

Are You a Tired Youth Volunteer?

So, you're a youth ministry volunteer. You just get off work and sit in your nice comfy recliner (or collapse on the floor), and you start thinking how nice it is to finally have a break from work and the crazy youth programs the Student Minister puts you through (guided by the Holy Spirit of course). You pull out your smart phone and you see that you have an email notification. It's almost as if it's Christmas morning all over again. You click the icon that has a "1" on it and you see it's from your church's youth minister. You find out it's a list of activities, challenges, questions, etc. etc. and they need your help! There goes your ideal vacation!

Many times in youth ministry there are the unsung heroes called "volunteers" that work full time (sometimes two jobs), have a family, have other priorities, rush their children from event to event, and manage to catch a few z's before the Back2School bash, all maintaining a desire and love for teenagers. Sometimes however, with a busy schedule and other obligations there's a feeling of inadequacy that tells them, "I'm too

busy for youth ministry”, “I’m not good enough”, “I’m not doing my job”, “Surely, this crazy person can find someone else”.

If you’re that volunteer, I think I can say this for youth ministers around the galaxy–YOU’RE INCREDIBLE!! In case the all caps wasn’t convincing **here are 5 tips that you can do to continue to make a difference** even if you can’t block out time for a weekend full of water balloon launchers, cow tongues, saran wrap, and most likely a trip to the ER.

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1. Pray for the students, leaders, and the vision of the ministry.

Never count out the value of a praying youth volunteer. Keep praying for the students, for yourself, and for the youth minister—we all know they need it!

2. Call or text students on your lunch break.

When you have 5-7 minutes on a break, in the car, or..well, probably not the restroom...Give a student a call or text just to see how they’re doing or let them know you’re praying for them.

3. Talk to your youth minister.

Let’s face it. Your youth minister is a busy person. They might suffer from A.D.H.D. Sometimes in the midst of pizza, chubby bunny, and follow-ups, they may sometimes forget to send dates to you in advance. Just grab ahold of em and ask if they have an idea of future events so you can plan accordingly. Hopefully there’s a communication system in place, but if not, just ask.

4. Sit one out occasionally.

Everyone needs a break sometimes. Youth ministries usually have plenty of events throughout the year. Talk with your minister ahead of time and

explain you would like to sit one event out for family, rest, work, etc. Be courteous though, you don't want to set the biggest event of the year out or sit every event but the pizza party at the youth minister's house.

5. Remember your calling

Remember the day or night the youth minister stopped you in the hallway to plead and beg you to pray about risking your life with teenagers. Remember how God fueled you to use teenagers to change the world. The moment in prayer that you seen the potential of students and how much of a difference they can make despite their bathroom selfies. Remember how Christ used teenagers to shock the world and how God used teenagers for His cause. Remember, that you are a difference maker.

We as youth ministers can't do our job without you. You are valuable to us and even when you can't see it, we see the difference and impact you make in the lives of students. So if any of my youth leaders are reading this...thank you. You are the true heroes in youth ministry. There is no higher calling in my opinion than serving teenagers and it's a blessing to have volunteers to serve with. I think all youth ministers would agree with that.