

FIRST STEPS GUIDE

10 Questions to Ask for Beginning a
Kids and/or Youth Ministry



NEXT GEN 101

*equipping churches to
reach the next generation*

One Generation Shall Commend Your Works to Another Psalm 145:4

Dear Ministry Leaders and Parents,

Who is called to reach the next generation? The truth is that we are all called to reach the next generation – all of God’s people, at all times, and in **every church**.

God’s design for reaching the next generation is that all of us are a part of passing on His truth to those who are coming next. Parents play a primary role in leading their own children and the church comes alongside them to encourage and reinforce their efforts.

This guide is structured around **10 questions**, meant to help churches with no or few young people make a plan to reach kids and teenagers in their context. This guide will also be a helpful reminder of the most important priorities for churches and leaders with established ministries to young people.

It’s my joy to serve those who lead the next generation!



Nathan Schneider
Lead Catalyst

10 Questions



01. Have you prayed about it?

02. What is God's vision for the ministry?

03. Who is the leader of the ministry?

04. When will you meet?

05. Where will you meet?

06. What will you teach?

07. What policies and procedures will you follow?

08. Who will serve as volunteers?

09. How will you equip and encourage parents?

10. What opportunities exist for outreach?

Question 1: Have you prayed about it?

Nothing is more vital to the success of ministry than prayer. Prayer is not an add-on or simply a part of our ministries; it is the very life-breath of our ministries. Before we gather volunteers, choose a curriculum, or plan an event, we must first seek God's direction for the ministry through prayer. Consider the commands of Scripture as they relate to praying and ministry.

Prayer for Leaders (Luke 10:2)

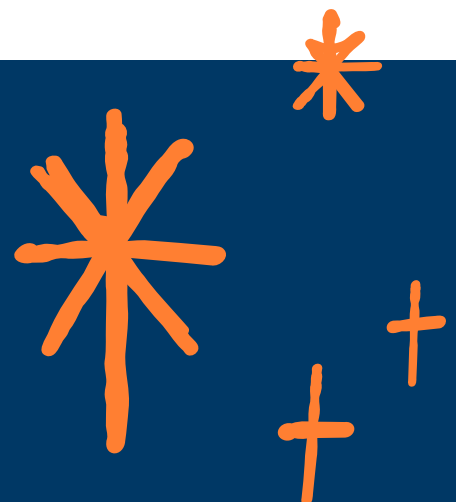
Pray for Open Doors (Colossians 4:3)

Pray for Spiritual Growth (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

Pray for Unity (John 17:21)

Pray for Boldness (Acts 4:29)

Pray for Perseverance (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)



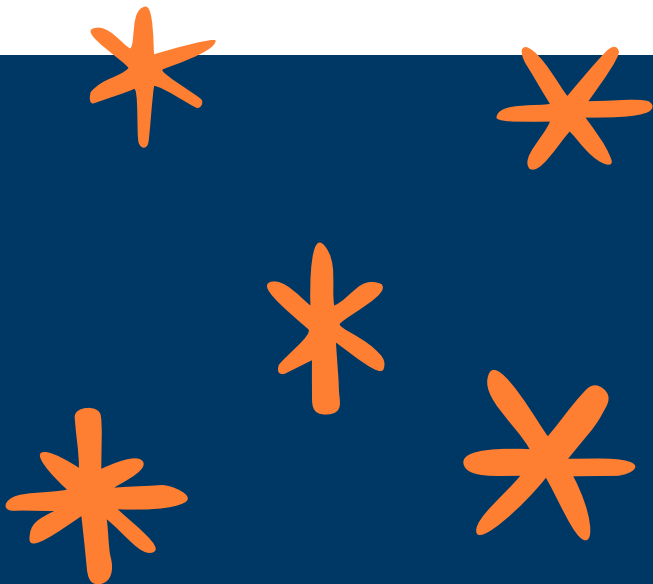
Question 2: What is God's vision for the ministry?

Before considering practical first steps, a ministry leader should ask the questions "Why start a ministry for young people?" and "What should this ministry look like?" This is your vision, your roadmap. In addition to prayer, two elements are essential for establishing a vision:

1. The Bible: Scripture speaks clearly and frequently about reaching the next generation. Study the Bible and highlight relevant passages.

2. Your Location + Context: The Lord has placed you in a specific context on purpose and for a purpose. What unique opportunities exist for your church to reach young people?

*Ministry priorities will be shaped by the vision. For example, if your vision includes the idea of seeing kids share the gospel in their schools, a priority should be training them to share their faith.



Question 3: Who is the leader of the ministry?

The old adage, “if everyone is in charge, no one is” highlights the need for leadership in our ministries. **Clear leadership** is necessary for clarity and execution (consider the examples of Moses, Joshua, David, Peter, and Paul).

It’s important to identify someone who will be the leader of the ministry, whether that be a staff member or a volunteer. This person will be responsible to:

- Champion the vision of the ministry
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Oversee the implementation of the ministry
- Serve as the primary point person for accountability and communication



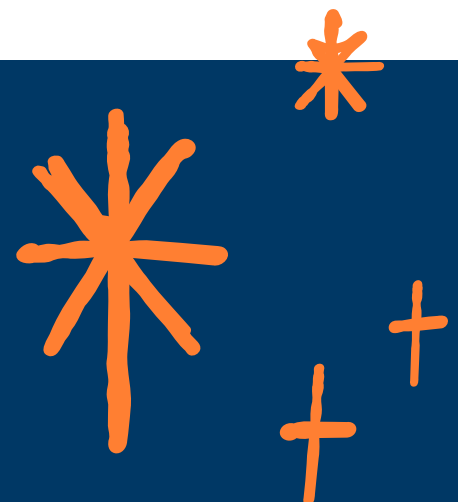
Question 4: When will you meet?

When beginning a ministry, don't try to implement everything at once. Start small by establishing **a clear weekly rhythm**. This rhythm can take place on a Sunday morning while your church members are already gathered, or during the week, which may create opportunities to reach families who are not yet connected to the church.

Whatever rhythm you choose, remember: **consistency is key**. A predictable schedule builds trust with families, volunteers, and students.

Once a weekly rhythm is established, you can begin to plan additional meeting times. These might include monthly family gatherings and/or quarterly outreach events.

Pro-Tip: Coordinate your meeting times and events with other church ministry calendars and local school calendars. This prevents your ministry from competing with the very people you're trying to serve. It also helps families win!



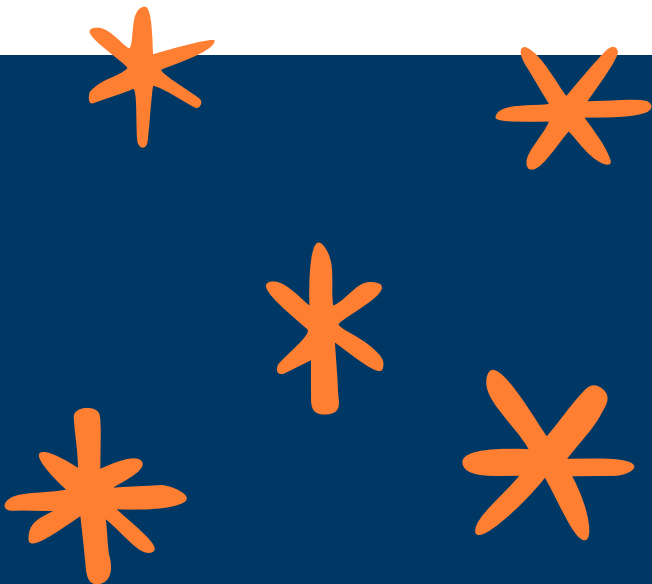
Question 5: Where will you meet?

A meeting place for young people is more than a room. It should be a space that's **clean, safe, and conducive to relationships**. A decision about where to meet will also take into consideration the gathering format (large-group, small-group, a combination of both), and the age group of those meeting.

For an ideal space size, see Florida Baptist's "[Small Group Structure Recommendations](#)" and the "[Meeting Space Specifications](#)".

Other elements to consider in a meeting space for young kids:

- Clear signage
- Location of the restrooms
- Limited access for non-participants
- Lighting and visibility
- Access to technology
- Access for parents check-in and check-out



Question 6: What will you teach?

A major focus of the Bible's emphasis on leading the next generation is teaching the truth of God. For example (Psalm 78:5-7a) *"He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to **teach** to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and **tell** them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God."*

There are people in your church who are gifted to teach young people. A curriculum is a tool that can be used to help guide them in what and how to teach young people. Some curriculum options also include suggested activities to help structure your total time together.

You can also find samples of most curriculum options online.

Popular curriculums include [Lifeway](#), [Group](#), and [Grow](#), among others.

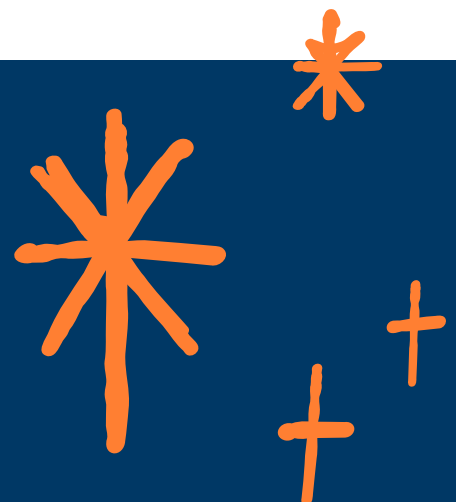


Question 7: What policies and procedures will you follow?

A safe and secure environment protects children, encourages their learning, and gives parents confidence in the ministry. Having clear safety policies also helps to protect volunteers, leaders, and the church.

For an overview of suggested policies and practices, check out the [“Blueprint for Creating Safety & Security Policies in Your Church”](#) document on the resource page.

Pro-Tip: Consider identifying **a child-safety coordinator**. This can be a volunteer in the church who can interview safety experts, review outside policies and procedures, suggest needed guidelines, and keep ministries accountable to policies.



Question 8: Who will serve as volunteers?

Everyone can contribute something to leading children and teenagers.

- Everyone can pray for young people.
- Everyone can provide resources for the ministry.

But not everyone will serve in the ministry. For those who will serve consistently, look for people who are relational, biblical, and intentional.

Relational = friendly and invested

Biblical = grounded in the Bible, personally and ministerially

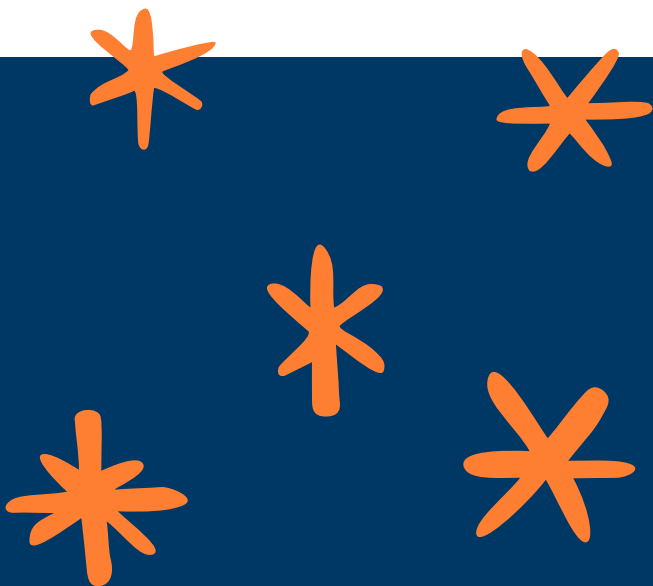
Intentional = faithful and available; follows through on commitments

Biblical + Intentional - Relational = Harsh Leader

Relational + Intentional - Biblical = Misguided Leader

Relational + Biblical - Intentional = Lazy Leader

Relational + Biblical + Intentional = Disciple-Maker



Question 9: How will you equip and encourage parents?

In Deuteronomy 6:7, Moses instructed the Israelites, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise"

Parents are best positioned to disciple their children in the Lord. The church, then, serves alongside families - both in instructing children and in equipping and encouraging parents.

A ministry to young people is also a ministry to and for parents.

Practical ways to equip parents include: providing conversation starters tied to weekly lessons, offering parenting workshops or seminars, sharing recommended resources (books, podcast, etc.), and regularly reminding parents that discipleship starts at home.



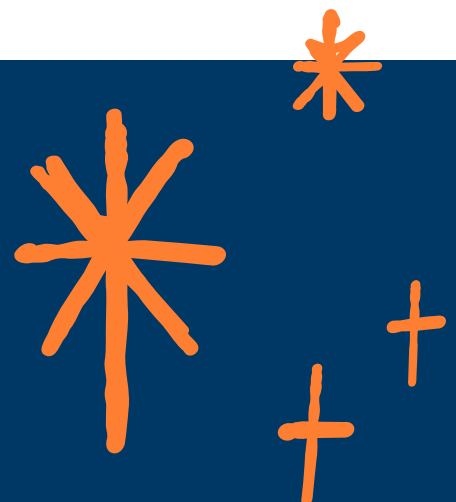
Question 10: What opportunities exist for outreach?

It doesn't matter how great your programming and leadership are, if you don't have a way of bringing people into the ministry. This means that we have to think about the opportunities we have to minister in our communities. We want to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19a).

Schools are the primary place where young people gather. Consider ways to connect with the local school. Check to see if any of the following clubs already exist at your local school:

- [Kids Beach Club](#)
- [Good News Club](#)
- [First Priority](#)
- [Fellowship of Christian Athletes \(FCA\)](#)

Pro-tip: Don't forget to have **a clear follow-up plan** for students and families who connect through outreach events and initiatives.



10-Question Checklist



Pray for your ministry to young people.

Clarify the vision.

Identify the leader of the ministry.

Establish a time for meeting.

Choose your location.

Select the right teaching materials.

Establish safety and security policies.

Recruit and train volunteers.

Begin regular communication with parents.

Develop a plan for outreach and follow-up.

Additional Resources



Kids Ministry

Florida Baptist Kids Ministry

<https://flbaptist.org/who-we-serve/next-gen/children/>

Lifeway Christian Resources Children's Ministry

kidsministry.lifeway.com/

Special Needs Resources

lifeway.com/en/shop/ministries/special-needs
sandrapeoples.com/

SEND Network Children's Resources

newchurches.com/course/childrensministry/

WMU Children's Missions Resources

wmu.com/missions-discipleship/children/

Evangelical Council for Abuse Prevention

<https://ecap.net>

Youth / Student Ministry

Florida Baptist Student Ministry

<https://flbaptist.org/who-we-serve/next-gen/students/>

Lifeway Students

studentministry.lifeway.com

YM360

youthministry360.com

NAMB GenSend Leader Resources

<https://www.gensend.org/leader-resources/>

Access to
Digital Resources



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