

The 7 **Soul Food** Groups as your guide for planning Youth Ministry

Look at each area and ask your team, “What can we do to incorporate this area in to our youth ministry?”

Remember that youth ministry can happen in a variety of contexts including the home, the school, worship, youth group, Bible study groups, mentoring partnerships, Christian friendship networks, wider church events etc

GOD AND I: enjoying an intimate relationship with God

Incorporate this soul food through * devotions in your gatherings *small group Bible studies *coaching and follow up support for personal faith practices using The Fridge or other resources *testimonies and sharing times * question and answer panels on God topics * teach and practice a variety of prayer patterns in group time which they will be able to use on their own at home. (pgs 32 – 33 of The Fridge) * give Christian families resources they can use together to grow closer to God at home * help your young people experience a wide variety of ways to connect with God which might suit all kinds of different personalities – the energetic and the reflective, people who prefer to see things, hear things or do things etc

HANGING OUT: cultivating healthy and authentic relationships

* have a group covenant for how you will all treat each other. Refer back to it to keep relationships going well * run a series on relational issues such as “How to be an excellent Christian friend” * ask the girls to run a session for the guys on “How girls like to be treated” and the boys to give the girls a session about “How guys like to be treated” * model encouragement and caring to each other
* give training in listening skills or conversational skills *Use exercises from this section of The Fridge with in youth group time

SERVING OTHERS: using gifts and abilities in a life of sacrificial service

*plan group service projects * encourage your group to plug in to church / community service projects that make sense for your group
* set individual service challenges such as the “Random Acts of Kindness” exercise (See The Fridge pg 96) * delegate jobs to people with in your meetings such as bringing or serving supper – give everyone the opportunity to serve * Help families of young people take up service projects together * encourage people to serve others with in the groups they belong to outside the church *develop service as a life style habit *give them service rolls at worship such as welcoming at the door, taking up the offering etc..

DOING CHURCH: belonging to and participating in a community of faith

Build or strengthen links between your young people and the worshipping congregation by * simply inviting them to come to church for all the Sundays of a month. Perhaps you could meet early for a pizza tea and then go in to church together * invite church people with great faith stories to share, to join the youth group one night and tell their stories * invite cool church people to visit youth gatherings and to chat together in small groups about faith, life, the church etc * run worship as a group and use the preparation time as a way to teach about the elements of worship * when you do service activities, help them to understand that this is doing church too * Offer them opportunities to use their talents and spiritual gifts with in the church in meaningful ways...

LIVING LIFE: being sustained, recharged and empowered by the Holy Spirit

Help your young people be sustained by The Spirit by * teaching them about The Holy Spirit's role in the Christians life * including small group prayer times in your meetings * giving examples of ways to be open to God's guidance * have sharing times where people talk about how they experienced God during the week * have them do a "Count your blessings" exercise to realize how many great things God has given them * run a mini retreat for them (pg 188 and 164 in The Fridge) * encouraging them to encourage each other and to be blessings to one another * discussing the REAL life issues that your young people struggle with and give them ways to manage the temptations they face...

ON A MISSION: actively engaging in mission

You can include this in your program by * helping them to identify with God's love for people so that they can understand why God wants them to be on about his missions * identify needs and meet them in God's name * run practice sessions on faith sharing * encouraging them to pray for their non church friends to find faith and for God to give them opportunities to share their faith * Hold "Bring a friend" nights at Youth Group or church* have regular sharing times about God's involvement in their lives. The more often we talk about our faith the more natural it becomes * use the map of the world prayer exercise from The Fridge pg 202 - 203 * encouraging them to be involved in leadership with children's ministry or peer ministry * tapping in to wider church mission experiences through Uniting in Mission or by contacting our churches Social Justice advocates and asking how your group might help others * Do the 40 Hour Famine Together * Have an Amnesty International information and letter writing night..

WHO I AM: developing a Christ-like character

This can be included in your ministry by * running Bible study sessions on Jesus as our ultimate role model * encouraging people to read the gospels (The table on pg 20 of The Fridge could help and also the reflection questions on pg 236) either on their own or together * encourage them to live like Jesus (pg 237 will help) and set "Jesus" home work where they let Jesus live through them to bless others * helping them to confront and deal with their own areas of weakness and vulnerability (pgs 244 - 249) * reflect on The Fruit of The Spirit * introducing them to the practice of journaling. Set questions to reflect on each day about their progress in developing a Christ Like Character which they work through for a month

