

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### WHAT ARE THEY?

A policy is a previously determined rule, that by consideration of what is wise and expedient, safeguards the participants, the institution, and the purpose of the institution. Whereas a formal procedure is a preplanned course of action that illustrates step-by-step methods to accomplish one's goals, policies are often developed because of bad or unplanned procedures that have brought improper or harmful results. Good procedures often prevent negative, mandated policies.

Policies are established in the following two ways: 1) With foresight, through previous consideration, a policy is set to prevent a problem from occurring. 2) With hindsight, in reaction to a problem that has happened, a policy is made to prevent this problem from happening again. Ministries make policies both ways, but those established with foresight are helpful, not devastating to the ministry and its reputation.

*Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour:  
so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.—Ecclesiastes 10:1*

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:  
be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.—Matthew 10:16*

*Let all things be done decently and in order.—1 Corinthians 14:40*

One's youth ministry may be very effective, but a few "flies" in the ointment can severely limit and undermine future trust and effectiveness.

**You must develop both policies and procedures in order to have a more effective ministry with youth.**

### WHY HAVE THEM?

They help create and maintain a youth ministry which functions decently and in order.

1. Preparation—gives structure for preparations
2. Prevention—gives guidelines to prevent problems from occurring
3. Protection—gives protection to the ministry, the ministers, those ministered to
4. Proficiency—provides a way for improvement
5. Pressure—relieves pressure from the leader in intense situations

### HOW TO WRITE THEM?

Writing policies and procedures requires thought.

1. Consider the purpose. What is the reason for your youth group's existence?
2. Consider the past.

- a. What problems have we had?
- b. What did you learn from the past?
3. Consider the input of youth workers. What do your leaders say?
4. Consider your peers. What are fellow youth leaders doing well around you?

## **WHO SHOULD THEY INCLUDE?**

Policies and procedures affect more than the youth.

1. Pastors
  - a. What steps will you take to support and not to undermine the pastor's ministry? Never announce to the teens what he has not approved.
  - b. When will you discuss the purpose and direction of the youth group?
  - c. How will you report to him what is happening in the youth group?
2. Parents
  - a. How are you helping them reach their goals?
  - b. When do you communicate with them about your goals and desires?
  - c. How are you involving them?
3. Youth Leaders
  - a. Have you defined a process of recruiting committed, faithful adult leaders?
  - b. Do you have a list of qualifications for adult leaders?
  - c. Have you defined and communicated the expectations of a youth leader?
  - d. What steps will you take to protect the reputation of the youth leaders?
4. Youth
  - a. Counseling—How and when do you counsel with teens?
  - b. Discipline—How do you keep order and deal with those who will not obey the rules?
  - c. Teen Relations—How can you have a group of teens that reach out and is unified?
  - d. Teen Leadership—What places have you made for student leadership?
  - e. Attire—What expectations do you have in the area of teen dress?
  - f. Time-honored Traditions, Rites of Passage—What are the special events that teens can only participate in when they are the right age?
    - 1) When will you promote upcoming seventh graders?
    - 2) How long will a senior remain in the youth group?

## WHAT SHOULD THEY CONTROL?

Policies and procedures govern a variety of activity areas.

1. The ACTION of an Activity
  - a. Should all activities have an evangelistic focus? What about service-oriented activities?
  - b. What type of physical contact is appropriate in a game?
    - 1) Will this lead to injury?
    - 2) Will it undermine teen conduct?
2. The MESSAGE of the Activity
  - a. When is the most effective time to preach to the teens?
  - b. Do you have a message at every activity?
  - c. Will you give an invitation?
    - 1) Who will your counselors be?
    - 2) Who will watch the rest of the teens?
    - 3) Will you have any literature to leave with the teens who respond to the invitation?
3. The TRANSPORTATION of an Activity
  - a. What expectations do you have for drivers?
  - b. Will you allow teens to drive for an activity?
  - c. What is your objective on a road trip?
    - 1) How do you make traveling fun?
    - 2) How do you keep unwise physical contact from happening?
  - d. What will your dining procedures be?
    - 1) Will everyone go to the same place?
    - 2) If you split up for dining, will a leader be with each group?
    - 3) What will be the minimum size of a group?
    - 4) How will you get everyone safely across a busy intersection?
  - e. What will your procedures for rest stops and boarding the vehicle be?
    - 1) How will you prevent someone from taking a teen?
    - 2) How will you keep from leaving a teen at a stop?
    - 3) Do you have some sort of buddy system?
4. The COST of an Activity
  - a. How do you provide for teens who do not have the money to attend?

- 1) Without embarrassment?
- 2) Without diminishing their sense of responsibility?
- b. Who collects the money?
- c. How is the money accounted for?
5. The CLEAN-UP after an Activity
6. The SAFETY at an Activity
  - a. First Aid
    - 1) Is there an accessible, practical first aid kit? Does it have band aids?
    - 2) Is anyone CPR certified?
  - b. Permission Slips and Medical Releases
  - c. Adult Leadership Screening Forms

## **HIGHLIGHTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### 1. The Relationship with Your Pastor

A youth leader, whether paid or unpaid, who has accepted the responsibility of working with the youth, must treat his responsibility with faithfulness and loyalty. One cannot look at youth work as doing someone a favor; it is accepting and being accountable for a position. Therefore, it is understood that the pastor has the last say. Seek to have regular times to discuss calendar for youth activities and new ideas for the youth.

### 2. Permission Slips and Medical Releases

These are a must. Set a time each year when the youth have permission slips and medical releases signed and notarized. Keep these forms on hand; three years is a recommended time.

### 3. Adult Sponsor Recruitment

- a. Meet with interested leaders before you give them a leadership role.
  - 1) Ask questions that give you a chance to see what their expectations are.
  - 2) Communicate your expectations.
- b. Have a plan to bring them into greater leadership over time.
- c. All leaders should fill out a Child Abuse Screening Form.
- c. All leaders should sign a Leadership Guideline Agreement.

### 4. Adult Sponsor and Teen Interaction

- a. Male leaders should focus on relationships with young men, and women with the ladies.
- b. Male leaders should not be alone with young ladies, nor women leaders with young men.
- c. Leaders should report to the church office with parental permission when dealing one-on-one with the same gender.

## 5. Keeping Discipline with Teens

- a. Leaders should not use physical force in dealing with unruly teens. If a teen will not obey verbal instruction, he should not participate.
- b. Develop a teen obedience agreement stating that the teen will obey the rules. Have each teen sign the document.
- c. Have clear instructions for leaders on how to prevent disorderly behavior.
- d. Deal with repetitive disobedience following four basic steps.
  - 1) First offense: Publicly ask the teen to stop the behavior.
  - 2) Second offense: Warn the teen a second time; speak with the teen privately after the incident.
  - 3) Third offense: Confront the teen and contact the parent.
  - 4) Fourth offense: Confront the teen, contact the parent, and have the parent keep the teen with him until the behavior is changed.

## 6. Including and Reaching Visitors

- a. Have attendance cards for visitors completed at every activity.
- b. Have a handwritten postcard ready to send to visitors. Mail it out right away after an activity.
- c. Recruit teens to call on visitors and to invite them back for another event.
- d. Assign a leader from each age group to welcome visitors, make sure they feel included, and visit them within the first two weeks after their attendance.
- e. Consider having one activity where visitors come free of cost.
- f. Prepare leaders to counsel with those who respond to the message. Have tracts to send home with any who seem sensitive to the Gospel.
- g. Devise a plan to disciple each newly saved teen.

## 7. Student Leadership

- a. The most successful youth groups develop serving teens.
- b. Consider having a box with a student comment card, allowing even the shy teen a chance to give input.
- c. Consider setting up youth committees to plan activities under adult supervision.
  - 1) One committee for youth activities and outreach
  - 2) One committee for service projects
- d. Set up a process whereby teens begin to help in teaching.
  - 1) Involve them for a pre-determined amount of time—no shorter than a quarter—that develops relationships and faithfulness.
  - 2) At least every six months, if not sooner, set a time for the teacher to evaluate the teen's teaching for effectiveness and weaknesses. Then communicate these for the purpose of growth and maturity.

- 3) Consider rotating the teens through different areas in order to give them well-rounded training in many areas.

8. Student Attire

- a. As ministers in a youth group (all teens should be), they need to consider the message they send with their clothes.
- b. Communicate with parents the goal for modest attire, and explain what you mean by modest. Parents are the key to their children's attire.
- c. Clearly communicate dress expectations.
- d. Consider what is appropriate attire for the activity. Teach the teens to dress appropriately for what they are doing.
- e. Consider how you will deal with the unsaved in an area that takes spiritual understanding.
- f. If individual instruction is necessary, choose wisely who will speak to the teen who is immodest—ladies with ladies, men with men.