

Youth Ministry Funding

Practical Matters

~Source: YFM Program Guide, Unity Worldwide Ministries

Each church must decide for themselves who, where and how their tithes, talents and treasures are disbursed.

- All Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) expenses and incomes must fall within the general fund of the church to maintain the tax-exempt status of 501(c)(3). All accounts must have accurate accounting and must undergo church auditing. When setting this up, include a line item in the general fund for each of the special groups within Youth and Family Ministry.

General Guidelines

- Youth of Unity (YOU) and Uniteens do not get a separate account outside of the general fund of the church. They must be part of the church's accounting system to retain tax-deductible status. By maintaining a line item in the general fund for special groups, you reduce the risk of misuse of funds. The group learns that planning is essential and that accurate paperwork is extremely important.
- Youth fund-raisers need to be planned, meaningful events. A balance register or ledger can be used to review a monthly statement from the church, so the youth can learn how to balance a checkbook.
- The Youth and Family Ministry will not pay for itself through Sunday morning collections and fundraisers. An important part of your position is to manage and record accurately how money delegated to youth ministry is spent.
- An equally important responsibility is to communicate regularly and clearly with your minister, treasurer and board about the needs of the department and help them to understand that the program will not pay for itself.

Current Status

- What is the current Youth and Family Ministry budget?
- How is it allocated—monthly, quarterly or annually?
- Is there a petty-cash fund? How does it work?
- How are expense records kept and reimbursed?
- What have we done in the past?

Director Needs

- Are office facilities and equipment sufficient to support the director's responsibilities?
- Is the use of office equipment paid through the administration/office costs or does the Youth and Family Ministry department need to pay a percentage?
- What types of office equipment or supplies are needed for youth staff?
- What regional or national training is available for the director and other staff?

Volunteer Needs

- How many volunteers do you have? Do you need more?
- Who performs background checks on your volunteers? What does that cost?
- What expenses are incurred for volunteer training?
- How do we recognize and thank the volunteers? What expenditures are needed for that?

Children's Considerations

- How many children are you serving?
- Do you offer snacks to the children?
- Do you have promotional or graduation ceremonies?
- Do you gift the children at any time during the year?

Equipment and Future Plans

- What are you doing that is new in your program? What are its needs?
- Are you growing or setting intentions to grow?
- How many classrooms do you have and how many do you need?
- Do you need furniture or other items to create a loving environment?
- Do you have first-aid supplies in the classrooms?

Curriculum and Resources

- What curriculum are you planning to use this year? Remember to consider all age groups.
- Do you need to purchase the curriculum?
- What resources (books, music, etc.) do you need for your curriculum?
- What supplies (art, craft, recycled items, cooking supplies, costumes, etc.) do you need?

Teen Considerations

- How are the Youth of Unity and Uniteens funds handled?
- What are the youth fund-raisers?
- How often do they have fund-raisers?
- What events do the teens have? When and where are they? How much do they cost?
- How are the teens transported to events? (Local, regional, international) How much does that cost?
- What part of the teen expenses does the church subsidize?
- How is insurance coverage for teens handled?

Event Planning

- What events are being planned for each age group? (Holidays, workshops, etc.)
- How are the young people transported to events? (Local, regional, international)
- Do you have paid child care or other paid youth staff?
- Do you have or are you planning a summer camp or special summer program?
- Do you have a children's choir?
- Do you offer parenting or prenatal classes or other support groups for families?

Income Sources

- What events provide a gratuity/love offering? Is it allotted to youth ministry?
- What events have registration fees?
- What is the budgeted church support for youth ministry?
- What is an estimate of the amount of youth ministry-designated gifts?
- How might we ask/advertise for the needs of the youth ministry's supplies and resources? (Consider placing a wish list of these items in the bulletin occasionally.)