

Traveling with Teens

by Ben Freudenburg

A Vehicle for Youth Ministry

Getting the Most Mileage from this Resource

We live in a world of travel. It is no wonder that youth ministry is into travel. Every teens in congregations are traveling to Servant Events, District or National Youth Gatherings, mission stations, river rafting trips, or ski mountains in the United States and around the world.

This resource is designed to help leaders make the most of a ministry of travel. This guide is divided into two parts:

- Content Pieces
- Meeting Designs

The two components can be used to empower groups to create great plans for ministry.

The Content Pieces give specific information, ideas, and suggestions for traveling with teens.

The Meeting Designs provide an agenda and a process to help groups make important decisions as they build their travel plans together. The process includes group activities and directions to help you make the most of your meeting.

This resource is best used as a series of meetings. The outline of the meetings indicates when to use a particular Content Piece.

This booklet will guide you through a process that can result in a meaningful ministry travel event. The Content Pieces provide some real-life examples and point to a process that will empower your group of planners to create and plan a travel experience. When you finish this travel guide with your youth, you will be ready to roll with a real vehicle for ministry.

I hope this booklet will help you in each step of your journey. May it empower a safe and significant ministry event. Most of all, I pray that each trip you take will become a faith-building journey toward a stronger relationship to Christ and a more active Christian community.

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Getting Started

Even though it's dark outside, there is a lot of excitement in the air. The vans are ready, ice chests are in place, garbage bags and maps lying on the front console. The back seats have been removed to make room for the luggage. The sun begins to peek over the horizon.

Cars are arriving with sleepy kids and luggage. Parents wait with steaming mugs of coffee in hand. They all seem to have "I-want-you-to-go-but-be-safe-and-come-back" looks on their faces. As the sun rises from the horizon, so does the volume of chatter and giggles. Kids are waking up, piling their luggage beside the vans, and gathering in small groups. You are busy with health forms, last-minute payments, and accounting for each piece of vital information.

A group of people who know what they are doing are giving clear instructions. Others are loading the luggage in vans. Just before the trip begins, parents, youth, and adult travelers form a circle as reassuring words are spoken to the travelers, and a prayer is offered for protection.

The final leg of the journey that started months ago is about to begin. A group of Christian youth and adults is about to be changed through a ministry vehicle called traveling. No matter the mode of transportation or the destination, travel can be a great means for ministry. The reason is hidden in the word itself.

T "Time to touch" each other with God's love.

In our busy world, time is precious. Young people seem to have less and less time to be together in meaningful ways at church and in other settings. Regular meetings are now once-in-a-while events. Travel provides time to be together, to reach out to one another, and to touch each other's lives with God's love.

R "Real-life relationship" with God and each other.

Living together for days—or even weeks—forces each person to be who they are. The masks we hide behind come off and real life shows. What a great time to learn about self, to affirm others, and be affirmed! It is time to experience the acceptance of the Christian community and of God's love. Travel time can be quality time, allowing deeper, more significant relationships to develop rather than brief encounters that often happen in the rush of daily living.

A "Allows self-discovery."

Traveling with other people allows time for self-discovery. As individuals write in a journal, participate in small-group discovery time, or reflect during quiet time, great learnings about self can happen.

V "Value through victories" small and large.

Traveling allows time to deal with the hardships of life—encountering and living through a torrential rainstorm, experiencing a flat tire or broken transmission, readjusting schedules because of a canceled plane or a serious personal injury—and discovering that God is real and always present as we cope with unanticipated hardships. Traveling helps turn the struggles of life into little victories—faith and promise victories that build self-worth and trust in God. Traveling provides opportunities to count the little Easters along the way—each time God surprises us with a new life, new hope, and renewed faith.

E "Experience."

How many times have you heard people say, "Experience is the best teacher"? Traveling can be a series of real-life experiences that become a teaching/learning laboratory. What will you meet that will change your life? Who will you hear that speaks words which will echo in your ears for a life-time? Where will you pray and why? What picture will be so vivid in your mind that it will last far longer than any picture or video? Travel is a time to experience life and learn from it.

L "Life changing."

Travel can change lives as we take:

- Time to be with each other and grow in
- Real-life relationships. We
- Allow for self-discovery and understand the
- Value of struggles and experience the small victories as we hope in God's promise; and
- Experience new people, places, and cultures; and we learn in a way that has
- Life-changing impact.

Youth travel equals a journey. The journey begins months before the trip. It includes:

- ownership of the trip by all travelers;
- careful planning;
- selecting adult leaders with the needed spirit and skills;
- preparations for a safe and well-organized trip;
- special understanding and activities that help all get the most from the trip;
- selecting the right models of discipline and leadership to insure that the trip is a real means for ministry.



The “Four P’s” for a Successful Journey

For five years in a row, one parish has supported its youth as they raised more than \$20,000 for their church-sponsored trip—not counting the budgeted amount of \$10,000. Each year parents encourage their youth to get involved and willingly give of their time and energy. The youth invite their friends. Each year the number of teens who decide to travel increases. One young man who had made a select traveling baseball team for several summers said, “I’m going on the youth trip this year no matter what. Baseball is important, but I want to have this experience for my faith life.”

That kind of response takes planning. There are four keys—called the “Four P’s”—that are essential to getting started.

Participant Ownership

Travelers need to be involved in the planning and implementing of the travel event. When teens invest their time, gifts, and money, they own the trip.

Participant ownership is built when travelers:

- help make as many major decisions as possible;
- have talents and abilities that are discovered and put to work;
- make a monetary commitment up front;
- make a commitment to work on fund-raising events;
- help make arrangements and secure supplies;
- help recruit adult leaders;
- participate in the building of the travel covenant.

Be clear about your expectations of each traveler in pre-traveling meetings. Are they expected to be at all meetings? Are they expected to be involved in a portion of the planning or can each traveler just show up the day the bus leaves on the trip? Pre-traveling commitment and activities help build the community before departure. People feel included and their gifts valued. They know the community needs them and wants them to be involved. They build bonds with others as they work through conflicts and find ways to resolve them. This kind of participant ownership empowers the relationships of people and forms a foundation for problem solving as the group travels. Participant ownership is a key to a successful journey.

Parent Involvement

Parents are the primary youth ministers in the parish and need to be involved in the lives of their teens. This is not an overstatement, but a key concept to remember when planning a trip. Adult leaders become partners with the parents, acting in the parent’s behalf.

Support and involvement is built when parents:

- know and trust the adult leaders;
- are kept well-informed about travel plans early and often;
- are involved with the fundraising activities;
- organize and host “sending” and “returning” parties;
- join youth in planning covenant meetings;
- receive registration materials along with youth; can be selected as adult counselors to accompany travel;
- have a chance to meet and share support with one another.

Insuring parent involvement is an essential key to a successful trip and helps parents remain the primary provider of ministry to their youth.

Parish Support

The parish is the Christian community sponsoring the trip. They provide the context and the reason to travel. The traveling group reflects the parish.

Congregational support and involvement is built when:

- members are informed about travel plans, goals, and fundraising activities;
- church councils are informed and support travel plans with budget allocations;
- individual members are involved in preparatory meetings and activities and are asked to support with their prayers;
- counselors are members of the congregation;
- reports are given as plans are made and travelers return.

Plan Carefully

It has been said that, "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail." A principal key to a great travel experience is a great plan.

Planning starts with an agreed-upon purpose for the event and a set of goals. Look for various ways to meet those goals, and include as many travelers as possible in making those decisions. Investigate various modes of transportation, kinds of lodging, ways of obtaining meals, and length of stay. Without planning it's almost impossible to move four vehicles over 1,200 miles on schedule and still deal with planned stops and unplanned emergencies.

Planning also includes preparing for "risk management." Look into insurance for persons and vehicles, first-aid supplies and training, and emergency procedures.

Even the end of the trip needs planning. How do we return to life back home? How do we handle mom and dad's many questions—when all we want to do is sleep? How do we bring back all that we have learned and apply it to our own lives?

Remember the important keys—four P's for successful travel:

- Participant ownership
- Parent involvement
- Parish support
- Plan carefully



Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens

It was Sunday morning and Beth was home from college. She caught my eye from across the worship center and we both smiled. After church we talked. Beth and I had become friends during her high school years. We had traveled to a Servant Event in Brownsville, Texas, lived through two ski weekends, and attended a National Youth Gathering. Though nearly a generation separated us in age, we shared a special bond—a bond of Christian love.

Youth leaders enjoy a unique opportunity to earn the respect of teens and to gain their trust and friendship. This honor is not given to all. Certain equipment—attitudes and skills—are required of adults who would travel and bond with teens:

The Right Kind of Heart

Adults traveling with youth need to be equipped with the right heart—a heart that loves teens unconditionally because of who they are and Whose they are—God’s special children. An adult’s love that is sincere can be spotted a mile off. It is love that is empowered by God’s gracious acceptance of us. It is a heart that is open to the teen’s world and is willing to live there with them. It is a true heart, true especially to self. It is a heart filled with Christ—happy and willing to risk in faith; a trusting heart—able to forgive and move on; a confident heart—ready to respect and value teens as unique gifts of God.

The Right Kind of Hands

Adults traveling with youth also need the right kind of hands—hands that are willing to get dirty serving with teens. Teens have said that a key attribute of adult leaders is the ability to “make things happen” and to recognize when it is appropriate to turn various tasks over to teens.

One of the highlights for a group of teens traveling to a National Youth Gathering was going on a tour with their adult counselor. The adult got his hands dirty “making it happen” so that the group could tour the Capitol and the White House, and could visit their state representative’s office. Another adult accepted the decision of her group and rode the train for five days to Washington state and back. Their stories about the trip when they returned were filled with excitement. It is essential that adults be willing to make things happen. It might mean “rolling up your sleeves” and doing what is best for the event and the youth.

Just as important is the ability of adult leaders to know how to hand over some tasks to capable youth—food preparation, devotions, and the like. They aren’t hands that “dump” the task on teens, but rather hands that work side-by-side to accomplish the task. Hands that are willing to let youth be a part of planning and preparation are important equipment for adults traveling with youth.

The Right Kind of Ears and Mouth

The third piece of equipment needed by adults traveling with youth is the right kinds of ears and mouth. They need ears that are willing to listen past the first words to the feelings and concerns of teens and a mouth that thinks before it speaks, encourages when needed, and even shouts in case of danger.

The Right Kind of Feet

Adults also need the right kind of feet when traveling with youth—feet that are willing to walk in the shoes of the youth, and be with them in their journey. Feet that lead in an organized way. Feet that have stumbled and have fallen and are willing to share those failures as well as the successes. Feet that let Christ be the light that guides the way.

Adults who travel with youth are very important for a successful journey. They need to be “youth-user-friendly.” It is important to deliberately recruit the adults. You might want to gather a group of youth and adults to discuss the attributes you feel are important. Then list the adults that fit your profile. The truth is that youth are a great barometer in this selection process. (See Meeting Agenda 2 for a format and process.)

In addition to the right kind of heart, hands, ears, mouth, and feet, look for adults who have some other characteristics. One group of youth and adults compiled the following list of expectations for adult leaders:

- Love Jesus and are committed to a Christ-like lifestyle;
- Love to be with youth;
- Are flexible;
- Are willing to let their hair down;
- Work with and relate well with youth;
- Are friendly and outgoing;
- Are not always parenting;
- Are willing to risk being liked;
- Are willing to do what’s right.

In addition to these qualities, certain skills are needed and useful. As you recruit your leaders, see if you can find a group of leaders whose sum total possesses the following skills:

People Skills

People skills are a key ingredient for adults traveling with youth. People skills include listening and problem solving in ways which empower relationships—one of the most important aspects of youth ministry. People skills enable adults to relate with youth. Much of ministry to youth is listening and helping them get through life. This skill is essential!

Organizational Skills

A trip that is well organized will run smoothly and have an impact on the lives of teens. Organizational skills—from keeping track of the registration forms, to setting the itinerary for the trip, to following up on all the details—ensure a trip to be the best possible.

Driving Skills

Driving skills include map reading, knowing how to change a tire, where to go to find help, knowing when to stop and change drivers, being able to concentrate on the road—not on the people you are driving with—and being sensible and reliable. Driving skills are not uncommon, but are very important for a safe trip.

Communication Skills

Some people have the ability to express themselves clearly and to communicate in a way that encourages others. It takes caring and creative communication skills to help teens understand all that is expected of them, the many details of the trip, and much more.

Discipline Skills

Certainly a trip with committed Christian teens does not need an “enforcer.” But every trip needs adults who are willing to help youth establish their covenants for traveling together and then commit to responsible living by their covenants.

Care Skills

It’s always helpful to have a “caretaker” as a traveler. It does not necessarily need to be a “mom,” but someone with those compassion and caring skills. This person is naturally warm and approachable and helps teens deal with illness, homesickness, squabbles, boyfriend/girlfriend problems, or other typical real-life rough spots.

Group Management Skills

Every group that comes together will have good times and bad times. It is natural for some new people in a group to feel uncomfortable until they get to know others. It is natural for groups to have struggles and conflicts. Helping the travelers feel accepted through these struggles and growth times helps the community form. Adult leaders who understand the place of conflict in group life and know how to move the group through the stages of group life are valuable to have along on the trip.

First-Aid Skills

A nurse is ideal to have on the trip, but others with first-aid skills can also be valuable. Those who can help with minor aches, injuries, and crises do not have to be professional medical people, but they might be trained in first-aid skills. In fact, you might consider offering a first-aid course to all those who will travel with youth.

Contract Negotiation Skills

There may be many times you will need to negotiate a contract with various agencies. You may need to rent a van, buy food, make reservations at motels, airlines, etc. A good negotiator can save you a lot of money.

Invite Identified Adults

After you’ve identified a number of adults, invite each individual to be a part of the journey. Let each person know that he or she has been chosen by the group as having the kinds of skills and abilities that young people need and desire.

Clarifying the Job Description

Make sure that you clarify just what you expect of these adults. You might even write down a job description that includes some of the following duties.

Adult leaders who travel with youth are asked to be:

- involved with each fundraiser;
- involved with planning and budget preparation for the trip;
- willing to host pre- and post-meetings or gatherings as needed;
- willing to act as a guardian to insure safety;
- able to work at building positive relationships within the group;
- a spiritual leader and example;
- appropriate at all times with youth and adult relationships;
- willing to be trained for a leadership role;
- responsible for necessary forms, e.g. medical release forms, permissions forms, etc.;
- willing to be an active participant at the event.

Share the expectations and job description with the adults that you are recruiting to help them understand what is expected. Be sure to give the adults time to reflect on the task you are asking them to do. Assure them that they will be a part of a supportive group. Offer them help, encouragement, and training for their task.

Training adults for the trip is very important. Whether you are a group of two adults or twenty, training time is important. (See the Suggested Resources on training adult leaders.)

Making the Most of Your Ministry Miles

Faith is an exciting journey—a journey that started as God’s Spirit brought faith to people through the splash of baptism. Our journey of faith is nurtured through the reading of Scripture, prayer, Spirit-filled worship, and through caring words of faith spoken by a friend. There are many vehicles to nurture faith and to respond to God’s love. Traveling with youth is one vehicle that offers exciting opportunities for youth to struggle and to grow in faith.

A man in his late forties came up to David as he worked at a Servant Event in Brownsville, Texas. David discovered that the man was a refugee from South America who had come to El Calvario Lutheran Church for shelter. The man couldn’t speak English very well, but David listened. He learned the man was running for his life and had left his family behind in San Salvador. He was hungry and alone.

David shared the man’s story with his leader. As they talked about the man’s situation, they decided that David and a friend in the servant group would take David’s new friend to McDonald’s for supper. “What was more important anyway,” he said when he returned, “getting the porch on the church done or talking with this man about his needs?” The man surprised David by attending worship on Sunday morning. David will never forget his encounter with this man, the questions he began to struggle with, and the injustice he began to feel.

Helping teens meet people in faith is one way to get the most out of your ministry miles.

Have you ever seen an unforgettable face—a face that was filled with love and affection? Marta had an unforgettable face. We met Marta in Poland. Her three sons helped her tend the garden filled with fresh vegetables and collect the eggs her hens laid each day. Marta is an artist, a librarian, and a woman of deep faith. Her boys know Jesus and are proud to go to church. We talked about real issues. Through faith-filled Marta, I saw how God works to keep His kingdom alive around the world. We celebrated Christmas together—even though it was August—as we exchanged gifts, faith, and hope. We lit a candle and read Scripture together, though we could not speak each other’s language. She read her Bible and I read mine. I’ll never forget her face.

Making the most out of ministry miles is finding ways to share faith with God’s special people along the way.

Herb, a good friend, leads a number of trips each year to Germany and other European countries. He helps the travelers understand that their trip is more than a tour—it is a journey. On a tour one “sees the sights.” On a journey one makes the most of each moment as a learning and growing experience. Herb helps people look beyond the scenery and themselves to see the people they meet. He helps travelers struggle with issues and gets them to look inside themselves to discover new things about themselves and their faith direction in life. The journey has the potential to change people, relationships, and faith. The journey is much more than going somewhere. It is seeing life, experiencing life, and intersecting faith and life.

An important question you need to answer before you begin to plan a trip is: Which is most important—getting to the destination or the journey it takes to get there?

Many travelers chose the destination as most important. For them, that’s what traveling with teens is all about—getting to the mountain to ski, the river to canoe, the Gathering to celebrate, the Servant Event to serve.

But if destination is the heart of the journey, are we getting the most for our ministry miles?

We want to help teens struggle with their faith and we celebrate their joy in Christ along the way. Can we create ways for the Spirit to work in travelers? Can we provide opportunities for teens to learn and grow in God’s love and each other as they see His love in people, places, self, and in one another?

Yes—and here are some ideas to help that faith journey happen:

- **Prepare daily care action cards for the counselors.**

Assign a counselor to a small group of travelers. On a card, list care action tasks that the counselor should accomplish each day with their particular group of travelers.

Day One:

- Greet the youth assigned to you and tell each one how excited you are to have him/her on the trip with you.
- Ask each youth what he/she hopes to get out of the trip.
- At bedtime (when the youth are in their rooms) stop by to say good night to each person. Remind them of the time they are to be ready in the morning and where they are to meet.

Day Two:

- Make sure your assigned teens are up and going on time.
- During the day, check with each youth to see how they are doing.

- Check to make sure they are in their rooms at the appointed time. Ask each to share the best part of their day.

Make a list of other care actions. Be creative. Try to find ways to help each counselor follow through on his/her care actions.

- **Visit places that help youth struggle with issues.**

You might plan to visit some of the following: a graveyard, a veterans' hospital, an orphanage, a nursing home, a prison, a food pantry, an abortion clinic, a church, a cathedral, a rural church, a church of a different faith, a farm, a ranch, a museum, a very large downtown, a very small town, a county health clinic, a city hospital, a humane society, a wedding chapel, a homeless shelter, a school for the deaf, a group home, a convent or monastery, a mortuary. Add some places of your own.

- **Listen to real-life stories.**

Find a person to tell the story of a place you are visiting. That person might not be the one you'd expect. A graveyard storyteller might be the lady who comes day after day to visit the grave of her husband—she just might be there when you stop at the cemetery. The storyteller at a church might be the janitor or the church secretary. Listen carefully and don't forget to ask important questions—questions that will bring out issues of faith and life:

- What brings you to this place?
- What changes have you seen? Good? Bad?
- What bring you joy here? Sadness?
- What are your hopes for this place?
- What are your concerns?
- Tell us of a struggle that has taken place here.
- Where (or why) do you find God here?
- Where has a promise been kept?

- **Discover the treasures a new place holds.**

Explore carefully. Look for symbols of hope, struggle, promise, and joy. If you can't find a storyteller, let the travelers tell the story of what they have discovered in that place. Say a prayer, sing a song that reminds you of the place, recite a Bible passage, light a candle, and claim the place as your worship center.

- **Do a service project.**

Do a service project along the way. Clean a park or roadside. Sing to or help feed the residents in a nursing home. Offer your services to a pastor for a day or an afternoon to do jobs around the church. Throw a party for the children in a homeless shelter. Sing for a worship service or lead the high school Bible class.

- **Let eating be an adventure.**

- Order pizza and eat in a park.
- Go to an unusual eating spot in an out-of-the-way place.
- Eat in a small-town cafe or a downtown hospital cafeteria.
- Call a youth group and invite them to a picnic lunch.
- Talk about life and the future as you enjoy lunch together.
- Go without lunch or supper and give the money instead to a soup kitchen. Talk about how it feels to be a little hungry.
- Splurge and eat in a fancy restaurant the same day and discuss the difference.

- **Worship anywhere.**

Stay at a historic marker, read it, and talk about the meaning of the event that it commemorates. Read a psalm, say a prayer, hum a song to thank God for the wonders of the past. Light a candle and claim the place as a worship center. Stop at a field of corn and thank God for the food of the earth. At a river, talk about the water of life. Pray for the hungry at a grocery store or a food pantry. Worship in unlikely places will help teens see that worship is a way of life, and not just a happening on Sunday mornings. Worship at a water fountain to remember our baptism. Worship on the front steps of a school—thank God for the students and teachers.

- **Process each day.**

Gather your group together each day to talk over the events of the day. To get started, say: "Pretend your eyes were a video camera today. We're now watching what you recorded. What do we see on the screen?"

Let all share what they remember from the day. Ask questions to help the group find meaning in the events:

What have you learned today about yourself? Others? The group? How can this day prepare you for tomorrow? In your struggles today, where did one of God's promises bring you hope? Joy?

- **Start and end each day with devotions.**

Take along a devotional book, a book of poems, or a book of prayers. Use it along with a Scripture reading each morning and evening. You might ask a storyteller to recap the events of the day in story form. Pray together after you have shared a joy, a worry, a sadness, a hope, a sin. Involve the youth as devotional leaders. Give them a format to follow:

- Pray an opening prayer.
- Hum, sing, read, listen to a song.
- Share the peace of the Lord.
- Read Scripture and your story or devotion for the day.
- Tell your story of the day.
- Pray together.
- Share a benediction.

- **Provide a time each day to journal.**

Writing in a journal is simply writing down events, thoughts, and experiences to remember. In writing, they are saved so you can come back to them and learn from or relive the trip in the future. The journal becomes a story of the trip and a mirror for self-learning. It begins to help you tell the story of you.

Writing in a journal is personal. It can't be forced. But it can be very useful for some people. Here is a simple format to suggest:

- Write the events of the day that were important to you.
- Next to the event, write the feeling it produced.
- Describe why you felt that way.
- Write what you learned.
- Write what you could do with this learning.

On the Road... Have Safety, Will Travel

Another spring concert done, the youth group's contemporary singers at Shore Haven in Euclid, Ohio, loaded the bus to head home. About two blocks from church we saw smoke rising from the hood. Walt grabbed the fire extinguisher as the rest of us exited out the rear of the bus. Jumping out the front door, Walt lifted the hood and sprayed. The fire out, we thanked God for our safety.

The teens at our redeemer in Hutchinson, Kansas, were all excited about their trip to World's of Fun in Kansas City. All the plans had been made for a great trip. Two hours into the trip, the bus overheated and stranded us all on the side of the road. A semitrailer truck driver stopped and offered us a ride in his truck. He drove the whole bus load to the next town. We called back to church and a group of parents rescued us and the trip.

It was early Sunday morning and a group of youth from Concordia in Kirkwood, Missouri, gathered at the St. Louis airport to go to Brownsville, Texas, for a Servant Event. When all the parents and youth gathered, we made our way to the ticketing counter only to discover that our flight was marked CANCELED. The setback called for some quick planning and re-ticketing.

Traveling with youth can produce many exciting adventures like this—some planned and others unplanned. Here are some traveling suggestions that might help you be ready for some of the adventures you may encounter.

No matter the length of the trip—short or long, far or near, weeks or days—there's no substitute for a good travel plan.

- A travel plan starts with a map and a carefully laid-out route. That route uses the best highways, designates the best places to stop, states the length of time and purpose for each stop (e.g. gas, rest, food, lodging, sightseeing).
- A travel plan helps keep the group on schedule because it marks the number of miles between stops and estimates the time it will take to travel that distance. Pre-setting the time at each stop is very important. It offers a chance to check progress against the schedule and allows leaders to add time or make up time by changing the length of the stop.

All drivers need to know "the Plan" before leaving on your trip. Make copies of the travel plan and go over it with drivers. Have one driver designated as the "lead car"—the one who will keep the group on time and headed in the right direction. Agree to let that leader make adjustments and decisions along the way. Share the schedule with all the travelers and post a copy of the plan in the vehicle. Knowing what to expect will head off many questions ("Are we there yet?" "When are we going to stop?") and will raise the comfort level of the travelers.

Some Safety Suggestions

- If your travel plan includes more than one vehicle, designate the travel order of the caravan and make a commitment to stay in that order. The lead driver is responsible for driving in such a way that the group can stay together (making sure that all get through red lights, waiting for delayed vehicles, etc.). Caravanning offers a way to deal with mechanical problems, allows interaction among the travelers, and keeps the group together.
- Have two adult drivers for each vehicle. Be sure to switch drivers at every designated stop, even if the current driver is not tired.
- Never allow youth to drive on church sponsored events.
- Travel a maximum of ten hours a day and stop every two or three hours.
- Never let the cost become more important than safety. You have the most valuable cargo in the world—the lives of young people—the most precious possession of parents and others who love them.
- Cell phones are a necessity, especially for caravans. They are a great way for the traveling community to keep in touch with each other, and they warn of turn offs and stops before they occur. Be sure someone other than the driver uses the phone while traveling.
- Have a home contact. Recruit someone at home whom you can call if you get separated. Give each driver that person's name and number in writing. A call home in the case of storm or accident can help form a new plan or meeting place.
- Pay attention to passenger needs. Illness or discomfort are not always evident. Monitor the group by asking how things are going and be ready to deal with expressed needs. Plan so that travelers eat and drink properly—good food will keep bodies healthy and energy levels up.
- Develop a community travel agreement or make group travel conduct a part of your covenant. Answer questions like:

- Who controls the radio?
- Who cleans the vans?
- What items can we keep in the van?
- What is the appropriate noise level in the van?
- What eating and drinking is allowed in the vehicle?
- How do we treat this rented or borrowed vehicle?
- Who checks the oil, water, pumps the gas, cleans windows, etc. at gas stops?
- Others?

Dealing with Breakdowns

- Know the emergency procedures provided with a rented vehicle. Printed procedures usually include a number to call in the event of a breakdown. If you borrow a vehicle, agree with the owner on a way of handling breakdowns.
- Set up a plan to help finance emergencies—credit card, extra cash, etc.
- Remember that the first concern in a breakdown is the safety of the riders. Keep the travelers away from the highway.
- Youth may say they know how to fix a problem—and they might—but get an expert to help.
- Call ahead to let those who might be expecting you know that you will be late.
- Don't panic. Turn the breakdown crisis into a positive, meaningful experience and make the most of it. Who knows, it just might be the highlight of the trip for some.
- Don't assume the insurance that comes with a rented van or the driver's own insurance necessarily covers every eventuality. The extra insurance offered by the van rental dealer is well worth the cost. It takes the responsibility off the volunteer and puts it with the sponsoring agency. If you borrow a vehicle, sit down with the owner and decide the best way to cover damage to that vehicle. Confusion over insurance and liability is only one of the reasons that borrowing a vehicle may be the least desirable alternative.

Planes, Busses, or Trains

- Would you believe that a group that flies may be saving money? When you consider the cost of renting a vehicle, extra insurance, food, lodging—you might discover that flying is the cheapest alternative.
- Whether you fly or take a bus or train, book your travel with a travel agency. Go to the agency in person and develop a relationship with an agent. A good agent can save you money and heartache when things go wrong along the way. Most have a toll-free number to call in case of emergency.
- Be flexible. Schedules change due to weather, contracts, emergencies, or damaged equipment, and the like. Most employees of carriers will work with you to get the best service possible. Help them do their job, and they will help you by getting you to your destination as soon as possible.
- Allow enough time before departure to get through pre-boarding procedures. A good rule of thumb is to meet two hours before departure. Designate a "home base" in the departure area. Give clear instructions: "Be here ready to load by 3:15. I'll stay with your luggage. You must be with two others of our group at all times. Does everyone have a cell phone or money for a phone call? If we leave and you're not here, call home, and we'll see you when we get back."
- Decide who will carry the return tickets.
- Mark your luggage to give it a group identity. Use a colored tag, special piece of tape, ribbon, or special sticker on all items. Make sure each piece of luggage has a tag with a complete address and phone number on it.
- If you travel by air, consider that checked luggage may be lost. It's a good idea—a must if you're travelling internationally—to have your essentials in your carry-on (passport, medicine, toiletries, a change of clothes, personal care items, etc.). Wear the shoes you will need at your destination. Have you ever spent the first two days at a work camp in sandals?
- Make ground travel arrangements well in advance. Make sure that ground carriers have room for all of the travelers and their luggage. One leader asked the travelers to bring their empty luggage to the rental agency to be sure it would all fit in a van. The test also helped youth see just how important it was to pack according to plan.

Packing for the Trip

Plan enough space for luggage and supplies. Luggage needs to be secured so that it will not be flying at people if a sudden stop is necessary, out of the way so that no one must sit on it during the trip, and safe from the elements.

When you have determined how much luggage space you have, you can allot space to each traveler. This will help determine how much luggage each traveler can bring.

A few hints for helping travelers pack:

- Soft luggage packs easier than hard-sided luggage.
- A packing list and demonstration can help cut down on luggage. (Actually take the packing list, pack the luggage, and unpack it in front of the group at a meeting. It makes a big difference, and it's a lot of fun.)
- A rule of thumb: "Pack your suitcase with what you think you'll need, then take out half of it."
- Share bulky things like hair dryers.
- Whatever luggage you bring, you carry.

Managing Group Behavior... From Control to Self-Control

Sometimes adults working with youth are attacked by the “what if’s”:

- What if they won’t listen to me?
- What if they break curfew?
- What if I find drugs or beer?
- What if I find a couple in bed?
- What if someone is always late?
- What if...?

Nothing will make the concerns go away, but here are three prescriptions to help calm the fear of the “what if’s.”

Prescription One: Planning Prevents Discipline Problems

An event that is well planned by the travelers will have fewer discipline problems. The reason: the travelers will want the event to succeed. In addition, a well-planned event leaves less idle time to get into trouble. A veteran youth minister once said, “Don’t try to control the kids’ energy; rather, plan to use their energy to do great things.” An energetic group of boys decided to raid and destroy the girls’ rooms. Instead of trying to stop the raid, one brilliant counselor called the boys into his room and planned the raid with them. He set three rules:

- This raid must not destroy or damage property.
- This raid must not cause real physical or emotional pain for anyone.
- Whatever gets messed up in the raid, we must be willing to clean up.

The 4 a.m. raid was well-planned and a great surprise to the girls. It was a real highlight of the trip! Surprisingly, it was one of the best unanticipated community builders to date! In this case, the counselor used the energy of the youth and turned what might have been destructive into something fun and constructive.

Prescription Two: Help Travelers Develop a Group Covenant

A group covenant is simply an agreement that sets out guidelines for how the community will live together during the trip. The covenant is developed together at a meeting with the teens, adult leaders, and parents. There are many models that work well for coming up with a covenant.

Covenants are not new things for Christians. God made a covenant with Abraham:

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Basically, a covenant is a promise. God promised to make Abraham and his descendants a great nation. God gives us His promised forgiveness and new life in Baptism. He made a covenant with each of us at the time of our baptism.

A covenant is a promise from one to another—a mutual promise. The covenant travelers make with one another is exactly that—a mutual promise to live out their commitment to one another. For the safety and well-being of each person, a group covenant outlines the way the group pledges to live out their life as a group and the consequences when they break the covenant. Dr. Bill Wagonseller in his training manual, *Teaching Involving Parenting*, emphasizes the importance of rules and boundaries, and points out how useless they are if there are no prescribed consequences of breaking the rules. He suggests that the consequences need to be significant enough to make an impression. They must have an element of displeasure. For example, these might be some agreed-upon boundaries and consequences:

Boundary Broken:

- Drug or alcohol use
- More than 10 minutes late
- Breaks curfew

Consequences:

- Sent home at parents’ expense
- \$3 gift to mission project
- Sleeps on floor in counselor’s room

Consequences must fit the crime. Consequences may be set each time the covenant is broken so the consequence fits the circumstance.

A covenant needs to deal with the following areas:

- Place rules: These are given and unchangeable for different sites. Most camps have a set of rules that must be followed for the good of the camp. Similarly, a youth gathering will have a set of rules to follow. Hotel management expects certain behavior.

- Personal needs: People have various needs for personal space, quiet time, sleep, etc., to stay healthy and happy. How can we respect and allow for these needs?
- Property: The property we use or visit is not ours. How will we treat it to show our respect and care for it? How will we treat each others' property?
- Personhood: We are fragile beings and in need of care. Our feelings get hurt and our self-esteem can be destroyed. How will we treat each other's personhood to bring out the best in what each person has to offer?
- Program: How will we participate during the event? How will we follow directions, be on time, or follow the schedule?

Writing a group covenant is an important event. It can be done almost anywhere—by the pool at a parent's home, on the patio during a barbecue, or in the church basement. A design to help you write the group covenant is found in Meeting 4 in the back of this book. You'll find a sample covenant on page 32.

But what if the covenant is broken? Here are some do's and don't's for counselors, adapted from a list by Doris Milligan—a mother, educator, and youth minister.

Do's:

- Do be consistent.
- Do be fair.
- Do be understanding.
- Do treat each youth with respect and listen to all sides of the story.
- Do touch appropriately.
- Do "catch the young person being good."
- Do stop unacceptable behavior immediately.
- Do plan age-appropriate activities.
- Do teach youth to "own" their behavior.
- Do pray for each person every day by name.
- Do forgive and forget.

Don't's:

- Don't use physical punishment.
- Don't ignore dangerous or destructive behavior.
- Don't use a permissive approach.
- Don't answer in-kind.
- Don't give choices when there are none.
- Don't criticize in front of others.
- Don't humiliate.
- Don't talk down.

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Prescription Three: Follow a Good Leadership Model

A leadership model defines the roles of the leaders on the trip and helps clarify their functions.

One leadership model for three leaders divides the leadership task into three roles: Guide, Host, and Program Leader. Each person on the trip has assigned duties.

Guide

This person gets travelers from one place to another, makes the necessary arrangements for the trip. The Guide is a trip director, or kind of like the "master of ceremonies." The duties of the Guide are:

- Guide the event.
- Make announcements.
- Make reservations for lodging and/or activities.
- Make transportation arrangements.
- Work with others, creates the travel plan (route, stops, etc.).
- Pay the bills.
- Help apply consequences when the covenant is broken.
- Function as a negotiator if differences occur.

Host

In this model, the Host is the hospitality person. He/she cares for each traveler as if they were guests. Duties of the Host are:

- Plan for food, snacks, etc.
- Help with personal needs, crises, etc.
- Select and reserve eating places.
- Have and use first-aid kit.
- Deal with problems with the room, the meals, or the toilet paper.

Program Leader

The Program Leader is like the teacher and/or chaplain for the event. The Program Leader encourages creativity, gets activities going, organizes devotions, etc. The duties of the Program Leader are:

- Develop activities and program.
- Encourage travelers to grow in their relationships.
- Lead or help others lead worship, writing in journal, personal time, growth activities, Bible study, family group activities, prayer, etc.

Of course, there are other ways to divide up responsibilities. If there is a large group and there are more than three adults along, what are their roles? They are the counselors with the right kind of heart, hands, feet, ears, and mouth. They are with the youth to care, help, build up, encourage, and to assure that all have a great time. Or, if you have a small group of adults, they may have to assume another role in addition to the role of counselor, guide, host, or program leader.

In whatever way the jobs of guide, host, leader, counselor are divided, the adult leaders need to work as a team to carry out their functions as best as they can and to encourage and support one another. Nothing is more frustrating than to get four different answers to the same question. Consider the following scenario:

"Where do we meet for supper?"

Adult 1: In the lobby at 5:30.

Adult 2: By the van at 5:15.

Adult 3: In pastor's room at 5:30.

Adult 4: I'm not real sure. Let's ask Mark. He'll know.

Guiding people to the person who has the role or function always helps the group stay on track, reduces frustration, and lends a sense of security to the whole event. It also eliminates the game of youth working one adult against another to get their way.

The leadership team needs to be a team! Adults need to know and respect each other's functions. They need to give authority to each team member to carry out their role. The team needs to meet daily to talk over the past day and plan for the next. Leaders functioning together can have a great impact on the behavior of the travelers and the success of the trip.

These are the three parts to the prescription for taking away the "what if's":

- Planning prevents discipline problems.
- Help travelers develop a group covenant.
- Follow a good leadership model.

To these, stir in forgiveness and grace. Apply law when repentance is lacking, and always, *always* act in love and in the best interest of the person.

Use the meeting agendas and plans on the following pages as they fit your needs. Feel free to adapt, rewrite, change, and make them your own.



Planning for Meeting #1

Once you have decided to undertake the ministry of traveling with teens, decide which adult(s) and youth should attend this initial meeting.

Before this meeting, answer the following question:

Who is responsible to develop this ministry of traveling with teens?

Set the date for the meeting and recruit those who will attend this initial meeting. You'll want to include some of those listed above and others who might be interested in starting this ministry.

Agenda for Meeting #1

1. Opening devotion and get acquainted.
2. Share the purpose of the meeting.
3. Why Take a Trip?
4. Share the Content Piece: "Getting Started."
5. Questions and Discussion.
6. Read Content Piece: "The 'Four P's' for a Successful Journey."
7. Share the Content Piece: "Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens."
8. Questions and answers.
9. Brainstorm and write goals.
10. Decide on a trip.
11. Decide on the next meeting.

Process for Leading Meeting #1

1. Opening devotion and get acquainted.

Select an appropriate devotional thought to share or open your meeting with prayer.

Get acquainted. If those present don't know each other well, take time for introductions and interaction. Ask: "What brought you to this meeting? What are your hopes?"

2. Share the purpose of the meeting.

You might briefly state your understanding of the reasons for the meeting—what you hope this ministry of traveling might accomplish and expectations of the group.

3. Why Take a Trip?

Ask those present to share the best things about taking a trip. As they do, list these on newsprint. Ask: "Are any of these things a good reason for youth to take a trip?"

Summarize how you believe taking a trip as a youth group is a great opportunity for fun and for ministry.

4. Share the Content Piece: "Getting Started."

Summarize (make copies available) "Getting Started," from the front of this manual. You might write the following acrostic on the board or newsprint to refer to as you read:

T - Time to touch
R - Real-life relationships
A - Allows self-discovery
V - Values and victories
E - Experiences
L - Life changing

5. Questions and Discussion.

Ask and discuss the following questions:

- Why would developing a trip be a good way of helping the youth in this congregation grow in friendship with each other?
- Why might our youth take time to go on a trip?
- In your opinion, why would taking the youth on a trip help them grow in faith?
- "Going on a congregation-sponsored trip has the potential to change lives." Agree? Disagree? Why?

6. Read Content Piece: "The 'Four P's' for a Successful Journey."

Summarize the Content Piece. Discuss the question: "How can we involve parents, youth, and the congregation in the travel plan?"

7. Share the Content Piece: "Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens."

Ask participants: "Who is a famous person that you think would be a good adult leader for the trip and why?"

Supply copies and introduce the Content Piece. "Let's read about what characteristics an adult needs to have in order to be successful in leading youth on a trip."

You might write this list on newsprint to refer to as you read:

- The right kind of heart
- The right kind of hands
- The right kind of ears and mouth
- The right kind of feet

After you have summarized the material, discuss the following questions:

- How "on target" is the equipment identified for adult leaders who take youth on a trip?
- What about the qualities listed that adults need?
- Which ones do you agree with? Disagree with?
- Knowing the equipment and qualities needed, would you now take any of the famous people as adult leaders?

8. Questions and answers.

Take time for questions about what has been covered so far.

9. Brainstorm and write goals.

Clear goals will help put into focus the reason for the trip.

You might write the following description on the board and discuss how it applies to your task.

"A goal is a description of a preferred, future condition of individuals or the group that contributes to an effective pursuit of the group's mission." (Reprinted with permission of Les Stroh, Cornerstone, St. Louis, MO.)

List goals suggested by participants. Encourage all to focus on the reason for the trip.

You might suggest some of the following as examples:

- Youth and adults will celebrate their faith.
- Youth and adults will make new discoveries about self.
- Youth and adults will demonstrate the marks of a Christian community.
- Youth and adults will use their talents to serve others.
- Youth and adults will grow in their appreciation of different cultures.
- Adults will have a positive experience leading youth.
- Youth will grow in their self-awareness of their gifts and abilities.

10. Decide on a trip.

If the people at this meeting will serve as the planning committee for the trip, move to **Meeting Plan 1 - A** now and complete the pre-meeting items. Be sure you establish a date to meet with youth and parents.

11. Decide on the next meeting.

Plan a meeting with the youth of the church to decide the kind of youth trip they feel would best meet the goals that you have established.

At this point, you have two options. If the people at this meeting will be the planners of the trip, move to **Meeting Plan 1 - A**.

If your group meeting with parents and youth will involve a larger group of youth to give input to the kind of trip they want to plan, then go to **Meeting Plan 1 - B**.

Meeting Plan 1 - A

Developing a Parent/Youth Meeting to Share Trip Details

Before you can have a meeting to share your idea for a trip, you need to decide the following:

- Destination (place or event you wish to travel to).
- Dates the event will take place.
- Travel options.
- Estimated costs.

Decide how you will invite youth and parents to your next meeting. Develop a promotion and registration flyer to be given out at the parent/youth meeting or to be included with the invitation to the meeting. Be sure you list the meeting date, time, and place. This meeting could be a part of a Sunday morning Bible class, youth fellowship, a special event, or it could stand alone.

Be sure you assign responsibilities:

Who will...

- develop the invitation?
- develop the information and registration form?
- get the necessary information about costs?
- lead each portion of the parent-youth meeting?
- provide refreshments?
- do the things that will need to be done prior to the meeting?

Agenda for Meeting Plan 1 - A

1. Welcome.
2. Share the purpose of the meeting.
3. An overview of what the trip could be. (Check for available videos on your chosen destination.)
4. Cost of the event and how funding will be handled.
5. Registration procedures and expectations.
6. Timetable and deadlines.
7. Other needs.

Meeting Plan 1 - B

Meeting with Youth to Choose Travel Event

This plan includes all of the youth who are interested in a trip. The goal of this meeting would be to involve as many youth in the process of choosing a travel event as possible.

1. Welcome.

2. Share the purpose of the meeting.

"The purpose of this meeting is to select a travel event that meets the goals established during the initial meeting."

List on the board or newsprint the goals that you have developed or selected.

This group will decide on our trip and during this meeting we need to accomplish the following:

- Estimate the cost.
- Set the dates.
- Set the registration deposit. (You may not know the exact cost of the trip but you can set a registration deposit and therefore begin your publicity.)
- Decide who will be responsible for registration.
- Plan a meeting with parents.

3. Lead a devotion on traveling

"As you think about travelers in the Bible, which ones come to mind? You might be thinking about the Exodus, Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem, the Wise Men. Can you think of others?"

Read a brief portion of one of the Scripture journeys suggested, then discuss the following travel questions:

"What concerns do you think these travelers had? What fears? What questions? What did their relationship with God and each other have to do with the trip?"

Share a prayer.

4. A memorable trip.

Ask participants to form groups of three and share a memorable group trip they have taken. It might have been a ski trip, retreat, district gathering, National Youth Gathering, Servant Event or mission trip, or a family trip. Ask each group to list on newsprint the reasons they discovered that made the trips memorable.

Ask each group to report their list.

5. Discuss "Reasons for Taking a Trip"

"Traveling is fun, but what is traveling all about and why do it as part of the youth program?"

Discuss the following questions:

- Why would developing a trip be a good way of helping the youth in this congregation grow as friends?
- Why would the youth give time to go on a trip?
- How would a trip help youth grow in faith?
- "Going on a church-sponsored trip has the potential to change lives." Agree? Disagree? Why?

6. Share the material from the Content Piece, "Getting Started."

Make copies of the resource available to participants. As we go through each section, ask all to mark the things they agree with and those they disagree with. Discuss each section by asking what each phrase of the acrostic of the word TRAVEL means to them.

7. Share material from the Content Piece, "The 'Four P's' of a Successful Journey."

First ask, "What is the role of youth in planning a trip?"

Make copies available and read aloud or summarize the material as a group. Discuss the question: What are the ways we can involve parents, youth, and the congregation and come up with a good travel plan?

8. Share with the group the goals for the trip.

Read your goals and seek input. Make changes as necessary.

9. Brainstorm a list of sites or events that would meet the established goals.

Present information on the places you have researched. Explore with the group the cost, travel requirements, and activities that could be included for each destination.

10. Select the destination.

Put each place on a sheet of paper and tape it to the wall. Give each participant a sticker and have them vote by placing the sticker on the sheet they feel is the best trip or event to meet the goals. When you have a majority or have reached a consensus, you are ready to move ahead.

11. Establish major event details.

- Dates
 - Estimated cost
 - Registration fee
 - Registration deadline
- (A word about deadlines. It's very important that you help youth make a timely decision about going along on the event. If you continue to accept registrations up to one week before you go, it affects your community. How will the youth who have been working all the way through feel about those who have just come on board? Think through your deadline and how you want to deal with it.)

12. Set date for meeting with parents.

Determine how parents will be invited to your next meeting. Decide who will develop a promotion and registration flyer to be given out at the parent-youth meeting or to be included with the invitation to the meeting. Be sure you list the meeting date, time, and place. Develop the agenda for your meeting with the parents. Refer to **Meeting Plan 1 - A** for a suggested agenda as you meet with parents and youth together.

13. Assign responsibilities.

- Who will develop the invitation?
- Who will develop the information and registration form?
- Who will research the necessary information about costs?
- Who will lead each portion of the parent-youth meeting?
- Are refreshments needed? Who is responsible?
- What other things need to be done prior to the meeting?

14. Close meeting with prayer.



Planning for Meeting #2

Optional Meeting with Youth to Select Adult Leaders for the Trip

Develop a meeting to identify adult leaders who will travel with youth. This is an optional meeting. If adults leaders have not been selected for the trip by this time, involve the youth in the selection and recruitment process. Be sure that the adult leaders chosen for travel meet the criteria the group sets. The right kind of adult leader is an important component of a successful trip.

Agenda for Meeting #2

1. Welcome and devotions.
2. State the purpose of this meeting.
3. Share about travel.
4. Brainstorm adult leader skills.
5. Brainstorm adult leader attitudes.
6. Share Content Piece: "Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens."
7. List and prioritize possible adult leaders.
8. Job description.
9. Set next meeting.
10. Assign tasks.
11. Close with prayer.

Process for Leading Meeting #2

1. Welcome and devotion.

Select an appropriate devotion and/or prayer to open your meeting.

2. Share the purpose of the meeting.

Clearly state the purpose of this meeting: "We want to identify adult leaders for traveling with youth." Ask for reaction or questions.

3. Share thoughts about travel.

Ask participants to complete the following statements. List their responses on the chalkboard or on newsprint.

- The feelings that adults may have when they think of traveling with youth are...
- The feelings that youth may have when they think of traveling with a group of youth are...

4. Adult leader skills.

Ask participants to suggest skills that adult counselors need when they travel with youth. List suggested skills on another sheet of newsprint or on the chalkboard.

5. Adult leader attitudes.

Make another list on the board or newsprint of the kinds of attitudes the adult counselors need to be successful with youth.

6. Summarize "Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens."

List some of the skills and attitudes the resource presents. Discuss the reading: "What skills or attitudes did the reading leave out? What might you add? What might we add to the lists we have developed?"

7. List and prioritize potential adult leaders.

Based on your lists of skills and attitudes, develop a list of adults from the congregation that the group would like to recruit for this trip. Prioritize the list. Decide who will recruit those chosen, using the job description that is to be developed. (See next step.)

8. Job description for the adult leader.

Choose a small group from meeting participants to develop a job description for your adult leaders before they are recruited. Refer to the sample job description in the Content Piece "Equipment Adults Need to Travel with Teens."

9. Next meeting date.

Set the date, time, and place for the next meeting. The next meeting will gather adult and leaders who will be going on the trip. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine the schedule for the trip.

10. Tasks to be done for the next meeting and assigned responsibilities.

Determine which tasks need to be done before the next meeting and who will be responsible. Make a list. For example:

Things to be done:

- Write a job description
- Recruit the adult leaders
- Write and send promotion
- Call youth to register

Who is responsible:

- Krista, Brett, Jeff
- Nancy, Mark
- Ben
- Beth, Mike, Susan

11. Close meeting with prayer.



Planning for Meeting #3

Meeting for all Travelers

This meeting is designed for all travelers—youth and adult leaders. The goal of this meeting is to determine the mode of transportation and to develop the travel schedule.

Prior to this meeting, you should have the following information:

- Destination:
- Dates of the trip:
- Goals for the event:
 -
 -
 -
- Adult leaders who have been recruited:
 -
 -
 -
- Youth who have registered for this trip:
 -
 -
 -
- Costs and availability of various modes of travel (e.g. vehicle rental or air, train, bus fares). It may be helpful to have maps available so participants can trace their route of travel.
 -
 -
 -

Agenda for Meeting #3

1. Welcome.
2. Purpose of the meeting.
3. Share Content Piece: "Getting the Most for Your Ministry Miles."
4. Opening devotion and prayer.
5. Prepared yet flexible.
6. Share Content Piece: "On the Road... Have Safety, Will Travel."
7. Decide on the mode of transportation.
8. Develop the first schedule for the trip.
9. Luggage and packing concerns.
10. Determine date and time of next meeting.
11. Assign responsibilities and tasks.
12. Develop the agenda for the next meeting.
13. Close with prayer.

Process for Leading Meeting #3

1. Welcome.

2. Purpose of the meeting.

State the purpose of the meeting: "We want to decide how we'll travel and develop a travel schedule."

3. Share Content Piece: "Making the Most of Your Ministry Miles."

Make copies of the content piece available and summarize the content.

In groups of three or four, share your responses to the following:

- What concerns do you have about going on the trip?
- What is the one thing you really look forward to and think is absolutely necessary for you to see or do on the trip?

- What would you be doing right now if you were not here, and why is being here the best choice?

4. **Opening devotion and prayer.**

Read Jeremiah 29:11 aloud together. Reflect on how God might use this trip for His plan and purpose.

In your small groups, pray over the concerns that were shared and other needs or concerns mentioned by small-group members.

5. **Prepared yet flexible.**

Discuss the following:

- When undertaking a big group trip, how important is careful planning? Why do you feel that way?
- How important is flexibility? How can you be prepared yet flexible? Give an example.
- Is it possible to be too safe? Too prepared? Too flexible? Why? Why not?

6. **Share Content Piece: "On the Road... Have Safety, Will Travel."**

Make copies available and read through together. Make a list on the board or newsprint of things your group wants to remember as they plan their trip.

7. **Decide on the mode of transportation.**

Share the various kinds of transportation available and the cost of each as you list each mode of transportation on a sheet of newsprint.

Ask participants to list the positives and negatives for each mode of transportation.

Review the positives and negatives. Clarify any questions individuals may have concerning the lists before you move to the next step.

Vote for the preferred way of travel by a show of hands, by standing, or by placing dot stickers on the newsprint sheets.

Remember that it is possible that you may need more than one form of transportation—if you are flying, you may need a rental car for ground transportation, etc.

When the mode of transportation is determined, assign someone to make all the necessary reservations.

8. **Develop the first schedule for the trip.**

Remind participants that the schedule is a way to bring out ideas and activities that will help meet the goals for the trip.

Prepare a skeleton agenda and let each group fill it out. On the agenda list what needs to happen, departure times, destinations that are already decided. Include options where available.

Divide into groups of 3-5 and give each group a marker, map, and newsprint. The task of each group is to route the trip on the map and to write a schedule from beginning to end, including all major stops.

Give the groups 15-20 minutes to work out their suggested plans. Then ask each group to share their plan with the larger group.

Find similar patterns among the schedules. Find the major differences and as a community look for consensus on what is most important.

Suggest that a small group—perhaps one person from each planning team—work out the final schedule. Get your volunteers and set a date for a meeting.

After final suggestions have been added, set the schedule aside for a few days, review it, bring it back to the next meeting with a suggested schedule to be approved by the group.

(Another option would be to choose a small group of youth and adults to accomplish this task at a later time.)

9. **Luggage and packing concerns.**

On newsprint list all the personal items needed for this trip. Call it the "Packing List."

Decide on the amount of luggage necessary to pack the stuff on the packing list. Agree on the amount and style of luggage for each person.

Assign a person to purchase and assemble the needed first-aid kit.

10. Determine next meeting date.

Be sure to include all youth, parents, and leaders. Let them know the date, time, place, and items to bring to the meeting.

11. Assign responsibilities and tasks.

Who will write letter to parents:

Date letter should be sent by:

Letter includes:

date, time, place, things to bring, packing list, date health form to be returned by, other forms

Assign other responsibilities:

Travel responsibilities

Parent meeting responsibilities

First-aid kit

Schedule reshaping

12. Develop agenda for the next meeting.

List the important items to include in this final meeting before departure.

13. Closing prayer.

Planning for Meeting #4

Developing the Group Covenant

This meeting is for all travelers, adult leaders, and parents of travelers. The purpose of this meeting is to share information about the trip and to develop a group covenant.

Since this meeting is the result of much work by all adult leaders and youth, assign members of the traveling group to lead various parts of the agenda.

Agenda for Meeting #4

1. Welcome, get acquainted, introductions.
2. Opening devotion.
3. Share goals of the trip.
4. Share the mode of transportation and the schedule for the trip.
5. Packing list and packing demonstration.
6. Share money concerns.
7. Questions and answers.
8. Developing a Group Covenant.
9. Expectations about coming home.
10. Closing prayer.

Process for Leading Meeting #4

1. Welcome, get acquainted, introductions.

As you welcome the parents, youth, and adult leaders, give each a 3" x 5" card. Ask them to write three questions they may have about the trip.

Allow five minutes for participants to move about the room and ask their questions of as many people as possible, listening for the right answer.

Introduce the adult leaders to the parents and explain their role or function:

- counselor
- host
- guide
- program leader

2. Opening devotion.

Ask one of the travelers to develop the devotion for this meeting or use the following suggestion.

Read Acts 9:1-11 and discuss the following:

- Where was Paul's journey leading him? (Damascus, to kill the followers of Jesus.)
- Did he know all of the details? (He thought he did, but what a surprise!)
- How did this journey change his life? (180 degrees—Paul was changed from a Jesus-hater to a Jesus-follower and the greatest evangelist of all time.)

Close with a prayer.

3. Share goals of the trip.

On newsprint or on the board, list the title of the event and the goals of the trip.

4. Share the mode of transportation and the schedule for the trip.

Give copies of the schedule to the parents. List the appropriate phone numbers and addresses where you can be reached during different portions of the trip.

You might present the schedule by presenting a pretend slide show. Pretend you have a clicker in your hand and pretend you are showing the slides that will be created. Share and explain two or three pictures from each day.

5. Packing list and packing demonstration.

Distribute the packing list and indicate the type of luggage to be used. Ahead of time ask one of the youth to pack all the items needed for the trip in the appropriate type of luggage. Unpack it in front of the group to show how it can be done. Have lots of fun with it. Tell the group how much luggage they can bring. Go through the packing instructions in the Content Piece: "On the Road... Have Safety, Will Travel."

6. Share money concerns.

Share a detailed accounting of the funds needed for the trip. Make arrangements to collect any outstanding fees. Perhaps the treasurer can receive fees at the end of the meeting.

Cost per person:

Registration fee _____

Transportation fee _____

Food costs _____

Housing costs _____

Program costs _____

Total cost per person: _____

Total cost for the group: _____

Money received:

Registration fees _____

Church scholarships _____

Fundraising _____

Grants and gifts _____

Total money received: _____

Money still needed: _____

Spending money each traveler needs to bring:

(Outline what the spending money is needed for.)

7. Questions and answers.

Ask for any questions from parents and youth concerning information covered thus far. Respond to each question.

8. Developing a Group Covenant.

Read the Content Piece: "Managing Group Behavior... From Control to Self-Control."

Share copies and summarize.

Introduce the design for developing a group covenant: "We are going to write a group covenant. This covenant will be the guideline for our community as we live together for the days we travel. We want parents to help build the covenant because they are ultimately responsible for their youth. We also want this covenant to reflect their views and attitudes as well as those of the travelers.

- First share the "givens."
 - No drugs or alcohol or illegal substances.
 - No girls or boys in each others' rooms.
 - Other rules that may already be established by the camp, convention, hotel, lodge, etc.
- Ask the following question: In order for this community of people to have the very best traveling event possible, how must this community treat:
 - the people going on the trip?
 - the program?
 - the property we are privileged to use?
- Form groups of four (or the number you decide, based on the number in attendance).
 - Give each group a sheet of newsprint to make a composite list of their responses—listing the rules under each of the "P's".
 - Go through each covenant and cross out statements that are repeated or combine those that are similar.

(As you mark off a group's rules, they might become offended. Keep reminding them that you aren't crossing this rule out, but adding it or picking it up on the previous sheet. You may want to make sure some rules from each group are used.)
- The final list is a community covenant. Read the list of agreements aloud and ask: "Do we, as a community, agree to live by these standards?" Get an oral agreement from each person or rewrite the statements on a clean sheet of newsprint and ask the participants to sign the covenant. Someone can do the rewrite as the meeting continues and then the participants can sign it at the conclusion of the meeting.

List the other major features of the covenant, including drug and alcohol use, for which the consequence is being sent home. These givens are set by the adult/youth leaders.

Discuss how the community wants to deal with other broken parts of the covenant.

Options: As they are broken, determine consequences to fit the crime. Try to set consequences now for each standard of the covenant.

9. Expectations about coming home.

Parents, when your youth come home from this trip, how are they going to feel? (tired, excited, hungry)

Youth, what will your parents want to do when you get home?

Parents, what questions will you want to ask?

Parents and youth, when is the best time to talk about the event? (when the youth are ready, pieces of the trip may unfold for weeks after the trip)

Youth, how will you respond to your parent's questions?

A fun extra: Perhaps the parents would be willing to sponsor a send-off or a welcome home party.

10. Closing Prayer.

Blessings on your travels!



Youth Event Registration - Sample Form

Location:

Date:

Cost:

Activities will include:

Name _____ Gender _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Date of Birth _____ Email _____

I would like to go on this trip because...

Special skills I would bring include...

I will give all my energy and commit myself to being a true servant of Christ as I participate in this event.

(Youth Signature) (Date)

I give my permission and encourage my youth to participate in all the activities listed for this youth event. I also give permission for any media images that may be taken of my child at this event to be used by (church and sponsoring organization) as they see fit.

(Parent Signature) (Date)

Turn in your...

\$_____ Registration fee

Registration form

Medical release form

by _____ to reserve your place for this event.



What are Adult Leader Responsibilities?

An Adult Leader is responsible to the congregation and to the traveling group for the care and nurture of each group member throughout the youth event experience. An Adult Leader is expected to attend all even activities and participate with the traveling group.

A congregation should choose Adult Leaders who...

1. Love kids and enjoy being around them... because they'll have to live with them for several days and because they will develop relationships that will last long after the event!
2. Love the Lord... by being forgiving, compassionate, patient, and faithful models of servant leadership in Christ... realizing this is a wonderful faith building opportunity in the lives of youth and youth leaders.
3. Have effective communication skills... such as listening to and talking with youth and being sensitive to how youth think, feel, and act.
4. Can be team players... by supporting and working together with other adult leaders and by following event and group guidelines.
5. Have experience working with youth... or have experienced leaders to ask for advice... because it's easier to be understanding and dedicated to the leadership tasks if they know the youth and the youth know and trust them.
6. Know how to be adult... in knowing and maintaining the appropriate personal, sexual, and emotional boundaries and behaviors between adults and youth... and helping youth in maintaining appropriate boundaries with other youth and adults.
7. Can be leaders and decision makers... by being able to handle unexpected or emergency situations calmly in order to make caring, intelligent decisions.
8. Have a positive, enthusiastic, and trusting attitude... even if tired, frustrated, or challenged, remembering to have fun, laugh, smile, and pray daily.
9. Can be caregivers... because youth need emotional and physical care when they are tired, excited, hungry, emotional, or sick.
10. Do not assume anything... by checking with youth in their understanding and double-checking on all plans, reservations, and arrangements.
11. Are organized... can handle details, are able to delegate, and can be flexible enough to establish a contingency plan if things have to change.
12. Will commit the time... to read through all material and share with youth and parents, to plan and lead pre-event meetings and Bible studies, to go to the event, and help the youth "bring home" the experience.
13. Involve all parents, congregational leaders, and youth... in information, decisions, and plans.
14. Are able to take on responsibility... because someone has to make reliable decisions involving group covenant, medical, emergency, or legal issues regarding youth participants, keeping families informed along the way.
15. Will be active, energetic participants... in the preparation process, at home, at the event, and when they return.



Sample Job Description for Adult Leaders Attending Youth Travel Events

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this experience with the youth. We pray you will be blessed through this experience, as well. Between now and the event, you'll need to...

1. Take an active role in helping the event be a positive experience by...
 - hosting pre- and post-events with your group of youth.
 - making travel plans, including transportation, lodging, and meals.
 - helping the group develop a back-home presentation for the church during Sunday worship.
 - helping the group host a pre-departure parent meeting.
 - joining the group in sharing their experience during Sunday worship.
2. Be involved with each fundraiser and participate with the youth in:
 - (list each fundraiser and date)
3. Be a care group leader in high school Bible class and be willing to carry out the assigned duties of the care group.
4. Prepare a budget with your group for the trip, helping them track their financial needs and progress.
5. Work at building positive relationships with all group members.
6. If participating in a Servant Event, contact the Servant Event Project Coordinator by phone to introduce yourself and ask for pertinent information.
7. Be a spiritual leader at the pre- and post-events, including leading or enabling worship and Bible study.
8. Be willing to be trained for your leadership role.
9. Be a willing and active participant at the event.
10. Secure and deliver necessary forms for the event: medical release forms, camp forms, final payment, etc.
11. Help the group select youth leaders for the various responsibilities of the event.
12. Act as a guardian to ensure safety while traveling and participating at the event.
13. Encourage youth to process their experience while at the event.
14. Help your group members bring the experience back to share with the congregation.



Sample Group Covenant

A covenant is a pledge or promise. In this case, the covenant is developed among the members of the group.

Before leaving for the event, your group should covenant together to define and clarify mutual expectations. Adult leaders may find it uncomfortable to “police” the members of the group. But remember, all the individuals are fellow members of the Body of Christ. By God’s grace, they accept the freedom that the Lord grants His people. However, we are also sinful human beings who need each other for support and strength to carry out the responsibilities the Lord gives.

As you develop your group covenant you will want to keep in mind your needs and the needs of the other members of the group. If mutually agreeable, parts of the covenant can be redone if the group finds it necessary. But, while it is in effect, all members of the group are responsible for honoring it.

As a group, determine each group member’s responsibilities under each question.

1. We covenant together to treat each other in a Christian manner as follows:
(This could include statements concerning being inclusive rather than cliquish; working at getting to know those we don’t know or don’t like; issues of inclusivity, prejudice, and disabilities; and/or some special goal that might be unique to your group.)
2. We covenant together to help one another in the following ways:
(Consider things like encouraging each other to fully participate; helping to make the event happen rather than waiting for it to happen; reaching out to those with special struggles in their lives, etc.)
3. We covenant to bring this experience back home to those not able to participate by:
(Consider appointing a travelogue person(s) and a photographer(s). Set a sharing date now and start publicizing it.)
4. In our covenanting together, we expect our leaders to:
(See the leader’s job description for help on this one.)
5. We covenant together to handle the following behavior issues as follows:
 - Opposite sex relationships/couples
 - Disagreements/hassles
 - Smoking and other use of tobacco
 - Drugs and alcohol
6. In order to make the (name of event) a safe and happy experience for all travelers, we, youth and adults, covenant to abide by the event rules, including:
 - Full participation in the event happenings.
 - Lights out and quiet by 1 am each night.
 - No use of illegal drugs.
 - No use of alcohol.
 - Always traveling in groups of three or more.
7. When someone breaks our covenant:
(For example, discuss the information with the group; call parents under the following conditions; infractions that result in an immediate trip home at the parents’ expense by public carrier, etc.)

When your covenant is completed, provide a written copy for each group member.

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Sample Final Checklist

Before you leave on your trip, make one final check to make sure you have...

- All adult leaders
- All youth
- First-aid kit
- Medical release and activity release forms
- Registration forms
- Left phone numbers and contact information with parents, etc. back home
- Final payment (if not already sent)
- Directions to destination and maps
- Travel plan and necessary phone numbers
- List of parents' home and work phone numbers
- Luggage
- Tickets
- Money and credit cards and quarters
- Extra set of keys
- Home-base contact phone numbers
- Bibles
- Beverage coolers and snacks
- Recreation equipment
- Camera, film, video camera, or digital camera
- Musical instruments and songbooks
- Trash bags
- Cell phone
- Travel games and activities



Additional Resources

Volunteer Training

A Handbook of Youth Ministry Skills by William E. Drill, Jr., Educational Ministries, Inc., Prescott, AZ 1997

Help! I'm a Volunteer Youth Worker! by Doug Fields, Youth Specialties, 1997

Equipped to Serve: Volunteer Youth Worker Training Course, by Dennis McLuen, Youth Specialties, 1994

One Kid at a Time (a video and several books) by Miles McPherson with Wayne Rice, Youth Specialties, 1995

Purpose Driven Youth Ministry (book and training kit) by Doug Fields, Youth Specialties, 1998

Youth Ministry Programming

Bore No More!: 70 Creative Ways to Involve Your Audience in Unforgettable Bible Teaching by Mike and Amy Nappa, Group, 1995

Great Retreats for Youth Groups by Chris Cannon, Youth Specialties, 1994

Ice-Breakers and Heart Warmers by Steve Sheely, Serendipity, 1996

Jump Starts and Soft Landings by Steve Sheely, Serendipity, 1997

On the Edge Games for Youth Ministry by Karl Rohnke, Group, Loveland, CO, 1998

Retreats from the Edge: Youth Events to Build a Christian Community, Cokesbury, Nashville, TN, 1997

What I've Learned about Youth Retreats, Department of Youth Ministry, St. Louis, MO, 1997

Up Close and Personal: How to Build Community in your Youth Group by Wayne Rice, Youth Specialties, 1989

Youth Group Trust Builders by Denny Rydberg, Group, Loveland, CO, 1993

Youth Retreats for All Occasions by Kelly Stevens, Educational Ministries, Inc., Prescott, AZ, 1996

Devotionals

Called to Be: Devotions by Teens for Teens, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 1998.

Life in the Real World: 5 Minute Devotions for Teens, by Eileen Ritter, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1997

Life in the Real World 2: 5 Minute Devotions for Teens, by Eileen Ritter, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 1999

101 Affirmations for Teenagers, Group Publishing, Inc., Loveland, CO, 1993

God's Word for Students, (Bible with devotionals) Wayne Rice, General Editor, World Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996

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