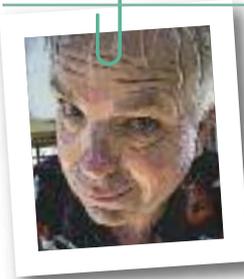


LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Just Add Water?

When I was a rookie youth pastor, I had two, count 'em, TWO youth ministry books. One was *Far-Out Ideas For Youth Groups* and the other was *Way-Out Ideas For Youth Groups*. Those two little paperbacks from Youth Specialties were all I had to go on that first year—except the dorky Sunday School curriculum that the church gave me each quarter which I promptly (and discreetly) threw away.

I might have done every idea in those two books. They were my main guides for creating a youth ministry. Sad, I know.

The REALLY sad part is that I kept those books hidden. I wanted the kids to think that I was making up all those great ideas. I wanted them to think I was the greatest, the most talented, the craziest and the most awesome youth leader in the world. I did not want them to know that I had no clue about what I was doing. I didn't want to let on that I had never been trained to be a youth pastor. So I kept those books hidden from the kids and continued to use those books as I tried to impress those teenagers to follow Christ and influence their friends to become Christians too.

What a dork I was!

That was a LONG time ago. I'm still a dork, but I've learned a thing or two about ministry with teenagers. I've learned that a youth leader can't just take material and indiscriminately put it into play in their youth ministry. There is no "just add water" youth ministry material. All of the phenomenal resources that are available to a youth leader today require preparation, skill, work, and planning to utilize fully and see results in the lives of kids.

You need a clear *strategy* for your ministry with teenagers if you're going to see real life change in your young friends and their families. There is just so much that you can do in youth ministry that you **MUST** have a way to choose what (and what NOT!) to do.

This issue of *Youth Leaders Only* has some help for you. You'll find excellent insights from long-time youth ministry guru's Duffy Robbins, Denny Miller, and Keith Cote. Their articles are actually excerpts from their books—so order their books and get the whole load of info!

I really hope you're not as dumb as I was, and keep this material squirreled away somewhere out of sight in your office. I hope you will use every bit of this material and share it with the other youth leaders you know. It's too good a resource to waste—even if it does require more effort to use than "just add water"!

Godspeed,

Ken McCoy
Editor

PS. (We are working on getting Denny Miller's seminal youth ministry book, *Changing Lives*, into digital format. It's currently out-of-print. We will let you know when it's available and how you can get your own copy!)

