



Event Planning Guide

WHEN DID WE
SEE YOU?

The King will reply, Truly I tell

you, whatever you did for one of the least of these

you did for me.

A PYT
CONNECT
RESOURCE

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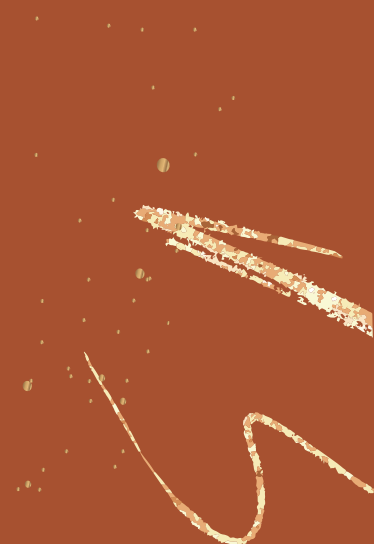
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Introduction

This guide is for the person who is trying to fit in planning an event among the 27 other responsibilities they are already juggling, the volunteer who has never planned an event before in their life, and the experienced or new youth worker who deeply desires to connect youth, families, and young adults – God’s people – in a joyful and organized manner. It is written for you! Because we SEE you. We SEE that you are busy. We SEE that you love young people. We SEE that you want to cultivate a fun, polished, relevant, and faithful gathering.

In this guide you will find instructions, resources, and tips to help you plan an event from start to finish. We have provided sample itineraries for a handful of different gatherings focused on the theme of “When Did We See You?” using the PYT Connect resources. We hope to offer event planners and planning teams with a basic framework from which to hang the various layers necessary for hosting an event.

Not all of these ideas will work for every event size or setting. It is our hope that no matter how big or how small of an event you are planning, whether you are doing it alone or together with a team, that you will find some helpful ideas, resources, and ways to create meaningful experiences for your community in this guide. Use this to plan from beginning to end, or just for inspiration as you create your own unique gathering.

The PYT Connect resources referenced in this guide are all available on the Presbyterian Youth Triennium Website and include:

Group Study Guide: Three sessions of creative and interactive bible study, conversation starters, reflective experiences, and group building. The scriptures explored in this guide correspond with those in the Worship & Prayer Guide. You can use this resource to facilitate small group sessions and bible studies.

Recreation Guide: A collection of games for opening recreation and community building time, decorating ideas for different spaces, games to play around the table at mealtimes, and a theme party plan that is highly adaptable. You can use this resource to facilitate play and build community at your event.

Worship & Prayer Guide: Three sessions of opening worship services and closing worship gatherings that correspond with the scripture explored in the Group Study Guide. You can use this resource as is by following the Order of Worship provided for six unique 30-minute services or select elements from each session to create your own worship experiences.

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink Matthew 25:35



Planning
an
Event

Where to Begin

When planning an event there are many factors to consider including your event site, your participants, and your budget. Some people may start with a full vision of the event in their head. Others may simply know the location where they want to gather, who they want to attend, or what their budget looks like. There is no right order or place to start – starting anywhere is a great first step! Once you make one decision, the others will follow.

For example, you may start with an event location. The size capacity of the site will help you to determine the number of participants allowed at your gathering. It can also work the other way around where you start with a goal for attendance numbers and find a location that can host that many people. If your event requires shared transportation, this may also affect your event size or budget. For example, the number of seats in a van or bus you are renting may limit the number of participants who can register.

Another decision to keep in mind as you begin planning is the type(s) of participants who will be invited to register for your event. Your event might welcome youth participants based on specific ages or grade levels, young adults, adult advisors/chaperones, families, or intergenerational participants. These participants could be invited from your church, your local community beyond your congregation, your presbytery, synod, or geographic region, or a specific national group or caucus.

Budget is often a main driving factor in choosing the number of participants or event location. Determining your budget directly affects your event registration fee, or what you are asking participants to pay to attend. Make sure this fee is as affordable as possible and will not exclude anyone. Get creative and ask for help where possible to keep expenses down. Find out if you have access to funds to underwrite some of these costs or to provide scholarships. Funding may be available at the church or mid council level and is worth looking into when creating a budget. Keep in mind that meeting the conditions of any grant you receive may also influence your decisions while planning.

Building a budget can feel daunting. Simply put, building a budget is estimating all expenses, then subtracting any funding you might have available. Seeing what the difference is can help you decide on your registration cost. Divide that difference by the estimated number of attendees to come up with the per person cost. Update your expenses and revenue/funding as you go to stay on track. Also keep an eye on your estimated number of attendees.

Some categories of expenses to consider when building a budget include venue, lodging, food, transportation, leadership honorariums, supplies, printed materials, scholarships, and any necessary equipment rentals (including any audiovisual).

BUILDING A TEAM

If you are able, we strongly recommend not doing this alone. Invite a small team to join you in the planning process. No one brain should hold all the information. While one person can be the director or point person, plans are always richer when more minds and hearts are involved.

To plan a diverse and inclusive event, it is important to start with your planning team. Build a team that truly represents who your audience is and should be. If this event is for youth, invite some youth to be on your team. If this is a presbytery or regional gathering, invite folks who represent the different churches and groups that will be attending. Include people who might not already be on your radar and reach out to churches that are different from your own. This is critical. The investment in your gathering will be stronger, diversity and inclusion will be more faithful, promotion will begin in a shared manner and financial contributions can be greater.

Reach out to presbytery staff about who you might contact from other churches in your area. It is important to consider things like their membership demographics, New Worshiping Communities and well-established congregations, rural, suburban, and urban churches, and churches with youth ministry programs of every size – including those without a current program.

As you reach out to churches, try to recruit adults (of all ages) and youth who might not be directly involved in youth ministry. Find and invite volunteers who have gifts in planning, mission, choreography, decoration, party planning, counseling, non-profit endeavors that involve teenagers, etc. This can help to cultivate leadership and participation in the greater church and give youth workers a break, as well as the opportunity for them to focus on bringing youth to your event. Bottom line – build a team that truly represents who your audience is and should be.

If you have a large planning team, it can be helpful to establish a basic team structure and planning timeline. Your basic team structure can be comprised of volunteers or smaller teams focused on specific elements such as registration & promotion, community & safety, hospitality, budget, study/small groups, worship & prayer, music, or recreation.

No matter how you decide to structure your team, provide consistent communication. Hold an initial meeting to get to know everyone. Follow up with an email or note to say thank you. Send regular emails or group texts to communicate key decisions and celebrate accomplishments. Checking in along the way helps to increase engagement in the process. It also allows team members to stay informed and speak knowledgeably and excitedly when promoting the event.

SITE SELECTION

Most events will likely take place at your church or another church in your community. A camp or conference center is another great option for an overnight, regional, or presbytery event. You may also need to take distance and cost of travel into account when thinking about your event location. Often the size of your event and your budget will determine your site.

If your budget allows, it can be fun to host a hotel-based retreat. We recommend looking for a hotel that includes free breakfast, a pool (indoor if your event is during colder months) and meeting space. Free breakfast will save money and is one less thing for you to coordinate. A pool provides a great way to relax during free time and is built-in recreation. Meeting space will allow you to conduct programming and gather together onsite. You may also find it slightly easier to recruit adult leadership since hotels can provide more privacy, a better bed, and easy coffee options.

Additional Hotel Tips

- Reach out to a hotel's group sales department to inquire about a block of rooms.
 - Ask about a reduced or comped meeting space rental for your event.
 - Find out their policies on outside food and onsite catering costs (if any).
- If hotel pricing is high, a little bit of flexibility can go a long way.
 - Ask about better rates on a different weekend.
 - Find out when the off-season is and plan an event then.
 - If transportation allows, look at properties in less-busy areas.
- Read all contracts carefully! Pay particular attention to deadlines & attrition.
 - Important deadlines may include a contract cancellation deadline and rooming list deadline.
 - Attrition is the percentage of your room block that you are required to fill by the cutoff date.

A few other things to consider in terms of site selection include accessibility, safety, and seasonal needs. The site should be accessible and hospitable to all participants. For example, there should be ADA accessible rooms and entrances. You might not know all of your participants' needs prior to registration, so it is important to take these things into account on the front end. Make note of any safety and security measures that are in place at the venue. Consider different seasonal needs and how these might be dealt with onsite. For example, providing air conditioning during hot months, heating during cold months, and rain plans for outdoor activities. Finally, keep in mind that some larger venues might host different groups onsite at the same time. Find out how that might look and if it will work for your specific audience and schedule.

Registration, Promotion and Building Anticipation

REGISTRATION & PROMOTION TIMELINE

Once you have an overall vision and budget for your event, you can begin registration and promotion. Creating a timeline for this will help you to stay organized and delegate tasks.

We suggest starting at the end of your timeline by setting a registration deadline. This deadline could be dictated by contractual obligations you might have for submitting final numbers for meals, rooming lists, etc., or can be based on the time you need to prepare for the event after closing registration. With this deadline determined and today's date as your starting point, you can begin to fill in the rest.

Here's an example timeline with details

Create Promotional Materials

- Consider printed and digital options.
- Share basic information about your event, including cost, contact information for someone who can answer questions, how to register, and a way for people to find out more, such as a Facebook page or website. Always keep in mind the who, what, where, when and why.
- “When Did We See You?” graphics, artwork, and icons are available on the Triennium website to help get you started!

Make a Promotional Plan

- Think about using social media, e-newsletters, printed newsletters, church bulletin inserts, bulletin boards, high traffic areas, Zoom meetings, committee meetings, church service announcements, and word of mouth. If this is a presbytery or regional event, reach out to every church in your area.
- Once is not enough! Promotion should not only take place prior to your registration opening but needs to continue throughout the registration period. Do additional rounds of promotion – a second round and even a

final push as you get closer to registration closing. Frequency can be key.

Create your Registration Form, Medical/Media Release and Covenant

- These forms can be printed or digital. For youth participants, a parent/guardian will need to complete forms and sign releases. If you have adults/young adults attending, they will complete and sign their own.
- Churches and mid councils often have their own procedures and policies around releases, covenants, background checks, abuse prevention, and accepting money. This is a good time to review these policies and procedures, establish your own if needed, and plan for their implementation in your timeline.

Open Registration

Registration Deadline

More information about abuse prevention and participant covenants can be found under “Community & Safety” below. Sample forms and covenants can be found under the “Resources” section.

BUILDING ANTICIPATION

As soon as your participants register, there are a few ways you can start to get to know them, get them thinking about the theme, and generate excitement around your event. This can help to increase engagement and begin to build relationships before they arrive.

Social Media

Create a hashtag for your event! Make a Facebook group or Instagram/TikTok account. Invite registrants to join/follow. Post scriptures from the Group Study Guide with a reflection question. Invite and encourage dialogue by asking questions such as “What is your favorite time of day?” or “Will we see you bright & shiny at breakfast or dragging in?”

Include fun, theme-related questions such as “What is your favorite thing to SEE when you are riding in a car?” and “What do you wish you could unSEE?”

This is also a great way to share practical information and updates.



Pre-Event Gift

Send a pre-event gift to build excitement, such as a snack with a clever theme tie-in. For example, you could put eyeball chocolates in a clear cellophane bag with a note attached that says, “Can’t wait to SEE you!” Ask church members to help with packing or delivery. If you have room in your budget, items such as buttons, hats, drawstring backpacks, or sweatshirts could be enjoyed before, during, and after the event.

Pre-Event Ambassador

Send a “Can’t Wait to SEE You!” ambassador. This will let participants know how grateful your team is that they are joining you on an adventure to SEE! This ambassador could be a planning team member or volunteer. For a multi-church or presbytery event, send an ambassador to each group that is planning to attend. For individuals it could be as simple as reaching out via text. Any of this can be done virtually (using Zoom, FaceTime, etc.) or in person.

Pre-Event Devotional

Create a pre-event devotional. This should be very simple. Use free, theme artwork available on the PYT website. Type up 3-4 sentences. It could be something like a scripture reading, a question that builds curiosity, and a question to respond to within a group or silently. For example:

- Matthew 25: 31-46
- What do you hope for this event to accomplish for you? For all of the participants? For God?
- What is something or who is someone that you SEE that could use prayer, care, or attention?

Video

Record a fun, upbeat video. Share this via email, group text, or social media. Post it on your registration site. Let participants know what to expect at your event and how much you are looking forward to SEEing them in person!

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Community & Safety

PARTICIPANT COVENANT

One of the first steps you can take to establish community and promote safety at your event is to create a clear and age-appropriate participant covenant. This should be a thoughtfully developed set of expectations, guidelines, and rules that all participants (and guardians) are required to read, consider, and commit to by signing. The covenant should be incorporated into your registration so that all expectations are communicated and agreed upon before the event.

Include direct and focused statements that spell out desired behaviors. For example, “participants are required to attend all activities unless they are ill or need to step away with a leader.” You may also want to list positive ways of participating such as being willing to try something new or practicing listening instead of talking. Do not hesitate to include “non-allowables” such as illegal substances, alcohol, sexual activity, phone use during official activities, bullying, and racist/demeaning/bigoted language and/or behavior.

In the “Resources” section at the end of this guide you will find Quicksheets with sample covenants, as well as an Expectations Contract. This contract is adapted from one used by The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown Freedom School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and provides a way to spell out expectations and work collaboratively with participants and their families to redirect behaviors when part of a covenant is broken.

COOPERATION CONTRACT

A cooperation contract is an additional, optional community building tool you can create with participants at a pre-event meeting or on the first day of your gathering. This collaborative approach is also adapted from The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown Freedom School. It allows the group to identify specific expectations for behavior and conduct during their time together, helping to cultivate a culture in which participants hold each other accountable.

In this activity, everyone works together to establish community norms for the gathering. To begin, leaders should explain the overall concept and how it allows participants to directly contribute to the culture of the event. Participants will then work together to create

I was sick and you took care of me. Matthew 25:35

a list of expectations for behavior that they discuss and agree upon as a group. All expectations must be positive! Use newsprint and bright markers to keep it upbeat and to create a visual aid. Display the finished contract somewhere everyone can see. It can be revisited as needed and serve as a constant reminder of what the group agreed upon together.

Here are some examples of expectations:

- One mic (one person speaks at a time)
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Don't yuck someone's yum (you like it, I love it)
- Be helpful
- Always ask before you leave the room

This is a good activity to do in small groups, especially if you have a larger event. For example, this could be incorporated into the first Group Study Guide session. Each small group could then have their own set of expectations, or you could compile all expectations into one event-wide cooperation contract.

If you are working with a planning team or other staff/leaders, this can also be a great activity to break the ice, establish norms, and maybe even begin to develop language for your participant covenant.

ABUSE PREVENTION

Churches, mid councils, and camp & conference centers often have their own policies and procedures in place regarding abuse and harassment prevention, child/vulnerable adult protection, and background checks. Carefully review these and decide how you will integrate them into your registration and implement them at your event. For example, adults should be required to complete a background check as part of their registration.

Clearly communicate and review your policies and practices with your leaders and participants. Consider hosting a pre-event meeting for adults to review the covenant and abuse prevention policy together. As with the participant covenant, any expectations around abuse prevention should be understood and signed off by all participants prior to attending the event.

Doing a simple review of these policies with the full participant group on opening day can also help set the tone for a community and venue that will be safe. It supports the foundational theological truth that, as God's people, we deserve to live and learn in a safe place. For additional information on creating safe ministries, visit <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/>

WELLNESS

It is important to establish a first aid and medical care plan. A good place to begin is with your venue. Find out how your site manages first aid and severe illness or injuries. Note the closest and preferred hospital, clinic, or urgent care location(s). If you are at a camp, sometimes the nearest medical facility is a bit of a drive, in which case it is even more imperative to have a plan in place.

A good first aid kit is never a bad idea; however, medicine should only be given to a minor with parental permission and knowledge. Requiring pertinent medical information as part of registration, along with a medical release, can help to ensure the best care possible is provided to each participant. Keep a record of all medical interactions. Note the incident, the person requiring care, any other people involved, steps taken to determine the plan of care, and details of the care provided.

For larger events, you may want to recruit a nurse, doctor, or EMT from a local church to volunteer their time. You may also consider creating a Safety & Wellness Team or Pastoral Care Team. This team can help to provide care and support to participants onsite. A Pastoral Care Team may be comprised of leaders who are trained in prayer, hospital visits, crisis management, and/or therapy. As with medical incidents, you will want to keep a record of all care team interactions and interventions. Whatever volunteers or teams you can provide, make sure your participants have appropriate contact information and know the steps they should take if they need help.

It can also be helpful to create policies and procedures regarding COVID-19 or other infectious disease prevention and care. Your policies and procedures should be part of the participant covenant and other registration materials to ensure they are well-communicated prior to the participant arriving. This should include information about what will happen if someone tests positive during the event. For example, decide where someone would quarantine and how they would be cared for in terms of meals, medical needs, or transportation.

We suggest having back-up supplies such as masks and rapid tests readily available on site. It might also be a good idea to create a self-guided packet for participants who must quarantine, are unable to attend last minute due to illness, or are sent home. This could include bible study, devotions, or prayers for them to use while recuperating.

END OF THE DAY PLAN

Determine a friendly and thorough plan for how you will close the event and venue each day. For overnight events, you may work with leaders onsite to count “heads” before bed and to do a wellness check to make sure everyone is where they need to be, feels safe, and is physically well. For other events, it could be as simple as having leaders or volunteers do a final garbage run, ensure all entrances are locked, and have a consistent person responsible for the keys.

*Quicksheet #37
linked under
“Resources” below
contains a sample
Incident/Accident
Report Form.*



Most participants will also need help transitioning from an active day to going home or going to bed. Creating an end of day practice as part of your programming can help with this transition and is a fantastic opportunity for participants to reflect on and connect with key scripture and themes. This could include prayer, liturgy, and/or music to reflect intentionally on the day and return that day's work to God. For example, a "What did you SEE today that you want to remember?" spiritual practice. In pairs, each person responds to this question by sharing one thing they experienced that day that felt significant, while the other person practices holy listening - truly listening to their partner without interrupting or judging. Other simple end of day activities could be the "I Felt, I Learned, I Feel" reflection from the Recreation Guide or pulling elements from the Worship & Prayer Guide or Group Study Guide to reflect on in small groups. To some degree, your site may also dictate your end of the day practice. Whatever you decide, having a plan in place is crucial.

Thorns and Roses

If possible, spend fifteen minutes at the end of the day debriefing with your leadership. Be mindful that this is taking place when energy levels may be low. Ask leaders to share any highlights from their day. Things that were challenging and things that were good. You can think of these as thorns and roses. Thorns are things that made the day more difficult, such as lunch starting late or the sound system having issues. Roses are things that made the day a little easier. For example, a new kid participating without any prompting. After everyone has had the opportunity to share, discuss if any changes need to be made and what the group needs to do to prepare for the next session. Communication and debriefing at the end of the day is key!

PHONE POLICY

Establish & communicate clear guidelines for phone use during your event. It's important to note that some participants may not have a phone, while others may use it as an accessibility tool. If you decide to prohibit general phone use, make sure you have a specific reason why and that everyone can practice this with consistency. In this day and age, it can be very disconcerting to young people (and their families) to not have access to a phone. On the other hand, phones can be distracting and can keep participants from fully engaging.

To create a thoughtful and balanced phone policy, consider when or how phone use might be beneficial or enhance engagement. For example, the Group Study Guide includes activities in which phones can be used to explore the theme and scripture. You could also invite participants to tweet phrases or quotes that spark something for them during worship or to film a TikTok responding to theme-related questions during free time.

Also consider when or how phone use might be a distraction and have a negative effect on a participant's experience. For example, during group discussions when they should be practicing good listening skills or during prayer when participants should focus on being present in the moment. Whatever you decide is best for your gathering, determine a phone policy prior to the event, include this as part of your covenant, and review expectations with leaders and participants.

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Hospitality

CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

It is important to provide participants with a convenient place to be enthusiastically welcomed when they first arrive. This is also a great opportunity to hand out any important information, name tags, materials, or swag. Use neat and welcoming signage to direct participants to your check-in area and clearly mark your entrance, gathering area, parking lot, and exit. If volunteers are available to greet people and answer questions, this can also go a long way to starting your event off right. Never assume that people will know what to do or will be comfortable jumping right in. Your signage, organization, and positive attitude can help to create a good first impression and all say a great deal to participants about the care and preparation that has gone into your event.

NAME TAGS

Never assume that people know each other's names or will remember them. You might have participants who rarely attend events and at least some of your participants may be meeting for the first time. Name tags are usually a necessity. Plus, they can be fun, provide a memento, and communicate critical event information. For example, participants' pronouns can be listed on their nametags and the event schedule can be printed on the back or included in a badge holder. Name tags are a way of silently communicating to a participant that you have prepared for them, you care about them, and you SEE them. A good name tag adds polish and practical information to any event.

EVENT SCHEDULE

There is a fundamental human need that most folks have, which is to know what to expect during an event. Providing an event schedule that is printed, portable, and polished will help your gathering run smoothly. Hand schedules out upon arrival & display them around your venue. Use the free graphics and style guide available on the Triennium website to help create a cohesive design.



At the end of each day, you may want to spend a few moments reviewing the schedule and noting any changes. Engagement in an event from your participants will deepen exponentially if they feel welcomed, named, cared for, and directed.

MEALS

When it comes to meals, think about how to best cater to the ages, dietary needs, and preferences of your participants. If your site provides food, talk with them about ways to customize menus for your participants and theme. This might be something as specific as a special menu for a theme party, or as simple as having a family style meal one night instead of a buffet. If your event is for youth and young adults, create a meal schedule that does not start at the crack of dawn and consider providing late night snacks.

Capture any dietary preferences or allergies as part of registration and communicate this information to whoever is providing food. Most camps, conference centers, and hotels can accommodate special dietary needs. However, a little conversation in advance will help ensure everyone's dietary needs are met and may even result in some more fun and flavorful options. You may also want to encourage participants with specific dietary needs to bring along supplemental snacks just in case.

The table where you eat can be one of the most enjoyable and memory-making places at any event. It is where stories are shared, memories are exchanged, and goofiness happens. The PYT Connect Recreation Guide includes a section on table games as a way make meals more fun and to help build community. These games are also a way to “break the ice,” encourage laughter, and help slow down the high-speed dining that often accompanies teenagers (if you know, you know).

Fun Food, Beverage & Meal Ideas

Here are some ideas for youth – or just those who are young at heart! Not all of these will work for every event or site. Note your venue's rules about outside food.

- **Late-Night Snack Bag**
 - For example, hot chocolate mix, marshmallows, stirrers, and a cookie.
- **“Make Your Own” Buffet**
 - Macaroni and cheese bar, taco bar, pasta bar, baked potato bar, etc.
 - This is an easy and fun way to meet different dietary needs.
- **Surprise Coffee/Tea Delivery**
 - Leave a hanging door-knob menu with check-box options.
 - Prepare and deliver these drinks on the final morning of your event.
 - This could be a fun surprise just for the adult leaders.
- **End of Day Pizza Party**
 - Surprise groups with a pizza delivery during their end of day practice.
 - Order lots of cheese and pepperoni pizzas.
 - Remember gluten-free and dairy-free pizza options as needed.
 - Provide cold, caffeine-free drinks like lemonade and water.



- **Theme Meals**
 - Pajama Party theme with breakfast for dinner.
 - Gala Dinner theme with special invitations, costumes, and a more formal sit-down meal.
 - Movie Party for fun or as a group study option with on-theme foods.
- **Mix Things Up**
 - Outdoor picnic or other venue change.
 - Have participants sit at different tables with new people.
- **Simply eat and be together.**
 - Consider at least one meal that does not involve games or structured activities.
 - Some of the best memories and connections are made this way.
- **Share group snacks.**
 - Invite different groups to each bring a snack to share.
 - Encourage them to bring something that represents them or their community or is related to the theme.

BREAKS & FREE TIME

Intentional breaks and free time are important to consider when planning an event. A break is a brief pause in between activities during which participants are encouraged to stretch, move around, get some fresh air, and rest their active minds for a moment. Free time is a specified amount of time for participants to rest or do a preferred activity, often away from the main event spaces.

Participants benefit from this time to talk, relax, debrief, and get to know each other without instruction or direction. If possible, include some self-directed options for folks who might be more introverted, prefer to stay active, or benefit from a little bit of structure. For example, set up an art station, reading nook, group graffiti wall, prayer center, or board game tables. Your site may have built-in options, such as a guided walking path, a basketball court, or a place to swim.

EVENT EVALUATION

Create an evaluation for participants to fill out at the end of your event. Providing a way for participants to offer feedback is a faithful way of demonstrating that they and their experiences matter and are taken into consideration. This is an important way of truly SEEing someone!

It can also be a very helpful tool for planning future events. There are simple digital survey options like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms that are easy to use and are inexpensive or free. Paper surveys are also helpful, just keep in mind that someone will need to review and compile the feedback manually.

Mission & Service

If your event includes a service and mission component, it is important to do a couple of things to prepare.

First, consider the “why” and “how” as you design it.

- Why are we doing this?
- Why or how does it fit the purpose of the event?
- How does this service component reflect the theme?
- How does this truly serve God and our partners in mission?

Any service or mission element should be carefully woven into the fabric of your full event. Make sure it is not just an added activity, but a thoughtful way of engaging with the theme and community. In order to demonstrate true collaboration in service, invite mission partner representatives and community members to be involved in planning and participating in the event.

Second, a successful service component requires a good bit of planning, direction, and communication among different parties before, during, and after the event. If possible, appoint a coordinator or special team to help manage these responsibilities. This person or team can provide ways of intentionally integrating this component into the overall event. They can also be responsible for several logistics including supplies, signage, instructions, recruiting and communicating with leaders, transportation, meals, safety, hospitality, weather issues, and more.

Links to multiple mission and service-related resources can be found in the “Resources” section of this guide.

Adapting for Young Adults

Relationships are key to a successful young adult event. If you are bringing young adults together for the first time, you will want to integrate meaningful community building opportunities into your schedule. Keep in mind that young adults also benefit from free time. Be intentional about including time for sabbath and breaks that will allow young adults to engage in informal conversations and organically build relationships.

Young Adults are open to more in-depth learning and diving into specific topics, so do not be afraid to provide this as part of your programming. Many young adults also enjoy practicing what they learn. Offering opportunities for service and experiential learning at your event is a great way to facilitate this.

A young adult mission or service component can be a wonderful option to thoughtfully integrate into your event. This could include volunteering at a local food bank, community garden, or shelter, or doing a project onsite. For example, creating care packages for a ministry such as Sacred Sparks, an outreach of Nashville Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, or for a campus ministry serving students at a local college or university.

Keep in mind that there are different demographics within the category of young adult that are important to consider when planning your event. For example, some young adults are in school, some are just entering the workforce, and some are a little more established in their careers. Some are married, some have young children, and some are single. Many young adults will fit into multiple categories. If there is a mix of young adults in different life stages at your event, consider creating group study or seminar options relevant to specific life stages that allow them to gather for exploration and conversation around a relevant topic.

Another thing to consider for a young adult gathering is if there will be a need for childcare. This could be on-site supervision during the planned activities, or even a separate program designed for children. Ideas for intergenerational or family gatherings are included in the next section. Additional schedule-specific adaptations for hosting young adult groups are included along with each itinerary.

Adapting for Intergenerational Groups

When you dive into an intergenerational event you will discover the most rewarding parts of the gathering are the interactions and relationships that are formed.

Allow space for this and remember the following:

- Intergenerational formation is focused on the internal nature of the Christian community.
- Intergenerational formation has an emphasis on experiencing and participating, not on learning and accumulating knowledge.
- Intergenerational programming can be difficult if you have not done it before. Do not let that keep you from trying. Practice, practice, practice!

Events that are 3 days or less or take place during the day or evening work well for intergenerational groups, especially those that include younger children. For most of these itineraries we encourage intergenerational groups to gather together for worship, meals, and recreation, but suggest that group study sessions or small groups be divided by age. Depending on the makeup of your participants, you may also need to provide additional group study options or make age-appropriate adjustments to the Group Study Guide sessions.

Scheduling an early dinner and ending your day a little earlier can help to accommodate younger children and their families. If breakfast is included as part of your schedule, consider providing grab & go or self-serve food and coffee options to accommodate everyone from early risers to late sleepers.

Younger participants may also benefit from additional or alternative options during worship. Consider providing activities related to the theme. The Recreation Guide has printable Table Mad Libs and I Spy pages included as part of the table games. There are theme-related coloring pages available on the Triennium website as part the Group Study Guide's Session 3. You can also find small ways to make worship more interactive. Get creative!

When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you? Matthew 25:38

Plan free time and activity options that appeal to a variety of ages, abilities, and preferences. Many of these will be built into your site or available nearby. Others may take some initiative and setup to provide. Be sure to take different ages, abilities, preferences, and age-appropriateness into consideration when selecting any games, movies, and music as well.

An intergenerational mission or service component can be a great option to thoughtfully integrate into your event. For example, participants could volunteer as a group at a local food bank, community garden, or shelter. You could also bring supplies to do a project onsite, such as creating PDA hygiene kits or tie blankets for Project Linus. Intergenerational mission experiences can happen in our churches or even in our homes. Links to resources that can help you plan experiences for all ages are available in the “Resources” section of this guide. Additional schedule-specific adaptations for hosting intergenerational groups are included along with each itinerary.

The background is a solid light orange color with scattered gold dots and decorative gold brushstrokes in the corners. A large, irregularly shaped white paper scrap with deckled edges is centered on the page. A thin, shimmering gold circular border is drawn around the white scrap. The text "Event Itineraries" is centered within this circle. "Event" is written in a large, elegant serif font, and "Itineraries" is written below it in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font.

Event Itineraries



EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Event Itineraries

Included in this section are sample itineraries for a handful of different gatherings focused on the theme of “When Did We See You?” using the PYT Connect resources. These itineraries are easily adaptable to a variety of settings and needs and could be used as a starting point to help you design your own event. Our hope is that between the itineraries, curriculum, and event planning information above that you will be well on your way to a fun and faithful gathering.

The PYT Connect Resources mentioned throughout the itineraries (Group Study Guide, Recreation Guide, and Worship & Prayer Guide) are all available on the PYT website. You can download these as PDFs and use the detailed table of contents to easily find the sections referenced below. You can also interact with the guides on the website by selecting the thumbnail for the particular section of the guide that you need. In addition to specific itineraries for young adults and intergenerational groups, there are tips for adapting the other itineraries for these audiences.

Please note, the times listed on these itineraries are suggested and should be adjusted as needed to factor in transition, travel, setup, and clean-up time in your particular setting.



"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Long Weekend Event

This schedule is great for youth or young adults over a long weekend. While this could be hosted in a variety of settings, a hotel might be a nice change of scenery and feel like a treat. Note, there are two-hour breaks on Day 2 and 3. If desired, these can be shortened to create an earlier dinner time and evening schedule.

DAY 1

"See & Be Seen"



Think about including an exhibit area for local ministries, nonprofits, and denominational ministries such as Youth and Young Adult Offices, Camp and Conference Centers, Christian Formation, or Hunger Program.



See "End of the Day Plan" above under Community & Safety.

4:00 PM - CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

Get name tags, Find lodging spaces, Drop luggage & Stretch!

WELCOME ACTIVITIES

[Recreation Guide - Opening Recreation](#)

[Arrival Activities \(Choose 2\)](#)

Start with 1-2 self-directed Arrival Activities

[Large Group Mixers \(Choose 2\)](#)

As more people arrive, transition into Large Group Mixers.

7:00 PM - WELCOME DINNER

[Recreation Guide - Table Games](#)

7:45 PM - RECREATION EVENT

[Recreation Guide - Opening Recreation](#)

[Movement to Make Small Groups](#)

[Small Group Games \(Choose 4-6\)](#) & [Large Group Games \(Choose 1\)](#)

[Closing](#)

8:30 PM - SMALL GROUPS

[Group Study Guide - Session 1](#)

10:00 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide - Session 1, Opening Worship](#)

10:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

If applicable, meet in "back home" groups at this time.

Pick a prayer or blessing from [Worship Guide - Session 1, Closing Worship](#)

11:30 PM - OFF TO BED!

Day 2

“Know & Be Known”



Create teams of one youth and one adult to co-lead each small group! These teams should be selected from the participating church(es) and paired up before the event. Host a pre-event Small Group Leader Orientation to provide them with a thorough review of the three lessons, activities, and supplies as well as idea sharing.



If you are at a hotel or a camp with a pool, have a pool party with games, contests, a DJ, fun snacks, and more.

9:00 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - GREETING THE DAY!

Singing, Energizers, and Announcements

10:15 AM - WORSHIP AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

[Worship Guide – Session 2, Opening Worship](#)

Invite a speaker to talk on the “Know & Be Known” theme

11:00 AM - BREAK

11:15 AM - SMALL GROUPS

[Group Study Guide – Session 2](#)

12:45 PM - LUNCH

1:30 PM - SPECIAL GATHERINGS AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Provide different options focused on a thematic topic.

Games, movies, and conversation groups.

Prayer Center, prayer walk, or labyrinth.

5:00 PM - FREE TIME

Relax, recharge, refuel, or rest.

You could also offer field trip or offsite excursion options.

7:00 PM - DINNER

[Recreation Guide – Table Games](#)

8:00 PM - RECREATION

[Recreation Guide – Opening Recreation \(Choose new games\)](#)

9:30 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide – Session 2, Closing Worship](#)

10:00 PM - BREAK

Choose optional activities such as stargazing or swimming.

10:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

If applicable, meet in “back home” groups at this time.

11:30 PM - OFF TO BED!

DAY 3
"Bless & Be Blessed"

9:00 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - GREETING THE DAY!

Singing, Energizers, and Announcements

10:15 AM - WORSHIP AND MORNING PRESENTATION

[Worship Guide – Session 3, Opening Worship](#)

"Bless & Be Blessed" Presentation

11:00 AM - BREAK

11:15 AM - SMALL GROUPS

[Group Study Guide – Session 3](#)

12:45 PM - LUNCH

1:30 PM - SPECIAL GATHERINGS AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Provide different options focused on a thematic topic.

Games, movies, and conversation groups.

Prayer Center, prayer walk, or labyrinth.

5:00 PM - FREE TIME

Relax, recharge, refuel, or rest.

You could also offer field trip or offsite excursion options.

7:00 PM - THEME PARTY & DINNER

Celebrate the last night with a theme party.

[Recreation Guide – Theme Party: Ultimate Birthday Party](#)

Choose from the "Food Ideas" for your dinner menu.

Choose from the "Decoration Ideas" to decorate your space.

Choose from the "Activity Ideas" for your recreation.

10:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

If applicable, meet in "back home" groups at this time.

11:30 PM - OFF TO BED!

DAY 4

“When Did We See You?”



Set conversation cards at each breakfast table that can be used to share reflections on the event.

- “What have you SEEN?”
- “When have you felt SEEN?”
- “Who are people that we need to truly “SEE?”



Send participants out with joy by adding festive worship elements after the Meditation!

- Group song with movement
- “When Did We See You?” card with a handwritten message or scripture
- Banner with group or participant names that says, “You have been SEEN!”
- Simple, on-theme memento handed to each participant such as a bookmark, keychain, charm, temporary tattoo or mirror

9:00 AM – BREAKFAST

Change up seating so that small groups dine together, or participants sit with new people.

10:00 AM – PACK UP

10:30 AM – CLOSING WORSHIP

Energizers

[Worship Guide – Session 3, Closing Worship](#)

11:45 AM – END OF THE EVENT

Consider ending the event with lunch. Add simple, fun decorations to the tables. Provide a quick and easy meal. Send desserts in a to-go bag with a note. Create simple signs and post them along the exit route at your site. Send participants away with the message “You were SEEN!” “Now, go and SEE more!”



HOW TO ADAPT FOR YOUNG ADULTS

A longer weekend is an ideal gathering length for young adults. If this is a group that already knows one another, you can probably skip the typical “get to know you” activities and get right into the weekend by starting Day 1 with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Make more of the activities optional rather than mandatory. Consider having a sabbath morning with an optional hike or devotional time.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Shorten free time in the afternoon to thirty minutes and start dinner at 5:30 p.m. to help accommodate younger children and their families. This will move everything in the evening schedule up by an hour and a half, ending the day earlier as well.

Keep in mind that a hotel setting may be more challenging when it comes to supervision and free space, particularly for younger children. Take this into account if you choose to host this at a hotel. Location, amenities, and proximity to other activities can help to address these challenges.

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

3-Day Daytime Event

This program is designed for youth and would work well for a group from a church or cluster of churches in the same city. Choose a site that has a larger space for whole group sessions, dining, and recreation, and breakout spaces for small groups. This might be a church or a centrally located YMCA, community center, camp, or conference center. It could be held Friday-Sunday, Saturday-Monday over a long weekend, or on weekdays during a school break.

DAY 1

"See & Be Seen"



Use this itinerary as part of a graduation celebration, back to school kick-off, end of the school year party, or confirmation class.

10:00 AM - CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

[*Recreation Guide*](#) – Decorating Ideas, Pennants

A fun & easy arrival activity is to have attendees make pennants. Use these as a backdrop for Day 2's Step and Repeat or just to decorate your space.

11:00 AM - RECREATION - COMMUNITY BUILDING

[*Recreation Guide*](#) – *Large Group Mixers (Choose 2)*

12:30 AM - LUNCH

[*Recreation Guide*](#) – *Table Games*

1:30 PM - WORSHIP

[*Worship Guide*](#) – *Session 1, Opening Worship*

2:00 PM - FREE TIME

For tips and ideas read "Breaks & Free Time" section.

3:15 PM - SMALL GROUPS

[*Recreation Guide*](#) – *Movement to Make Small Groups*

[*Group Study Guide*](#) – *Session 1*

5:00 PM - BREAK

5:15 PM - RECREATION

[*Recreation Guide*](#) – *Large Group Games*

Play both if time allows.

6:00 PM - DINNER

DAY 2
“Know & Be Known”

7:00 PM - CLOSING PRAYER

Worship Guide – Session 1, Closing Worship

Prayer, Song and Closing Blessing only.

This is also a good time to review the plans for the following day.

7:15 PM - DISMISS FOR THE DAY

10:00 AM - OPENING ACTIVITY

Recreation Guide – Arrival Activities (Choose 1)

10:30 AM - SMALL GROUPS

Recreation Guide – Small Group Games (Choose 2)

Group Study Guide – Session 2

12:30 PM - LUNCH

Recreation Guide – Table Games

Encourage participants to mix things up and sit with new people.

1:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 2, Opening Worship

2:15 PM - MOVIE SCREENING

Play a movie onsite and serve popcorn & candy.

The movie can be on theme or just for fun.

This time will allow volunteers to set up for the theme party.

4:15 PM - PARTY PREP

Suggest outfits that fit the theme party.

Examples: pajama party, funny outfits, or vintage prom.

Thrift stores are great for this!

5:00 PM - STEP AND REPEAT

Recreation Guide – Decorating Ideas

Create a fun and simple backdrop for photos.

Have a volunteer take everyone’s photos on their way to the party.

Share photos via group text, email, or on a private Facebook group.

5:15 PM - THEME PARTY

Recreation Guide – Theme Party

Choose from the “Decoration Ideas” to decorate your space.

Choose from the “Food Ideas” for your dinner menu.

Choose from the “Activity Ideas” for recreation.

7:15 PM - DISMISS FOR THE DAY

DAY 3
"Bless & Be Blessed"

10:00 AM - OPENING ACTIVITY

Recreation Guide - Arrival Activities

"When Did We See You? #2"

Draw what you ARE taking away from this time together.

10:30 AM - SMALL GROUPS

Group Study Guide - Session 3

12:00 PM - BREAK

12:15 PM - LUNCH

1:15 PM - CLOSING REFLECTION (stay at lunch tables)

Recreation Guide - I Felt, I Learned, I Feel

1:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide - Session 3

Combine opening and closing worships into one, longer session.

Hand out stones as attendees enter the worship space.

Remove the closing blessing from opening worship.

Or include it right before the closing blessing in closing worship.

2:30 PM - CLEAN UP AND DISMISS



HOW TO ADAPT FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Host your event in the late afternoon or early evening to accommodate school and work schedules. With young adults, you will likely be able to continue the program late into the evening since they do not mind staying up later. Instead of hosting this three evenings in a row, you could choose one evening each week for three weeks.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Divide into small groups based on age by assigning groups ahead of time instead of using the Recreation Guide's Movement to Make Small Groups.

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Overnight Retreat

This itinerary is ideal for middle or high schoolers at a site with breakout spaces and at least one larger space for whole group sessions, meals, and recreation. This could be a lock-in at your church or a retreat at a local camp. It could be held Friday-Saturday, Saturday-Sunday, or on weekdays during a school break.

Please note, the Group Study and Worship guides are both split into 3 corresponding sessions. This overnight retreat is designed to focus on just one of these. Choose Session 1 – "See & Be Seen," Session 2 – "Know & Be Known," or Session 3 – "Bless & Be Blessed" for your event.

OPENING NIGHT



Instead of hosting this retreat as a standalone event focused on only one session, consider a series of 3 retreats to explore all 3 sessions over the course of a year.

Examples:

- Fall Retreat:
"See & Be Seen"
- Spring Retreat:
"Know & Be Known"
- Summer Retreat:
"Bless & Be Blessed"

5:00 PM - CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

5:30 PM - OPENING RECREATION

Recreation Guide – Large Group Mixers (Choose 2)

7:00 PM - DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

8:00 PM - WELCOME GATHERING

Announcements
Energizers/Music

8:30 PM - OPENING WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Opening Worship (Choose your session)

9:00 PM - BREAK

Transition to housing/sleeping quarters.

9:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

11:00 PM - LIGHTS OUT

NEXT DAY

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - MORNING GATHERING

Announcements
Energizers/Music

10:00 AM - BREAK

Transition to Group Study Sessions.

10:15 AM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide \(Choose your session\)](#)

11:45 AM - BREAK

Transition to Lunch.

12:00 PM - LUNCH

[Recreation Guide - Table Games](#)

1:00 PM - AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES (Choose your own)

[Theme Party: Recreation Guide - Ultimate Birthday Party](#)

Guest Speaker(s)

Free Time with structured options

Movie screening onsite

Open Mic / Talent Show

Site-specific, built-in activities (Ex: swimming, basketball, or nature walks.)

Site-specific service projects (Ex: community trash walk, community art, tending to a community garden, or camp improvement.)

Age or grade-specific retreat

(Ex: confirmation class or senior seminar.)

3:00 PM - CLOSING WORSHIP

[Worship Guide - Closing Worship](#) (Choose your session)

3:30 PM - HEAD HOME



HOW TO ADAPT FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Instead of a 30-minute break after worship on opening night, provide a couple of hours of free time with self-serve snack options. Adjust the end of the day plans to be optional and more informal if possible. Be mindful of any end of day policies that your venue might have.

You could also extend this to a two-night retreat held Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. Incorporate a longer service component or intentional sabbath time into your schedule on Saturday and hold closing worship on Sunday.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

This itinerary would make a wonderful intergenerational or family gathering at a regional camp or conference center. Consider starting the opening night schedule an hour or two early to accommodate younger children. This will provide them with a slightly earlier dinnertime and bedtime.

If you have an annual “family day” or similar event, you could host it earlier in the day before opening night begins, making this retreat an optional extension of “family day.”

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

6-Week Evening Series

This schedule is an evening program designed for youth participants at a church over the course of six weeks. It is easily adaptable for other age groups; in fact, we encourage you to consider it as part of an intergenerational series. This could also be a collaborative series with youth ministry programs from multiple congregations in one city.

Please note, each Group Study Guide session is split up and explored over the course of two evenings. For Week 4, the times for Worship and Group Study are flipped so that participants can work on communion elements during their Group Study session. For Week 6, the Opening Activity and Dinner are combined for a theme party, so the timing is slightly different.

WEEK 1

"See & Be Seen" Part 1

5:30 PM - OPENING ACTIVITY

[Recreation Guide – Choose 1 from Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers](#)

6:00 PM - DINNER

6:45 PM - BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Worship.

Invite participants to help clean up or set up.

6:55 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide – Session 1, Opening Worship](#)

7:25 PM - BREAK

Transition from Worship to Group Study.

7:30 PM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide – Session 1, "Good to SEE You" & "Let's SEE"](#)

[Recreation Guide – I Felt, I Learned, I Feel](#)

8:25 PM - CLEAN UP

8:30 PM - HEAD HOME

WEEK 2

"See & Be Seen" Part 2

5:30 PM - OPENING ACTIVITY

[Recreation Guide – Choose 1 from Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers](#)



Incorporate a service project, special topic, or speaker by extending this series by a week or two. Make Week 2 and Week 4 or 5 the evenings for this component. Replace your worship service time with this featured element to create an active, hands on worship experience.

WEEK 3

“Know & Be Known” Part 1

6:00 PM - DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

6:45 PM - BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Worship.

Invite participants to help clean up or set up.

6:55 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 1, Opening Worship

7:25 PM - BREAK

Transition from Worship to Group Study.

7:30 PM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 1, “I SEE What You Did There” & “SEE Ya!”

Recreation Guide – Small Group Games

If time allows, play a small group game before Clean Up

8:25 PM - CLEAN UP

8:30 PM - HEAD HOME

5:30 PM - OPENING ACTIVITY

Recreation Guide – Choose 1 from Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers

6:00 PM - DINNER

6:45 PM - BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Worship.

Invite participants to help clean up or set up.

6:55 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 2, Opening Worship

7:25 PM - BREAK

Transition from Worship to Group Study.

7:30 PM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 2, “Good to SEE You” & “Let's SEE”

Recreation Guide – I Felt, I Learned, I Feel

8:25 PM - CLEAN UP

8:30 PM - HEAD HOME

WEEK 4

“Know & Be Known” Part 2

5:30 PM – OPENING ACTIVITY

Recreation Guide – Choose 1 from Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers

6:00 PM – DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

6:45 PM – BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Group Study (instead of Worship).

6:55 PM – GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 2, “I SEE What You Did There”

Create Communion elements for Worship.

Group Study Guide – Session 2, “SEE Ya!”

7:45 PM – BREAK

Transition from Group Study to Worship.

Invite participants to help set up for Worship and Communion.

7:55 PM – WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 2, Closing Worship

Participants can help with Communion.

8:25 PM – CLEAN UP

8:30 PM – HEAD HOME

WEEK 5

“Bless & Be Blessed” Part 1

5:30 PM – OPENING ACTIVITY

Recreation Guide – Choose 1 from Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers

6:00 PM – DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

6:45 PM – BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Worship.

Invite participants to help clean up or set up.

6:55 PM – WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 3, Opening Worship

7:25 PM – BREAK

Transition from Worship to Group Study.

WEEK 6
"Bless & Be Blessed" Part 2

7:30 PM – GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 3, "Good to SEE You" & "Let's SEE"
Recreation Guide – I Felt, I Learned, I Feel

8:25 PM – CLEAN UP

8:30 PM – HEAD HOME

5:30 PM – THEME PARTY & DINNER

Recreation Guide – Theme Party: Ultimate Birthday Party

Celebrate your last night with a theme party.

Choose from the "Decoration Ideas" to decorate your space.

Choose 1 or 2 of the "Activity Ideas" for your opening activity.

Choose from the "Food Ideas" for your dinner menu.

6:30 PM – BREAK

Transition from Dinner to Worship.

Invite participants to help clean up or set up.

6:40 PM – WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 3, Closing Worship

7:10 PM – BREAK

Transition from Worship to Group Study.

7:15 PM – GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 3, "I SEE What You Did There" & "SEE Ya!"

8:00 PM – CLOSING THEME PARTY

Recreation Guide – Theme Party: Ultimate Birthday Party

End your evening with more theme party fun!

Invite participants' families, church staff, volunteers, etc., to join.

Choose from the "Food Ideas" for your dessert menu.

Choose 1 self-directed activity from "Activity Ideas" (Ex: Photo Ops)

8:30 PM – HEAD HOME

HOW TO ADAPT FOR YOUNG ADULTS

There may be a need to pare down this schedule to fit it into a smaller amount of time for young adults. They are typically very busy so it may be easier for them to gather for just 2 hours, especially over 6 weeks. Make the opening activity optional, so that those with busier schedules can start with dinner at 6:00 p.m. Skip the table games and transition into worship around 6:30.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

This is a great schedule for intergenerational groups. In fact, it may easily fit into Sunday or weeknight programming your church already has in place.

HOME GROUP ADAPTATION

Another fun option would be to ask families or households to host so that small groups meet at several sites in different geographic areas. This could work well for intergenerational groups or young adults. Each site could host a group of no more than 12-15 people. Participants would need to register ahead of time so that everyone can be assigned to a small group site. This setup would cut down on the time needed for transitions in the schedule. If you opt out of breaks and table games during meals, you can bring the total time closer to two hours.

Provide each host with an orientation, and identify an onsite leader from each group, so that the host and leader are two different people. Ask the host to provide a simple meal each week. This should be something easy to make or pickup, such as pizza, spaghetti, or a taco bar. If weather permits, plan on doing what you can outside.

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Weeklong Event with Service

This is a weeklong itinerary that is best suited for high school students. It could be held at a local church or a regional camp and conference center. This is a great way to get high schoolers to explore the theme in a hands-on and local way. Read over the "Mission & Service" section included in this guide for more tips. Additional "Mission & Service Resources" are available in the "Resources" section at the end of this guide.

SUNDAY

4:00 PM - CHECK-IN

4:30 PM - ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES & MIXERS

[Recreation Guide - Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers \(Choose 1 of each\)](#)

5:30 PM - DINNER

[Recreation Guide - Table Games](#)

6:30 PM - SERVICE PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Invite partners in mission to talk about the service component.
Review logistics and expectations for the local service project.
Connect this to the theme as you begin worship.

7:00 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide - Session 1, Opening Worship](#)

7:30 PM - BREAK

7:45 PM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide - Session 1, "Good to SEE You" & "Let's SEE"](#)

8:30 PM - OPENING RECREATION

[Recreation Guide - Opening Recreation \(Choose games you didn't play earlier\)](#)

9:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

10:30 PM - LIGHTS OUT

MONDAY

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - LOCAL SERVICE PROJECT

Lunch at the service site

3:30 PM - FREE TIME

Prayer Center

Self-directed options

5:30 PM - DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

6:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 1, Closing Worship

7:00 PM - BREAK

7:15 PM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 1, “I SEE What You Did There” & “SEE Ya!”

8:00 PM - MOVIE NIGHT

Consider movies related to the service project and/or theme.

Provide classic movie theater snacks.

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

10:30 PM - LIGHTS OUT

TUESDAY

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - LOCAL SERVICE PROJECT

Lunch at the service site

3:30 PM - FREE TIME

Prayer Center

Self-directed options

5:30 PM - DINNER

Recreation Guide – Table Games

6:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 2, Opening Worship

7:00 PM - BREAK

WEDNESDAY

7:15 PM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 2, “Good to SEE You” & “Let's SEE”

8:00 PM - BREAK

Transition to housing/sleeping quarters.

8:15 PM - BOARD GAMES & SNACKS

If applicable, meet in “back home” groups at this time.

9:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

10:30 PM - LIGHTS OUT

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 2, “I SEE What You Did There” and “SEE Ya!”

Work on communion elements for Worship.

10:30 AM - FREE TIME

Prayer Center

Self-directed options

12:00 PM - LUNCH

1:00 PM - LOCAL SERVICE PROJECT

6:00 PM - SERVICE PROJECT DINNER

End your project by sharing dinner with your partner(s) in mission.

If appropriate, invite them to join in worship and communion too.

7:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 2, Closing Worship

If appropriate, invite them to join in worship and communion too.

8:15 PM - BREAK

8:30 PM - DEBRIEF / REFLECT & SNACKS

If applicable, meet in “back home” groups at this time.

9:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

10:30 PM - LIGHTS OUT

THURSDAY

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:30 AM - INTENTIONAL SABBATH

Prayer Center
Sabbath practices
Rest

12:00 PM - LUNCH

1:00 PM - SPECIAL ACTIVITY

Pool, amusement park, museum, etc.

5:30 PM - DINNER

Recreation Guide - Table Games

6:30 PM - WORSHIP

Worship Guide - Session 3, Opening Worship

7:00 PM - BREAK

7:15 PM - GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide - Session 3, "Good to SEE You" & "Let's SEE"

8:00 PM - BREAK

Transition to housing/sleeping quarters.

8:15 PM - BOARD GAMES & SNACKS

If applicable, meet in "back home" groups at this time.

9:30 PM - END OF DAY PRACTICE

10:00 PM - IN ROOMS

10:30 PM - LIGHTS OUT

FRIDAY

8:30 AM – BREAKFAST

9:30 AM – GROUP STUDY

Group Study Guide – Session 3, “I SEE What You Did There” & “SEE Ya!”

Spend a few extra minutes in groups to reflect and say goodbye.

10:30 AM – FREE TIME

Prayer Center

Self-directed options

12:00 PM – LUNCH

Celebrate your last day with a theme party.

Recreation Guide – Theme Party: Ultimate Birthday Party

Choose from the “Decoration Ideas” to decorate your space.

Choose from the “Food Ideas” for you lunch and dessert menu.

Choose from the “Activity Ideas” for recreation.

3:00 PM – WORSHIP

Worship Guide – Session 3, Closing Worship

3:30 PM – PACK UP

4:00 PM – HEAD HOME



HOW TO ADAPT FOR YOUNG ADULTS

This would be a great option during spring break for college aged young adults. Many college groups go on service week trips. Keep in mind, you may need to shift this schedule to accommodate different service opportunities.

HOW TO ADAPT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Intergenerational mission is not always easy but is always worth the extra work involved. It invites everyone to serve Christ and, in doing so, demonstrates that we can all serve and love our neighbors together at any age or life stage.

A simple way to adapt this for an intergenerational group is to switch from an overnight event to a daytime program. Skip breakfast and begin your mornings at 9:30 a.m. End your programming around 8:00 p.m., or simply make the activities after this time optional (most are recreation or reflection). You could also turn this into a once-a-week, daytime event that takes place every Saturday for 6 weeks.

Links to additional resources to help plan mission experiences for all ages are available in the “Resources” section of this guide.

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Young Adult Event

This event is designed for young adults in different life stages. This would be ideal for a camp, conference center, or state park with cabins. You will want space for whole group gatherings, worship, dining, and recreation, as well as breakout space for group study.

FRIDAY

7:00 PM - CHECK-IN

8:00 PM - ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES & MIXERS

[Recreation Guide – Arrival Activities or Large Group Mixers \(Choose 1\)](#)

You can also skip the Arrival/Mixers and jump right into Session 1.

8:30 PM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide – Session 1](#)

10:00 PM - BREAK

10:30 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide – Session 1, Opening Worship](#)

11:00 PM - LATE NIGHT HANGOUT WITH SNACKS

Bring along some cards and board games for groups to use.

Provide snacks or ask participants to bring their own in registration.

SATURDAY

8:30 AM - BREAKFAST

9:00 AM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide – Session 2](#)

Work on elements for Campfire Communion.

10:30 AM - SERVICE PROJECT

Partner with local organizations or provide onsite options.

12:00 PM - LUNCH

SUNDAY

1:00 PM - FREE TIME

Prayer Center
Self-directed options
Afternoon sabbath
Outdoor activities

6:00 PM - WORSHIP

[Worship Guide - Session 2, Opening Worship](#)

6:30 PM - DINNER

7:30 PM - BREAK

8:00 PM - CAMPFIRE COMMUNION

[Worship Guide - Session 2, Closing Worship](#)

Choose an alternative if a fire is not a safe option at your venue

8:30 PM - EVENING HANGOUT WITH SNACKS

Camp fire with s'mores (if this is a safe option at your venue).
Games and cards

9:30 AM - BRUNCH

10:15 AM - GROUP STUDY

[Group Study Guide - Session 3](#)

11:45 AM - CLOSING WORSHIP

[Worship Guide - Session 3, Opening Worship](#)

12:30 PM - HEAD HOME

If there are different groups that came together, perhaps from a particular church, community, or school, provide an option for them to stay onsite together one more night and hang out.

"WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?"

Intergenerational Gathering

One way to begin intergenerational ministry in your church is to have regular gatherings onsite that are appropriate for all ages. This itinerary is for an intergenerational or "all-church" event to be held at a church after a worship service. Fellowship and intergenerational relationships are truly at the center of this gathering. It is designed specifically for a service that ends at 11:30 a.m., so you may need to adjust the times based on when your worship service lets out.

Additional resources for planning a whole church experience can be found in the "Resources" section of this guide.

11:30 AM – CHECK-IN & ARRIVAL

Provide a chart that lists generations with birth years.

Give everyone a colored dot that corresponds to their generation.

Explain the rules for sitting at tables:

Each table should have 2-3 colors (or generations) present.

Each table should have more than one family group.

11:45 AM – CONVERSATION AND LUNCH

Provide conversation starters on the table for introductions.

Example: *Recreation Guide – Table Games, "One of Kind"*

Cover tables with paper and provide markers/crayons to decorate.

When the food is ready, have someone give a brief welcome.

Invite tables to the food line.

Each table can say their own prayer before getting in the food line.

Other tables can continue table activities until it is their turn in line.

12:30 PM – SCRIPTURE & THEME INTRODUCTION

Have someone give a brief introduction to the scripture and theme.

12:45 PM – SCRIPTURE & THEME TABLE ACTIVITY

Have tables engage in a table activity related to the theme.

This should be adapted for all ages.

1:00 PM – CLOSING & CLEAN-UP

Have someone give a brief closing reflection or prayer.

Provide instructions for clean-up and departure.

1:15 PM – HEAD HOME



Resources

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Resources

FUNDRAISING RESOURCES

[*Quicksheet #14 – Road-trips in a Recession*](#)

Creative Ways to Fundraise and Support Local and Global Ministries on a Small Budget

[*Quicksheet #27 – Fundraising Ideas for Youth Ministry*](#)

MISSION & SERVICE RESOURCES

YOUTH MINISTRY

[*Quicksheet #75 – Mission Trips: How to Take the Experience Home*](#)

[*Quicksheet #76 – Mission Trips: How to Get Organized*](#)

[*Quicksheet #77 – Mission Trips: Planning Your First Mission Trip*](#)

[*Quicksheet #72 – Not a Game: Hunger*](#)

Activities to help youth understand the real-life impact of hunger on people in the world and our community (for use prior to CROP Walk or another type of hunger alleviating activity)

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

[*Intergenerational Mission Toolkit*](#)

[*Intergenerational Mission Experiences at Home*](#)

[*Mission and Service Gatherings for the Whole Church*](#)

[*What is Mission? An Intergenerational Experience*](#)

[*Matthew 25 and Intergenerational Community*](#)

[*Elements of an Intergenerational Mission Trip*](#)

[*Intergenerational Mission Trip Planning Timeline*](#)

[*Covenant Writing for Intergenerational Mission Activities*](#)

[*Quicksheet #73 – Exploring Justice on the Road: Intergenerational Civil Rights Tour*](#)

Read how one book study at a church turned into a transformational three-day, intergenerational trip. The book was “Just Mercy,” and their bus trip was a civil rights tour of Alabama. The planning steps included in this resource can be hugely helpful for a variety of events and contexts. This Quicksheet addresses advertising and promotion, determining costs, post-trip reflections, and the beauty of intergenerational storytelling. It also includes a final itinerary, debriefing questions, and alternative suggestions if you are unable to get on a bus to do a similar tour.

FORMS & COVENANTS

These forms can be easily adapted to your specific event, setting, and needs.

Quicksheet #37 – Important Forms for Safety and Community in Youth Ministry

Includes:

- Youth Community Covenant
- Medical Information and Release Form
- Media Release Form
- Incident/Accident Report Form
- Youth Worker and Volunteer Background Screening Consent Form

Quicksheet #11 – Community Life Covenants

Includes a sample youth group covenant and a sample event covenant – also includes helpful information for designing covenants together as a group.

When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you? Matthew 25:38

PYT Beyond Registration & Medical Form

Participant Full Name: _____ Badge Name: _____

Pronouns: _____ Gender: _____

Birthdate: _____ Race: _____

Participant Role (Circle One): Youth Participant Adult Advisor Volunteer

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ T-shirt Size: _____

Church Name & City (if multiple church event): _____

Dietary Needs: _____

Severe / Life-threatening Allergies: _____

Medication(s): _____

Please list any additional & important participant needs that leadership should note:

Please list any additional & important health/medical information for medical providers:

If you have health insurance, please provide your insurance company & policy number.

Insurance Company: _____ Policy #: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Emergency Relationship: _____

Emergency Day Phone: _____ Emergency Night Phone: _____

Expectations Contract

[Name of event] is a safe environment that is conducive to spiritual learning and fun. We strive to provide a positive experience for all participants and their families, as well as our volunteers and staff. While it is never our desire to ask anyone to leave, repeated serious incidents of inappropriate behavior and unsuccessful intervention attempts may be grounds for dismissal. Serious incidents may include but are not limited to behaviors that jeopardize safety, that disrupt and impede upon programming, and/or any intentional physical altercations.

Participant: _____

When addressed by a [name of event] representative, I agree to:

- 1. Stop** Immediately stop & give my attention to the person speaking to me.
- 2. Listen** Actively listen to & hear the concerns of the person redirecting me.
- 3. Communicate** Calmly share the information I know. Explain what happened, why I did or did not do something, and who else was involved.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

When notified of an inappropriate behavioral incident, I agree to:

- 1. Stop** Take time to stop and give the representative an opportunity to review the incident with me.
- 2. Listen** Actively listen as they explain the situation and their concerns.
- 3. Communicate** Calmly share my thoughts, concerns, and the strategies I use to successfully redirect my youth. Help to problem solve and support the program representative as they implement an agreed-upon plan of action.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

[Name of event]

In response to a participant's inappropriate behavior, we will:

- 1. First Incident** Call the parent/guardian.
- 2. Second Incident** Call and conference with participant and their parent/guardian.
- 3. Third Incident** Implement suspension and consider dismissal.

[Name of event] Representative: _____ Date: _____

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