

Dear Parents of Teenagers, Here are 5 reasons you should keep your teens involved in youth group...

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Dear Parents of Teenagers,

Thanks for all you do to invest in the life of your teenager(s). You probably feel like an uber driver (ready to pick them up/drop them off when they call), coach (helping them perfect their sport), tutor (working with them on homework), guidance counsellor (preparing them for the future) and, sometimes, a jockey (pushing them to cross the finish line...without a whip of course!)...all wrapped up in one!

That's why, with all the insane busyness of parenting a teen, it's easy to let youth group attendance slide off the grid. It's tempting to think, *"My kid's just too busy for a night of hanging out with other teenagers, playing some goofy games and hearing another Bible lesson."*

Believe me when I say, I understand the temptation. As a parent of a teenager (who has tons of homework, plays football and is not yet old enough to drive) my wife and I are constantly under pressure to measure every event through the lenses of what matters most. And we have decided that youth group attendance must be a priority. Although we view ourselves as the primary spiritual influence of our kids, we also believe that a strong youth ministry plays a vital role in his overall spiritual development.

With this as a backdrop here are 5 short, yet powerful, reasons you should encourage (make?) your teenager(s) go to youth group:

1. Teenagers need models and mentors.

"O God, You have taught me from my youth, And I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come. " [Psalm 71:17,18](#)

In the Jewish culture it wasn't just parents that poured into the younger folks. Older men poured into younger men and older women poured into younger women ([Titus 2:1-8](#).)

Of course you as a parent are called to be the primary spiritual mentor of your own teenager but he/she also needs other godly adults! It's important for your son or daughter to see that this whole "Christianity thing" is more than just mom's and dad's belief system. They need to have models and mentors that reinforce all of the spiritual truth they are learning from you.

2. Teenagers need community.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." [Hebrews 10:24,25](#)

In an age of bullying, gossip, slander and hatefulness (which can destroy a teenager's self-identity), young people need other young people who can lift them up, encourage them and challenge them in all the right ways.

Youth group is also a place where teenagers can discover their spiritual gifting and begin to use it to serve others. This will help them have a heart to selflessly serve others for the rest of their lives!

3. Teenagers need mission.

When Jesus challenged his most-likely teenaged disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations", he was tapping into the activist wiring of these young men. In the same way your teenager needs challenged with the mission to reach their peers with the good news of Jesus in a loving and contagious way.

Youth group is a place where your teenager can invite their unbelieving friends to hear the gospel. But it's also a place where they can be equipped to share the good news of Jesus with their own peers (which will help them grow in their faith!) As your youth leader continues to build a [Gospel Advancing ministry](#) the message of Jesus will advance in them and through them. This process will accelerate the discipleship process in the life of your teen in ways you could never imagine!

A great and simple way to give your teens a taste of this mission is by bringing them out to [Dare 2 Share Live](#) coming up on October 13th! Here they'll be inspired and equipped to share their faith along with tens of thousands of teenagers in 97 cities across the United States. One day. One mission. One hope! Sign your teens up today. Click [here](#) for more info!

4. Teenagers need theology.

"Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church." [Ephesians 4:14,15](#)

Youth group is a place where teenagers can wrestle through the theology you've been teaching them (you've been teaching them right?) and have it reinforced in a powerful and personal way under the guidance of a youth leader who knows how to ask great questions and point teens to sound truth.

This should result in your teenagers knowing and owning their faith on a deeper level. Youth groups and small groups should be a place where teenagers can ask tough questions and even share doubts and struggles with their beliefs without fear of rebuke. Skilled youth leaders can take questioning teens back to God's Word as the source of authority and help them process through all of the Biblical truth you are praying they grasp, believe and live out.

Great youth groups build on the foundation that godly moms and dads have laid. And, for those teenagers who don't have believing parents, an effective youth ministry helps lay a solid foundation of Biblical truth for the rest of a teenager's life.

5. Teenagers need a safe place to confess and confide.

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." [James 5:16](#)

Often teenagers who struggle with sin and temptation have nowhere to confess and confide. They feel trapped by their sins. But a healthy youth ministry can create a safe space for teenagers to open up and talk honestly about their struggles. Of course this doesn't mean they should confess every sin to everyone. But it does mean that they should have a handful of others who know their struggles and can pray for and encourage them to walk in victory over those sins. When my son came back from a youth retreat last year he had this opportunity. He opened up with a handful of others about some of his struggles and then he came back and opened up to me. After he confessed his struggles he told me that he felt a thousand pound weight had dropped off his back.

Here's the thing, my son and I have a very strong and very open relationship. But there was something about his band of brother friends, under the leadership of a caring adult in a youth retreat type setting, that gave him the freedom to confess and confide.

Skilled youth leaders know how to create a context of open and honest dialogue. Teenagers who push their struggles down and never open up often struggle later on in life with addictive and destructive behavior. An effective youth ministry can help teenagers deal with these challenges now and prepare them to be victorious both now and later.

Yes, I know that teen life is busy. But it would be a shame if our teenagers graduated from high school and were catapulted into *"the real world"* without every opportunity to know, live, share and own their faith.

At the end of the day, our teenagers embracing and embodying the Christian faith is more important than sports and more important than academics. Getting them involved in a healthy, vibrant youth ministry is worth fitting into a crazy, busy schedule. And if it's not quite as healthy as you think it should be then why don't you volunteer and make it better?

There's too much at stake for us to get this wrong. So let's get it right!

To Reach a Generation,

Greg Stier (a fellow parent of a teenager and Founder of [Dare 2 Share](#))