FOUNDATIONS & Techniques

YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Participant's Guide

YOUTHSABBATHSCHOOLIDEAS.ORG

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Participant's Guide

Your name

YOUTHSABBATHSCHOOLIDEAS.ORG

YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL IDEAS

Prepared by the North American Division Department of Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Additional copies of this resource are available from:

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Welcome

FOR THE "HALVES" AND THE "HALF NOTS"

Back in 2014–2015 NAD Youth Ministries phoned pastors of churches in all nine unions in the North American Division. Our focus was to help churches who were missing young people. In the process of talking to these pastors, they told us about what their church was doing (or not doing) when it came to youth ministry.

Here's where the "Halves" and "Half Nots" come in. In those two years we called about half of the SDA churches in North American (2,015 pastors to be exact; some who pastor more than one church). We made four attempts to reach these pastors. We were able to communicate with about half. We consider them the "Halves" and the others the "Half Nots."

We discovered with the "Halves" that the most common youth ministry activity available in SDA Churches is a Youth Sabbath School. How many of the churches have this? About half! Here's another subdivision of the "Halves" and the "Half Nots."

For the "Halves" who we reached, here are the youth ministry programs they provide.

- 54% Youth Sabbath School
- 35% Nothing
- 22% AY/MV or Vespers
- 20% Socials
- 20% Other
- 16% Teen Pathfinders
- 13% Youth Service Activities
- 11% Small Group Bible Studies
- 9% Annual Youth Day at Church
- 6% Youth Evangelism

Youth Sabbath School is the most common youth ministry our churches do. But some say, "Youth Sabbath School is dead" or "Call it something besides SCHOOL" or "Why not try something else?" Yet Youth Sabbath School is the most common and the most frequent (52 times a year) youth ministry activity in SDA Churches.

Instead of burying or renaming the primary youth ministry activity in SDA churches, let's pray for and practice resurrection. The Old Testament story of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) and the New Testament story of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11) give us hope and the expectation that God can give life to any Sabbath School. Because our confidence and dependence on God is strong, we turn to him and ask that he resurrect our Sabbath Schools. We offer ideas and training for Youth Sabbath School leaders. Only God can ignite this with life. Join us in praying for God to ignite us and the young people and Youth Sabbath School.

Foundations and Techniques Schedule

Foundations and Techniques is training for Youth Sabbath School leaders of all ages (including youth). The North American Division (NAD) is sponsoring this in conjunction with your union, conference, and local church.

Session 1 Initiate (How to Start or Revive your Youth Sabbath School)

Session 2 Give & Take (Ideas and Resources for Youth Sabbath School)

Session 3 Need (10 Ways to Increase Participation in Youth Sabbath School)

Session 4 Involve (How to Start Good Discussions)

Session 5 Thrive (Mentoring Young People to Lead)

Session 6 Express (Summary, Commitment, Consecration)

You can expect some breaks and snacks between sessions (plus a meal). Your host may have scheduled all six session in one day, or possibly a combination of Friday evening and Sabbath.

Introduction

Welcome to Foundations and Techniques, training for Youth Sabbath School leaders. Jot down the names of some of the other youth leaders you're meeting here.

NAME	CHURCH NAME

Start with a Spark

Some get-acquainted activities I can use for my Youth Sabbath School include:

Name _____

Description: _____

_____

_____

Name _____

Description: _____

_____

_____

Name _____

Description: _____

_____

_____

Name _____

Description: _____

_____

_____

Session 1: Initiate

HOW TO START OR REVIVE YOUR YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL

Why have a Youth Sabbath School?

With a clear purpose you can choose the components that will intentionally feed that purpose. Without a clear purpose, Youth Sabbath School will likely deteriorate into a hodge-podge of stuff that either tries to appease young people or instruct them on what someone thinks they should believe or do.

Put a check mark by each reason that sounds good to you to have a Youth Sabbath School

__ Give religious instruction

__ Study the Bible

__ Evangelization

__ It's better than doing nothing

__ Provide social interaction

__ The pastor wants us to do this

__ Prompt outreach

__ Teach spiritual disciplines

__ Equip youth to share their faith

__ Challenge church beliefs

Other: _____

__ Fellowship

__ Leadership Training

__ Promote Missions

__ We've always done this

__ Teach young people the SDA doctrines

__ Give immature adults a place to be

__ Prepare young people for baptism

__ Connect young people to God

__ Babysit youth so adults have free time

__ Discover ways to live one's faith

Other: _____

Circle from the Collection Above Your Top 3–4 Reasons to Have a Youth Sabbath School

What are the top purposes you have for Youth Sabbath School?

What do you think are the top reasons your youth have for Youth Sabbath School?

How are these similar?

How are they different?

Your purpose tells you WHAT to do. But you also need to choose methods for HOW to do that.

You can't just say, "My purpose for Youth Sabbath School is Bible study," and then young people will study the Bible. The method you choose for your purpose of Bible study will determine whether or not you achieve your purpose.

The "WHAT" is important; but so is the "HOW"!

LET'S TALK ABOUT TIME & NUMBERS

_____ Time your Youth Sabbath School begins

_____ Time you arrive

_____ Time you're set up and ready to go with Youth Sabbath School

_____ Time the youth arrive

_____ Time when you have enough people to actually start Sabbath School

_____ Time the last youth arrives

_____ Time Youth Sabbath School ends

_____ Amount of time you spend preparing for Youth Sabbath School

_____ Day of the week you start preparing for Youth Sabbath School

_____ When you contact someone to help you with the program

_____ Number of youth at your typical Youth Sabbath School

_____ Highest number in attendance

_____ Lowest number in attendance

_____ Number of people on your Youth Sabbath School leadership team

_____ Amount of money spent on Youth Sabbath School most weeks

_____ Amount of money collected in Youth Sabbath School most weeks

MODEL A FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

The current General Conference Sabbath School suggested plan for 60 minutes of Sabbath School: https://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/sabbath-school-strategic-plan-(2017-2020).pdf

15 minutes *Fellowship, Outreach, World Mission*
Pray, plan organize for action, care for missing members; schedule outreach, mission story, mission offering.

45 minutes *Bible Study*
Involve everyone in the study of the lesson; ask questions; highlight key texts.

Plan lunch for the class after worship, then go out and reach someone!

The Adventist Mission Quarterly for adults and youth has mission stories for youth and adults that can be accessed at: https://am.adventistmission.org/mq-adult

What do you like about this model?

What do you not like about this model?

How will this model work for you?

MODEL B FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

How much time would you spend on the 4 purposes (Bible Study, Fellowship, Outreach, World Mission) provided for Sabbath School?

What would you do for each purpose?

How will this match your purpose(s) for Youth Sabbath School?

_____ minutes *Fellowship*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *Bible Study*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *Outreach*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *World Mission*
What we'll do: _____

_____

What do you like about this model?

_____

_____

_____

What do you not like about this model?

_____

_____

_____

How will this model work for you?

_____

_____

_____

MODEL C FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

A model with 5 purposes with examples for one week of Youth Sabbath School

10 minutes — *Purpose: Fellowship*
What we'll do: Group-Growing Activity such as a mural or a short scavenger hunt in groups or an ice breaker activity

15 minutes — *Purpose: Praise*
What we'll do: Group singing (3-4 songs)
- Post-It Notes of "Praises this week" and put them on the wall

10 minutes — *Purpose: Outreach*
What we'll do: Update local service project involvement
- Update on global mission focus for this quarter
- Take offering for local service and world mission

20 minutes — *Purpose: Bible Study*
What we'll do: Read the passage in Scripture
- Spend some time on individual Bible guides
- Discussions in groups of 3-4 based on Bible guides
- Share with the larger group (if there is one) and enough time to do it

5 minutes — *Purpose: Spiritual Growth*
What we'll do: Prayer experience to apply the Bible study

What do you like about this model?

What do you not like about this model?

How will this model work for you?

MODEL D FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

How much time would you spend on your purpose(s) for Youth Sabbath School?

What would you do for each purpose?

_____ minutes *Purpose*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *Purpose*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *Purpose*
What we'll do: _____

_____

_____ minutes *Purpose*
What we'll do: _____

_____

What do you like about this model?

_____

_____

_____

What do you not like about this model?

_____

_____

_____

How will this model work for you?

_____

_____

_____

SUMMARY FOR "INITIATE"

Which model do you choose for your Youth Sabbath School? _____

Why?

When someone asks you, "Why Youth Sabbath School?" what will you state as your purpose(s)?

How will you make your Youth Sabbath School purposes reality?

A Brief History of Sabbath School

1852 James White published four lessons for Youth Sabbath School for the purpose of Bible study and called the new publication *The Youth's Instructor*.

1863 The Seventh-day Adventist Church officially organizes as a denomination.

1877 The Sabbath School Department becomes an official department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1885 A second purpose, world mission, was added to the original purpose of Sabbath School for Bible study.

1889 Ellen Write wrote, "The Sabbath School, when rightly managed, possesses marvelous power, and is adapted to doing a great work, but it is not now what it may and should be. The influence growing out of Sabbath School work should improve and enlarge the church" (*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 29).

1926 More Sabbath School members than church members in the SDA Church.

1944 A third purpose, soul-winning, was added to the purposes for Sabbath School.

1978 A fourth purpose, fellowship, was added to the purposes for Sabbath School.

1983 *Cornerstone Connections* becomes the all-inclusive resource for youth leaders with materials for Youth Sabbath School (sections for leaders, teachers, and youth) plus outreach, small groups, socials, AY/MV programs, and leadership training.

2006 The General Conference Sabbath School Department abandons a set format for Sabbath School and suggests leaders create their own Sabbath School with the following four purposes: Fellowship, Outreach, Bible Study, and Mission.

2014 Laurentiu Serban's dissertation (Andrews University) estimates that only 25% of the Adventists in North America attend Sabbath School on any given Sabbath.

2017 The only resource for Youth Sabbath School is the *Cornerstone Connections* teacher's quarterly. Only 28% of conferences and unions in NAD have a director for Sabbath School (most label this for Adult Sabbath School). Only 7% of youth directors mention "Sabbath School" as part of their ministry.

2018 NAD Youth Department officially adopts the orphan called "Youth Sabbath School" and begins to create resource materials and provide training for leaders. A number of unions and conferences have already joined this adoption.

2019 NAD begins free online Youth Sabbath School ideas each week at www.YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org and a Facebook page named "Youth Sabbath School Ideas" for connection and interaction.

2020-2025 The General Conference will launch a new curriculum for Youth Sabbath School.

Session 2: Give & Take

IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL

What resource(s) do you currently use for Youth Sabbath School?

What do you like about it/them?

What do you not like about it/them?

How much does it cost you?

Money: _____

Time: _____

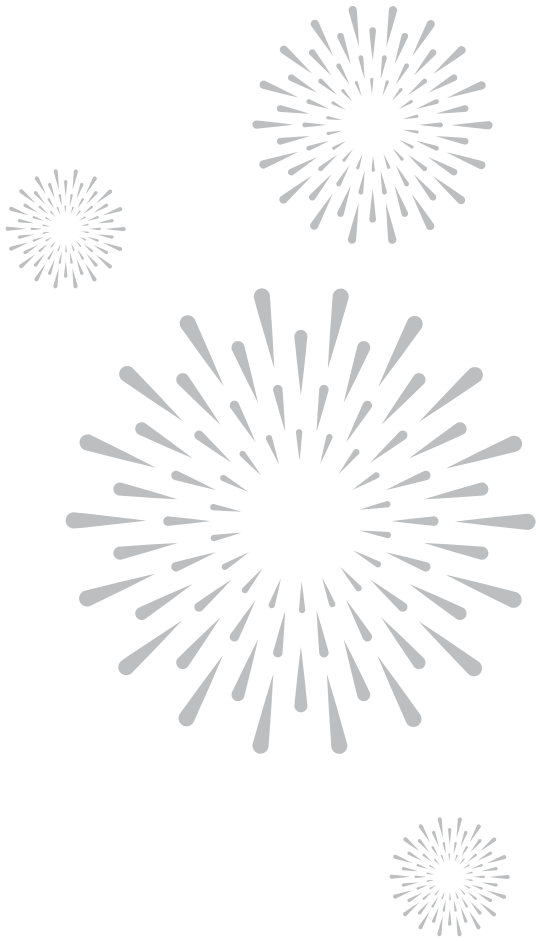
What are resources others use for Youth Sabbath School?

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

Cornerstone Connections has a teacher's guide and a student lesson for Youth Sabbath School. It's available currently as hard copy and online: www.cornerstoneconnections.net

What could you use from this resource?

What, if anything, do you still need for your Youth Sabbath School?

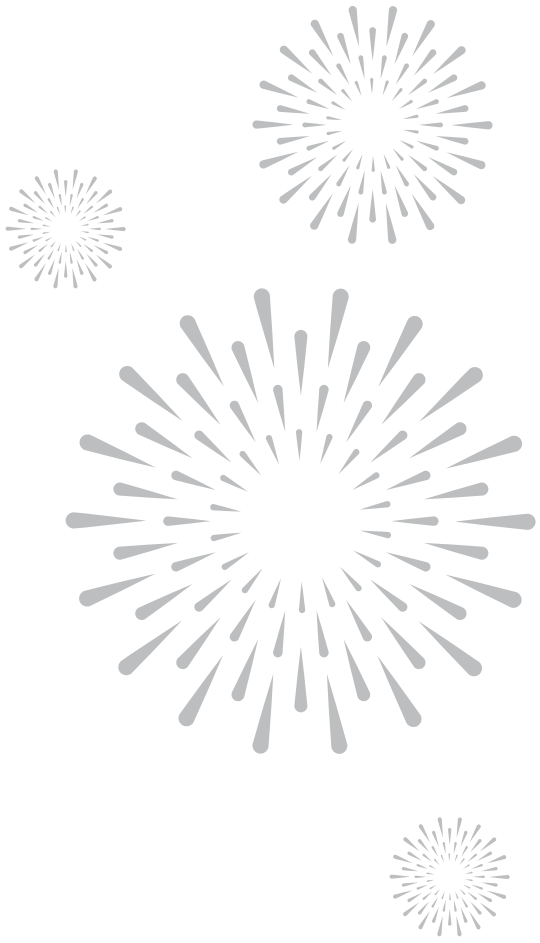


YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL IDEAS

Have you seen the online materials that add more components to this same Youth Sabbath School topic and Scripture study? www.YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org

What could you use from this resource?

What, if anything, do you still need for your Youth Sabbath School?



CONNECT WITH OTHERS

You can connect with other Youth Sabbath School leaders on the Facebook page "Youth Sabbath School Ideas" for ideas, interaction, support, and sharing.

Go to Facebook and search for "Youth Sabbath School Ideas."

Post something now!

MY PLAN FOR YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL NEXT WEEK

Based on what you've found in *Cornerstone Connections* and www.YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org what's a plan you'd recommend for next Sabbath.

SUMMARY FOR "GIVE & TAKE"

Where are you able to GIVE when it comes to Youth Sabbath School?

Where are you able to TAKE when it comes to resources for your Youth Sabbath School?

You can find new ideas for Youth Sabbath School each week at YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org

Connect and interact with Youth Sabbath School leaders on Facebook:
Youth Sabbath School Ideas

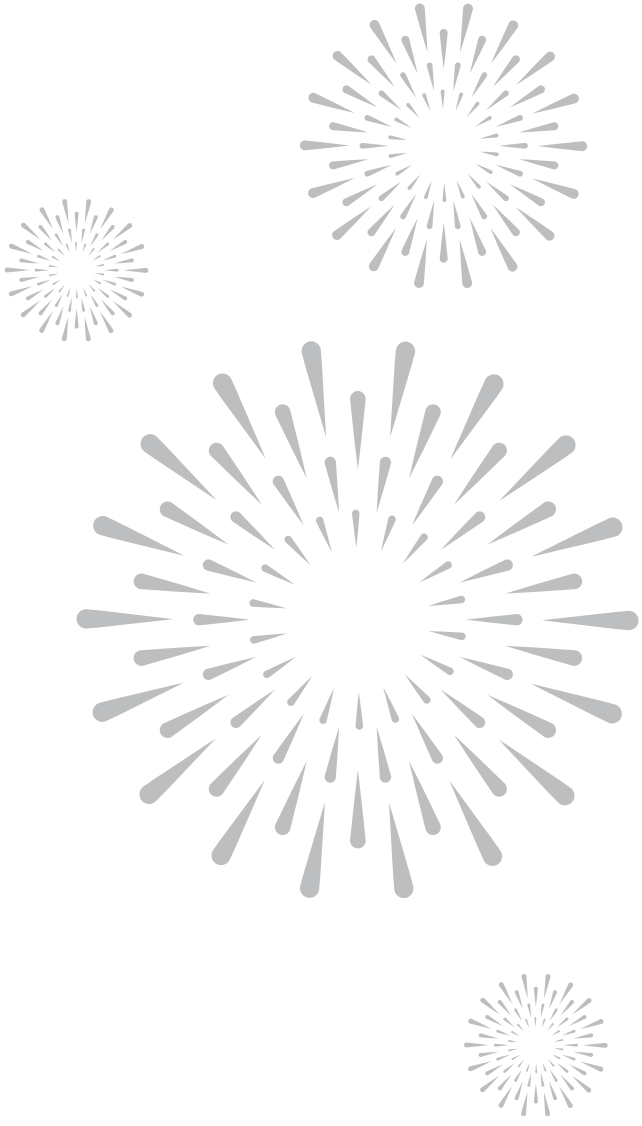
Session 3: Need

10 WAYS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL

The most common (and least effective) method used in Youth Sabbath School is a "talking head" lecturing to the class. What percentage of the time in your Youth Sabbath School has one person talking to the group? _____%

There are many different methods to move the youth from being spectators to becoming participants. Here are 10 methods you can use in a variety of ways. Vary it from week to week.

1. Make It a Game
2. Challenge Participants
3. Individual Write-Ups
4. Ask Questions
5. Small Group Dialogue
6. Reward Participation
7. Create Something
8. Provide Options
9. Interact With Others
10. Empower to Teach



1. MAKE IT A GAME

Use a game you already know, but tweak it to fit your purposes. Or you can create a game of your own.

Example A

Use the game of "rock, paper, scissors" to choose who goes first in an activity or to select options from activities or topics of discussion.

Example B

Form groups of 2, with one person selecting 2 "Jelly Bellies" to feed their partner who has eyes closed to make it harder to guess. Then reverse roles. Use this activity to launch sharing one's testimony to "taste and see that God is good" or "How God communicates to us through others via our senses."

Example C

Who? Where? What?

This discussion game from Advent*Source* uses role-playing in pairs. Two dice are rolled to identify "Who?" the roles will be (unpopular teen, best friend, teacher or boss, etc.). Next two dice are rolled and the sum determines the "Where?" for this role play to occur (lakeside, serving the homeless, church lobby, a concert, etc.). From a selection of cards, pick one card that describes a topic and two sides of the topic the two people role-playing will push for "What?" in their 2-minute discussion.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

2. CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS

Make it do-able, but something that requires some "umph" that participants will want to try.

Example A

Shoot a foam rocket across the room to a target with a bull's eye. Add $5 each week until someone hits the bull's eye. Pull a name out of a hat each week to choose who gets to shoot. The first person who arrives at Sabbath School gets a free shot. If you bring a visitor to Sabbath School, both you and the visitor get a free shot. The person who donates $10 or more to the outreach offering for the week gets a shot, etc.

Example B

Put a time limit on any activity you do. For example, the human knot can usually be undone in 1–5 minutes for a group of 6–7 people. But you usually need something more like 5–10 minutes for a group of 8-9 people, and 10–20 minutes for a group of 10–12 people. If a group untangles faster, have them try it again, but this time with their eyes closed.

Example C

Give a challenging question and a few passages of Scripture to guide the youth. Have them work in teams to come up with a team answer to the question and then report to the rest of the group. Bring in someone outside of the Youth Sabbath School to judge the answers.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

3. INDIVIDUAL WRITE-UPS

Get a response from individuals by having them write something. This can be done anonymously or as a precursor to sharing something verbally after giving it some forethought.

Example A

Ask a question and have participants write their responses before asking anyone to share. This provides those who aren't as quick on their feed to write a thoughtful answer before group discussion begins. It allows people to read an answer rather than relying of speaking skills for prowess.

Example B

Play "I'll Bet You Didn't Know." Write anonymously on an index card something most people don't know about you. Place all cards face-down in a pile. Distribute one to each group. You must read the response and act like it is your own. People guess who it really is, but don't confess until all cards have been reported and guessed.

Example C

Get responses from people outside of your Youth Sabbath School for something of interest. It could be light-hearted such as "My favorite flavor of ice cream" or deep such as "The most important reason Jesus came to our earth was _____." Answers could be obtained from adults or children or people not part of your church. Give each youth one of these anonymous responses and a little bit of time to think it through. Then have them give the response as if it were their own. Urge them to get into the answer/part they are sharing. Open to group discussion after everyone has shared the card they were given.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

4. ASK QUESTIONS

Use a few key questions that include more than just "pat answers." Since you won't know the exact responses such questions will elicit, be flexible and responsive rather than following a tight script. If your question is deep, allow enough time for people to think before responding.

Example A

Play "What Did You Say?" by having 2 people face off by asking questions back and forth. Instead of responding to the question with an answer, a person must answer with another question (no repeat questions). If you don't respond with a question (or if you take too long or blank out), you lose. If you have more than 2 participants, have teams and the next person takes on the champ. If you win 3 times in a row, you're just too good and you need to go to the back of the line. This is playful, but doesn't promote good listening skills.

Example B

Form groups of 3 or 6 people and number off from 1–6. If your group has 3 people, each person will have 2 numbers (1, 4 and 2, 5 and 3, 6). Ask a question, then roll a die (1–6). Whatever person has that number is the person to first answer the question.

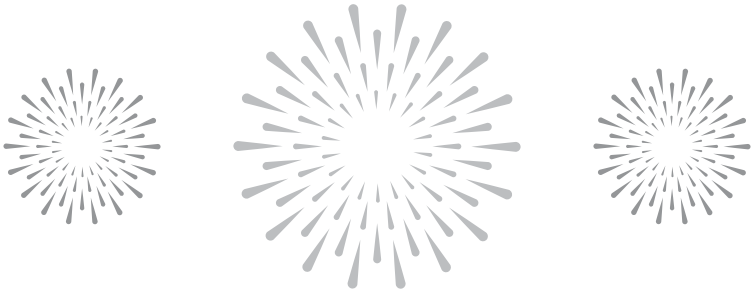
Example C

Out of the Hat

Advent*Source* provides a hat a 3 different levels of questions: Low-risk, Medium-risk, and High-risk. Choose which ones you want to have in the hat and then have someone choose "out of the hat" and respond. You can also do this as pairs to increase participation.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)



5. SMALL GROUP DIALOGUE

Break your group into smaller groups (2, 3, or 4 people) and wrestle with a question, dialogue about it, then report to a larger group. With 5+ people in a group, some won't get a chance (or choose to) talk, so you want the group to be smaller.

Example A

Give a challenging question and then form smaller groups (2, 3, or 4 people). Have each group come up with a group answer based on the input of everyone in their group. Compare responses.

Example B

Have a different question or challenge for each group to wrestle with, but each one based on the same topic for the week. Report back to the larger group.

Example C

Instead of coming up with answers to a question, have each small group come up with questions on a given topic, such as "Salvation" or "Jesus Today" or "How to Be a Good Friend." After coming up with questions, give them to another group or use them in small groups the next week in Youth Sabbath School.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

6. REWARD PARTICIPATION

Rewards can be extrinsic (food, gift card, object, cash) or intrinsic (positive feelings from affirmation, acknowledgment, position, responsibility). They can be expensive ($) or inexpensive (points).

Example A

Something as simple as the order of receiving snacks at the end of Youth Sabbath School can be based on the points each youth receives for participating during that particular Sabbath School. Or you can accumulate points over a full month for a bigger reward (gift card to a local favorite food place).

Example B

Have teams fund raise for a month for either a local charity or a global one. Whichever team raises more money for Youth Sabbath School gets to choose the charity. Another option is to have each team choose a charity and after one month of fundraising the results are reported in front of church.

Example C

As a youth chooses to be involved in part of Youth Sabbath School, give that youth another task until it becomes a regular part of Sabbath School (such as AV or snack set up/clean up or choosing the songs twice a month, etc.). Eventually invite the youth who demonstrates responsibility to be an assistant to one of the youth leaders, with the intention of co-leading or leading as soon as they are ready to do so.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

7. CREATE SOMETHING

This doesn't need to be limited to the "artistic" people who can draw or paint. You can make clay creations, mark up posters, write Psalms, edit photos, make individual videos.

Example A

Give each you some playdough or clay to create animals for Noah's ark or the original Garden of Eden.

Example B

Begin a mural on one wall of the Youth Sabbath School room. Choose a topic such as "Names for God" or "Benefits from Jesus" or "People I Pray For." Have a variety of colors and textures available. Periodically dialogue about what's on the mural. Use the mural for people to respond to dis-cussions on the topic.

Example C

Write a Psalm by doing 2 lines at a time. Come up with a first line, such as "God is good to me" or "I cried out to the Lord." For the second line, choose 1 of the following 3 options:

1. Paraphrase the first line: "He cares and shares" or "My heart groaned sounds of anguish"
2. Contrast with the first line: "In spite of what I did to Him" or "Others laughed at what they heard"
3. Complete the first line: "So I can face anything" or "and he heard the pain of my soul"

Repeat for 2 more lines. Share with others.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

8. PROVIDE OPTIONS

Given choice a person feels empowered. Tap into individuality and multiple options rather than a one-size-fits-all perspective. You may need input from people different from you to consider new options that would never come to your mind.

Example A

Have two or more different stations for the lesson and have something different at each station. You can divide the youth into separate groups and rotate together or have them transition at their own pace. Stations could include music, Q & A, sand sculpting or drawing, reading selected portions of Scripture, etc.

Example B

Solicit funds from a big donor for the youth to appropriate. Use the ADRA gift catalogue for your youth group to choose projects. Allocate the funds and then begin to fund raise among the youth for another project they have already bought into.

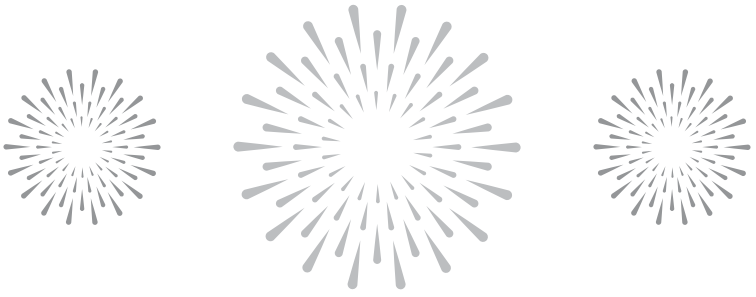
Example C

Q4U Discussion Cards

This set of cards from Advent*Source* contains two questions per card. Have participant's draw a card and choose their response. Use this as a springboard for additional discussion.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)



9. INTERACT WITH OTHERS

This could happen verbally or with activity-based components. It could take place within your Youth Sabbath School or expand to others in the church or at another church in person or through technology connections. These could take place live or over time.

Example A

Get in groups of 2 for the "Human Spring." Face each other about 1 step apart. Hold up your hands and touch palms. Both partners take 1 step backwards. Hold up your hands and touch palms again, but this time you'll have to lean toward each other some. Push back to the upright position. Both partners take another step backwards, then hold up your hands and lean in to touch palms. Continue the process as long as you're able. Then debrief what happened, followed by how this happens in other areas of life.

Example B

Send individual youth to interview an adult Sabbath School class (make arrangements in advance), or have an adult class come and interview the youth either individually or as a group. The same thing could be done with a children's Sabbath School instead of an adult Sabbath School. Have appropriate questions ready for the group to be interviewed. Be willing to talk and to listen. Share as a Youth Sabbath School what you experienced through your interaction with others.

Example C

Connect with an individual or another Youth Sabbath School via Skype or FaceTime or Zoom or some other form of communication. Be clear in advance about the topic or agenda and the time available so you can make good use of the time.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

To debrief an activity, ask 3 types of questions:

1. WHAT? What did we just do? What happened to you during the activity? What were others doing?
2. SO WHAT? What was going on under the surface? What is this really about? What feelings did you experience? What principles came into play?
3. NOW WHAT? How can you live out this experience? What are other parts of your life where these principles apply? Who will be your accountability partner?

4. EMPOWER TO TEACH

Give bite-size pieces for others to share instead of having just one person be "the teacher" for your Youth Sabbath School. Some can teach one component or lead an activity or assist someone who is leading the teaching. You really learn when you teach!

Example A

Give different people one key question each to lead the group in discussion. Dialogue with each one in advance so they have depth to their understanding and can follow up potential responses. Encourage other youth to participate since they will want participation when they ask their question.

Example B

Hand out Youth Sabbath School responsibilities one week in advance. Depending on your group size, choose how many will be in each group or have each person be responsible for one component. Choose your topic and give small responsibilities (2–4 minutes) for components such as: group song to sing, skit to act out, Scripture passage(s) to consult, questions to ask, answers to give, prayer activity to include everyone, ways to live this in the coming week. You'll need to follow up during the week so the youth are prepared.

Example C

Ask a youth to either be your assistant or team-teach the lesson with you. The two of you will need to spend some time together to not only go over the lesson, but choose how it will be presented and who will do each part. Think in terms of grooming the youth to eventually teach solo.

Example D (your idea)

Example E (your idea)

SUMMARY FOR "NEED"

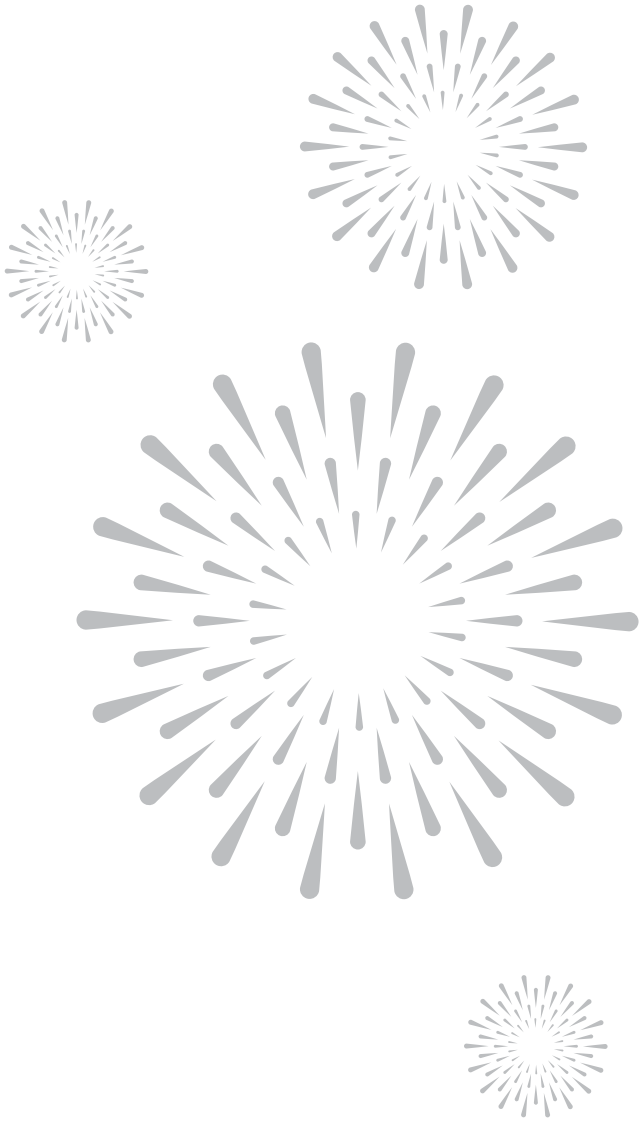
Put a:

√ by the methods you are likely to use

X by the methods you'll share with others

– by the methods you aren't likely to use

1. ____ Make It a Game
2. ____ Challenge Participants
3. ____ Individual Write-Ups
4. ____ Ask Questions
5. ____ Small Group Dialogue
6. ____ Reward Participation
7. ____ Create Something
8. ____ Provide Options
9. ____ Interact With Others
10. ____ Empower to Teach



Session 4: Involve

HOW TO START GOOD DISCUSSIONS

Most people would prefer a discussion over a lecture or monologue. But the problem seems to be finding a way to START a discussion. People seem to just wait and wait until the discussion is already going. But if they don't join, it will never get going!

Using open-ended questions can help. Getting an ally in advance who will jump right in can also help (although it might become just a dialogue between the two of you while others sit silently).

In this session we'll identify 2 key principles for how to START a good discussion, and then we'll provide you with a variety of ways to do that. You'll be able to create your own before the end of this session.

2 Key Principles to Start a Good Discussion

1. *A **small commitment** is needed from the participants*

   Ask them for this. Make it clear that this is a "small commitment" (not a marriage proposal or a college selection, or a matter of life and death). You could say something like, "I'm going to ask you to make a small commitment to start our discussion. I won't hold you to this by the end of our discussion, but I need you to make this small commitment as we start. Are you willing to do that? Please give me a little "thumbs up" or a smile is you're willing to help me in this way (and look for it and affirm it).

2. *You need **variance** in the responses*

   If everyone answers the same, there's nothing to discuss. "Are you alive—yes or no?" doesn't leave much to discuss. Frame your question so there can be a variety of good answers that are spread all over the place. For example, on a scale of 1-10, how alive are you feeling right now? You may have to re-word a question depending on the group you have. You could re-word the question to be "What is something that makes you feel very much alive?"

Let's now look as some ways to START a good discussion relying on participants making a small commitment and having variance in their responses.

1. VOTING

Participants respond to a statement by voting one of the following responses:

__SA __A __U __D __SD

The letters represent (and can be voted with motions):

SA = Strongly Agree (thumbs up and pumping)

A = Agree (thumbs up)

U = Uncertain/pass (arms crossed)

D = Disagree (thumbs down)

SD = Strongly Disagree (thumbs down and pumping)

Here's a statement. Read it and then vote on it:
My desire for Jesus to return to earth is stronger right now than at any other time in my life.

__SA __A __U __D __SD

Here's another example:
My parents understand me very well.

__SA __A __U __D __SD

Now create your own statement that your youth could respond to by voting:

_____

__SA __A __U __D __SD

2. CONTINUUM

Participants respond to a statement or question by marking where they see themselves on a continuum that has two opposites.

This can be done individually, or the dynamics change when a group makes marks on the same continuum (If you put yourself "there," then I'll put my mark "over there." You can make marks on a paper or you can physically move across the front of the room with one side wall being one extreme of the continuum and the opposite side wall being the other extreme of the continuum.

Here are two examples:
When it comes to being "talkative," I see myself as:

Quiet/Silent Non-stop Chatty

How well do you know the Bible?

What's the Bible? Bible Brain

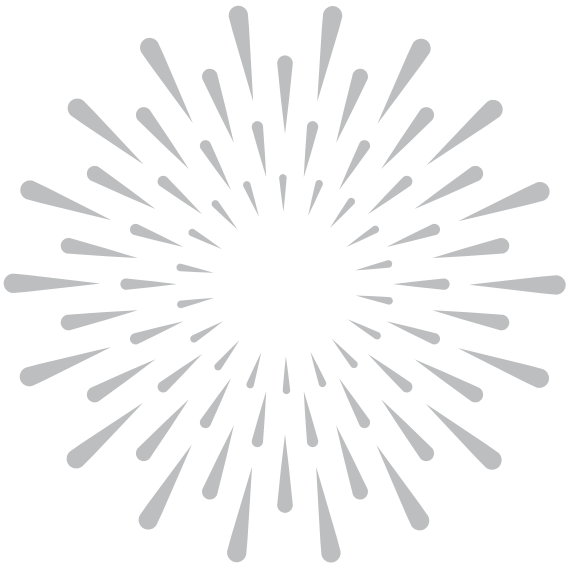
Now create your own by writing a statement or question, and then labeling two extremes to your question/statement.

3. RANKING

Participants respond to a statement or question with three or more options by ranking them from #1, then #2, and so on until each option has received a number.

You can make these options boxes and you can move them around to put them in the ranking order you choose. Options should be close to being equally good or else equally bad, but not mixed. Here's an example of a statement with a set of options to rank that has equally good options (for high school age teens), followed by a question with a set of options to rank that has equally bad options.

I think the best age to be is: Rank from 1 (best) to 6 (worst)



_____ Birth–12

_____ Teens

_____ 20s

_____ 30s

_____ 40s

_____ 50+

Who would you go to if you had a problem?
Rank 1–4.

_____ Self-righteous Person

_____ Dishonest Politician

_____ Drug Dealer

_____ Gang Leader

Now create your own, starting with a statement or question, and then offering 3 or more equally positive or equally negative options to rank:

_____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

4. GOAL SETTING

You might be more accustomed to setting a goal AFTER a discussion, but you can initiate a discussion by setting a goal at the START, but then be lexible and make changes based on the discussion.

It's usually better to set the goal too high so participants will make it more attainable. Let this spark the discussion to talk about how important the topic is to them. Here are two examples:

Example 1

Our Youth Sabbath School is going to raise money for textbooks for an orphanage in Kenya. We would like 100% participation each week for 3 months, raising at least $1,000. Are you willing to do this or should we adjust our goal?

(Get input on 100% participation; each week; 3 months, $1,000 and even whether it should be an orphanage or textbooks or Kenya)

Example 2

We have been asked to lead out in the entire church service one month from today. Let's have each person have some part of the program and some might have more than one part. Let's do the components our church usually does, like announcements, invocation, songs, Scripture reading, prayer, a children's story, take up the offering, special music, sermon, benediction, etc. Are you willing to do this our should be make some adjustments?

(Get input on doing the church service, using the same components as always, involving each person in the Youth Sabbath School, and who will do which part. It would be good to not just talk about this theoretically, but actually have permission in advance to be able to follow through and do the church service.)

Your Example

5. LISTENING

After listening to a paragraph or two about a topic, participants respond based on the information they now have on that topic, as well as previous information they may have already had. This can be based on real events or hypothetical ones. Have a few follow up questions ready to go.

> Emily's parents died in a tragic car accident when she was only 3 years old. Her grandparents took her in and all of them attended your church. When Emily was 10, her grandma died and her grandpa couldn't take care of her. Eventually she went into foster care and bounced from house to house. She hasn't been to church in years. Now, at the age of 16, she's been in trouble with the law and hangs out with a group of friends who influence her to participate in negative behaviors. Grandpa recently took steps to reclaim her from the state foster care system. She now lives with him, but doesn't like it. Grandpa has reached out to the Youth Sabbath School for help.
>
> - What help do you think Emily's grandpa needs?
> - What help do you think Emily needs?
> - What help might Emily accept?
> - How might all of this affect you, and those around you?
> - What can/should the Youth Sabbath School do?
> - What can/should the rest of the church do?
> - What can/should Emily and/or her grandpa do?

Your Example

Questions

6. WATCHING

This is similar to the previous method called "Listening" but with this one you also visualize things either by video or a live skit you watch and then respond to individually and as a group.

Have someone in your Youth Sabbath School create the video clip and follow up questions (or team up with the video creator and you supply the follow up questions).

If you aren't able to do that, here's a video clip from the iBelieve series that is part of the "Youth Sabbath School Ideas" website that makes these available each week, at www.YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org. In addition to the link to watch the video, you also get 5 questions to start the discussion. Here's an example for the Youth Sabbath School for Sabbath, the YouTube video clip "DUST & STARS (Imago Dei)" (just under 3 minutes).

Questions

1. Based on your life so far, is there more evidence that God:
   A. Exists
   B. Doesn't exist

2. Based on evidence beyond your life (other people, history, science, Scripture, relationships, circumstances, etc.), what makes you think God:
   A. Exists
   B. Doesn't exist

3. What's a good description of God? Upon what do you base this?
4. How do you explain the existence of both good and evil on earth? Which is stronger? Does it ever change?
5. Is God visible or invisible? How can a person know God? How do you know God?

7. INTERVIEW

This discussion-starter can begin with a 1-to-1 interview in front of Youth Sabbath School. Depending on the size of your group and the confidence of the person being interviewed, this might be too intimidating. If that's the case, the interview can be conducted with the leader in front and just bounce around asking different people the same question, but ask for different input from each per-son (not acceptable to say: "same as what they just said" or "I don't know").

It's usually best to start with lighter questions and then move to deeper questions. The closer you stand to a person who is answering, the more intimidating it is. You might need to give extra distance if need be. Here are some questions about the topic of "Needing or Wanting Family/ God."

- When do you need your parent(s) (or whoever your guardian is)?
- When do you need an older sibling (or big brother/sister type of person)?
- When do you need a younger sibling?
- When might any of these people already mentioned need you?
- When does God need you?
- Do you feel used or useful to these people?
- When do you just want to be around these people?
- When do you want to be around God?
- Pick a topic of your own. Think of several questions related to that topic, starting with lighter questions and moving to deeper ones.

Topic

Questions

---

8. DILEMMA

Present a situation in which there is no easy next step to take. Then pose basic questions such as "What would you do?" and "What should you do?" (which may be different than what you would do!). In addition to asking "WHAT?" kinds of questions, also ask "WHY?" kinds of questions. See if you can find something in the Bible that might help in your specific situation. These can come from real life examples or hypothetical examples.

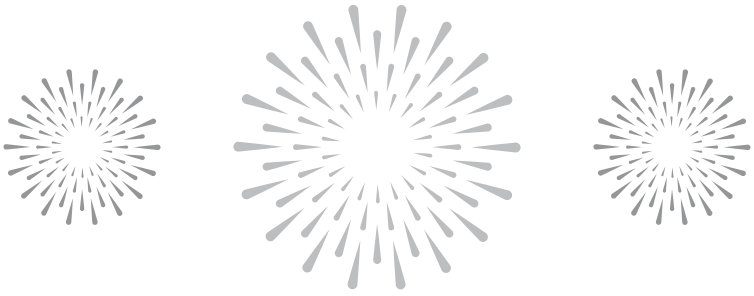
> Haley has been helping some at Youth Sabbath School. Some of the leaders asked her if she would be willing to work with them to have a special Friday evening program for teens in several churches in the area. She agreed and helped them plan well in advance.
>
> The week of the Friday program, Haley was listening to the radio when her favorite musical artist was singing. The radio station announced that the artist was having a concert in Haley's town and caller number 5 would get two free tickets. Haley called, and she was caller #5. Unbelievable! She has never won something like this in her whole life! She now has two free tickets for her favorite music artist this Friday night—the same night as the area youth gathering.
>
> - If you were Haley, what would you do? Why?
> - What should you do? Why?
> - Who would you ask for input on your decision? Who wouldn't you ask?
> - What in the Bible (a story or text) could help Haley know what to do, and then do it?
> - An example from you:
>
> _____

Questions

_____

_____

_____



9. EITHER/OR

Participants are given a statement or question with two options (either/or) that are quite different from each other. This is sort of like the "Continuum" but you have only the two extremes and not spots along the line.

You can do this physically by moving participants to either side of the room. Then give them a few minutes to discuss among themselves the reasons they chose that side. Then give both sides a chance to report their top three reasons. The other side can be given an opportunity to rebut their arguments if you choose. And with that, you're started you discussion.

Here are some examples of "Either/Or":

- Who is smarter: Either

  Old people OR Young People

- Which is more important: Either…

  Christ's Second Coming OR The presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit right now

- What matters more for you salvation: Either…

  What you believe OR How you live

Come up with some examples of your own.

_____: Either

_____ OR _____

10. MULTIPLE OPTIONS

Give participants a question without a clear, single answer. Provide more than one option, with more than one being a possible right answer. You can do this with current situations or Bible passages. Give participants a chance to respond privately and then as a group. Encourage them to explain why they chose the option(s) they did. Here are two examples.

The current political climate in our country is:

1. Similar to what it's always been.
2. Better than what other countries have.
3. Will always be a mess until Jesus returns.
4. Sort of what it's like on our church.
5. Something I could not care less about.
6. Has nothing to do with my relationship with God.
7. Similar to what it was like in Bible times.
8. Something God cares about.
9. Other

What's a good way to "love your enemy" (Matthew 5:44)?

1. Spend a lot of time with them.
2. Heap coals of fire on their head by serving them gladly (Rom. 12:20).
3. Recommend they serve on the church board.
4. Pray silently for your enemy.
5. Pray out loud for your enemy.
6. Pray for God to change your heart, and then expect it to change.
7. Submit to God whatever made that person your enemy.
8. Other

Come up with your own:

_____?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

RESOURCES AT ADVENT*SOURCE* FOR STARTING GOOD DISCUSSIONS

OUT OF THE HAT — Similar to the "Ready-2-Roll game, you have three levels of questions or statements that come on round (light), square (deep), or triangle (spiritual) shapes. You can dump all of them in the hat provided, or you can limit it to ones you pre-select. You can add your own to the mix as well.

Q4U — A card deck of discussion questions has deep questions because instead of a person putting another person on the spot, participants draw their own question, and then they can choose which one of the two questions they will answer. Both of the questions are related to each other (even though they are slightly different).

I'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU — Created to quickly get acquainted in pairs, people who don't know each other very well are paired up and they go through the 52 questions by answering each question with each other. Questions begin on a superficial level and then go deeper and deeper, provided the participants choose to answer on deeper levels. This activity can take 10+ minutes with junior high young people; 15-20 minutes with teens, and 30-60 minutes with young adults.

WHO? WHERE? WHAT? — A simulation game that involves rolling foam cubes and then role-playing. This happens in three steps. The "Who?" is the identity that two people in the group will assume based on dice provided. The second step determines where the dialogue will take place. Both participants roll one of the numbered dice. The sum of the two dice determines the location of the discussion, as listed on the side of the box. The final step is the topic for the discussion. A set of "Challenge Cards" provide more than 100 options, with the role-play lasting until the 2-minute sand dial ends. This game can be done with two people in front of the group while others watch and then take turns with two more people getting a turn, or you can put everyone in pairs and have all of them role-play at the same time.

or "Christian Challenge Cards" are also available.

LET'S TALK ABOUT JESUS — A small group Bible study that covers a passage of Scripture and then provides multiple option responses to spark group discussion. This moves from the Bible passage to personal applications.

WAYS TO END A GOOD DISCUSSION

Starting a discussion might be difficult. Once things are rolling, it's all good. But what's a good way to end a discussion? Here are several options you could choose.

SUMMARY — Repeat what the key points of the discussion were. You might have these in mind from the beginning, or you might be able to weave in elements that others added to the discussion. An example of a summary would be, *there are a variety of ways to get a discussion going, but the two key principles are always 1. A small commitment is needed, and 2. There needs to be variance in the responses.*

ACTION — Based on what was discussed, what kind of action are people to make at this time? For example: *Let's bring back hygiene packs tomorrow to send to hurricane victims.*

INVITATION/CHALLENGE — I'm feeling a call right now. Sometimes the discussion has an implied action, but it may need a actual invitation or challenge. For example: *If what we've been talking about really matters to us, then I invite you to talk to three of your friends about Jesus in this next week, no matter what they might say to you!*

COMMITMENT — Can be a private or public, individual or group commitment, based upon what has been discussed. For example: *If you're willing to pair up with another person to be prayer partners for a full month, go to that person now and kneel beside them.*

QUESTION — Either a summary or the next step to ponder or wrestle with once the discussion is over. For example: *The wise men saw the star from a distance, but nobody in Jerusalem saw it when it was right over their heads. What's close to you right now, but it may take somebody from a distance to point it out to you?*

PRAYER — Doesn't have to be a cop-out ending. Some discussions should lead people to pray! For example: *We don't know the specific changes God wants in us right now, but we are open for Him to show us. Let's listen to His voice during this time of meditation.*

SYMBOL — A potentially powerful item that can keep the discussion alive and refocus people when they remember it. For example: *Put your WWJD bracelet inside your pocket and see if people notice you behaving in a Christ-like way without seeing the bracelet.*

OPEN ENDING — Leave people without a neatly packaged tie-off, sort of like real life! For example: *Yes, our youth budget was voted out of existence for next year. And yes, we feel abandoned by the rest of the church. Some of our youth may quit. Or this might be the spur we need to take more initiative instead of expecting everything to be handed to us. That's what we have to wrestle with now.*

Or you could just say, "Out of time! See you next Sabbath!"

SUMMARY FOR "INVOLVE"

The 2 key principles to START a good discussion are:

1. Get a **small commitment** from participants
2. Obtain **variance** in responses

How well do you understand these two key principles? Put an "X" on the continuum

1. Get a **small commitment** from participants

Clueless I got it!

2. Obtain variance in responses

Clueless I got it!

Put a:

√ by the ways you are likely to use to START good discussions

X by the ways you now know how to create to START good discussions

1. ____ Voting
2. ____ Continuum
3. ____ Ranking
4. ____ Goal Setting
5. ____ Listening
6. ____ Watching
7. ____ Interview
8. ____ Dilemma
9. ____ Either/or
10. ____ Multiple Options

Session 5: Thrive

MENTORING YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEAD

Questions

- Who are the key leaders in your Youth Sabbath School?
- Who are leaders who aren't "key leaders"?
- How many teens serve in leadership roles?
- What will it take for teens to lead in your Youth Sabbath School?
- Who can you recruit?
- When will you do that?
- Who's in your Youth Sabbath School?

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONTINUUM (5-STEP PROCESS)

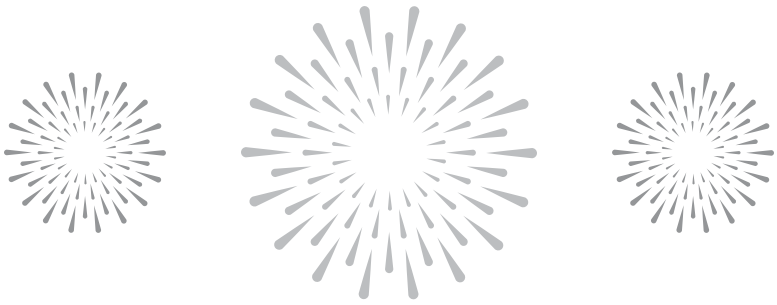
1	2	3	4	5
I lead, you participate	I lead, you assist	Co-leaders, you and I	You lead, I assist	You lead, I participate

Write the names of the youth in your Youth Sabbath School and where they fit currently on the Youth Leadership Continuum. Use symbols if you don't want to write their names.

Think of small leadership tasks to start with, and in a variety of areas (not necessarily talking from the front). Create roles if need be, whether it's in technology, music, greeters, decorators, supplies, set up, take down, finances, attendance records, birthday greetings, etc.

Always be moving teens up the continuum, knowing they will graduate and you'll need keep starting new youth to keep replacing them as they move on to lead in other arenas and ministries in your church and beyond. You aren't "working yourself out of a job;" you're preparing young people to lead wherever they go, and you'll keep preparing others as they cycle through your Youth Sabbath School.

In "Growing Young Adventists" terminology, this is called "Unlocking Keychain Leadership" and it's key for churches to thrive rather than die.



MENTORING MARKERS

"Mentoring" has been a popular term for a number of years. But it's so vague and it takes so long that it sometimes seems like a copout for a more specific plan, whether that's for youth as leaders or for youth to grow spiritually from more seasoned Christ-followers.

Mentoring is more likely to happen when you utilize the "Mentoring Markers" below. Circle the ones you currently do; underline the ones you will do more.

1. Frequent, long-term contact (not just once, or once a year).
2. A warm, caring relationship (it needs to go both ways).
3. Share what's inside (go beyond superficial chats).
4. Experience life together in a variety of settings and situations (not just at Youth Sabbath School).
5. Demonstrate consistency and clarity in behaviors and values (honest and authentic, especially during change).
6. Involved in the life and practices of your faith community (not an unsupportive "wise guy" or private sage).
7. Communicate not only beliefs and behaviors, but also the reasons behind them as they are lived out (not merely theory or action, but both as they are experienced).

List the young people you are currently mentoring.

Do they know it? Which ones know?

Are they seeking you as a mentor? Which ones are?

Which other adults are mentoring the youth at your church?

What will it take to engage more?

SUMMARY FOR "THRIVE"

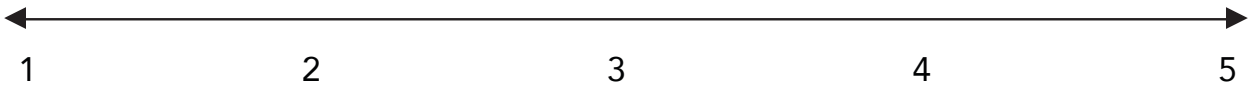
Which young people do you have on your Youth Leadership Continuum?

Who else will you add?

In what role/capacity/task/responsibility?

1. I lead, you participate
2. I lead, you assist
3. Co-leaders—you and I
4. You lead, I assist
5. You lead, I participate

Youth Leadership Continuum (5-step process)



What "Mentoring Markers" do you use?

With which young people?

How can you enhance your mentoring of young people?

Session 6: Express

SUMMARY, COMMITMENT, CONSECRATION

Foundations and Techniques is Youth Sabbath School training that has covered the following topics:

Session 1 Initiate (How to Start or Revive your Youth Sabbath School)

Session 2 Give & Take (Ideas and Resources for Youth Sabbath School)

Session 3 Need (10 Ways to Increase Participation in Youth Sabbath School)

Session 4 Involve (How to Start Good Discussions)

Session 5 Thrive (Mentoring Young People to Lead)

Session 6 Express (Summary, Commitment, Consecration)

What is 1 "take-away" you have from this training?

(For the overly ambitious, what is 1 "take-away" for each session?)

COMMITMENT

We're asking you to make 4 commitments at the close of this training for Youth Sabbath School leaders:

1. My commitment to God (Savior and Lord)

2. My commitment to the Youth: Be present, Lead, Empower, Support

3. My commitment to the Congregation: Integrate young people, Advocate

4. My commitment to the Community: Go to them; Bring them to the church

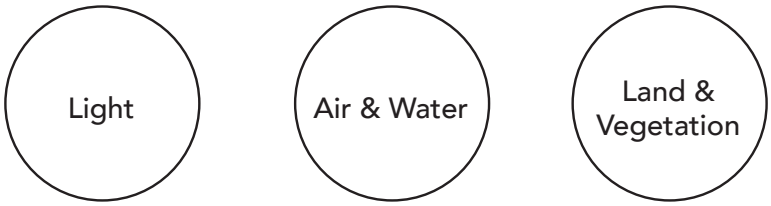
CONSECRATION FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Example 1 from the Old Testament

The Creation Story found in Genesis 1–2

God, the Creator, use the first 3 days as a first round of creation. The number 3 symbolizes God in the Bible.

The first 3 days of Creation



He then repeated the cycle of 3 and filled each one of those.

The second 3 days of Creation

God took 6 days to prepare for Sabbath.

How many days does it take you to prepare for Youth Sabbath School? Start on Sunday and get a rough idea of the lesson. Be creative during the week so the Youth Sabbath School is filled and is full so when Sabbath arrives, it spills out in blessing and celebration.

Example 2 from the Old Testament
Ezekiel 37:1–14 (Good News Translation)

1. I felt the powerful presence of the LORD (*Yahweh*), and his spirit took me and set me down in a
valley where the ground was covered with bones. 2. He led me all around the valley, and I could see
that there were very many bones and that they were very dry. 3. He said to me, "Mortal man, can
these bones come back to life?" I replied, "Sovereign LORD (*Yahweh*), only you can answer that!"
4. He said, "Prophesy to the bones. Tell these dry bones to listen to the word of the Lord. 5. Tell
them that I, the Sovereign LORD (*Yahweh*), am saying to them: I am going to put breath into you
and bring you back to life. 6. I will give you sinews and muscles, and cover you with skin. I will put
breath into you and bring you back to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD (*Yahweh*)." 7. So I
prophesied as I had been told. While I was speaking, I heard a rattling noise, and the bones began
to join together. 8. While I watched, the bones were covered with sinews and muscles, and then with
skin. But there was no breath in the bodies. 9. God said to me, "Mortal man, prophesy to the wind
(breath, spirit). Tell the wind (breath, spirit) that the Sovereign LORD (*Yahweh*) commands it to come
from every direction, to breathe into these dead bodies, and to bring them back to life."
10. So I prophesied as I had been told. Breath entered the bodies, and they came to life and stood
up. There were enough of them to form an army. 11. God said to me, "Mortal man, the people of
Israel are like these bones. They say that they are dried up, without any hope and with no future.
12. So prophesy to my people Israel and tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD (*Yahweh*), am going to
open their graves. I am going to take them out and bring them back to the land of Israel. 13. When
I open the graves where my people are buried and bring them out, they will know that I am the
LORD (*Yahweh*). 14. I will put my breath in them, bring them back to life, and let them live in their
own land. Then they will know that I am the LORD (*Yahweh*). I have promised that I would do this—
and I will. I, the LORD (*Yahweh*), have spoken."

Questions

What hope do you have for your Youth Sabbath School?

Upon what do you base your hope?

What will you do about that now?

CONSECRATION FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Example 1 from the New Testament

Jesus said, "I AM…"

The Gospel of John records 7 "I AM" statements Jesus made.[1] Our focus will be on the one associated with the resurrection of Lazarus in John 11. When Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, lay sick, Jesus waited two days, stating that this would bring glory to God.

Returning to that area of Palestine would mean returning to the place where their recent departure was because the people tried to stone Jesus (John 11:8, referring to John 10:33, 39). That's why Thomas said, "Let's go with Jesus and we'll die with him" (John 11:16).

Both Martha and Mary expressed faith that Jesus had the power to prevent death (John 11:21, 32), and Martha expressed faith that Jesus had power to raise the dead at the final resurrection of the dead (John 11:24). But Jesus had this to say:

"I AM the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25)

What did this mean for Lazarus?

What did this mean for Martha and Mary?

What did this mean for the disciples?

What does this mean for you?

What does this mean for your Youth Sabbath School?

1. I AM the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); I AM the light of the world (John 8:12); I AM he who testifies about myself (John 8:18); I AM the door of the sheep (John 10:7, 9); I AM the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14); I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); I AM the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6); and I AM the true vine (John 15:1, 5).

CONSECRATION FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Example 2 from the New Testament

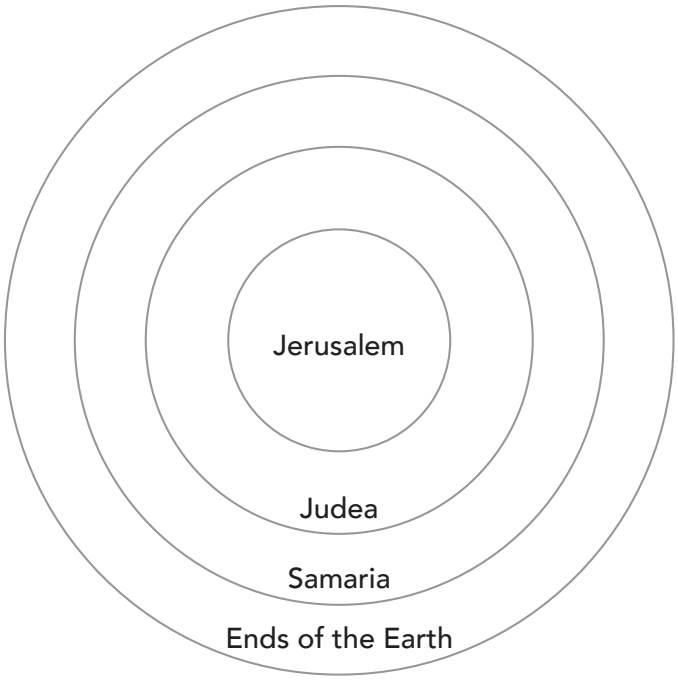
Acts 1:8 (NIV): "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The 2 "You's" of Acts 1:8

1. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you
2. You will be my witnesses

Where?

1. Jerusalem (Youth Sabbath School)
2. Judea (your entire church)
3. Samaria (your community)
4. To the ends of the earth (the whole world)



Prayer for the reception of the Holy Spirit

Prayer to be witnesses

Brainstorm for how to do it in the 4 enlarging spheres (where?)

A WEBSITE WITH YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL HELPS!

This website is created just for Youth Sabbath School leaders. It features opening activity ideas, video clips, music suggestions and Bible study options that go along with the weekly Cornerstone Connection lessons. You will also find ideas for mission, application and youth leader tips. Lesson ideas are added every week so check it out!

YOUTHSABBATHSCHOOLIDEAS.ORG

SABBATH SCHOOL LEADERS CONNECT ON FACEBOOK

Are you looking for more ideas for your Youth Sabbath School? Do you want to share what you are doing that is working really well?

We are building a Facebook community to share and connect with people who are passionate about Youth Sabbath School. Join today to post your pictures, ideas and questions.

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YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL IDEAS

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