earn the right to be heard with their young friends. For more than seven decades, God has blessed the Young Life staff, increasing its numbers from five to more than 3,300 — from one club in Texas to clubs in nearly every corner of the world.

### **Young Life Goes Global & Comes to Australia in the '70s**

Young Life's outreach to kids outside of the United States began in 1953 with the work of Rod and Fran Johnston in France. That ministry, under the name of Jeunesse Ardente, continues to this day. At present, a mix of American and national staff and some 19,000 volunteer leaders are reaching kids with the Gospel through more than 700 ministries in over 70 countries.

Young Life Australia has two separate histories in New South Wales and Victoria, dating back to the early 1970s. Young Life literally bounced its way into NSW in 1972 when a team of Young Life basketball players from North America visited Sydney under the umbrella of Campaigners for Christ. As a result, of that visit about 35 kids met Jesus Christ through Young Life's relational approach in the camp setting. These new Christians and a handful of leaders wanted to start Young Life clubs in their schools at Killarney Heights, Carlingford, Northmead, and Caringbah. Sydney's first Young Life clubs were hosted in 1973 by John and Laurice Waller in Killarney Heights, Ivor and Joy Lewis at Miranda, and Dave and Jo Lindsay in North Rocks.

In 1973, a schoolteacher on exchange from Colorado, U.S.A. at Rosebud High School in Victoria began a Young Life club in his house. Cliff and Liz Johnson, because of their years of involvement in Young Life U.S.A., did not know another way to minister to kids in that community other than to invite them around to their house. And come they did,

up to 70-80 kids every week. Most of these kids had never been to a church in their lives! Australian young people were ready for a relational ministry!

The 80's and 90s on the main were good years for Young Life. Under the leadership of Daryl Redford in Victoria and Arthur Ongley in NSW, the respective state organisations saw healthy clubs and camping ministries develop. With large numbers attending clubs each week (up to 150 people) volunteers were the mainstay of Young Life at every level. From regular schools based contact work, community engagement, club, camping, small groups and serving on committees and boards, volunteers were the life of the ministry. They lived and breathed ministry, many went on to serve in churches and overseas mission agencies and continue to do so to this day.

After the failure of a national body in the 1980's, Glyn Henman saw another opportunity to unify the mission again in the late 1990's. With new levels of trust between the respective ministries, talks began in 1999 to look at forming a national entity once again. With Andre Linossier (VIC), Paul McConnell and Glyn Henman (NSW) leading the discussions, there emerged a strong commitment to form a National organisation once again. By March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000, the deal was completed with Amicus Young Life Australia Inc formed out of the two organisations. Andre Linossier was the first Chairman of the new board and Glyn Henman was appointed as the National Director (CEO). By the end of July 2002, we had settled on Young Life Australia INC as our official name.

Since 2002 there has been the usual challenges of getting a new organisation established in its own right and setting the priorities for the years ahead. 2008-09 were difficult years with the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) impacting the organisations capacity to reach more young people! Despite the challenges Young Life has seen rapid growth in all aspects of its work with young people. With new ministries in Bathurst, Dubbo and Maroubra (NSW), the Barossa Valley (SA), Hobart (TAS) and Redlands (QLD) and the placement of staff in Belarus and Macedonia. Young Life also partners with schools to place chaplains as part of various government programs. God was growing the work.

2015 saw a watershed moment with the purchase of a training facility in Armidale. We are grateful to God for his generosity to Young Life.

At the time of writing (July 2016) Young Life Australia is poised for further growth with new opportunities emerging for God to use the organisation to reach more young people than ever before. The last 6 years has seen Young Life double its size and increase its capacity. We look forward to what God is going to do in the next 10 years.

## Leadership from a Servant Perspective

(Submitted by Les Comee)

### Introduction

Some of us in Young Life have had the extraordinary privilege of working with visionary leaders who approached their calling as a way to serve others. We could sense that the primary concern to them was not their program, goals, and vision - all of which were very important. They were led by a vision of the Gospel and touching kids' hearts. They exercised their power and influence in significant ways. They expected a lot from us and we wanted to give them the best. But deep down we knew their primary desire was that we would grow into the people God wanted us to be. We were more than just a way to get a vision accomplished. They led us not just by assigning work, but by being with us in the work.

We also knew that this was not a strategy on their part. It was grace. God's grace had given them something. They were bearers of grace in a special way. People grew in their presence. Gifts were utilised. Risks were encouraged and we continued to learn more about reaching young people in new ways.

One of the descriptions of Jesus I have most appreciated is "the Man for others." That seems to me to be at the heart of servant leadership<sup>1</sup>. Some wonderful books have been written about servant leadership. I want to discuss some of the simple implications for people who want to ask God to lead them in this way.

### i. Leadership from Within

Each year, for the past several, I have encouraged our staff to listen to God for a special scripture, then to ponder that scripture and let it shape their vision, shape their prayer, and shape their speaking. Jesus did this with Isaiah 61. He used it when He preached His inaugural sermon in Luke 4. It under girded His ministry. It focused His prayer life. When the disciples wrote the Gospels they remembered that Jesus' vision was not His own - it was given to Him. He listened first.

If we are going to be servant leaders, we begin with a listening posture, to our Lord in Scripture, to the leadership God has given us, to the people we are called to serve.

It is an important question we need to ask - how am I doing at listening? How clear am I on what I am being called to do? Am I being faithful to that vision in the midst of whatever struggles I face?

All leadership begins from "within."

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<sup>1</sup> Leighton Ford's *Transforming Leadership* is a solid biblical/practical study of Jesus' style, especially chapter 8 on Jesus as a servant leader. A.B. Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve* is a classic used by Robert Coleman in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Robert Greenleaf's *Servant Leadership* talks about leadership in an institutional setting.



There are a lot of different ways to talk about this.<sup>2</sup> For the leader, the real issue is always an internal one. This is a hard lesson for me to learn. I want to change or blame everything but myself, "Young Life expects too much. Not enough leaders are committed. We do not have enough money." All this may be true. The issue for a leader is to begin to understand what is blocking him or her from hearing God's Spirit. What are we to do that will allow us to be open to God's grace? What, in me needs to be transformed?

This is another way of saying the servant leader has to be open to change, to listen, to hear the voice of God. So, the leader has to live with the paradox of being clear about a sense of call and vision, plus open to God and others. This is one of the many tensions with which a servant leader lives and works.

## **ii. Servant Leadership and Cost**

John Stott, in *Imitating the Incarnation*, said, "Evangelical theology is essentially a theology of the cross." There is no other way to understand Christian leadership than leadership that is self-giving and costly. Four times in John 10 Jesus talks about laying down His life for the sheep. It is something He does by His own free will. It is not something pushed on Him by a "program" of any sort.

A good deal of my ministry has been spent trying to understand the meaning and implication of these ideas. How do you lead and serve in this way? Being honest/vulnerable with the people we serve is one thing that we see in Jesus' ministry. It was misunderstood then, and we can expect the same response now.

In America, we are taught to expect to move from victory to victory. Our lives and ministry grow and grow from one mountaintop to the next. I have never heard an area director take scripture and teach his or her leaders how to deal with lack of response (or failure). Jesus took the time to warn the disciples in Mark 6 as He sent them out in mission by twos. Everyone will not "buy" the Gospel (Mark 6:10-11), and He gave them a sign to allow them to "let go" when people did not respond. He helped them deal with one of the outward stresses of ministry. He told them the truth. People do not always respond. They had not responded to Jesus in Mark 6:1-6. Do we ever talk with our leaders like that?

But, soon after the sending of the disciples, Jesus begins to prepare them for the inner cost of leadership. He begins in Chapter 8 of Mark and continues in chapters 9 and 10. Like me, the disciples are not interested in hearing about this. They want things to go smoothly, painlessly. In fact, in Chapter 10 they want glory and honour. Jesus then gives His most clear teaching about servant leadership. It has to do with suffering. It is the way God has chosen to transform us. In fact the primary paradigm for the Christian life

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<sup>2</sup> R\_Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*. Gordon Cosby in *Handbook for Mission Groups*. H. Nouwen in *In the Name of Jesus*. C. Swindoll in *Improving Your Serve*.

is death (deny self/let go/give up) and resurrection (new life/gift/renewal). Jesus modelled it and the disciples misunderstood it.

It seems to me there are numerous ways we may be called to suffer. We may be called to walk with brothers and sisters through their pain, suffering and darkness. The disciples did not want to do this with Jesus.

Then there is the more subtle call to death that comes with facing our own need to let go of power and control. It may be the call to face our own places of sin and darkness and surrender them to Jesus and our fellowship. How do we lead when we are tired, in pain, or not "together?"

Tom Wilson has amazed me with his vulnerability as a senior vice president. I invited him to our region one year to "G-up" the troops because I was too tired to do it. Instead, he shared his own struggles he and his family were facing. The whole meeting moved to a new level of honesty. Leadership can confer this gift if leaders serve by honestly sharing the suffering they face - suffering due to ministry or our personal lives.

When teaching the disciples about the cost of being a servant in Mark 10:45 or in Luke's more expanded account in chapter 22, Jesus never says that being a servant means giving up leadership. He redefines what leadership means, but He expects them to be "the greater" or "the one who rules" (in Luke). He just does not want them to rule by "lording over" people like the Gentiles. Their calling was to lead - Jesus' purpose was to reframe the meaning of leadership.

How have you worked in your own life with the inner cost of leadership?

### **iii. Anger and Hostility/Shooting Straight**

I do not know why, but I am always surprised by the amount of hostility that leaders face. In time, I have come to believe that the ability to face hostility (to work with it and through it) was an important task of a person who wanted to serve. I have always wanted to believe that if I am "nice" enough people will not get upset with me. That is the opposite of what I am talking about. I am called to be open about my struggles and encourage the same in others. All of us bring our own pains and wounds into ministry. The context a leader creates either encourages us to cover up all of our "stuff," or allows us to be who we really are. There is a cost to allowing that kind of openness. Some will be especially upset if the leader is vulnerable. We are not meeting their expectations.

There are many other reasons a leader faces hostility; but the issue is do we dodge it or allow it to surface and grow through it? We are faced with the decision to get on with the task/vision or work with a person. Often hostility is a clue to an important step in a person's spiritual journey. The leader who is willing to serve by facing hostility knows that grace and transformation come at a high price to God and to the people of God.

I have missed too many opportunities in my ministry to help people grow by not shooting straight with them. I have not given them honest feedback about parts of their lives that need to change. Jack Fortin, one of our former vice presidents, used to say "Confrontation + Tribulation = Transformation." Are we willing to take the time, energy, and work that is necessary, (the "tribulation"), to help people grow?

Along with this question, it seems to me we are called to accept people where they are. It is one of the principles we teach early in ministry. How do you live with the tension of accepting people where they are and honestly giving them feedback about their growth?

*Following is an excerpt from an interview between Jeff Munroe and Max DePree.*

**Jeff Munroe:** What are the marks of a servant leader?

**Max DePree:** A servant leader is one who approaches leadership with the thought that the leader owes things to the followers. The leader owes opportunities, recognition, good orientation, reality.

There is a myth afoot that shows itself in our language, when a coach talks about "my team," or a manager talks about "my work team" - that's the wrong language. You don't own them, they own you. Servant leadership starts with this concept: Leadership is a posture of indebtedness.

To carry that out, some further attributes are necessary. Integrity is always at the top of the list, but I think vulnerability may be the point at which most of us struggle in trying to be servant leaders. It is very hard to be vulnerable, that is, open, to the gifts that others bring. When we interact with our children, whom we love dearly, it is not so hard to be vulnerable, but when we transfer that concept into the work place, it is more difficult. Being vulnerable to what other people bring is one of the things that is at the heart of servanthood.

Another thing that is at play here is that when you move steadily up the hierarchy of a really good organisation – an organization that is vital and has a mission that is worthwhile - you become more and more an amateur, because there is such a gap between the actual work that goes on and what the leader shares in. The leader cannot share in all the work that goes on in a good organization so he/she has to be educated in order to make decisions. If the leader understands that he/she is an amateur, the odds are much better that he'll/she'll be able to be a servant.

## Ministry of Reconciliation

By Glyn Henman

**Read:** 2 Cor. 5:17-21, 1 Thes 2:6-12

We are all called to a ministry of reconciliation - a ministry of reconciling those who do not know Jesus into a full relationship with Him. The Bible says that all are called. It means all Christians, not just those who have lots of extra time, are good communicators, are educated in technology, or are outgoing. All. The question isn't just what am I called to do, but how can I best do what God has called me to do?

Young Life is a tool, one of many, and like any tool it can be used correctly or incorrectly. We need to plan together to make a real difference for God's Kingdom.

How do young people come to know Jesus in Young Life? They know you! They have a friendship with you that says 'I love you as Christ loves you - unconditionally.' A friendship that says 'I accept you as Christ accepts you - unconditionally.' I care enough to listen. You are my friend no matter what.

How do young people grow up in Christ? They know you! As you walk with young people who have made commitments, live with them, grow with them, and give yourself to them, they see someone who is their example of who Christ is.

What do young people need today? They need Christian adults of any age to take an interest in them. Young people don't usually have adult "friends" - unless they want something from them. They need adults who are willing to love sacrificially, spend time with them, be vulnerable with them, and stay by their side through whatever life brings. They also need mature adults who are strong and able to be tough with them, when needed. We need to be adults who demonstrate the values of God. Out of this kind of friendship, we proclaim the Gospel.

*"Your actions speak so loud I can't hear your words" changes to "Your actions speak so loud I want to stop in this busy world and listen to what you have to say."*

We are His Ambassadors. An ambassador is both a messenger and a representative. He doesn't speak in his own name or act on his own authority. What he communicates is not his own opinions or demands, but simply what he has been told to communicate. At the same time, he speaks with authority, in this case with the authority of Christ Himself. It is God's divine love we are commissioned to proclaim.

We share God's love with young people by our words, but even more often by giving them our very lives. It's a sacrifice to love young people on their terms, not ours, but that is what we are called to do.

*(Further verses to study: 1 Peter 2:9, Matt 28:19, Matt 9:35-38, Acts 1:8, John 15:7-8, John 15:16-17, John 10:10-11).*

## The Importance of Knowing Why We Do What We Do

(Adapted from an article submitted by Ken Knipp)

Lyle Schaller tells a story of a congregation which always recited the Apostles' Creed in their worship service facing the back of the sanctuary. This practice had been continued for many years without question. No one in the congregation knew why this custom was followed, yet the majority of the congregation was unwilling to change this practice. Finally, it was discovered that many years earlier, when the practice of reciting the creed was begun, a banner on which the Apostles' Creed was printed had hung across the back of the sanctuary. Since the congregation did not know the creed from memory, they always stood, looked at the banner, and then were able to repeat the creed together. This practice continued many years after the banner itself had been removed.

This brief story illustrates how easily we can adopt practices without having any real understanding of the reason why we are doing them. When this occurs, we are exposed to two dangers. The first is that we will follow a very legitimate practice, yet fail to draw out its proper results because we don't understand the reason behind the practice. The second is that we will continue a practice which no longer meets its original purpose, again because we do not grasp the reason why that practice was initiated in the first place.

There are a number of areas where this applies to the ministry of Young Life. Many staff and volunteer leaders have seen others in leadership roles doing contact work, leading clubs or directing camps and modelled what they did after the form of ministry they saw, without always understanding the *function* which the *form* intended to fulfil. Here are some examples:

I have encountered plenty of leaders who thought that if they simply attended a game or other school events, or walked onto the school campus, they had done contact work. While going to school events or the places where kids congregate is a necessary part of contact work, that doesn't get beyond the form. The function is for leaders to be *actively present with kids*, initiating friendships with them. Risking our security is involved, dependence on the Holy Spirit is involved, initiating conversations is involved, seeking to personally demonstrate the love and presence of Christ is involved. These things do not automatically happen if we simply show up at a place where kids are.

The principle holds true for club as well; in fact, it may be here where we have the greatest danger of holding onto the form while forgetting the function. The goal of club is to create a situation in which kids feel safe, where they drop some of their barriers to the Gospel, and are open to understand both a verbal and nonverbal expression of the gospel. Hopefully, this understanding will be evident in skits, message presentation, camping and every other area of our ministry. We need to have a clear idea of why we are saying what we say, and why we are doing what we do. We need to be sure that we understand the *function* we are trying to accomplish, or else we will be facing the back of the church after the banner has been removed.

## **The Signature of Young Life**

*(Adapted from articles by Neil Atkinson, Dick Langford and various other Young Life veterans)*

Contact work is the foundational principle behind Young Life's ability to communicate the Gospel to disinterested teens. It is the platform from which uncommitted adolescents can experience the Gospel. Contact and Young Life go together like a hand in a glove.

Yet for both experienced and new staff alike, contact work can be a difficult, even frightening experience. It is a term that is used handily, but many are not quite sure what it means, or know conclusively that they are doing an effective job of it.

Contact work builds a bridge of unconditional friendship that often stretches from a concerned adult to an "I couldn't care-less" adolescent. It is the movement of an individual into another's life for the purpose of bringing an awareness of God's love.

Unfortunately, many avoid doing contact work, saying, "I don't have the time," "That's not my gift," "I don't relate as well at the school as I do at club," "Let's just concentrate on making club great," "We'll have Campaigners do it -if each Campaigner would reach just one person." These excuses ultimately lead in the wrong direction. Club attendance either declines or, worse, becomes a youth group filled with evangelised teens who are looking for something more attractive than their local church.

Contact work is the beautiful gift God gave to Jim Rayburn and passed on to the rest of us who have been called to be a part of Young Life. It is what has made Young Life unique and has served as a model for several other ministries. Developing relationships with adolescents in their world is a key element of Young Life.

### **What is contact ministry?**

The name contact work does not seem to be a fitting title for the job we are going to discuss. Actually, it is Christian leadership, and every minute we spend in this work we spend as Christian leaders. Paul set the norm for our contact work in 1 Thessalonians 1:5b-6 (The Message), "You paid careful attention to the way we lived among you, and determined to live that way yourselves. In imitating us, you imitated the Master." We intend to lead young people to the place of following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

### **What is the aim of contact ministry?**

The ultimate aim is to lead each young person to the Lord Jesus Christ. The intermediate steps in this plan are:

- Winning the right to be heard.
- Building a bridge of friendship and trust.
- Identifying with people where they are.
- Understanding and penetrating a culture. Demonstrating Christ's love for people.
- Active listening.
- Being the instrument God can use in another life.



Ideally, we go to young people for the same reason that Christ came to humanity: to reveal God to them with no strings attached. To love them in order to get an opportunity to preach to them is a string. We should love them because they need love, because God loves them and wants to love them through us. This concept is one we may have to grow into, but it is included in the idea that with Christ in us the incarnation is still in process in the world- today.

Contact work reminds us of our dependence upon Jesus Christ. If it weren't for Him, we would stay in some comfortable setting with friends our own age. But Christ says go and we go in His strength, with His blessing. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," John 20:21.

"Jesus will not allow true religion to exist in comfortable little circles of its own. The new quality of life is love in action, and that may mean coping at firsthand with the difficult, the messy, and the unpleasant." JB. Phillips

### **Personal preparation**

1. Our walk with the Lord is paramount. A close relationship with Christ and with His people is essential so that when we are with young people our actions, words and attitudes will be His.
2. A growing spiritual understanding of what it means to go to a person who is without, such as Jim Rayburn envisioned, as God taught him:
  - Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.
  - Have a good rapport.
  - Judge not.
  - Walk honestly.
  - Walk in love.

Acceptance by young people depends primarily upon our love for them and our ability to communicate this love non-verbally and verbally. But physical appearance and health should be carefully observed. First impressions are often formed by physical appearance. Leaders do not have to conform to teenage styles, but rather should observe the styles of their own age group.

### **Neighbourhood and School Research**

1. Get to know the school and community in which you will work.
  - Size of school.
  - Intensity of school spirit.
  - Economic, social and racial strata within the school.
  - See who the school leaders are. Read the school paper or yearbook, and be sensitive to changing or new areas – positive or negative -where leaders are involved.
2. Learn as many names as possible. *Keep a list.*

- Follow the athletic programs in the local papers.
- Check to see who on the faculty might be sympathetic to Young Life.
- Learn any special ground rules for visitors on the campus.
- Get the school calendar of events and activities.
- Find out what other clubs are operating, especially other Christian organisations like Scripture Union and Youth Dimensions. Meet with them to determine if there is a need for Young Life as an additional ministry.
- Be aware of any local high school customs or local slang words and their meanings.
- Invite local congregations and individual Christian people to begin praying for specific students. And by all means, have your own prayer strategy!

### 3. Public relations contacts.

- Make sure local law enforcement agencies know of your work (local Police).
- Call on school administrators with staff and local committee members or adult friends. Be positive and open to them. We are there to give information, not to seek their endorsement. Answer their questions concerning purpose, support, endorsement, church relations, program, and personnel.
- Find out what other agencies and churches in the community are at work with young people. Get to know and pray with the leadership of these groups if possible.
- Carefully plan to meet the parents of the students whose friendship you make in the early stages of club development, explaining the program and answering questions. Also, check out your own attitudes toward parents. Are these open? Respectful?
- By showing them the proper respect, seek to get to know school officials, coaches and sponsors as friends so they understand why you are frequently there.

### **Guiding thoughts**

1. Keep clearly in mind that our goal is that every young person should have the opportunity to see and hear of God's love for him/her in Christ through what we do and say.

2. We must be aware of influential teens within different groupings. If we touch these students, we may have the potential of touching others. If we ignore them, we may automatically ignore many who would have been influenced by them.

The key teen concept was based on a sound theological principle. It also has been the target of much criticism over the years. Our call first and foremost is to every young person and we must use whatever strategy possible to reach every teen for Christ. In some schools, the teens who traditionally would have been Young Life key teens are actually the objects of ridicule and scorn. We should love teens unconditionally and offer Christ to all.



3. Most important of all, we must seek to be led of the Holy Spirit. The Lord will often lead us to people who do not seem to be key teens. Many times these will turn out to be the real disciples.

4. You are representing Christ before teens; therefore, it is essential that you are not always with the socially "in" crowd. To spend quality time with all sorts of young people and groups is good. This example is worth a thousand words at club. Your treatment of the "least of these" will prove who you really are.

5. Adult volunteers who come to club but do not do contact work are not Young Life leaders. They might be "club specialists," but the required behaviour to be a Young Life leader is *contact work*.



## The Signature of Young Life – Part II

*(Adapted from articles by Neil Atkinson, Dick Langford and various other Young Life veterans)*

### The three levels of contact work

1. *Being seen* at school affairs and wherever teens are. It is important for the leader seeking to build friendships to express his/her interest by attending events that are important to the teenager. This could be a school play, athletic event or practice session, or some other activity in which they are engaged. It could be a shopping centre, or street corner, or park. The leader might not say anything to anyone, but his or her presence there speaks of interest. It is good to remember the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "We preach Jesus Christ and, when necessary, we use words."

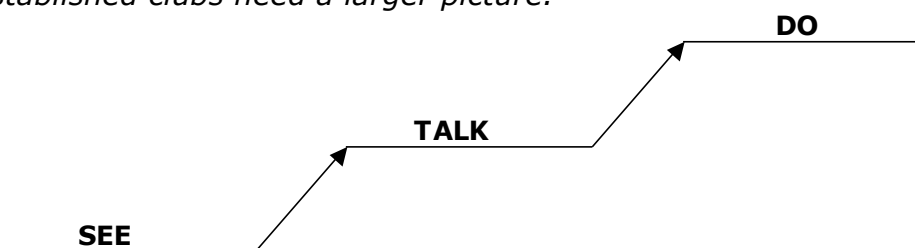
2. *Conversing* with a young person. Before long the leader must step up to this second level and actually talk with someone. If he goes on just hanging around, suspicions will grow about his purposes. Real friendships can be built only through communication, and this communication must be more than an occasional "Hi!" We must remember to look at things from a young person's point of view and learn to speak about things which are of interest to him or her.

3. *Enjoying activities* with young people. Of course, this is the finest way to get to know a young person. Fast friendships are built when we live one of life's experiences with him or her. Suggestions follow:

Water and snow ski trips, fishing trips, college and professional athletic events, golf, having young people over for lunch or after a game, telephone visits, working on school projects or decorations, slumber parties, parade float building, touch football and pickup athletic events, weekend trips to the beach or mountains or cities, bicycling, handball, swimming, bowling, weight lifting, chaperoning school events, athletic officiating, visiting a college or university, music (give guitar lessons or take lessons from teens, listen to their group practice), arts.

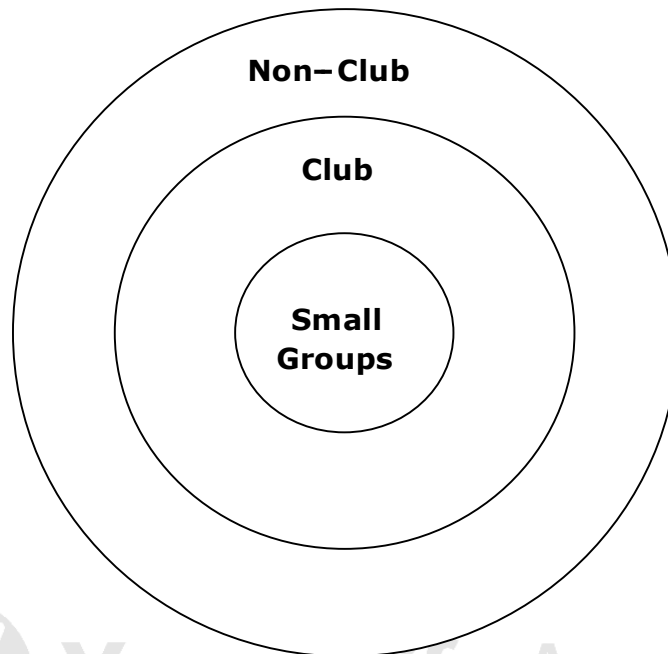
Leaders should use their imaginations and be constantly on the lookout for activities, which they may share with young people.

*Established clubs need a larger picture.*



Besides 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. The

Campaigners are the smallest segment of a high school population. A larger circle surrounding the Campaigners is the circle of club attendees. Club attendees make up the next largest segment with which we have contact. The last group of young people, by far the largest, is the non-club attendees. 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 teens in each of the three categories: Campaigners, club attendees and non-club young people. What frequently happens is that contact work is done with Campaigners and club attendees and is not done with non-club kids *on a regular basis*. Seldom, if ever, do we get to level three contact work. Many Young Life leaders do nothing with non-club attendees, not even converse. No wonder clubs don't expand! We need to go back to relationship development and get to non-club kids at level three. We have to do *something* with them.

### **When do we do contact?**

In order to be effective, we must be regular in our approach to teens. It might mean going when we don't feel like it. It is essential that a leader do contact weekly. Vary the time and type of your contacts. Do not give the young people the idea that you are there to build your own ministry or event. On the other hand, consistent attendance for a certain sport you are targeting can help provide the trust needed to develop relationships.

## General Suggestions and Principles for Contact Work

Practice the discipline of *learning names*. Use whatever system will help best.

*Look for ways to serve* young people - taking a group home (but only those of the same sex!), keeping charts for games. Caution must be used, however, to prevent giving the impression of buying their friendship.

Do not attempt to be one of the kids. We are leaders aware of our age, yet loving and genuinely interested in them and in their affairs. They need to see *adult models*.

Through established friendships, *seek to know others*. Sometimes we can receive a lot of help from those we know. But be careful to love kids for who they are and not what they can do for you or the club.

Do not force your way into certain social situations where you would not be welcome, such as parties or some group discussions. Pray always for *sensitivity* here.

*Avoid making fun* of young people. This is the most dangerous kind of humour.

*Be careful about talking too much* of your accomplishments or your own high school prowess.

*Be yourself*. Do not try to impress with overdone or clever antics, or by imitating others. You don't have to be a comedian, athlete, personality-plus, to love them.

*Ask questions about school* life when in conversation with high schoolers. Most people enjoy talking about these things.

*Ask God for a sincere interest* in young people. They can spot the feigned interest. We might not like all they do, but we can appreciate them as people.

*Be casual*. Don't work too hard at being friendly, with a lot of hand shaking or rapid patter, unless this is natural to you.

Develop a *sense of humour*. Find what fits you best.

*Be adaptable*. Expect to have to change pace from time to time. We cannot predict the adolescent behaviour.

*Keep close personal records* of significant contact, including the adult community. Some sort of diary is of great value, especially in our prayer life.

*Seek to gain friendships with all types of young people, both school leaders and followers. Many of them will have great potential for leading their friends or particular activity group.*

*Cheerfulness and enthusiasm are contagious.*

*In many areas, adults are not welcome in the halls of a school. Study the situation carefully. Have a valid reason for being there. You may have to forego any contact work in the buildings.*

*Every school situation or neighbourhood is unique. Work out a plan or strategy that fits your local picture.*

*Pray for those you have met, or want to meet. Enlist prayer support from interested adults or Christian young people.*

*Contact work is never finished. There are always new ones to get to know. It is this continued effort to be their friend that wins the right to be heard with our message of Jesus Christ. Once the right has been won, work on the right of continued hearing.*

*Realise contact work is identification with people in a real way in the sense that Christ "the Word, became flesh and dwelt among them."*

*Pray for kids as your eyes touch them. Ask God to lead you to those He wants you to meet. Make it a trusting experience. God's timing is not always ours.*

*Pray that God will lead you into deeper, relationships with specific kids. 'Ephesians 3:18, "That you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ, and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension."*

*Be a person of integrity as so beautifully cited in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.*

*Do not draw people to yourself and keep them for your security reasons. Give friends every possible opportunity to grow. You are building the kingdom of God, not kingdoms unto yourself.*

*Remember the whole person, the family they come from, closest friends. Take opportunities to introduce yourself to the parents / carers of the young people you're working with and their friends.*

## Overcoming Fears in Contact Work

(Adapted from an article submitted by Pam Moore)

Contact work is the foundation of effective Young Life ministry. We must be willing to initiate relationships and to permeate the turf of high school young people today. We must be willing to do this with all kinds of young people, many of whom are radically different from ourselves. Often the initial reaction of our leaders to this concept is one of 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 the battlefield and that is uncomfortable. We would be naive to think it would be otherwise.

But there are some tips that can help us move forward in spite of our fears in order to further the work of God's Kingdom. We must ask ourselves, what exactly are our fears and what are the steps that can help us overcome them?

### 1. What are our Fears in Doing Contact Work?

Some of the most common ones mentioned by leaders are as follows:

- Teens will reject us.
- We as leaders won't know how to relate or won't know what to talk about.
- Teens will think we are boring.
- We won't know how to move the conversation below the surface.
- We won't know how to be ourselves; we will feel self-conscious or try to emulate someone else (another leader).
- Teens won't notice us if we are shy
- We will make fools of ourselves or draw attention to ourselves, particularly if we are outgoing.
- We will forget names of those we have met.
- Teens will think we are weird. They will wonder why we are there. And they may even wonder why we do not hang around people our own age.

All these fears are real. And yet to raise our level of consciousness of these and any other fears we might have is the first step in being able to move forward.

### 2. How do we Overcome these Fears?

- We need to remind ourselves every time we step onto a campus or spend time with a young person that the reality is – *young people are dying for adult friends*. They are looking for healthy role models that they can respect, admire and confide in. *Don't underestimate your role. Don't be intimidated*. Young people desperately want your friendship. It's often with the young people you least expect that the Lord will work most dramatically.
- Have confidence in the One who calls you to those young people. 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.

- Remember that with all of your faults and shortcomings, you are still His choice for those young people. He will show Himself through you: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not us," 2 Corinthians 4:7.
- As for what to talk about, the key is to remember to *make them the experts*. Ask things that the teens can talk about freely (*their sports, their families, their friends*).
- Remember to be a good listener. Learn to ask leading and open-ended questions. Learn to ask about the feelings behind what they are saying. Learn to listen attentively and to show empathy and compassion.
- Demonstrate an attitude of acceptance and delight in knowing them. Practice the art of making young people feel special and loving them into their potential. That takes the touch of God's Spirit in our own lives.
- Always let young people 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 to be one who *challenges* kids.
- Demonstrate servanthood in practical ways by offering rides, helping with school. This communicates loudly.
- We need to individualise friendships, which means we need to limit the number of close relationships. Constantly have an attitude of going *deep* and *wide*. We go *deep* with a handful of young people and *wide* with many on campus. There are *always* new young people to meet and to befriend.
- Never forget the importance of these four aspects of contact work:
  - Regularity.
  - Visibility.
  - Availability.
  - Accountability.

## **The Conversation Stack**

Have you ever met someone for the first time and run out of conversation after the first 5 minutes? Welcome to the human race. As funny as it may sound, we are not all gifted in the art of small talk or how to carry a conversation beyond the small talk stage.

So what do you say to teen you are meeting for the first when you are in their environment? Especially when first starting out, contact work can be intimidating and even the most gifted person can get stuck for words.

Each of the questions below is to help you with an initial conversation starter. Each question is designed to build upon the previous question to help you begin to develop a friendship. The first few questions are one word response questions, but they help you build the conversation. Remember, people generally like to talk about themselves. Also, remember to introduce yourself and anyone else you may have with you.

Your job is to think of one or two other questions that you could use to help the conversation along.

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you live?
3. Who do you live with?
4. What do you do with your time?
5. Where do you go for holidays and what do you do?
6. What things are you interested in doing with your spare time/future?
7. What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_ ?



## **The Traditional Young Life Club**

*(Submitted by Fil Anderson)*

### **What is a Young Life club?**

The Young Life club is historically the most effective setting for the proclamation of the Gospel. In some communities, it remains a highly effective tool in reaching out to a majority of a targeted adolescent community. Usually the meeting is held on a 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 maximum effectiveness in expressing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Young Life club should be a heavily prayed-for meeting. Even during the hour, leaders should cultivate the habit of praying without ceasing. Some club teams have been wise to establish prayer teams, which meet during the club hour to focus their attention exclusively on prayer for the meeting. 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. In a class by itself in importance is the leaders' relationship with Christ. Club will always reflect their attitudes. They are the ones who set the whole tone of club. They should radiate Christ in actions, words and attitudes.
2. A successful club is one in which Jesus Christ is made known. It may have nothing to do with numbers of kids, how many laughs were shared or how smoothly it was run. Club is geared to kids and where they are. Nothing is pushed or forced since Christ does not force Himself. Making Jesus known at club simply means doing things in His way, with His attitudes and His actions. The fun and games of club are all part of the nonverbal communication of Christ.
3. Young Life club is a team ministry. Christian kids and leaders living the Christian life are of major importance. They help set the atmosphere to be that of Christ's love. Their love and concern at club build a vital believing base for the message.
4. When kids leave club, they should feel like something was different about that one hour. As they continue to come, they should find out for themselves that it was Jesus Christ's presence that made it special. It was Christ in people, in the songs, in the laughs, in the message and in the attitudes.
5. Numbers *are* important! Christ's command to all of us is to 'go to all the world' and to every person. We will ask God to use us to reach as many kids as we can in our meetings. Well attended meetings usually have a stronger feel of excitement and interest. Obviously, then, we hope lots of kids will show up, and we pray to this end. *But be careful.* Numbers, per se, do not necessarily spell success.

## Preliminary Considerations

The club meeting features *planned* informality. The leaders are in charge, but the students feel it is their club. They sit on the floor, usually in the home of one of the participants, but it could be held elsewhere. The parents are the hosts and should be within earshot of what goes on.

1. Most clubs meet on a weekly basis, the same night each week. Continually shifting the night or calling off club will seriously impair the outreach it has.
2. Typically, in suburban situations, the meeting lasts from 50 minutes to an hour. In some urban and rural situations, the meeting may also involve recreational and social activities, and last for an evening. In places where the majority of teens experience home as a place to escape from, club becomes a safe place to be, and kids want to stay as long as possible.
3. It must be attractive - should move along and not drag.
4. The meeting is designed to introduce disinterested high school kids to Jesus Christ. *It should not become a clique for Christian young people;* we must always guard against this as some clubs become safe Christian sanctuaries.
5. It is open to any student in the school or community. There is no such thing as membership or dues.
6. Leaders make every effort to cooperate with 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. Always be sensitive enough to include those who tend toward being dropouts. Strive to win them also.
7. 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.
8. Information, both printed and spoken, must be given to parents. This may be accomplished through a prepared brochure, personal visit, phone call, or Parents' Night. In urban situations, it is vitally important that club leaders have a letter of introduction and explanation available at every meeting for new kids to take home. Don't leave parents guessing about what kind of group Young Life is.
9. No club may exist under the name Young Life without the supervision of a Young Life staff representative. This means, among other things, an adequate reporting system on a regular basis.
10. Leaders are free to experiment with new features in club just as long as the Gospel is not obscured or the club does not become mere entertainment.
11. Careful records should be kept in the form of weekly club report cards and use of the informal club cards 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.

14. The message is the climax of the meeting. All that is done earlier should prepare the way for the verbal presentation of Jesus Christ.

### **Atmosphere of Club**

1. Should be relaxed and enjoyable.
2. Picture Christ's love flowing from you to each kid.
3. Let students know you appreciate being with them.
4. Give them as much responsibility for the club meeting as possible. Help them to feel that it is *their* club. Let them participate. Here are some possible ways to incorporate students into the leadership and ownership of the club:
  - a. Have kids lead songs. (They should be carefully coached first.)
  - b. Have them clap, raise hands, answer questions.
  - c. Have them yell for their class or team.
  - d. Have kids pass out brochures, give announcements, do walk-ons and skits.
  - e. At certain times in the year you may want to ask kids to share their faith, lead in prayer or give the message.
5. Keep things moving. Don't lose momentum.
6. Each of the team leaders should sit in the middle of a group of kids and give rapt attention to the up-front leader at all times. This attitude will catch with the kids around the leader.



## The Traditional Young Life Club – Part II

(Submitted by Fil Anderson)

As was highlighted in the last article, the Young Life club is historically the most effective setting for the proclamation of the Gospel. The following “ingredients” and suggestions for making the club effective are a guide only, although should be taken into consideration as is written from a collection of years of experience. You know the young people you’re working with the best – do what is going to be most effective for the skills you have within your leadership team and is going to be most engaging for the young people you are working with. Remember, the main point of club is the clear proclamation of the Gospel – if you are engaging unreached young people and giving them a clear Message, you are running an effective club.

### Traditional Ingredients of the Young Life Club Meeting

- **Music/Singing** has particular value in getting 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.
- **The Minutes (Skits/Games).** This is not just a skit thrown into the program, but rather an important ingredient for breaking down barriers and making kids laugh and relax in a happy setting.
- **The Announcements.** Mainly used to break the stride of the meeting and cover any future plans for the club. Camp promotion may often best be done at this time.
- **The Message.** An important part of any Young Life club is when a leader has the opportunity to speak of Jesus Christ to young people who do not know Him. Give them something to believe so the Holy Spirit can do His work.
- **The Close.** Brief, but important in leaving kids with a good impression of the meeting and what was said.

### Making the Club Effective

#### ***Variety***

Young Life leaders have discovered that a club is attractive in its informal, sincere, loving presentation of Jesus Christ. The message does not need the support of special gimmicks and tricks, special music or refreshments, to be effectively heard and appreciated. Sometimes the charm and force of a club meeting is its simplicity. On the other hand, care must be taken not to get in a rut and allow the meeting to become routine or lacklustre. From time to time, leaders will want to try a special effect, or club meeting, just to introduce some needed variety. See *Module Seven - Further Resources* for suggestions.

#### ***Discipline in club***

Discipline is built upon respect. Most problems may be solved as we get to know the young people we are working with and as they know and respect us. Teenagers are naturally enthusiastic. In a setting as informal as a Young Life club, they will undoubtedly

pose discipline problems. Good leadership will ensure that the same problems will not continue week after week.

Christian kids can cause trouble with an "I've heard all this before," attitude. Disinterested students are often careless, not malicious, in their inattention.

- Pray for wisdom.
- Try to understand the reasons for inattention.
- Work hard to win the confidence of the ones who cause trouble.
- Keep motives in check. Are you motivated by a wounded ego or by a desire for kids to hear the Gospel?

### ***Some Solutions to the Problem of Noise and Inattention***

- Arrange furniture and focal point so kids can see the leader.
- Up-front leaders should be in a good light, good enough to show facial expressions.
- Leaders can help greatly by sitting close to trouble spots and modelling an attitude of complete attention to the up-front leader. Attitudes are contagious.
- At the first club of each semester, remind kids of some basic ground rules at club: We are committed to making club fun and treating you with respect. We ask, in turn, that you will listen carefully during the last 10 to 20 minutes each week. When noise and inattention must be stopped, try:
  1. Heart-to-heart talk, jovial or serious: "Hey, wait a minute. There are too many clubs going on tonight. This is way too important for us to compete with a lot of chatter."
  2. Just be quiet: Let it become obvious that someone is disturbing.
- Work on kids individually: Chat with him or her after club about it. Show love to that kid there and everywhere.
- Evaluate your club format frequently. Be willing to hear and act upon kids' constructive criticism as well as that of other leaders.

### ***Special Problems***

- *Kids who won't come in:* A leader should invite them in each time they hang around the outside. Be sure you are always friendly when you meet them at school. If they are making noise in an attempt to disrupt, appeal to their sense of fair play and ask them either to come in or at least let the rest of the crowd enjoy the club.
- *Kids who want to heckle you in club:* Above all, don't get angry since that would mean they won the game. If it isn't persistent, a readiness to laugh at yourself has the best chance of ending it quickly.
- *Smoking..* Do not allow it at clubs. It is against the law, it is offensive to non-smokers, and it can burn carpets!

### ***Publicising the club***

Of course the key to this is the student who is really sold on Young Life, perhaps a Christian who was greatly helped to personal faith through Young Life. Word of mouth invitations to others to come are most effective. These may be supplemented by:

1. Printed slips or flyers or pencils, giving information on where club meets, when etc. (Some school authorities object to these being given on campus. We must observe their wishes.) Some leaders see as much as a 25 percent increase in attendance due to flyers.
2. Posters or PA announcements are sometimes permitted on campus. Again, special care must be given to not violate school rules.
3. The leaders may become involved in some school activity, helping to officiate at a game, speaking to a class or assembly, working with a teacher or dean on some special program or project.
4. Be careful that your friendship with kids is not conditional on club attendance. Encourage kids to do most of the inviting of their friends.
5. Some kids need an invitation from a leader they have met. A good rule of thumb is to specifically invite a student once, and then pray for wisdom and sensitivity about bringing it up again.

### ***Encouraging decisions***

Young Life leadership is determined not to use embarrassing button-hole techniques. Yet, we must keep in mind the young person who might respond with a more directed and guided chance to trust Christ at a Young Life club. We do not need to wait for camps or special meetings to expect kids to make their commitment to Jesus Christ. If we give a closing prayer, we may help them phrase their own prayer of faith.

Leaders should be available to kids who might want to talk. We must make it as easy as possible to see us. We may want to encourage them publicly to come, letting them know we would like to help in any way possible. A direct question from the leader is in order with those we know very well, such as, "What do you think about all of this?"

It could happen at any time or place when a leader senses the young person wants help in meeting Christ in a personal way.

### ***Pitfalls***

A few assorted problems in club work are as follows:

- Do not use the summer camp entertainment skits for the minutes of club. This ruins it for all who go to camp and it is too often done.
- Beware of clocks, chimes and phones during the message. Stop them prior to club, if possible.
- Leaders should carefully avoid any situation where they might be alone with a young person of the opposite sex, such as taking him or her home from club.

## Giving an Effective Message

*(Adapted from an article submitted by Dr Chap Clark)*

Young Life has always been noted for its effective communication to young people. From the early pioneers to today's staff and volunteers, there remains a commitment to effective messages targeting youth. But productive communication, especially to a highly diversified and disinterested youth culture, is becoming increasingly more difficult. In order to reach the kids of today and beyond with the truth of the Gospel in a way that they can understand and are drawn to, it is vital- that Young Life messages be as clear and relevant as possible.

This article recommends a relatively simple, add water and stir method of preparing and delivering an effective message. This approach has been handed down in one form or another for decades. There is nothing new, but the plea in this approach is for simplicity and a return to the roots of what makes a good talk. The time-honoured speaking traditions in Young Life still provide one of the best possible methods for reaching disinterested kids with the wonder of Jesus Christ.

### Method

#### Order of preparation:

- Controlling Thought
- Conclusion
- Body (Scripture)
- Introduction
- Application
- Transitions

This order is useful every time you approach a brief message to any audience where you have one point to convey. A banquet talk, for example, may require the exact same preparation method in order to stay on target and not lose focus.

#### Components of the Message:

These are the essential six components of an effective message. See the examples at the end of the proclamation section.

1. Controlling Thought: This is your target statement. When the message is finished and someone is asked, 'What did she say?' he should be able to repeat this phrase almost verbatim. Throughout the talk, no matter how lost or nervous you get, as long as you keep this one phrase in mind, you cannot help but communicate clearly.
2. Conclusion: After writing down the thesis statement, the next task is to formulate a conclusive paragraph or summary. The reason I prepare this second is because



it provides a framework within which the controlling thought can be couched and delivered. When the thesis is clear, the conclusion will be clear.

3. Body: In almost every talk of this kind, the body represents the Scripture which illustrates the thesis. In most preaching classes, students are taught that the controlling thought flows out of the Scripture. But for a specifically evangelical or informational message, where the controlling thoughts have already been formulated and agreed upon (in Young Life, the Statement of Mission Purpose and Doctrinal Statement), the Bible becomes the tool to illustrate the truth being communicated.
4. Introduction: The point of an introduction is to draw the attention of the crowd to the speaker and interest them in what you have to say. Sometimes this is a personal story, current news or school occurrence or an anecdote. It usually has some sort of natural tie to the Scripture (or sometimes the controlling thought). The danger for most speakers is a tendency to spend too much time with an illustration, thus taking away from the point of the talk and diluting the impact and focus on the controlling thought.
5. Application: This is one of the most neglected components of Young Life messages. We will communicate life saving truth to students and then leave them without an avenue to implement the information. An effective talk must always have a clear and simple application that can be both understood and carried out. For example, after a talk on the identity of Christ, ask kids to answer the question for themselves, "Who do you say that I am" or challenge them to complete this statement on their own: "I believe Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."
6. Transitions: Perhaps the biggest mistake that is made by speakers is the lack of attention given to transition statements. Between every point there must be a sentence or phrase that bridges the gaps between thoughts. It can be smooth (And if you think I was hurting, let's look at a woman who once lost everything she had," and turn to Mark 5:21) or rather abrupt (Enough about school, let's get into some *real* exciting stuff . Last week we saw how Jesus...). The point is to make sure that each transition makes sense and maintains continuity and flow from point to point, making sure that the thesis statement is the objective.

### **Trouble Shooting: Common Pitfalls to Avoid**

- **Overuse of Illustration**: The point of a talk is to lift up Jesus Christ and not ourselves. We must keep in mind that every illustration is simply a tool to get into the Scripture, which in turn highlights the thesis. If an illustration goes beyond this purpose, it will often overshadow the thesis, which would cause a reaction like: "Great message! I'm not sure what was said, but it was sure funny!"



- **Muddy Conclusion:** Usually caused by lack of adequate preparation, where the most common mistake is to take either our favourite Scripture or illustration and force it into a talk.
- **Lack of Direction or Flow:** Again, often caused by preparing the components out of order, or not thinking through transitions. The key to a smooth flowing message is keeping a clear focus on the thesis and supporting it.
- **Poor Use of Scripture:** Scripture deserves careful attention in our messages. We must make sure that our interpretation is true to the original intent of the passage, and that we are not stretching the text to make it say what it does not intend. Every passage should be thoroughly studied and prayed through before speaking to kids in the name of the Lord.
- **Poor Delivery:** An effective Young Life message can be invalidated by poor delivery. It helps for the speaker to be aware of deficiencies and work on the delivery prior to speaking regularly. Such things as gum chewing, holding the Bible like a shield, speaking in a whisper or monotone and avoiding eye contact will diminish the effectiveness of a message. On the other hand, if the leader is known (and presumably liked) by kids, has a clear and simple message with a specific thesis and application and is willing to share with kids as friends, an unpolished delivery will still make a huge impact on the lives of the students.
- **A wise, old sage** once remarked to me, "Your message is only as good as the breath mints in your pocket." Not a bad piece of advice as someone approaches you after a talk.

## Club Components

### Effective Announcements

- Announcements are the vehicle we use for communicating upcoming attractions. Many of these events are key to our relationship building and proclamation. Therefore, announcements should be heard, remembered and ignite enthusiasm.
- Typically, there is one "Big Event" a team is selling. It is good to preface the announcement related to this event with a short run-on or skit that motivates kids to want to find out the details.
- To get kids to remember dates, it is helpful to make up a rhyme or slogan and ask them to repeat it each week, i.e., "August 3-9, I'm There!"
- Create a sense of urgency to respond to your invitation soon.
- Sometimes momentum can be generated by prompting Campaigners to raise their hands in response to the question, "Who's going?" following the announcement of an event.
- "So what?" is also a good question to answer. Tell them the benefits of their participation.
- Since kids will forget most of what is announced at club, it is helpful after the speaker closes in prayer for him or her to highlight any announcements that require attention after club like singing up for something, picking up a brochure, filling out a club card, etc.
- Sell things far enough ahead to build momentum, but not so far they are uninterested.

### Effective Icebreakers and Mixers

Since a club is made up of kids from a variety of groups who may or may not know each other, it is sometimes helpful to incorporate a mixer or ice-breaker into the club program.

A **mixer** is a game in which everyone participates and demands each kid interact with at least one other, if not everyone in the room. This "connection" with the other participants creates a feeling of safety for what will follow. They feel like they are all in this thing together.

An **ice-breaker** is a quick, funny way to defuse the crowd and put everyone at ease. In this case, kids don't have to interact with others, but instead share a common laugh.

- Though not essential, sometimes it can be helpful to have a team of student leaders kick off club with a mixer. Since they are initiators rather than the volunteers, other kids may feel more free to follow their lead. Obviously student leaders must be the right kids.
- Make the activity more fun than threatening.
- Be sure the instructions are clear and well-heard; otherwise, no one will want to participate for fear of failure.
- Test the idea yourself before doing it so you are sure to lead it effectively. Be sure to have the right props.

### **Effective Walk-Ons**

A run-on is a short skit that interrupts the flow of club. It can be a one-shot deal or a skit that is built on for several weeks running. It can be used to sell an event or just get a quick laugh. A continuous run-on creates an air of anticipation for what is coming as kids look forward to the next act.

### **Weekly Run-Ons**

- The characters should be clearly defined and easy to stereotype.
- Some of the dialogue should be repeated each week so the kids can say the lines along with the characters.
- Each episode should build toward a finale.
- It is effective, where desired, for the underdog to experience victory in the finale.
- Don't drag it out - either by over-milking individual episodes, or by carrying it out for more than six or seven episodes.
- Pick an appropriate theme song to kick off the run-on so kids know its coming and get quiet for the dialogue.

### **One-Time Interrupters**

- Come in suddenly, unannounced, even interrupting a song sometimes.
- Be well-rehearsed: A few well-chosen lines are better than rambling dialogue (often a consequence of inadequate preparation).
- Be short: Quit while they are wanting more.
- Dazzle them with visuals: either some memorable costumes, I-can't-believe-they-just-did-that antics, a goofy face, or by using humorous props (i.e. a bucket of water that's really confetti).

### **Effective Skits**

Historically, the reasons we do skits at club are as follows:

- laughter helps break down barriers;
- skits show humorous side of leaders;
- kids up front invites participation for all;
- they focus a diversity of kids on a common experience;
- done well, they portray a commitment to excellence, which communicates caring.

Introduce the skit with a creative idea that gets everyone's attention (funny costumes are good for this). You want kids excited about the skit before it ever takes place.

Involve a cross-section of the kids in club (don't use the same ones each week). Limit the number of Campaigners in skits.

Be crystal clear to the participants and the audience what the point of the skit is, and how it will run. A prerequisite of this is thoroughly thinking through the best way to run the skit.

Make sure every member of the audience is involved (cheering for their team, letting them in on the punch line, judging).

Never bore the audience. If you have props to set up or costumes to put on the participants, do it during a song. Don't allow for any "dead" time.

Be sure the MC is loud and speaks to the audience, not just to the participants.

Be certain everyone in the room has an unobstructed view of the skit.

Protect the floor, walls, and participants' hair and clothing from damage. Damage is never funny, always distracting and doesn't depict excellence.

Honour the participants with a funny prize, or at least a round of applause. Make all participants feel like winners!

Be creative - make audience say, 'Wow'

### Thinking through Skits

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* John 10:10

- Skits need to be in good taste.
- The whole purpose is to have fun!!
- Usually short: 5 to 7 minutes.
- Keep them moving - don't let it drag.
- Never crude or in poor taste.
- Never make humorous references to the spiritual aspect of club.
- Skits help to break down barriers.
- Use many different kids.
- Be very careful about involving new kids.
- We don't want kids to feel humiliated.
- Be creative.
- Walk through the skit in your head. Think through what could go wrong.
- Don't become predictable.
- Let Campaigner kids take ownership.
- Teach Campaigners how to think through skits. Make them successful up front.
- Always be prepared.
- If you are going to really mess someone up in the skit, you may want to clue him or her in beforehand.
- Make up a "skit bag:" drop cloth, paper towels, emergency skit, etc.

## **Responsibilities of a Leader**

### **Before Club:**

Arrive early – about an hour

- Not to plan club (it's already been laid out ahead of time)
- Get organised – order of the meeting, skit, etc. (have it in writing)
- Last minute preparation
- Prepare the room (talk about homes)
- Beat the kids there – be ready when the first one arrives so you can hang out.
- Pray together before the chaos begins.

Patrol – help outside

- Park cars
- Keep kids from getting hurt
- Greet kids outside
- Meet parents
- Have new kids fill out club cards (address and other information).

### **During Club:**

- Do your assigned job – be ready and practiced.
- When not involved spread out and help control kids by sitting with them.
- Don't be up front unless involved.
- Don't take away from who's up front by drawing attention to yourself.
- Sing enthusiastically, laugh, pay attention.
- Draw kids into the singing, tease them into clapping.
- Be alert to any crisis, keep kids inside, don't let them throw things.

### **After Club:**

Visit with kids

- Tell them you're glad they were there
- Be available to answer questions
- Take time to give yourself to them
- Leave to do contact work with them
- Set up a time to hang out with them later in the week.

Get kids home

- Again, be outside to patrol. This is a good time to meet parents and to provide safety.
- Don't leave while kids are still there, whether you meet at homes or another place.
- Clean up
  - Not until kids leave
  - Everyone help.

If at a home, be sure to vacuum, take trash with you and say THANK YOU!

## **A Prayer Strategy for Club**

*(Adapted from an article written by Kit Sublet).*

*"Prayer is surely one of the most spoken about and written about subjects in Christianity. Unfortunately, it is not the most acted upon subject in all Christianity. We constantly emphasize the importance of prayer but seldom heed our own words. The quality of the staff (volunteer) reflects the quality of the individual's time in his/her closet with the Saviour" From Back to the Basics by John Miller*

I am sure all of us pray for our Young Life club. Without prayer, club is no more than an entertaining evening with some friends (if it is even that), and you are no more than a neat guy or gal who has an attractive personality. The power of prayer cannot be overstated. It powers our lives and empowers our ministry. When we are prayed up, we are instruments of the Holy Spirit finely sharpened and ready for spiritual warfare.

We all have a picture in our mind of what great Young Life ministry is supposed to look like - energetic singing, amusing skits, winsome club talks and, of course, lots of contact work. It is possible, however, for all of these things to be taking place ineffectively, because it lacks the power of having even one person pouring his or her heart out to Christ, asking for the salvation of the kids that are involved. Andrew Murray says, "God seeks intercessors. God has need of intercessors. God wonders at the lack of intercessors. Rest not till God see that you are one."

What I am trying to say here is that we must be sure that prayer is every bit as much a priority as the rest of the program. Young Life has become so program-oriented and so specialized that we have a tremendous amount of gifted people. It is possible, and likely, to pull off what would technically be described as good ministry without ever praying. Something that has the appearance of godliness, but lacks the power.

So, what is the importance of prayer?

Prayer - secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness."  
(William, Carey)

It is the key ingredient to the recipe for a successful ministry.

Has anything new been said about prayer? Of course not! However, is it possible to begin new prayer practices that will empower our ministry and help produce eternal fruit for the kingdom? Yes, definitely. But, like everything in Young Life, we need a plan. We plan certain talks for certain times of the year; we plan our music to bring kids out of their shell and enhance the message; we plan skits to show that Christianity can be fun; and we even have three levels of contact work. Doesn't it make sense then, that if prayer is the most important element of our ministry, it should have a plan as well?

Following are some possible plans and strategies you might be led to try:

- Pray for a manageable number. Whether this means separating the names on your club list throughout the week or throughout the leadership team - keep it reasonable and specific.
- Pray them through these basic lists:
  1. *Kids you don't know*: Start with a list of kids you would like to meet. Pray. Hopefully, they do not stay on this list too long.
  2. *Kids you've met*: Pray for an opportunity to get together.
  3. *Kids you spend time with*: Pray that the conversations will eventually reach beyond the surface level of getting -to know one another.
  4. *Intimate relationships*: Pray for an opportunity to share your life with them.
  5. *Meeting Christ*: Pray for them to give their lives to Christ.
- Assemble a group of committed mums and dads who are sold out to the idea of praying daily for a list of kids that you give them, and to meeting once a week together for prayer. (Preferably during the hour your club is meeting.)
- Keep a prayer notebook.
  1. Don't casually promise to pray for someone or something. Make a serious commitment and record the requests and results.
  2. The blessing in prayer is to be able to look back and recognize how God chose to answer the requests.
- Have a prayer partner. Meet weekly with another person to pray solely for the team and for kids. The partnership will keep you accountable and comes with a promise, "for where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst," *Matthew 18:20*.
- Keep kids' names in front of you: on bookmarks, on the back of the visor in your car, on the refrigerator. Create constant reminders to be an intercessor.
- Don't forget to pray during club and have others pray on the night at home.

Remember, your prayer strategy need not consist of all, or even any, of these suggestions, but you need a systematic plan by which you lift up the individuals which God has placed in your care.

## Camp Sell Calendar

	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
<b>C</b> Conceptualizing	* Build anticipation for next year's camp with the energy from the kids who just returned.	* Camp promotion year round is a must.	* To get 35 kids to camp, you need 100 on the list that you're asking.	* For kids to go, you must go. * Plan as if you are the camp manager for your kids.	* Sell Committee and other Christian parents on camp – their support will help encourage kids to go.	* Young Life camp should be the most attractive kid's activity in your community.	* Most kids don't listen to club announcements – talk to them one on one. * No is not no forever.	* Kids sell kids better than we do. * Don't consider a kid to be "signed-up" until their deposit is in.	* Always ask kids one on one – asking kids in a group is not very effective.	* Never allow money to be an issue. * Never sell camp to the point of jeopardizing your relationship with that kid.	* We must believe it will be the "greatest week in kids lives".	* Make the whole camp experience about showing kids God's excellence.
<b>A</b> Acting	* Create an evaluation system to make sure you have covered all bases well - what can be Better/different from last year?	* Create a Camp Sign-Up checklist. * Start fundraising for summer camp now – Bunnings / Aldi BBQ's, car washes before the cold	* Get firm commitments from leaders about taking kids to summer camp. * Continue fundraising for summer camp now – are there lots of leaves that need to be raked right now?	* Get camp dates to kids early to beat vacation, sports camps, etc. Camp letter with dates to parents you know always go on family holidays in Jan	* Make sure your leaders always have plenty of brochures.		* Plan and pray with the goal that camp and the trip out there go smoothly (double check bus/plane reservations, etc).	* Be prepared to answer key question - "Who is going?".	* Keep on-going list of who has been asked... a kid who says no in April may become available in October.	* Communicate to kids any special things they will need to bring to camp, or things they will want leave at home.		* Get a camp video to show during the fall banquet. * Take pictures at camp for promoting next year's trip – kids like to see their friends.
<b>M</b> Motivating	* Have a camp reunion when you return to keep the memory alive. * Give kids the vision to either: - return on camp a second time with a group of friends - attend camp as work crew	* Start telling kids dates for next January, especially key kids / kids that are returning – they will be key in your camp strategy!	* Sell summer camp on water ski weekend away.	* Have an interest sign up sheet at club for every kid remotely interested. * Give leaders the vision: -what will this mean for their lives? -how will their ministry look next year?	* Have parents sign-on to Centre Pay		* Summer camp looks great when the winter weather is miserable. * Show camp video again at clubs / schools etc.	* Find out what a particular kid is interested in and highlight that activity at camp.	* Tell kids sincerely... "I am looking forward to being with you." – you have to mean it!!	* Keep selling camp until trip leaves.	* Have pre camp get togethers for signed up kids and potentials (BBQs, pool parties, volleyball, etc.).	
<b>P</b> Praying	* Give thanks for kids who met Christ at camp and pray for those who are still thinking. I Thess. 5:16-18	* Pray that the Lord would give you vision for the year. Ask him "Where do You want us to go/do with summer camp?"	* Pray that God would bring specific kids to mind to ask to camp.	* Pray for winter camps. Also, that new believers would continue to seek Christ and tell their friends about Him.	* Develop prayer chart of possible kids (Yes, Maybe, No Way). Mark 1:35	* Pray for God to put excitement in kids' hearts about signing up for camp.	* Get local "prayers" to pray for kids.	* Get Campaigners praying for lost friends, younger students. Mark 2:1-12.	* Pray that kids' faith would be strengthened by praying for their friends and watching God work.	* Pray for kids by name daily.	* Bathe the actual Camp week in prayer.	* Pray for safety at the camps and that kids' hearts would be softened.



## **40 Ways to Get Kids to Camp**

1. Develop prayer list of possible kids.
2. To get 35, you need 100 on list.
3. Pray by name for kids daily.
4. Get local "pray-ers" to pray for kids.
5. Enlist previous campers to bring friends.
6. Announce summer camp in club all year.
7. Talk to kids one on one.
8. Inform sports coaches, or school administrators about camp, camp dates, etc.
9. Have parents give down payment as Christmas present.
10. Have signup sheet for every kid remotely interested at club.
11. Be prepared to answer key question: "Who is going?"
12. Be aware of competing activities.
13. Build year-to-year tradition.
14. Build camp price around 30 paying kids if it is a trip of 35.
15. Keep an on-going list of who has been asked. A kid who says no in October may become available in December.
16. Keep selling camp until trip leaves.
17. Show video in homes one on one -or to groups of non-club kids.
18. Go to homes to pick up deposits.
19. Kids are not signed up until you have a substantial deposit.
20. Find out what activity kids are interested in and highlight that activity at camp.
21. Get Campaigners praying for lost friends, younger students.
22. Find out what lies behind a "no." If a kid says he/she can't afford it, ask if he/she would go if the money was raised. Remove obstacles in an imaginary fashion first, and if he or she responds affirmatively, then work with him/her to remove the obstacle. Remember, only 10% of kids who say they will go next year actually do.
23. Summer camp looks great when the winter weather is miserable.
24. Never allow money to be an issue. Plan effective camp fundraisers.
25. Tell kids sincerely, "I am looking forward to being with you."
26. Get camp dates to kids early to beat holiday and family vacations.
27. For kids to go, you must go.
28. Have pre-camp get-togethers for signed-up kids and potentials (BBQ's, pool parties, volleyball, etc.).
29. Kids sell kids better than we do.
30. We must believe it will be the "greatest week in kids' lives."
31. Committee and other parents must be sold on camp for their kids to go.

32. Plan and pray with the goal that Young Life camp becomes the most attractive kid's activity in your community.
33. Never sell camp to the point of jeopardizing your relationship with that kid.
34. Personally talk with five kids per week about camp.
35. Sell summer camp on a weekend trip.
36. With Campaigners, give vision:
  - a. you can affect lives for eternity
  - b. you can be like junior leaders before, during, after camp
  - c. you will see God do great things
  - d. pray for friends by name starting now
  - e. develop their own "yes, maybe, no way" list.
37. With leaders, give vision:
  - a. what will this mean for their lives?
  - b. how will their ministry look next year?
38. You are the camp manager for your kids.
39. Show camp video after club for new kids.
40. Don't ask for commitments to go from kids in a group situation. Always ask for a commitment one on one.



## What is Campaigners?

Campaigners (discipleship groups / small groups) are traditionally a group of students committed to growing in their relationship with Christ and sharing this relationship with others. Whilst going through this section, consider those young people you are currently working with. Are there any that haven't yet made a commitment, but are interested in finding out more? Are there any you seen have leadership potential and enjoy being with you? If you don't have a group of young people who have made a commitment, consider starting a group with a group of young people who are willing and wanting to meet with you more regularly and model to them what a small group is all about – pray for them and see what The Lord does with you and them in the context of a small group.

### Committed to a group

God works through a group, a "body," a team - His Church. We learn about ourselves and His love for others as we live and work together.

### Committed to growing

As leaders, we recognise that kids are in different places in their journey with Christ. Keeping this in mind, Campaigners is still for those who desire to grow in their faith. In club, we aim at the lowest common denominator. The club message is basic so the kid farthest away might understand. In Campaigners, however, we are running with the big dogs. Although our Campaigners will be at various levels of commitment to Christ, this is still a time for those who want to be challenged to grow spiritually.

### Committed to sharing

Our growth in Christ will show itself in our love for others. Campaigners is more than simply gaining biblical knowledge, although it most definitely includes this. As we grow, we will want to reach out to others. Campaigners are our student leaders, the backbone for our club work.

Mark 12:28-31: "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'of all the commandments, which is the most important?'"

"'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.'"

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
- to love our neighbours - families, friends, peers, those of various backgrounds and cultures, the less fortunate - as ourselves

But this doesn't just happen.

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 Campaigner 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.

### **Begin with the end in mind**

- Your discipleship will take the shape of whatever you believe to be your goal.
- For some this goal is informational. "If we can just get Campaigners to read the Bible and learn biblical truths, we have succeeded."
- For others the goal is sharing. "Our teenagers need adults who create a safe place for them to be able to talk about what they are feeling in a non-judgmental setting."
- Still others may see the goal of Campaigners as building the Young Life club at their school. "Kids need a form of outreach to learn how to serve the Lord among their peers and club provided the opportunity."

Each of these goals is worthwhile. 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 of our time together.

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

This is the great commandment. The great commandment warrants our greatest attention. It is the end that we must keep in mind as we set out.

How does Campaigners help us love God and others? By giving us a true understanding of the One we worship and our need for God (biblical literacy). By allowing us to know the Lord's healing and compassion (honest sharing). And by giving us opportunities to live out our faith in an unbelieving world (service and mission).

When setting out to lead a Campaigner group, remember the end we have in mind is to love God with all that we are and to love others more. Keep asking yourself, "How does this help my friends love God and others more?" Begin with this end in mind!

*Taken from the Campaigner Handbook.*

## **The Value of Small Groups**

As we look at our Saviour's life, we see that He used small groups in His ministry. In fact, much of the time we see Jesus was ministering to people in small groups. The following is an acronym that organises some of the truths that demonstrate the value of a small group in a ministry setting.

### **S**hare your life

This happens as people share their struggles, joys, victories, sorrows, answers to prayer, what Jesus is teaching them, and what their relationship with Christ is like.

### **M**inistry

Many times other people can see their friends' gifts before they do. Small groups are a great place to challenge each other to discover and use their spiritual gifts.

### **A**ccountability

Small groups help us to be accountable in our spiritual walk, evaluating our spiritual discipline, challenging us to pray, memorize Scripture, and study God's Word.

### **L**isten and Learn

Being part of a small group can help develop the skill of truly listening to one another. God often speaks to us, or teaches through others experiences or revelations.

### **L**ove

Because we share our lives together, the group is able to understand many needs in the lives of each of its members. We can pray for others and often meet a need.

### **G**od

God speaks to us through the Body of Christ. In small groups we grow in our Christian walk as others confront, encourage, or pray for us.

### **R**elationships

Small groups help us develop close, healthy, loving relationships with others. Deep friendships form quickly when you are in a small group that meets on a regular basis.

## **O**ppportunity

Small groups provide a wonderful opportunity to go deep with a few people, giving us a chance to be a part of what God is doing in the process of training leaders.

## **U**nity

As small groups love and care for one another and work through conflict, the value of being united in love is displayed for all to see.

## **P**ray

In a small group, people are willing to share much more deeply than if they are praying with others they don't know well. Pray anywhere and anywhere. Pray often!

Here are just a few of the many opportunities to use small groups in Young Life:

- cabin time
- work crew
- mission community
- camp-work crew, summer staff, assigned team
- committee/sub-committees
- Bible studies
- discipleship
- staff meetings
- club
- leadership meetings
- contact work
- prayer groups
- tutoring
- mentoring
- after-school programs
- Mummy & Me
- visit a committee member's home with a small group of kids
- service project with a small group of kids

## The Follow-up Ministry

In seeking to discover a workable biblical model for the ministry of follow-up, the example of Jesus - both with the twelve disciples and with other interested followers - needs to be closely examined. Only as we first look upon the Master's ministry of working with believers can we effectively seek to follow-up with those He has entrusted to our charge. Let's enumerate some of the outstanding principles of the Lord Jesus:

### **He embodied all that He taught (He was their example).**

We live in a day of an ever-increasing proliferation of discipleship manuals, periodicals, standardised studies, overhead projectors, verse memorisation packets, and so on. These are tremendous tools, but they do not take the place of what has been discovered by psychologists to be the most important method to teaching/learning that the world has ever discovered - the model. Jesus did not send them off with a program or a manual - He asked them to follow Him. The bulk of his training consisted in His disciples being *with Him*. A disciple is a *follower first*. Then and only then can he be a leader of others.

### **Jesus allowed experience to be a very important teacher.**

Whether it was His commissioning of the disciples to preach and heal (Luke 10: 1-20, Luke 12:1-6), His patience with their slowness to understand (Mark 8:17-21, Matthew 28:17), or through their failures (John 21: 15-23), Jesus understood the importance of allowing them the opportunity to learn from experience, and most of all, through their mistakes. *In short, while Jesus would not tolerate a lack of commitment, He granted them the freedom to fail.* He knew that their errors would result in immense growth if the disciple was loved and encouraged to learn from his mistakes. Hence, we must recognise the primacy of individual experience as the second greatest method of teaching/learning. Too often, our follow-up with kids is confined to a lecture-discussion relationship once a week. We must challenge them to step out into positions of genuine dependence upon God, just as Jesus did, and responsibly supervise, encourage and evaluate them before, during and after these experiences.

### **He focused upon the obedient and teachable ones.**

We find no record of Jesus entertaining a follower who was not teachable. With all the fallacies of the disciples, from the stubbornness of Peter to the doubting of Thomas, they still listened intently to Jesus and underwent considerable sacrifices to follow Him. Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler in Mark 10 gives us the clear impression that He would not spend His time entertaining a spoiled disciple. He continually focused upon the importance of obedience (John 13:17, 14:21, 15:14; Luke 11:28). His emphasis upon men who were too busy for the Kingdom of God (Luke 14: 16-24) counting the cost (Luke 14:26-33), the narrowness of the door (Luke 13:23-30) and countless other situations indicate to us His clear pointing to the need to decide without reserve to follow Jesus. An internationally well-known Bible teacher once remarked, "I wish I could recapture the



lost thousands of hours that I have wasted teaching people who were never hungry." We find no Biblical precedent for force-feeding new believers.

### **Jesus expected reproduction from His disciples.**

A natural function of a healthy body is reproduction. This principle is fundamental to the plant and animal kingdom, as well as all of human life. So often, we are surprised when a young believer leads his friends to Christ. Hence, it happens all too seldom. We should consider something wrong unless a young believer has a great desire to reproduce. The parable of the sower in Mark 4 not only warns them that not all will respond to the Gospel, but significantly concludes that "the men who hear the message and accept it ... do produce a crop - thirty, sixty, even a hundred times as much as they received."

### **Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching them.**

Earlier I mentioned the fact that a psychological study had indicated the example was the greatest method of teaching/learning, closely followed by experience. The third greatest teacher is the didactic teaching method, whereby a teacher (Jesus) functions as an authoritative figure, but also as both a guide and a resource for students. In short, He fed them and taught them how to fish. A very important principle to note is that He kept it simple. Too often, we get carried away in waves of theological poignancy. If we can understand Jesus' simple, picturesque language in articulating basic truths, we will not only be more effective disciple-makers, we will also be more effective disciples ourselves.

### **Jesus articulated and exemplified the goal of every disciple: to love God.**

If we cannot first grasp the primacy of loving God "with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind," (Matthew 22:37) then certainly our young converts will never understand why Jesus pointed to this as the "greatest and first commandment". It is apparent in the amount of time that Jesus took to be alone with the Father (Mark 1:35-37), that the disciples very early came to understand without a word the truth of His total dependency upon the Father. The greatest gift we can ever impart to a new Christian is to show him by our lives and our words that the greatest blessing in life is to love God. Out of the being with Him, the doing for Him will come.