

# Effective Youth Ministry Free Resource

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# Writing A Youth Group Talk

written by  
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# WRITING A YOUTH GROUP TALK

Here are some principles that will provide you with some guidelines for preparing a youth group talk. You will need to add your own creative touches such as examples, illustrations, practical advice etc., and over time you will develop your own technique.

## Before you start:

1. Before you start, consider your group: Age, needs, Christian maturity etc.
2. Plan: Do you want to give a series or a single talk? A series should be between 3 – 6 weeks.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Choose a Bible passage or topic. (See also, "Writing a youth Bible study" in "Free Resources" [www.effectiveyouthministry.com](http://www.effectiveyouthministry.com) for some guidelines for preparing an inductive, thematic or topical talk/study).

**Step 2:** Read the passage and develop your understanding of what it is saying. Think about:

1. The Context: "What comes before and after the passage and what place is it in the bible book you are using and the Bible as a whole.
2. Ask, 'what is the main idea of the passage?'
3. Break the passage into sections: paragraphs, verses, themes etc, (is there a key verse? Is there a key theme? Who are the key characters?)

If your talk is a topical one that uses several passages, write down all the Bible passages you want to use and develop your understanding of the topic from what the passages say (not the other way around!). It is helpful even for a topical talk to have one key verse or passage that summarises the key thought.

**Step 3:** Give your talk a title in 5 words or less. If you cannot summarize your talk in 5 words then you may be trying to say too much or you may not understand what the passage is saying.

**Step 4:** Write a basic outline of your talk including an introduction, key ideas you want to explain and application/conclusion. You can use the sample youth talk below as a guide.

## **Some hints:**

- Don't write your talk out in full—this will cause you to read the talk. It is very common for people to speak from a full text. However, this usually leads to a poor way of communicating. Try to speak from a full outline. **DO NOT READ YOUR OPENING STORY OR ILLUSTRATION.** You will lose your audience at the beginning.
- Beware of talking too long. In the early days of giving talks you may need to give it a practice run and time yourself. Aim to go under the time limit.
- Try to gain feedback to improve your skills. You could even record yourself or have a friend listen to your talk beforehand.

*Don't limit the subject matter of your youth talks. It is not uncommon for a youth group to never venture past a simple gospel presentation. Make sure youth group equips your young people with a good understanding of Scripture and helpful instruction on how to live it out practically.*

## **What if you get nervous?**

Many people are nervous when speaking in front of others. Here are a couple of things you can do if this is your experience:

- Know your material. It is very important that you are ready and prepared. It is also very important to know what your opening sentence will be.
- Try taking deep breaths before you give your talk.
- Work at speaking slowly (and giving yourself time to breathe).
- Before you give your talk (if you are able to), go and stand where you are to give the talk before people arrive and become familiar with your surroundings early on. (This one really works!).
- Don't apologize or tell the group you are nervous. Simply begin and give your talk.
- Pray and ask God to help you be calm.

*NOTE: nerves are a common experience. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you are not a good speaker just because you feel nervous. If your nerves are not preventing you from communicating clearly then do your best to persevere. Some people become less nervous with experience. For some it remains a continual struggle.*

# SAMPLE YOUTH TALK OUTLINE

## 1. Introduction

Start with something that will catch the attention of your listeners and start them thinking about the subject. Below are some ideas on how to do this. Choose only one for your talk.

**An Illustration.** Tell a story that will connect to the topic of the talk.

**Sharing exercise.** Ask people to turn to the person next to them and answer a simple question.

**A Physical task.** For example, if your talk is about lasting as a Christian, have them search for an item in the room they think will last for 1000 years and ask for volunteers to explain why they chose the item they did.

**Group sharing.** Ask a question to the whole group and write down their answers (in one or two words on a Whiteboard). For example, 'what do people believe about death?'

**A survey.** Ask a series of questions in which the group has to vote for by indicating yes or no with a hand in the air or by standing etc. For example: put your hand in the air if you think most people believe in God; put your hand in the air if you think most people are happy with their lives etc.

**Play a song** that highlights the subject of the talk. Make sure you have a decent sound system and put the words on power point.

## 2. Read the passage

Read the passage aloud or have a young person read the passage for you.

## 3. Teach the passage

Explain what the passage is saying. For every point you make, you need to explain it. Try to illustrate it somehow with an example, a story or other some creative way. Keep your talk simple by limiting your points to no more than two or three.

## 4. Apply the passage

Apply what you have taught to the lives of those listening. Without application your talk can end up as merely an academic exercise. The outcome of your talk must not be simply to understand a concept but to be challenged by your new understanding. You need to answer the question: 'how will your life be different because of what you have heard?' Discuss how they can change wrong opinions or actions and live up to the standards set by scripture.

Application can be done as you teach the passage or after you have taught the passage. Group participation can work at this part of the talk. For example, if you are talking about making others feel welcome in your group, have them share some things they can do to make others feel welcome. They could do this by individually calling out ideas or they could break into small groups and briefly discuss their answers. They could even present their answers in the form of impromptu dramas.

## **5. Conclusion**

You can finish with a simple summary of your talk (no more than around 10 words) or you could do something creative such as end by playing a song (with words on overhead). It is always helpful to end your talk with prayer, either by yourself or a couple of volunteers or a group time of prayer.