WHY ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THE PATHFINDER MINISTRY?
OVERVIEW

- Understand Your Pathfinders
- Fostering Positive Relationships
- Create an Engaging Program
- Handling Difficult Situations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-teen</th>
<th>Teen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>• Testing of rules and limits increases</td>
<td>• Feelings of love and passion intensity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ideals develop, including selection of role models</td>
<td>• More serious relationships develop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Short term relationships may occur</td>
<td>• Capacity for affection and sensual love increases</td>
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<td><strong>Spiritual</strong></td>
<td>• Questioning of moral rights and privileges increase</td>
<td>• Interest in moral reasoning increases</td>
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<td>• Interests expand and gain importance</td>
<td>• Interest in social, cultural and family traditions expand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Beginning of puberty</td>
<td>• Emphasis on personal dignity &amp; self-esteem increases</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hormonal changes are visible</td>
<td>• Girls usually reach full physical development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Brain development</td>
<td>• Boys reach close to full physical development, growth continues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feeling of awkwardness</td>
<td>• Eating habits change (boys &amp; girls)</td>
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<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td>• Interest focus on present, thoughts of the future are limited</td>
<td>• Interest focus on near-future and future</td>
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<td>• Ability to do work expands</td>
<td>• More importance is placed on goals, ambitions, role in life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Capacity for abstract thinking increases</td>
<td>• Capacity for setting goals and following through increases</td>
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<td>• Risk-taking behaviors emerge</td>
<td>• Risk-taking behaviors may emerge</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>• Sense of identity develops</td>
<td>• Independent functioning increases</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Focus on self increases</td>
<td>• Firmer and more cohesive sense of personal identity develops</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Close friendships gain importance</td>
<td>• Ability to think ideas through increases</td>
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<td>• Peer pressure influences interests</td>
<td>• Peer relationships remain important</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Start to pull away from parents</td>
<td>• Emotion steadiness increases</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sense of identity develops</td>
<td>• Concern for others increases</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on self increases</td>
<td>• Social networks expand</td>
</tr>
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“Positive youth development is the understanding, based on research, that healthy development is best promoted by creating opportunities to develop a set of core assets, dubbed as the 5 C’s: competence, confidence, connections, character and caring.”

The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Health Adolescent Development by Clea McNeely, MA, DrPH and Jayne Blanchard
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How to Foster It</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPETENCE</td>
<td>Perception that one has abilities and skills</td>
<td>Provide training and practice in specific skills, either academic or hands-on</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>Internal sense of self efficacy and positive self-worth</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for your people to experience success when trying something new</td>
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<td>CONNECTIONS</td>
<td>Positive bonds with people and institutions</td>
<td>Build relationships between youth and peers, teachers and parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHARACTER</td>
<td>A sense of right and wrong (morality), integrity and respect for standards of correct behavior</td>
<td>Provide opportunities to practice increasing self-control and development of spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARING</td>
<td>A sense of sympathy and empathy for others</td>
<td>Care for young people</td>
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FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
MENTORING
A lot of Christians think they aren’t cut out for youth ministry. But if you love Jesus and you care about kids, everything else falls into place.

- Ryan Nelson, 10 Ways to Be a Better Youth Leader, July 13, 2014.

**Successful counselors are not successful because of their spunky personalities and teaching skills – kids gravitate to adults who love Jesus and genuinely love kids.**
FOSTERING A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BEGINS WITH YOU

Put your relationship with Jesus first!

• Have you heard the cliché “You can only lead someone as far as you’ve gone?”

• The more we put Jesus first in our lives, the more we love those around us.

• With Jesus first, the purpose and significance of what we do and say is amplified, not reduced.
EFFECTIVE COUNSELING

• Before you start to plan, pray!
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• Be a genuine YOU.
  • The more cool, holy or amazing you present yourself, the more distant kids will feel from you
  • Share yourself, be willing to be vulnerable
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• You are modeling Christ in all that you say and do.
  • Show the kids that Jesus meets them right were they are
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• Do everything with love
FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

• Studies have shown that what matters most to students is finding a welcoming environment where they can be themselves and build quality friendships.

• Create an environment
  • where they feel wanted, accepted and connected,
  • where they feel safe
  • where each child is allowed to shine in their own way

• Seek out the kids in the corner - get them involved, listen and love them.
FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

• Listen
  • Challenge yourself to a listening campaign.
  • Keep to the 80/20 rule (instructor speaks 20% and listens 80%)
  • Make eye contact

• Show them that you care through your words AND actions.

• GET TO KNOW YOUR KIDS!
  • Take the time and effort to really get to know your kids.
  • Know how they will react to different situations.
PIZZA AND VIDEO GAMES DO NOT TRANSFORM LIVES!
CREATE AN ENGAGING PROGRAM

Have a purpose for everything!

• Each component within your program should have a purpose. For instance the purpose of organizing a goofy game is to get the kids to work together or provide an outlet for those who are usually quit to participate and be cheered.

• If we understand the why behind each aspect of youth group, it becomes a lot less about us and a lot more about the kids, Jesus, and the ways we let God use us.
CREATE AN ENGAGING PROGRAM

• Youth are transformed by truth clearly presented

• Do not merely try to out “fun” the world. Be purposeful in the type of entertainment you use.

• Reinforce the Christian principles and lessons with activities and outreach that are purposeful and fun.

• Remember, have a purpose for everything
CREATE AN ENGAGING PROGRAM

Engage the Pathfinders by:

• Designing a program to reach them where they are
• Ask open ended questions
• Create a safe environment where opinions and feelings can be expressed without criticism
• Find something positive from every response
• Create an environment free from distractions
• Do not lecture or dominate the discussion
HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

• Be compassionate and listen carefully FIRST.
• Listen at their level – literally (physically sit or kneel for a level eye contact)
• Keep confidentiality (unless laws or ethics require otherwise)
• Keep your emotions in check – No gasps! No shocked expressions!
• Identify the underlying issue (could be completely unrelated to incident)
• Don’t be afraid to say that you don’t know the answer. Say “let’s study together for the answer.”
• Don’t be afraid to admit your weaknesses. Doing so shows that you are not perfect and makes you more easily relatable.
DISCUSSION

Is anger ever appropriate for a Pathfinder?

Is anger ever appropriate for a Counselor?

Explain.
As a Counselor, you WILL have an effect on a Pathfinder. The question is whether it will be a positive or negative effect?
WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PATHFINDER MINISTRY?

Creating opportunities for mentoring relationships with a Pathfinder with the goal of drawing them closer to Jesus Christ.
QUESTIONS?