

## JESUS - FOCUSED YOUTH MINISTRY

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*See the  
See the*  
**BIG PICTURE**



THE GOAL ▼



To catch the vision for  
Jesus-focused youth ministry

## JESUS FOCUS

Looking through the gospels, we can see that Jesus followed a dynamic pattern of ministry. He explained it after the Pharisees accused Him of healing on the Sabbath and after He made matters worse by making Himself equal with God.

*I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does (John 5:19).*

In intimate communion with His Father, Jesus got His instructions from His Father and followed them. That made what He did every day not only dynamic, but also unique. One thing we can say for sure about our ministries: God wants them dynamic and unique, based on an intimate relationship with Him. The result of going through the Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry equipping process is not to create a ministry that looks the same as everyone else's ministry, but to build something unique and dynamic, driven by a passionate pursuit of Jesus. That comes from a heart that desires to see what the Father is doing and then doing it.

Jesus looked to the Father. And we look to Jesus. When we look, what do we see? We see a pattern that occurs over and over in what Jesus did. We discover principles by which Jesus operated that give us direction for how we are to operate our ministries. Never rigid or rote, never putting His Father in a box, Jesus, nonetheless, had a strategy. What did it look like?

*Jesus obeyed His Father.* The experience of Jesus agonizing in the garden of Gethsemane typifies His obedience to His Father. Jesus' experience challenges us to obey.

*Jesus invested in His disciples.* With only casual observation we can see the investment Jesus made in the twelve disciples. Over three years, He took them through the most intensive leadership training ever devised. He led them to empty themselves

of self and to be filled with His Spirit. He took them with Him to experience ministry and then supported them as they tried their hand at it. In doing so He led them to preach the good news, heal the broken-hearted and set the captives free. Ultimately He empowered them to carry out the ministry they had seen in Him in their own unique way. As a result, He built a team of leaders that turned the world upside down.

Jesus' disciples in turn invested their lives in others. The dynamic multiplication effect of investing in the lives of others through discipleship was the heart of the ministry of Jesus, and thus, of the early church. People invested in people for the Kingdom of God. That propelled the church forward as a powerful force that changed the people around them and eventually changed the world. Investing in a small group of "Jesus followers" to disciple them to become "Jesus ministers" is still the best of all possible ministries. And, if done like Jesus did it, discipling others will not only change the people involved, but, in time, will also change our world.

Changing their world with the good news of the Gospel became a life-dominating priority to the disciples in the early church because they saw how important it was to Jesus. He ripped down all the fences and created a level playing field by hanging out with the prostitutes, the lepers, the poor, lame and blind. For us, like Jesus, discipling others always moves people toward maturity, and from maturity into ministry outside the walls of the church.

For Jesus, that ministry drew a crowd. Teaching, healing, preaching, casting out demons, feeding five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish. It really didn't matter what He did. Jesus was the focus of attention! It was not about the disciples or the method of making disciples. It was not about the amazing miracles, the profound teaching or anything else. It was about Jesus! Who He was and what He came to do was the core. That is what we need in the church today—Jesus-focused youth ministry. Any other kind of ministry will leave us empty and unfulfilled. If, like Jesus, we desire to make a mark for eternity that will never be erased, then we will make Jesus the focus.

## HARD QUESTIONS

To take an honest look at where we are does not come easy for most of us. But knowing where we are is the only way to get where we want to be. So let's ask some hard questions to see how Jesus-focused we are. Answer these on a scale of 1 to 10: 1 is the lowest, 10 is the highest.

### PRAY WITH PASSION

1. How much do you love to pray?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
2. To what degree do you discipline yourself to spend time alone with God daily?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
3. How often do you meet with other youth leaders to pray for your students?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
4. How often do you meet with other youth leaders to pray at/for the local campus?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
5. What percentage of your students spend time alone with God daily?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
6. What percentage of your students participate in small group prayer weekly?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### GO DEEPER WITH CHRIST

7. How would you rate your passion for God?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
8. How would you rate God's passion for you?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
9. To what degree do you honestly think God loves you, even with all He knows about you?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## SESSION 1 — SEE THE BIG PICTURE

10. At what level would you rate the intimacy you and God have together?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
11. How pure are your mind, heart, life and relationships?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
12. How holy are you?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### BUILD LEADERS

13. What level of influence do you have over your volunteers, parents and students?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
14. To what level are your volunteers willing to be trained?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
15. To what level are you willing to train your volunteers?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
16. Overall, how committed to Christ are your adult volunteers?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
17. To what degree are your adult volunteers committed to relationships with each other?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
18. How committed are your adult volunteers to a ministry to students?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### DISCIPLE STUDENTS

19. How difficult is it to motivate your students to pursue spiritual things?  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
20. What percentage of your students drop out of the youth ministry from 9th to 12th grade? (Research this one!)  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

21. What percentage of your students who graduate this year are wholeheartedly pursuing God and living for Him?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
22. What percentage of your total number of students are passionate about their relationship to Christ?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
23. What percentage of your students are involved in an intensive, committed discipleship group?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
24. What percentage of your students are involved in discipling younger students?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## PENETRATE THE CULTURE

25. If you walked on the campus today how comfortable would you feel there?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
26. How would you rate the amount of time you spend on the campus?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
27. Of the students you know by name what percentage of them are non-believers?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
28. What percentage of your volunteers have a ministry on the campus?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
29. How would you rate the training you give to your students to help them impact their campuses?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
30. What percentage of your students see themselves as active spiritual influencers on their campuses?  
 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## CREATE OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

31. How would you rate your burden to reach every student on every campus in your community?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
32. How would you rate your effectiveness in personally communicating Christ to students?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
33. What percentage of your students have a ministry and missions mentality?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
34. How "pagan-friendly" are your outreach opportunities?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
35. What percentage of the total number are non-Christians at your outreach events?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10
36. What percentage of your students have come to know Jesus in the last year?
- 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What is your average for questions 1-6? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your average for questions 7-12? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your average for questions 13-18? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your average for questions 19-24? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your average for questions 25-30? \_\_\_\_\_

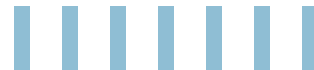
What is your average for questions 31-36? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE OVERALL? \_\_\_\_\_

The reason for these questions is for you to take a serious look at your youth ministry. Hopefully the result will be that these questions will make you hungry for change. In each session to follow you can reflect seriously on these questions related to that particular session.



## YOUTH MINISTRY PRINCIPLES



**H**ow do we catch the vision for  
Jesus-focused youth ministry?

### *Discover the Vision*

Read Matthew 9:35-38 six times. In this passage you will find all of the elements of Jesus-focused youth ministry! Each time ask God to give you one insight.

*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest”* Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

### Describe the Younger Generation

From Matthew 9:35-38 how did Jesus describe the crowd in front of Him? How does that description fit the students you know?

Define each word and describe how it fits the younger generation.

Harassed

Helpless

Sheep without a shepherd

Research shows that Jesus nailed the younger generation with His description.

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## EVERY 24 HOURS . . .

17,297 students get suspended from school

367 students are arrested for drug abuse

7883 students are reported abused or neglected

180 students are arrested for violent crimes

4248 students get arrested

9 students are victims of homicide

2861 students drop out of school

5 students commit suicide

1329 babies are born to teen moms

1 student dies of HIV infection

\* Based on calculations per school day (180 days of seven hours each) © 2002 Children's Defense Fund

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### Put a Name with the Numbers

Write the name of one student you know who fits Jesus' description of the next generation:

Describe that student by lifestyle, attitudes, habits, choices and activities:

Write your prayer for that student:

Apply everything you learn in Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry to reaching that student for Christ and others like him or her.

### See How You Make a Difference

Take a closer look at Matthew 9:38.

In this verse Jesus clearly sets forth the strategy to make a difference in the lives of people who are "harassed, helpless and like sheep without a shepherd." Note the simplicity of the strategy.

Jesus: "Ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers . . . into the harvest field."			
<b>ACTION:</b>	<b>PRAY</b>	<b>EQUIP</b>	<b>EVANGELIZE</b>
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	Pray with Passion	Go Deeper with Christ Build Leaders Disciple Students	Penetrate the Culture  Create Outreach Opportunities

## *See the Big Picture*

This Jesus-focused strategy from Matthew 9:38 **creates an environment for praying passionately** and then builds on *5 Core Principles* within that environment to equip and evangelize. (See page 18 to visualize the big picture.)

### **Go Deeper with Christ**

How do you develop your relationship to Jesus? *Go deeper into an intimate and passionate relationship with Jesus and live that relationship out by obeying Christ and reflecting His character to those around you* (Mark 1:7-8).

### **Build Leaders**

How do you build quality leaders for an in-depth and a long-term ministry? *Equip adults who have the heart and skills to reach and disciple students* (Mark 1:16-20).

### **Disciple Students**

How do you disciple students to develop spiritual passion and become spiritual influencers with their friends? *Challenge students to move toward maturity in their relationship to Jesus through small group discipling relationships* (Mark 3:13-15).

### **Penetrate the Culture**

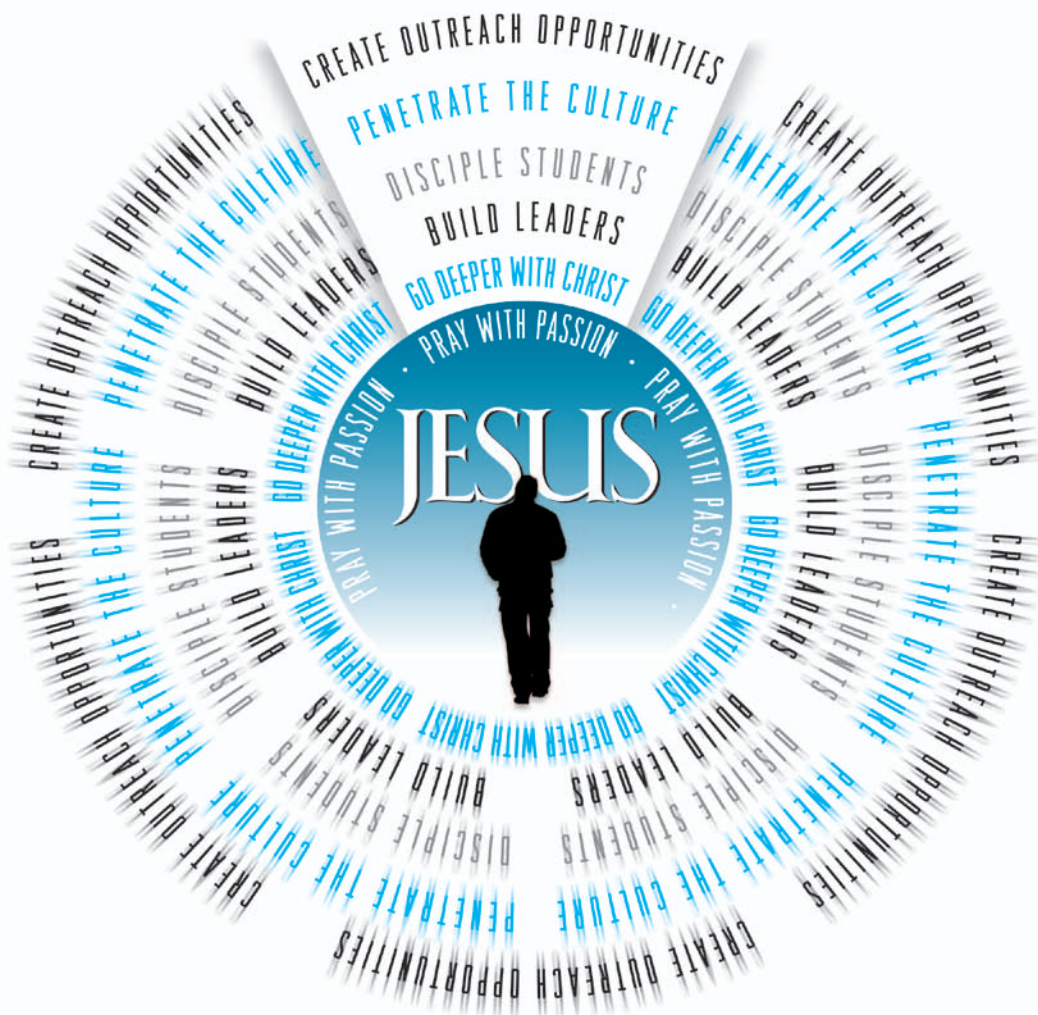
How do you motivate and mobilize your leaders and students to penetrate the student culture? *Go where students are by spending time in their culture, and equip them to reach their friends and their culture* (Mark 1:40-42).

### **Create Outreach Opportunities**

How do you design outreach opportunities for students to reach their friends? *Create culturally relevant opportunities for students to bring their non-believing friends to experience the life-changing message of Jesus* (Mark 4:1-2).

## Visualize the Big Picture

Once we see the big picture, we can realistically visualize not only how to build your church ministry, but also how it is possible to pursue the goal of reaching every student in every school with the life-changing message of Jesus.



A quick study or in-depth research of the four Gospels leads to simple principles that we see lived out in the life of Christ. Read Mark 1-4, as we have referred to above, or read the four Gospels. All roads lead to the same simple approach on which Jesus operated His life and ministry. And every page has a Jesus focus!

## PRACTICAL STEPS

Seeing the big picture of a Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry means you have grasped the concept.

Take these practical steps to capture your vision.

1. Memorize Matthew 9:35-38. Say it over and over until you feel like it is a part of your skin.
2. Take a picture of the student whose name you wrote as “harassed, helpless and like a sheep without a shepherd.” Place that picture in your Bible to remind you of your target audience.
3. Decide which of your current activities and ministries fit into the Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry strategy and where. Be brutally honest about the ones that don’t fit.

ACTIVITY	FITS THE STRATEGY	DOESN'T FIT THE STRATEGY
Pray with passion		
Go Deeper with Christ		
Build Leaders		
Disciple Students		
Penetrate the Culture		
Create Outreach Opportunities		

**T**ake what you have discovered and design your plan of action for catching the vision for Jesus-Focused Youth Ministry.

**Why?** (the motive for your vision)

**What?** (your goals and action points)<sup>1</sup>

**Who?** (your target audience and the people involved)

**Where?** (the place(s) you will meet)

**When?** (the deadline dates for the action points; place a date beside each action point)

<sup>1</sup> To go further with your goals, write out: 1. Your current situation 2. Your desired results 3. The gaps between the two 4. Your goals.