PRACTICES & IDEAS

YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Participant's Guide

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Participant's Guide

_____

Your name

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

Additional copies of this resource are available from:

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SESSION A

(SESSION 1 FOR 8 SESSIONS; DROP IF ONLY 6 SESSIONS)

"Here We Go"

Here (we gather)

We (our group)

Go (action/participation)

HERE

1. Use 5 words to describe your meeting place (like "crammed" or "shared" or "non-existent" or "friendly" or _____).
2. Name 3 things the youth can do to make it their own space (like "paint the walls" or "re-arrange the furniture" or "take leadership roles" or _____).
3. Give one example of how the Youth Sabbath School space relates to the rest of the church facility (such as "add-on" or "part of the adult SS" or "separate" or _____), and one example of how the Youth Sabbath School relates to the rest of the people in our church (such as "together-and-apart" or "few" or "tight" or _____).
4. Suggest 1 thing that you and/or the youth can you do to maximize the Youth Sabbath School meeting place (such as "clean it" or "add music" or "sit in circles instead of rows" or _____.

WE

WHO IS IN YOUR GROUP CALLED "YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL"?

Youth _____

Adults _____

Regulars _____

Occasional Attenders _____

No longer attending_____

Other _____

WHAT MAKES YOUR YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL "A GROUP"?

Place

Time

People come

Leaders lead

Habit or tradition

Sense of closeness

I wouldn't call it "a group"

Other

As a leader, your consistent presence communicates so much!

If you, the leader, are not there, will there be a Youth Sabbath School?

Who's missing?

Who can you recruit/invite to join your group?

GO

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YOUTH SS?

1. Sit
2. Listen
3. Watch
4. Discuss
5. Interact
6. Create

7. Pray

8. Commit

9. Food

10. Other

What level of depth do people share (1-10)?

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE YOUR "PURPOSE(S)" FOR YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL?

Purpose #1

Purpose #2

Purpose #3

FOLLOWING ARE THE PURPOSES THE SDA CHURCH HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST 150+ YEARS FOR SABBATH SCHOOL:

1. Learn (Bible Study for Sabbath SCHOOL)
2. Community/Fellowship/Group-Building
3. Outreach
4. World Mission
5. Other

SUMMARY

As we start this Youth Sabbath School Training, we've taken the three words "Here We Go" and used them to set the tone with:

Here—The place you meet for Youth Sabbath School, and all that goes with that physical reality and the dynamics associated with it.

We—The people in your Youth Sabbath School, and the impact they have on each other and the composition of the "group."

Go—The things you do in Youth Sabbath School, and the purposes behind them.

SESSION 1: "IDEAS"

Use these for Youth SS (and get more)

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you use?

_____

_____

_____

Where do you get resources for your Youth Sabbath School?

_____

_____

YOUTHSABBATHSCHOOLIDEAS.ORG

- Cornerstone Connections
- Scripture and background reading/listening
- Introductory video for the topic for this week
- Cornerstone Connections teacher's guide and student material
- Alternate lesson study on the same topic
- Relational Bible Study is the second option
- More materials, too!

More than what you can ever use, so pick what you think would be the best and then adapt it to you and to your specific group

Try this with the materials online for next Sabbath

Facebook Page: "Youth Sabbath School Ideas"

Connect with other Youth SS Leaders

SUMMARY

Each week Youth Sabbath School leaders must come up with ideas for Sabbath School. It's easy to run out of ideas or to repeat your favorite topic(s). Following a curriculum provides a broader perspective, but it always needs to be adapted for your specific group at your specific time.

YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org provides multiple ways of presenting a topic each week, including Scripture, a customized video intro, Cornerstone Connections Student Lesson, Cornerstone Connections Teacher's Guide, plus an optional presentation of the same topic from a different angle, and also a Relational Bible Study on the same topic.

With all of these resources, you can choose the best for your group because you won't have time to do it all. And that's a good thing.

Another resource includes the Facebook Page "Youth Sabbath School Ideas" to connect with other Youth SS leaders.

SESSION 2: "GIVE"

God's economy is GIVING

A gift God has given you: your testimony

Another gift God has given you: your service

When Jesus was on earth:

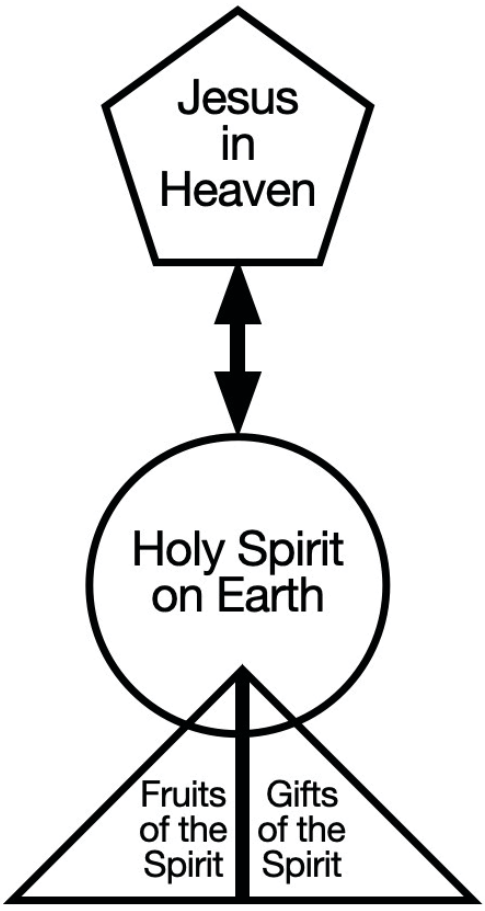
People saw what God was like.

People benefitted from God's love in action for them, such as:

- Healing
- Forgiving
- Encouraging
- Guiding
- Helping
- Celebrating
- Freeing

When Jesus returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit so:

1. His followers would become more and more like him (fruits of the spirit), and
2. Continue to do the same things Jesus did in service for others (gifts of the spirit)



QUESTIONS

Are you a "Giver"?

What do you give?

When do you give?

Why do you give?

Why do you not give?

How often do you give?

4 STAGES OF GIVING

Which stage describes you?

Does it vary depending on what you're giving?

STAGE 1—AWARENESS

Simply becoming aware of the need and the possibility you can do something about it.

Example: Homeless people need food (and more)

You can give some food (and more)

Drive by a homeless area

Walk into a homeless area

Talk with people in a homeless area

Have a homeless person share their story during Youth Sabbath School

Ask someone at church who feeds the homeless to share their experience at SS

STAGE 2—DO SOMETHING, ANYTHING, A VARIETY OF THINGS

Take action—give—in response when you have become aware of the need/opportunity

Example: Take food to people who are homeless

Deliver the food or eat with them

Prepare the food and deliver it

Shop for food

Provide more food than just one meal

Take a homeless person to a fast-food place and pay for their meal

Give of your Time, Treasure, and/or Talent

This is one way to experiment in order to discover the spiritual gifts God gave you

Check out the ADRA gift catalog: https://giftcatalog.adra.org

STAGE 3—GIVE ON A REGULAR BASIS

Give systematically or for more than just one time

Example: Join the team that takes food to the homeless each month

Do it more than once

Be a regular donor to the food bank

Be on the lookout to serve again

Talk and take action as part of your lifestyle

Do it for more than just getting credit for community service hours

STAGE 4—INITIATE GIVING

Initiate action when you see a need rather than waiting for others to act first

Example: Give your own food to someone else, or start a feeding program

Invite others to join you in responding to the need(s) you observe

This becomes your lifestyle

You're moved by the things that move Jesus

A few more tips about giving/serving

1. Sometimes you can simply join what others are doing instead of duplicating services

2. Sometimes you might need to start your own service/giving

3. Ask, "What are the systemic issues"—the hungry will be hungry again tomorrow, so why are they hungry, homeless, and sometimes helpless? Which systems help them and which ones hurt them or do nothing for them? What are attitudes, actions, policies, and prejudices that are at work?

4. Receive (from God and others) so you can give

5. You might be stage 4 in one area and stage 1 in another area

6. Jesus remains our example, motivation, and target

7. Matthew 25—Where do you see Jesus?

SUMMARY

God's economy is GIVING

God continues to give:

Fruits of the Spirit—becoming like Jesus in character

Gifts of the Spirit—continuing the service to others Jesus did

4 Stages of Giving

1. Awareness
2. Do Something
3. Give on a Regular Basis
4. Initiate Giving

SESSION 3: "NON_CONFORMING"

When someone shares an idea for Youth Sabbath School, it USUALLY won't be an exact match or something you would consider a good idea for your Youth Sabbath School. There can be several reasons for this:

1. The idea came from someone who knows nothing about your Youth SS
2. The topic might not be of interest to your group
3. It could describe something for a group of 30, and you have only 3 people.
4. Your space might not be adequate for the activity
5. It might cost more than you have in your budget
6. There could be an expectation that your youth easily engage in discussions
7. The idea could be mainly "activity" with very little about the Bible or even God
8. It could work for another leader, but not you
9. The resource might not be from your denomination
10. Other: _____

Rarely will an idea be a perfect fit for your Youth Sabbath School. In fact, seasoned Youth SS leaders expect that when they receive an idea for Youth Sabbath School, they will need to make adjustments for it to fit/work for their Youth Sabbath School. If a mere 10-15% of the ideas from a resource have things you could use even when you do adapt them, that's probably a GOOD resource. Sometimes an idea will miss the mark so much that you'll think, "That's crazy; that would only work if _____," and you just got an idea for your Youth SS because someone else's bad idea sparked a new idea for you!

ADAPTING AN IDEA

Here are three examples of ideas suggested for Youth Sabbath School. Most likely none of these will work for your Youth Sabbath School unless you adapt them. What are things you could do to adapt them, provided you think the idea has value?

SKIT ABOUT THE GOOD SAMARITAN

You'll need 10 people to do this skit: Jesus, religious lawyer, 2 robbers, Jewish victim, priest, Levite, Samaritan, donkey, inn keeper. Have each one act out the part as you read it, encouraging them to add their own unique interpretation in their actions. You can do this impromptu—no rehearsal necessary. Use this to follow up with a discussion.

Some Adaptation ideas

- If you have less than 10 people, drop some of the parts, such as Jesus and the religious lawyer, or the donkey or innkeeper.
- If you need more actors, draw on people from other SS groups.
- Have one person play three key parts as the priest, Levite, and Good Samaritan so that one person responds differently to the same situation.
- Instead of impromptu, have a practice in advance of Youth Sabbath School and have the participants give their input on how they want to present their parts.
- For the discussion, have each participant share what it was like to act their part, and how that compares to how they would do it as themselves rather than playing someone else's part.
- Put on the play for the younger SS departments.
- Your adaptations: _____

BIBLE READING

Read aloud during Youth Sabbath School the most famous sermon Jesus gave: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

Some Adaptation ideas

- Make it your curriculum for several weeks instead of just one session—there's A LOT in these three chapters!
- Instead of one person reading, rotate after each verse.
- Compare different translations, one section at a time.
- Make a group list under two headings: "What We Do" and What We Don't Do" and have participants assign each statement read to the appropriate list.
- Work individually and then in groups to write a paraphrase of each verse, starting with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12).
- Set up for artistic expression (painting, sculpting, doodling, drawing) as participants listen to the reading and give their response(s) artistically.
- Your adaptations: _____

SING

Spend 10-12 minutes singing the following songs: Power in the Blood, Lord I Lift Your Name on High, Oceans, and You Are My Hiding Place.

Some Adaptation ideas

- If you have a music leader or music team, these might not be the songs they would choose.
- You might not do singing because the youth in your Sabbath School don't sing, and maybe there isn't anyone who leads singing (yet).
- Play music and provide snacks so people can listen without feeling awkward about not singing.
- Invite a choir to join you and to sit interspersed in your group so they can carry the music and others can join in inconspicuously if they choose.
- Make it karaoke and invite the youth to sing along.
- Turn the entire Youth Sabbath School into a band, even if the instruments are simple rhythm instruments or kazoos, and do a "band practice"
- Your adaptations: _____

NOW DO THIS WITH THE IDEAS YOU FIND ON THE SDA YOUTH SS WEBSITE:

YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org

1. Choose ideas for next Sabbath or from some time in the past
2. Which idea(s) catch your attention?
3. What adaptations will you make for your specific Youth Sabbath School?

SUMMARY

Don't expect that a resource for Youth Sabbath School will be an exact fit for you or for your Youth Sabbath School. Instead, expect that you will need to adapt it.

We gave some examples for adapting a skit, a Bible reading, and singing.

We took a look at the resource YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org and showed how it provides several different ways of presenting the same topic. You can expect that you will need to adapt these as well.

Your ability to adapt a resource to you and your Youth Sabbath School is creativity—God doing something unique through you.

SESSION 4: "IDENTITY"

- **Circle** the words that describe you
- **Add** your own words that describe you
- **Cross out** the words that definitely DON'T describe you
- Leave the others **blank**

Tall	Smart	Muscular	Dark hair	Confident	Only-child	Rich
Friendly	Nerdy	Popular	Shy	Bully	Religious	Skinny
Teacher's Pet		Angry	Talkative	Loyal	Godly	Mechanical
Athletic		Skeptical		Lonely	Certain	Fun
Organized	Artistic	Helpful	Trouble-maker		Slow	Musical
Kind						

WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU DO?

If you had lived in America when Ellen White was alive, you would probably be among the 90% who were farmers. If you were a male you would work in the fields most days, and if you were a female you would help with food preparation, house cleaning, and taking care of the other children, especially the younger ones.

WHO ARE YOU?

John's son (Johnson) or Peter's son (Peterson)

I'm John and Harriet's daughter

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Plant in the Spring, harvest in the Fall, and repair farm equipment in the winter

Help my mom with household chores

Going to school, even elementary school, probably wasn't part of your life—no time for that, unless maybe for a few days in the winter or if there was a break between planting and harvesting.

Today less than 1% of the American population is farmers and just about all kids go to school. The answers to the two questions are now more diverse.

WHO ARE YOU?

A student

I have a mom, but I haven't seen my dad for years

I want to become a physical therapist

I want to make lots of money

I'm a musician

I plan to finish college, get a good job, and then get married and have kids

I don't know

It changed since yesterday

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Go to school most of the time

Hang out with my friends

I play football

Spend as much time as I can on social media

Play video games

School, sports, music, student government, AP classes, ballet, and church

Nothing

Lots of YouTube

I'm becoming an "influencer"

YOUR IDENTITY

In 1968 social psychologist Erik Erikson presented eight stages in the lifespan, from birth to death. Most of these stages take place in the early part of life. Each stage faced a crisis and people would go one way or the other as a result of what they experienced and how

they navigated through that crisis. For example, the first crisis occurs during the first year of life and an infant learns either to trust or to mistrust, primarily based on the interaction of the baby with its mother. If the infant could count on the mother, the infant would have a tendency to be trusting for the rest of its life. If not, the infant would have a tendency to not trust for the rest of its life. That has major ramifications for future relationships, including a person's relationship with God—to trust or not to trust.

Erikson's fifth stage takes place during the teen years. The crisis was about identity—either you figure out who you are—"identity achievement," or you change your identity to fit in wherever you are—"identity diffusion." When you think about "peer pressure" this takes place when a person gives way to the identity others want them to have rather than being true to who they are. But if you aren't sure about your identity, you're much more likely to give in to peer pressure. Erikson suggested that achievements might anchor a person's identity—am I: athletic, smart, attractive, musical, mechanical, funny, rebellious, religious, naughty, ugly, a failure?—it might take time as a person tries out different identities. After Erikson established identity as an adolescent crisis, others indicated that some find their identity by "achieving" something (often a male perspective), others could find their identity through "relationships" (often a female perspective).

KICKING OFF THE CHANGE

What causes this crisis, even with children who seem to be doing fine (until adolescence begins)? Many cite the cause as the onset of puberty. This physical change impacts the other aspects of a person. The physical change affects the emotional, and therefore the social, which also impacts the mental and even the spiritual. Puberty creates a change in a person's hormones that will continue for years. In addition to the need to deal with one's

sexuality, secondary changes include other body changes such as a growth spurt and body shape, vocal changes, and even skin oiliness. The current sexual identity varieties only further illustrate the dramatic change that can occur with the onset of puberty. In the Spring of 2022, Pixar animations released a movie that illustrates this crisis so common in middle school. You may have seen it, or you can Google "Turning Red" or type in this link to see a trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdKzUbAiswE

Perhaps you remember this time in your life. Some say the only other comparisons in terms of dramatic changes in a person's life, are birth and death. The difference with the onset of puberty is that you're fully conscious and realize that a dramatic change has taken place. But that doesn't mean you're ready for it!

Is this the moment a "girl" becomes a "woman" or a "boy" becomes a "man"? Well, sort of, but not exactly. It does mean that you start a new search, and who knows how long that search will take or what pathways you will take?

This has ramifications for a young person's spiritual life. When your identity changes, your spiritual identity also comes into question. A "good, little boy" may become a rebellious and angry teen. On the other hand, someone who previously had little interest in God may become more open to a different perspective.

After Erickson, someone named James Marcia expanded the possible responses to the adolescent crisis of identity. Instead of two boxes, he presented four possibilities.

The top left and the bottom right boxes are what Erikson already posited. But Marcia added two more boxes—the top right (Identity Moratorium) and the bottom left (Identity Foreclosure). Here's a brief description of each of these four boxes about "identity."

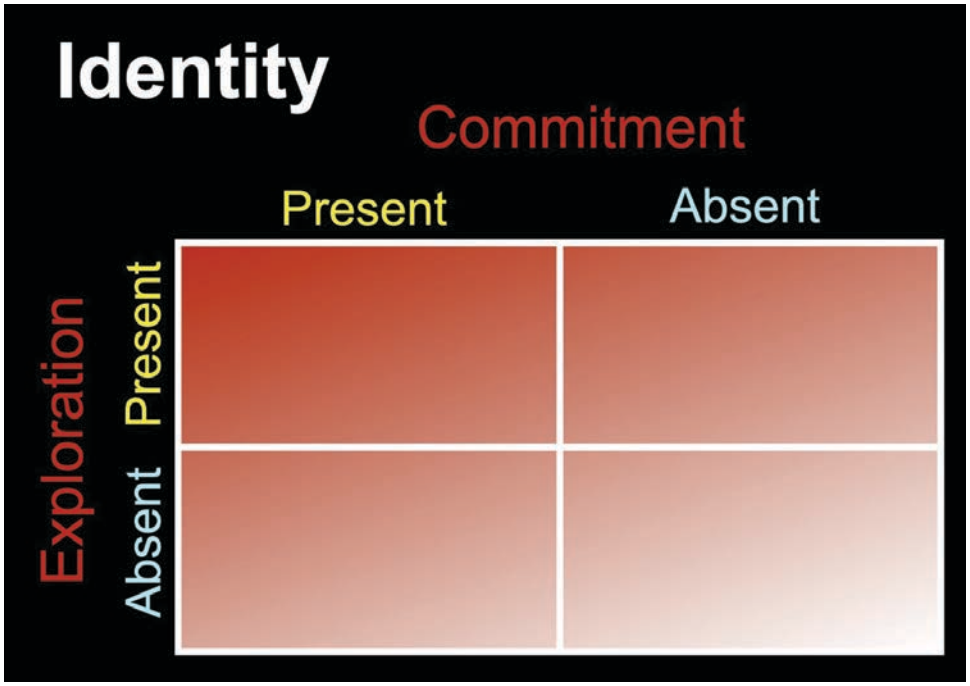
Achievement—I know who I am

Moratorium—I need some time to figure out who I am

Foreclosure—I am the person authority figures (parents and other adults) want me to be

Diffusion—I don't know who I am, so I change to fit in

Perhaps these four boxes need some descriptive categories. Moving from left to right is "commitment" which goes from commitment being present to commitment being absent. Moving from top to bottom is "exploration" which goes from exploration being present to exploration being absent.



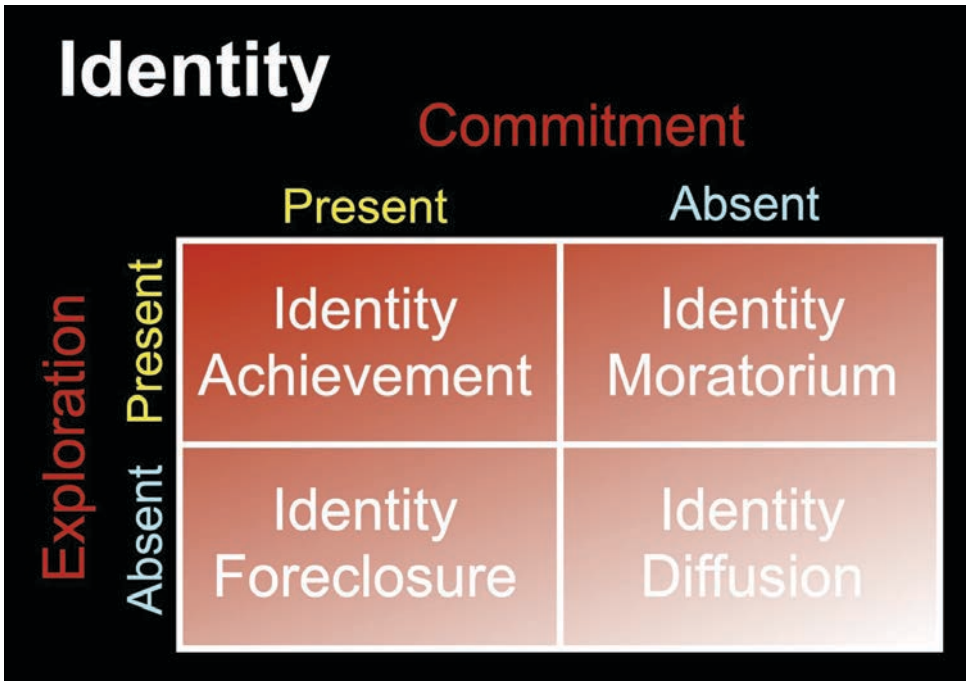
Do you know where to put each of the four types of identities? Let's list them again and put the appropriate descriptors with each one.

Achievement—Commitment present; Exploration present

Moratorium— Commitment absent; Exploration present

Foreclosure— Commitment present; Exploration absent

Diffusion— Commitment absent; Exploration absent



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE?

In your Youth Sabbath School, which youth are in which boxes?

Most adolescents don't arrive at identity achievement quickly.

Expect changes in identity on the spot and after changes (like a vacation)

You might need to give your youth some time (moratorium) as they experiment.

Identity diffuse adolescents can be very nice and fit in well, but rarely take a stand.

Adults celebrate adolescents with identity foreclosure because they mirror the adults.

Teens with identity foreclosure often have an identity crisis in their 20s or 30s.

Commitment is important, but so is exploration.

Those in youth Sabbath School need to have "exploration" in order to internalize beliefs.

WAYS TO HELP YOUR YOUTH ESTABLISH THEIR NEW IDENTITY

Draw from their past. Some remains the same and some changes.

Draw on their present. This is who they are right now.

Turn to God for acceptance. Changing identities changes acceptance. God is constant.

Turn to the Creator God to create the next phase of you.

In Youth Sabbath School:

- Have different youth take responsibility for parts of the program
- Make Youth SS a safe place to talk (one's comments could change next week)
- Expect change
- Expect growth
- Trust God because you don't know the future
- Have testimonies from previous youth
- Have testimonies from current youth

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." NKJV

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!" NIV

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun." NLT

"Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come." GNT

"If anyone belongs to Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have gone; everything is made new!" NCV

SUMMARY

Identity typifies the challenge of adolescence. Who are you? What are you good at? Who are your people?

Erik Erikson pointed out that during adolescence, a person either figures out who they are (identity achievement) or they don't (identity diffusion) and they change to whatever is around them (chameleon or peer pressure).

James Marcia added more texture to this identity search by suggesting four different ways or wrestling with identity:

1. Achievement—I know who I am
2. Moratorium—I need some time to figure out who I am
3. Foreclosure—I am the person authority figures (parents and other adults) want me to be
4. Diffusion—I don't know who I am, so I change to fit in

This isn't merely a psychological exercise. It has ramifications spiritually. Young people are in the ideal spot to be transformed into Christlikeness as adolescence as they form their unique identities.

SESSION 5: "TEACHABLE"

FOR THE FOLLOWING 5 STATEMENTS:

Put an "X" by the statement you agree with the most

Put a "√" by the statement you agree with the least

Put a "+" by the statement you would like to change

____ The Bible is God's word to us.

____ The Bible is the most important book in the world.

____ I read my Bible every day.

____ I understand most things in the Bible.

____ I know how to teach others how to read the Bible.

PRIORITIZE FROM 1 (MOST IMPORTANT) TO 5 (LEAST IMPORTANT) THE FOLLOWING 5 STATEMENTS WHEN IT COMES TO READING THE BIBLE

____ Be familiar with the whole Bible

____ The translation needs to be understandable

____ Have a teachable mind

____ The Holy Spirit needs to be present

____ You need someone else to explain the Bible to you

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU READ THE BIBLE

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What does it mean to me?
4. Why did God communicate this?
5. How will I live because of this?

LET'S TRY IT WITH A FEW VERSES FROM THE BIBLE

"Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' And God said, 'I will be with you.'" Exodus 3:11-12 NIV

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What does it mean to me?
4. Why did God communicate this?
5. How will I live because of this?

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12 NKJV

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What does it mean to me?
4. Why did God communicate this?
5. How will I live because of this?

"God is love." 1 John 4:8

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What does it mean to me?

4. Why did God communicate this?

5. How will I live because of this?

WHAT DO YOU FIND IS THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF "BIBLE STUDY"

____ Read one verse or phrase from the Bible and comment about it

____ Have several Bible texts about a certain topic

____ Read something from the Bible and then meditate on it

____ Have a person who knows about the Bible teach others about it

____ Be guided by materials, like the Sabbath School lesson quarterly

Following are 10 different ways to read the Bible. These are not the only ways, but these are ways that have been helpful for others to connect with God and to receive messages from God. After a brief description of how to study the Bible a certain way, you will have two examples, plus an opportunity to add your own Bible passage to this particular way of reading the Bible.

You might find a description of how you usually study the Bible. Some of these might be familiar to you already, and some might be new. Try several different ways. You can use these for your personal reading as well as with your Youth Sabbath School. Encourage the youth to do this on their own, too. The "bottom line" is: What is God's message to you? The follow up question is: What is your response to God?"

10 WAYS TO STUDY THE BIBLE

#1 JUST READ

Read an entire passage instead of just a verse or part of a verse or jumping around to different verses. Just read, and keep reading. This gives a better context than just an isolated verse or two. It's the way the Bible was written. Give yourself a set amount of time, like 5 minutes or 15 minutes or ___ minutes, and just read.

Examples

1. Read the Book of Jonah.

   It's only four chapters long; about 2-3 pages in most Bibles. It might be a familiar story, but you can pick up nuances and details and a bigger picture when you read the whole story.

2. Read the start of the Book of Acts

   Begin in chapter 1, verse 1, and just read for a while. The entire book has 28 chapters, so that takes a lot of time. But just read the first several chapters. The story, written by Luke, is part two of his researched telling of the story of Jesus and what happened after Jesus ascended to heaven.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#2 SINGLE VERSE OR PHRASE

This can be a familiar verse or any other verse for that matter. Let the verse (or phrase) sink into your mind and into your heart. Meditate on it—that means think about it and ask God to impress your mind with His message to you through these words of Scripture. Refer back to "Some Questions to Ask When You Read the Bible."

Examples

1. John 11:35 "Jesus wept."

   The shortest verse in the entire Bible (trivia fact), but what does it mean that Jesus, as God and human, wept? Why would Jesus weep? Why did he weep then? Why would he weep now? Do you weep for the same reason(s) Jesus did? Why or why not?

2. 1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV "The LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

   NCV "God does not see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but the LORD looks at the heart."

The story tells about God's instruction for Samuel to anoint a new king even though King Saul was reigning. Samuel, God's prophet, would have anointed Jesse's firstborn son, Eliab, because he looked like such a fine young man. That's the context for this familiar verse—man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. But we are like Samuel—human. We can't help but see the outward appearance. How can we know what is in a person's heart? What are we to do?

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#3 MEMORIZE

Because we live in an information age that has SO MUCH information and it's also readily accessible on our devices, few people memorize much of anything these days. Memorization might be considered a low level of learning, but it's also foundational for other understanding. Memorization records something on your mind. It can then go to your heart and through your body into action. It requires a certain amount of discipline, including practicing the memorization and repeating it, sharing it, living it, praying through it.

Examples

1. Zephaniah 3:17 NIV 1984 edition has five lines to it:

    1) The LORD your God is with you

    2) He is mighty to save

    3) He will take great delight in you

    4) He will quiet you with his love

    5) He will rejoice over you with singing.

Some might be intimidated because this verse has five lines to it. Memorize it over a week, adding one more line each day. Each line is a winner, and worthy of meditation. Notice the first two lines are in the present tense, while the last three are future promises given to Zephaniah to pass on to God's people (like you). What kind of image comes to your mind when you think of the last line—God rejoicing over you as He sings!

2. 1 Peter 5:6-7 NLT

[6] Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. [7] Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

This might remind you of the song "Humble Yourself in the Sight of the Lord" which is based on verse six. Memorize both verses or choose one of them. Repeat it every day and then, after a week, reflect on when this passage applied to you and your life.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#4 RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY (RBS)

This type of Bible study relies very heavily on the Holy Spirit. While all Bible study does (or should), this one relies on the Holy Spirit to an extreme. Usually we look to a seasoned, spiritual leader to help us during a Bible study, or maybe you're that person. The Relational Bible Study asks the Holy Spirit to be present to guide all in the Bible study to be attentive to messages God can send through anyone and possibly everyone in the group. After prayer, an introductory question "levels the playing field" by asking a question in which nobody in the group is the expert. For example, it could be a question like, "Who has been a positive role model in your life?" or "What is your favorite fruit?" The response from a bible scholar is no better than the response from a five-year-old. The introductory question also "breaks the ice" so everyone can be part of the discussion. Next, read the passage out loud, as a group. Take turns with people reading a few verses and then the person next to them can continue. After reading the Scripture, each person fills out their individual responses to the questions provided. These multiple-option questions often have more than one good answer. You may find you want to explain yourself when it comes to sharing your answer. You'll get a chance for that. After 5-8 minutes of writing responses individually, begin sharing as a group. By writing some responses individually, those who are quieter or who think more deeply have a chance to share instead of the quick responders dominating the discussion. Listen for God to speak through people rather than arguing your answers might be the best. The questions move from the mind, to the heart, to action—living it out. Close with prayer after the agreed-upon time has elapsed.

Examples

1. 1 John 1

Light My Way

When have you been in a dark place and you wanted some light?

Read 1 John 1:1—10.

1) How do you know that Jesus is real, and that he is God?

A. I've seen him.

B. I've heard him.

C. I've felt him.

D. The testimony of others.

E. Miracles.

F. Scripture.

G. The difference Jesus has made in my life.

H. You can't know for sure; it requires some faith.

I. Other.

2) What was John's testimony about Jesus?

A. Jesus was real.

B. I lived with him.

C. Jesus was human, like you and me.

D. Jesus was God.

E. Jesus came from God.

F. Jesus is human, and Jesus is God.

G. Jesus brings us into fellowship with God.

H. Jesus brings us into fellowship with each other.

I. Other.

3) Would you translate verse 4 "YOUR joy" or "OUR joy"?

A. I don't translate from Greek to English.

B. It's not up to me; that's up to God (or a Greek scholar).

C. It could be translated either way, or it could mean both.

D. John wrote it so YOUR joy would be complete—a gift for you.

E. John wrote it so OUR joy would be complete—fellowship together.

F. Either is fine with me.

G. It should be both.

H. Writing doesn't make anyone's joy complete; experiencing it does.

I. Other.

4) If "God is light" (vs. 5), what are the ramifications?

A. God makes it easier to see.

B. Darkness disappears when God is present.

C. Light often brings warmth.

D. Scientifically, light is energy; so God is energy.

E. God is bright.

F. God is the opposite of darkness.

G. Light enables people to see things they wouldn't otherwise see.

H. Light is the fastest thing known to humans.

I. Other.

5) What is the relationship between light and dark, fellowship and sin?

A. Light removes darkness and exposes sin.

B. Sin seeks darkness rather than light.

C. Fellowship can happen in the light or in the dark.

D. Light and fellowship go together.

E. Light and fellowship come with God.

F. We are a combination of all four.

G. We lose fellowship when we sin and move to the dark.

H. Other.

6) What happens when we confess our sin(s)?

A. Everyone will know about it.

B. Everyone will talk about it.

C. Jesus/God forgives us.

D. We only need to confess to God.

E. Our fellowship will be with sinners.

F. Our fellowship will be with forgiven sinners.

G. We will experience forgiveness—Yes!

H. It should be a habit we practice.

I. Other.

7) What is your paraphrase of verse 9?

8) What is your testimony about who Jesus is?

2. Go online to RelationalBibleStudies.org for an explanation and lots of examples you can download for a small fee. There are several free ones, including 1 John (5 studies).

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#5 LITERARY CONTEXT

"Read the Bible IN CONTEXT." Because you can manipulate the Bible by taking something out of context, one key element for Bible study is to study the Bible in context. That means reading the verses before and after the verse being emphasized, and letting the context explain the meaning. This often adds richness to the Bible study and it sometimes makes the understanding easier and more accurate.

Examples

1. Matthew 18:12-13 (also verse 14 and verses 1-6, 10-11) NLT

"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if

he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away!"

Clearly Jesus cares about those who are lost, even if it's just one out of 100.

Notice the additional meaning when you read the next verse (Matt 18:14): "In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish." This raises the question, "What little ones?" Go back to verses 1-6 and verses 10-11 and you'll see that Jesus emphasized going after lost young people—children—the ones Jesus considers the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. 1 Corinthians 2:9 (and 10) NKJV

9 "As it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'"

Let me paraphrase: Nobody has any idea what heaven will be like, because no eye has seen it and no ear has heard it, so nobody knows in their heart what heaven will really be like. I think it will be much better than anything anyone can think of, don't you?

But if you keep reading you will get a very different interpretation. The next verse reads:

10 "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

You said you have no idea what God has prepared for those who love Him? Why not? The Holy Spirit knows AND the Holy Spirit has revealed it to us! That's what verse 10 tells us.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#6 HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL CONTEXT

One of the reasons we know the Bible is a supernatural book is because it still speaks to us today. God sent these messages to others, but God still communicates to us through these ancient texts. For example, the book of Proverbs provided instruction for life for the Hebrew boys who went to school in Old Testament times. But we still benefit from it today, including not only males, but also females. Or consider the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians. According to 1 Cor 1:2, Paul wrote this to the Christian church in the city of Corinth (the southern part of Greece). But much of it pertains to our churches today.

The historical or cultural context helps us better understand the original target group. This can deeper our perspective before we apply it to our own time and place. Bible commentaries often provide this kind of background. With search engines like Google, anyone can easily access a lot of the historical and cultural context of the different portions of the Bible that were written from about 1500 BC through 100 AD.

Examples

1. Psalm 23:1 KJV

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Very few of us live around sheep or shepherds, so our understanding is second-hand, at best. What does it mean to have the LORD as your shepherd? We would do well to hear about that from those who know. Phillip Keller, a shepherd, wrote a book called A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23. Now that would give more insight than just reading the text and moving on.

2. Mark 2:1-12

You can read these 12 verses on your own. It's the story of when Jesus healed the paralytic who was let through the roof of a house where Jesus was teaching the religious leaders (who were having a hard time with Jesus). After the interruption of having a paralytic lowered in front of Jesus and his naysayers, Jesus added consternation by publicly forgiving the man's sins. If we lived in the days Jesus did this healing, we would understand that anyone who was sick was in that condition because they had done something wrong—because of their sin(s). That wasn't a problem for Jesus, but it was for the religious leaders who didn't want to accept that Jesus was God. Jesus used forgiveness and healing interchangeably. Jesus said, "To provide that I have the power to forgive sins," he said to the man, "Stand up and walk." The Greek word "to heal" is sozo which can mean "to heal" or "to save." Which did Jesus do? YES! And the result was those present praised God (vs. 12).

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#7 COMPARE WITH OTHER SCRIPTURE

This might be the most common way people study the Bible. Often people compare different Scriptures about one topic with other Scriptures on the same topic. Be careful that you don't take verses out of context when you do this. Sometimes it's good to also compare different translations of the same Scripture passage.

Examples

1. Compare Matthew 21:12-17 with John 2:11-25

The passage in Matthew describes when Jesus cleansed the temple at the end of his ministry. You'll find the same story in Mark 11;15-19 and Luke 19:45-48. This story seems so different from the meek and mild Jesus who encouraged the downtrodden and healed the sick. But did he really crack the whip and chase the money-changers and sacrificial animal sellers out of the temple (the area where the Gentiles met outside the Jewish part of the temple)? The answer is, "YES!" According to Matthew 21:14-15, once Jesus had chased those people out

of the temple, the blind and lame and the children came into the temple. (There's a sermon in that!)

But the Gospel of John gives a similar story early in Christ's ministry, not at the end. In John 2:11-25 it sounds like Jesus did the same thing at the beginning of his ministry. Did John get the timing wrong? The story in John 2:11-25 comes right after Christ's first miracle—changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana. It ends with a dialogue with the religious leaders about who Jesus is. At the beginning of Christ's ministry, he revealed himself to the religious leaders. But the religious leaders refused to follow him.

Some people think Jesus cleansed the temple only once. The Bible records it happening twice—once at the start of his ministry, and a second time at the close of his ministry. (The book Desire of Ages pages 591-592 indicates the religious leaders vowed to never run from Jesus after the first temple cleansing; but they ran faster the second time!)

2. Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Sam. 15:1-3, 17-23; 1 Sam. 30:1-6, 16-19; Esther 3:1 and 9:5-10

You might remember the Amalekites who often fought against God's people. You can read about them in Deut. 25:17-19, including God's judgment against them. When God told King Saul their end had come, Saul chose to keep some of them alive in direct disobedience to God's command. Later, their descendants raided David's group, and then they show up even later in the story of Queen Esther and the wicked Haman who sought to destroy all the Jews. Haman was a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#8 REFLECTIVE READING

Instead of reading the Bible and moving on, pause and reflect on what you just read. Like something simmering on the stove, take the time to let the Word of God simmer inside you. Another way to describe it is to slowly chew the food you're eating rather than taking a few bites and then swallowing. Take the time to thoroughly chew your food, enjoying the flavor, texture, and the experience. Yes, you will benefit nutritionally from what you swallow, but first benefit from the taste buds God gave you. This could also be considered "meditating on Scripture." For those fearful of the word "meditation" because they associate that with emptying one's mind and then being overwhelmed by Satan, "Reflective Reading" fills the mind with the Word of God, trusting that "Greater is He who is within us than he who is in the world" 1 John 4:4. The process for Reflective Reading involves reading through a passage (maybe 2-10 verses) several times with a pause between each reading to reflect on the passage. Follow these seven steps, or adapt them for your personal reflection of Scripture.

1. Pray and ask God to lead you as your read some verses from the Bible
2. Read the passage selected (usually about 2-10 verses)
3. Talk with God about the message you just read

4. Read the same passage again, asking God to impress you with His message for you for right now

5. Talk with God about the message or word(s) that caught your attention

6. Read the same passage a third time

7. Thank God for his message to you, including how it will impact how you live now

Examples

1. Ruth 1:14-18

This part of the story covers the interaction between Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. All three were now widows. Naomi was a Jew, while Orpah and Ruth were Moabites. The famine in Bethlehem had ended and now, 10 years after moving to Moab, Naomi began her return, alone. Her two daughters-in-law traveled partway with her, and these verses describe that discussion and the decisions made.

2. Romans 6:3-4

These verses remind us that when we accepted Jesus into our lives, we joined Jesus in his death and in his resurrection. To what have we died? To what have we been resurrected? Baptism by immersion symbolizes both of these. And these are questions for us to consider in our conversations with God while reading His Word.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#9 PUT YOURSELF INTO THE STORY

Take a story from the Bible—it can be familiar or unfamiliar—and as you read it, put yourself into the story. Instead of considering it a historical record from something thousands of years ago, make it current—either by using your imagination to transport you back in time, or by thinking of the story in a modern setting. Read through the story and then read through it again, making yourself one of the characters in the story (such as one of the disciples when Jesus calmed the storm on the lake). Read through it again and this time consider it from another person's perspective. When you put yourself into the stories in Scripture, you're more likely to look for God's actions today and not just in Bible times.

Examples

1. John 11:1-44

The story of the resurrection of Lazarus can be experienced from many perspectives. Read

through it as though you are Mary or Martha. Do it again, but through the lens of one of the disciples. What if you were one of the hired mourners? Read through it as a skeptic of Jesus the "miracle-worker." Maybe even read through it as Lazarus!

2. 1 Samuel 14:1-23

The story of Jonathan and his armor-bearer climbing up the cliff and overwhelming a group of Philistine soldiers might not be very familiar. Read it as though you are Jonathan. What prompted you to try this daring feat? Read through it as a Philistine soldier—surprise! Read through it as Saul—Jonathan's father. Read through it as one of the Israelite soldiers who heard about the commotion. Read through it as an Israelite soldier who had switched to the Philistine side and now switched back to the Israelite side (vs. 21) or the Israelite soldiers in hiding (vs. 22).

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#10 ONLINE AT YOUTHSABBATHSCHOOLIDEAS.ORG

Each week Bible studies get posted on the Youth Sabbath School website YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org. Each of them is based on the Bible topic for that given week. One of the studies was written specifically for teens. Another is the teacher's version for the same lesson. Another Bible study on the same passage but with a different twist is given as yet another option for that week. And yet another option is available as a RBS (Relational Bible Study)—see Option #4 earlier in this session. There's also an introductory video clip created specifically for this topic.

Examples

1. September 10, 2022

The lesson title, "Final Warning!" draws on the story of the 10 bridesmaids—five wise and five foolish (Matthew 25:1-13), as well as the first and second angels' messages found in Revelation 14:6-8. Go online to YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org to access these, as well as another Bible study option (#1) written on the same topic but from a different perspective, and a RBS (Relational Bible Study) on this passage of Scripture.

2. September 11, 2021

You can access previous Youth Sabbath School materials on the same website. This example goes a year earlier, back to September 11, 2021. The topic that week was "Jesus and Me" and it dealt with the story of Zacchaeus and Jesus (Luke 19:1-10). You can download the student lesson, the teacher's lesson, another presentation on the same topic, and a RBL

(Relational Bible Study). You can also access the introductory video clip and listen to a passage from the writings of Ellen White on this topic.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

SUMMARY

The Bible is God's message to us. We explained 10 different ways to study the Bible. These included:

1. Just Read
2. Single Verse or Phrase
3. Memorize
4. RBS (Relational Bible Study)
5. Literary Context
6. Historical or Cultural Context
7. Compare With Other Scripture
8. Reflective Reading
9. Put Yourself Into the Story
10. YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org

Try these as you and your Youth Sabbath School read God's message(s) to you through Scripture.

SESSION 6: "EMBARK"

How do you usually connect with God?

Choose a number:

1 = Never

2 = Rarely

3 = Sometimes

4 = Usually

5 = Always

for each item listed below

____ Reading the Bible

____ Praying

____ Gather with other believers

____ Nature

____ Music

____ Youth Sabbath School

____ Other: _____

When you pray do you usually (put a √ by all that apply):

____ Run out of things to say

____ Run out of time

____ Not know what to say

____ Repeat yourself

____ Write in a prayer journal

____ Fall asleep

____ Do more talking than listening

____ Do more listening than talking

____ Use written prayers that others have already prayed

____ Feel very connected to God

Teach us to pray

____ Read one verse or phrase from the Bible and comment about it

____ Have several Bible texts about a certain topic

____ Read something from the Bible and then meditate on it

____ Have a person who knows about the Bible teach others about it

____ Be guided by materials, like the Sabbath School lesson quarterly

In Luke 11:1 (NLT) we read, "Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'"

Next comes "The Lord's Prayer," although most Christians recite Matthew's version of it, found in Matthew 6:9-13. Ironically, the lead-in to this version begins with "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again." What makes this ironic? Many Christians repeat "The Lord's Prayer" many times, thinking that if they do it a lot, it's most likely to get through to God. The next verse informs us, "Your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!"

If God already knows what we need, then why ask?

Maybe prayer includes asking, but also much more. Prayer is simply a conversation with God.

In addition to "The Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6:9-13, another good source for the topic of prayer is chapter 11 in the classic devotional book Steps to Christ by Ellen White. A paraphrase of this can also be found in Connection: How to Have a Relationship With God pages 177-191.

Following are 15 different ideas for prayer. Some might be familiar to you and some might be new. Feel free to adapt them.

The purpose is to communicate with God.

15 IDEAS FOR PRAYING

#1 JUST TALK WITH GOD

This might sound easy, but some people have difficulty talking with someone they can't see, or that's what they say. Maybe the difficult thing is not hearing any response from the person with whom you're talking. Think about it—we talk on the phone frequently. But we usually get some type of response. Same with texting—you don't necessarily see the person, but you usually get a text response. Some have found it helpful to have an open chair and have their conversation with God sitting in the open chair.

3 suggestions

1. Learn to listen to God's voice. This might be audible—something you can hear out loud. Or it might be something you sense beyond just your ears. You might need to get away from distractions. Many people hear nothing, but there are people who do. Are you willing and ready to try "listening to God"?
2. Listen to what God has already told you. The Bible contains all kinds of messages from God. Read some of those as God's messages already shared with you, and then respond to them.
3. Keep talking to God. Many counselors and even friends do lots of listening. God is your counselor and friend, and he does lots of listening; so keep talking to him.

Here are some topics in case you don't know what to talk about to God:

1. What happened to me lately
2. What I'm thinking about right now
3. Feelings I'm having
4. My thoughts and feelings about God
5. My hopes and dreams
6. My struggles
7. People important to me
8. My church
9. Today
10. My ups and downs with God
11. Questions I have
12. Other: _____

#2 HELP, THANKS, WOW, OTHERS

Here are four topics most people can relate to in some way. They form the topics for your prayer time. Some have used the acronym ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) but most young people don't use words like "supplication" or "adoration" on a regular basis. The "Help" and "Thanks" and "Wow" and "Others" is an adaptation from Anne Lamott's 2012 book about prayer. For example:

Help (similar to "please")

God, I need help trying to do everything I'm supposed to be doing; I'm too busy.

Please help me with my schoolwork.

I don't know how to fix my relationship with someone who used to be important to me.

Sometimes I don't know what the right thing is for me to do; please let me know.

Thanks (gratitude expressed)

When I see how so many other people live, I realize how blessed I am.

Jeremy and I are friends again; thanks!

I found the encouragement I needed today when I read a passage from the Bible. Nice!

My Youth Sabbath School leader is the best! Thank you!

Wow (blown away by God—different from "Thanks")

The sunset tonight—spectacular!!!

I don't think that was a coincidence; God, you really showed up in a supernatural way!

I can't find the words to express how happy You're making me feel right now!

How can you handle everyone at the same time? I can't handle even one person.

Others (beyond yourself to the bigger world)

Tasha is really mad at you right now, God. Do something to touch her heart.

My church is good, but not really great. What can we do to improve things?

World peace—yes God, I'm praying for that!

Every time I pass by that certain part of town, I don't know what to do.

#3 CATEGORICALLY PRAYING

In groups sometimes a prayer leader will ask for prayer requests. These can vary from something very specific (such as "my grandmother has cancer" or "I'm asking for safety for my trip this weekend"), to very general (such as "be with everyone worshiping around the world this Sabbath" or "Bring comfort to those who have lost a loved one this past year"). Categorically praying identifies different topics and a person or group of people can then use these categories as the framework for their prayer time. Some ideas or requests can be grouped into a single category. Spend time praying about one category, and as you run out of things to say or the time available, move to the next category on your list.

School

- Safety
- Teacher and student relationships
- Prepare for life (not just tests)

Family

- Parents
  - · Don't get along with their teens
  - · Don't get along with each other
  - · Other things affecting them right now
- Financial pressures currently
- No time together

Current Catastrophes

- School violence
- Climate Change
- Fires
- Floods
- Hurricanes
- War(s)
- Political polarization
- On-going pandemic

Forgiveness

- For myself
- For others
- From others
- Gratitude to God

Seeing Jesus

- In my life
- In the lives of others
- In the events in life
- 15 Ideas for Praying

#4 PRAY A PSALM (OR OTHER PORTION OF SCRIPTURE)

While the Bible contains the prayers of others (see Matthew 6:9-13; 1 Kings 18:36-37; 1 Kings 19:3-4; 2 Kings 2:13-14; 2 Chronicles 6:14-42; Daniel 9:3-19), we can also take portions of Scripture that might not be stated as a prayer, but we can make them out prayer. The Psalms are examples of songs with lyrics that could easily be prayers. Simply take the Psalm (or other portion of Scripture) and use that as your prayer. Feel free to edit as you personalize it. Let this be your dialogue with God—the Scripture is God's conversation with you and your comments are your conversation with God.

Examples

1. Psalm 23

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Jesus, I've heard this phrase all my life. I've never met a shepherd, but I get the idea that a sheep is dependent on the shepherd, even when the sheep isn't aware of that reality. I do believe that you are the lord of my life and the lord of heaven and earth. The phrase, "I shall not want" is something I believe part of the time, but there are times when I don't. Maybe I have too many "wants" or I lack contentment or gratitude for all that I have been given. I tend to think that what I already have is a given; not realizing that I have more than most people in the world. . . (You can continue with where your conversation with God goes, or move on to the next verse as you communicate with God, starting with what he has already shared with you through Scripture.)

2. Romans 7:21-25 (NLT)

"I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."

Wow, God. I know what this tug-of-war is like. I've struggled with it many times. You know how it goes with me—success, failure, uncertainty, hope, bragging, embarrassment, anger, desperation, resignation, joy. I don't want to be distracted and I don't want to be fighting the wrong battles. It seems that I was born naturally selfish—looking out for #1 like that's my instinct. But your Holy Spirit that came into my life when I said, "YES, Jesus!" moves my conscious to take more action than just thinking about it. But the Holy Spirit and my natural selfishness get into fights, and they happen right inside my head and my whole body. I think the hope and the way forward is found in Romans 8. Thank you that Romans doesn't end with chapter 7!

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#5 PRAY ANOTHER PERSON'S PRAYER

We have access to many prayers others have offered over the years—prayers not from the Bible but from the lives of others. There are books of prayers and some churches have a set of prayers that many refer to. While some people scoff at the idea of praying a prayer that someone else wrote, when you "don't have a prayer" it might be a good idea to borrow someone else's prayer. You can always adapt or edit the prayer to make it your own.

Examples

1. Attributed to Francis of Assisi

"Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

And wisdom to know the difference."

2. Attributed to Catherine of Genoa in The Complete Book of Christian Prayer

"Lord, I make you a present of myself. I do not know what to do with myself. So let me make this exchange: I will place myself entirely in your hands, if you will cover my ugliness with your beauty, and tame my unruliness with your love.

3. Other (give an example of one you've found)

#6 PUSH AND PULL

Just as the words indicate, there are certain things you may want to PUSH away from yourself. In contrast, there could just as easily be things you want to PULL toward yourself. For example, you might want to PUSH away a spirit of revenge or greed or pettiness or pride. At the same time you may want to PULL toward you joy, forgiveness, intimacy, or guidance. You could make a list with two headings: PUSH and PULL and add items to the appropriate list. You can pray through this list during your seasons of prayer. You could focus on one list more than the other, go through the items in succession, or bounce back and forth.

Examples

1. PUSH

Dear Jesus, you made me as a sexual being. But in my fallen nature that sometimes goes awry. Don't remove what you created, but I want to PUSH away my selfish use of my sexuality to simply get what I want or to view others as objects rather than as people. I want to either flee or PUSH away temptation and be drawn in by the divine source of love that can then flow through me to others in the ways you created me to share. Jesus, I need your power and mindfulness to think and act with purity, wholeness, and holiness.

2. PULL

Jesus, I'm thinking of the Michael W. Smith lyrics, "Draw me close to you, never let me go, I lay it all down again, to hear you say that I'm your friend, you are my desire, no one else will do, 'cause nothing else can take your place, to feel the warmth of your embrace, help me find the way, bring me back to you. I want to feel close to you, Jesus. I might be pulling you to me when maybe I should quit pulling and just let you pull me to you. I want the singular focus on you, Jesus. I want to pull everything about you into my world. I exchange my dross for your gold. Please come into my heart anew.

3. Other (your own version of PUSH or PULL or a combination of both)

#7 PRAYER WALK

Instead of kneeling in your closet or by your regular place of prayer, a "Prayer Walk" involves movement, praying as you go. There are many variations of this form of "praying without ceasing." As you walk, let your observations—what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, spark or feed into your conversation with God. This could be done in a city, in the suburbs, or in rural areas. It could be in a park or a city high rise, a cemetery, or a county dump. You can do this individually or in groups, free-form it as you go or follow a guide with specified spots or territories to cover and maybe some prompts for those various places. In a group, have one person pray for the whole group or have multiple people offer one sentence each. Pray silently, aloud, or write out your prayer(s). You can return to the same spot(s) and pray similarly or very differently.

Examples

1. Several blocks in a suburban neighborhood

In a small group on a prayer walk through several blocks in a suburb, stop at identified spots for prayer, such as 1) A house where you don't know the inhabitants but you pray for the people who live there and what happens there; 2) An intersection where you pray for safety and looking out for each other as well as the "intersections" people in this neighborhood

experience; 3) The local park, and have each person in your group pray a sentence prayer or just a word about the park and what happens there; 4) A small business set up on the edge of the neighborhood, praying for the owner, the employee(s), and those served by this business; 5) Police and fire crew/medics who serve this neighborhood—people we hope we don't need to see, but we want them when the need is there; 6) Social media that enters this neighborhood, bringing the entire world to a few blocks, and preventing these few blocks of people from interacting with those next door; and 7) That your church will have a positive influence and impact in this neighborhood.

2. Prayer Walk with Interactions with People You Meet

Be prepared to pray at different spots as you walk a given set of streets (by yourself or in your small group). Take the initiative to interact with others, keeping in mind that a group of people coming up to one stranger can be threatening. Identify yourself and explain that you are on a prayer walk. Ask the person what you can pray for concerning that person. You might find quite a variety of responses. Then go ahead and pray for that person, being respective if they want the prayer given at that moment or whether it should be aloud or silent. You can also do this door-to-door by telling those who answer the door which church you're from, and that you're praying for people in the neighborhood and would like to know if there is anything they would like for you to pray for them or for those close to them. Then pray.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#8 PRAYER ROOM

Individuals often have a "place of prayer" whether that's indoors or outdoors. Some create a special spot, perhaps an entire room, and decorate it to make it more conducive for prayer—soft lighting, comfortable seating or kneeling, visual aids, maybe even some background music and pleasing smells. Usually these work better for individuals or small groups rather than a large group, or you can schedule or rotate people through the prayer room. Some prayer rooms have stations that you pass through in successive steps, while others have stations you can go to in random order or skip. The stations tend to guide your prayers there in a certain way.

Examples

1. Stations of the Cross

Christ's passion week that ended with his crucifixion and then resurrection are something many believers re-trace during the Easter season. You can actually create "stations of the cross" by focusing on different moments that led to this pivotal event in salvation history. Christians have been doing this for centuries. You can have signs with brief descriptions and even add pictures to help those praying as they go through Christ's passion for them that

led to his death on the cross. One station could be the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Another could be before the chief priests, and another before Pilate. One could be choosing Jesus or Barabbas, and another could be Roman soldiers flogging Jesus. You could have one station be Jesus carrying the cross (or the cross-beam) and another one when Simon of Cyrene began to carry it.

2. Successive Stations in One Room

Here's one example of successive stations, with communion in the middle. The progression goes from moving in toward the center and then moving out to return to the world outside the prayer room. This requires obtaining certain objects in advance. Of course you can adapt this as you choose. Each station has some suggested questions.

1. Take off your shoes. QUESTIONS: What condition are your shoes in now? Where have these shoes taken you? Consider yourself to now be on "holy ground."
2. Hand Washing. QUESTIONS: What has made you dirty? What "dirt" is inside you? How can you become clean inside? Do you want to be clean inside?
3. Draw Your Picture of God. QUESTIONS: What do you want your picture to look like? Draw your picture of God. How well does this portray your picture of God? What makes pictures of God more accurate?
4. Mirror. QUESTIONS: What do you see? What do others see? What does God see?
5. Communion. QUESTIONS: Jesus told his followers to "eat" and "drink" to remember what He did for them. Go ahead and eat and drink, remembering what Jesus did for you. Why did Jesus die for you? Do you really need that? What reminds you of it?
6. Shaping. QUESTIONS: Open one of the small containers and empty its contents onto your hands. What shape are you in right now? Take some time to mold this. What has God already done to mold you? What more would He like to do?
7. Listen. QUESTIONS: Listen to one song. What message do you hear from God in the words? In the music? What song would you most want to share with someone else?
8. Pathway. QUESTIONS: Start by making the sand smooth and flat. Use your finger or hand to mark a pathway that represents the pathway God seems to be guiding you. What questions do you have for God right now? What impressions is God giving you?
9. Take a "Selfie." QUESTIONS: Take a "selfie" with your smartphone that pictures God next to you. What does God look like? What do you look like? In what ways are you similar? In what ways are you different?
10. Put on Your Shoes. QUESTIONS: Where does God want you to go now? Where does God want you to go this week? What does God want you to do? What does God want you to not do?

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#9 BREATH PRAYING

Following your natural pattern of breathing (inhale . . . exhale . . .) let that rhythm provide the cadence for short prayer statements. Consciously think about your breathing—about every five or six seconds. One you get in synch with your breaking, as you inhale, identify some aspect of Jesus, God the Father, and/or the Holy Spirit. As you exhale, make a statement or request in response to the aspect you just named. If nothing comes to mind on the inhaling or the exhaling, just keep the rhythm going and say something on the next round. Do this for 30 seconds or 60 seconds or even longer as you get accustomed to it.

Examples

1. Breathing Jesus

(as you inhale) Living Jesus . . . (as you exhale) Thank you for living in me.

(as you inhale) Wonderful Counselor . . . (as you exhale) Give me wisdom from on high.

(as you inhale) Man of Sorrows . . . (as you exhale) Touch my heart.

(as you inhale) Light of the World . . . (as you exhale) Show me the way to go.

(as you inhale) Dearest Friend . . . (as you exhale) I rely on you.

2. Mix or Match

(as you inhale)	(as you exhale)
Loving Father	Thank you for blessing me.
Divine Spirit	Pour your love into me.
Gracious Savior	Flow your grace through me.
Blessed Trinity	Make me divine with your presence.

3. Other (give examples of your own or begin a list and add to it over time)

#10 LISTENING TO GOD

At first this might seem like the opposite of praying—at least if you think of prayer as a one-way "conversation" in which you do all the talking and God does all the listening. What if you reverse this practice, or try it a few times? It may seem awkward, weird, or terrifying. Those fearful of the devil's schemes during silence should consider if the devil is more active when you're talking or when you're listening. You should probably place yourself in a place and at a time in which you won't be distracted by other things. Try only listening for Jesus to communicate to you in silence. You may ask Jesus a question or simply invite Jesus to

communicate with you at the moment. Give yourself 60 seconds of silence as you listen attentively. Try it the next day for two full minutes. Maybe you can get to five minutes by the end of the week. It may be that you will receive no impressions from Jesus, even though you request them. It's possible that you'll start to "hear" God for the first time in your life!

Examples

1. The Spot

Create a place free of as many distractions as possible. Some do this in darkness and with silence, while others need some background noise or instrumental music and a picture to focus on or a serene spot in nature. If you need to time yourself, go ahead and do so, maybe using an alarm to let you know when it has been 60 or 120 seconds. Invite a close friend to do the same thing and share your experiences with each other throughout the week as you experiment with listening to God.

2. Bible Examples

If the lack of direction frustrates you, look in your Bible at 1 Kings 19:13 and imagine yourself in the same setting as Elijah when God spoke to him in a "still, small voice." Read the entire story in 1 Kings 19 if you need to do so. You could also read one of the Bible stories about Jesus and listen to Christ's message to you in the story. Matthew 9 or Mark 4 or Luke 7 or John 4 are good places for stories about Jesus.

3. Other (What would be a good time and environment for you to listen to God?)

#11 JOURNALING

Some people already do this. It goes beyond a simple wish list or "Prayer Requests" and "Answers to Prayer," although it can certainly include that. It also includes sentences and paragraphs as you write what is on your mind and heart. It might not be as efficient as praying aloud or silently, but it can be more effective through the process of writing. Some collect these over the years and refer back to them to renew their spiritual journeying. The journal can be a daily discipline or sporadic, short or long.

Examples

1. Sharing Personal Thoughts With God

Thinking back over this past week, I'm glad I didn't know in advance what was going to happen. Too often I've wished You would show me what is going to happen in the next day or two so I can better prepare for it. This might be my control issue coming through again, as though I can control the future, or certain aspects of the future that are clearly out of my

control. Trusting You continues to be something I say and something I mean, but then I revert back to trying to take care of it myself.

2. Dumping on God

Why do you do something, God? I pray and pray and pray, and nothing seems to happen. Are you there? Do you care? Have you forgotten about me? Right now it seems like we're on our own on Planet Earth. The stories of the Bible seem like fairy tales. I'm so frustrated. I'm feeling alone. I want to quit. I can't believe I'm saying/writing this, but it's truly how I feel right now.

I'm back. It's been more than an hour since I wrote that last paragraph. Wow! Things can change in an instant after they haven't changed in a week. I'm glad that I could dump that last paragraph on you, God, and not on anyone else. Thank you for listening to me, and for being Lord of all, including me and my little life.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#12 DRAWING, CREATING, DOODLING, JAMBOARD

While some people write prose or journal, others are more visual and draw or even doodle. In fact, some people focus better when they can be creative in their space and let their hands form their ideas or thoughts. This can be done individually or with a partner or two. You can do this in community with something like Jamboard—an online bulletin board for people to draw, write, or create in other ways. These can be saved or discarded.

Examples

1. Draw your prayer request to God

2. Write a Praise You Have for God at This Time

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#13 MUSIC

Music continues to be a language of its own, often touching emotions more potently than thoughts. Even instrumental music communicates a message or an experience. An earlier idea for prayer was praying through a Psalm, but that's taking the songbook of the Bible and praying only the lyrics to the songs. We don't have the music, which might be a good thing because some might think only Israeli music would be acceptable to God. Some create music and others tap into existing music, even creating playlists that can serve as their prayer to God.

Examples

1. Play an Existing Song

This can be a children's song like "Into My Heart" or a Hymn like "Faith of Our Fathers." It can be something more contemporary such as "O Lord, You're Beautiful" by Keith Green, or "After All" by David Crowder Band, or "How Great is Our God" or "Is He Worthy" by Chris Tomlin. Some sing or play these songs as their prayer to God, while others take a recording of the song and play it in their headphones or earbuds or on speakers.

2. Create Your Own Music

This can be an original piece or your own arrangement of an existing piece of music. This isn't about performance; it's about communicating with God—the one who invented music.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#14 POPCORN PRAYER

Instead of praying in complete sentences, just pray single-word prayers. While this practice usually occurs in group prayers, especially when participants might feel inhibited due to a fear they might not be able to speak eloquently enough, a single word invites more participation. For example, a person could say, "Family," and those listening wouldn't know if the speaker is thankful for their family, weary of their family, considers their friends to be

like family, or something else. But God knows. The awkwardness of silence isn't a problem, because, like popcorn put in a microwave oven, there are times when nothing seems to be happening, or times with two people say their word at exactly the same time—just like two kernels popping at the same time. It's okay; God understands. Popcorn prayers could also be used individually when a person prays in short bursts rather than complete sentences. And silence is okay, too.

Examples

1. One Word Prayers

. . . Family . . . Friends . . School . . . . . Homework . . Church . . . . . Youth Sabbath School . . . Scripture . . Grandparents . . . . Courage . . Volleyball . . . . . Food . . Desserts . . . . . Stylish . . . . . Forgiveness . . . . . AMEN.

2. Another example

. . . . . Today . . . . Tomorrow . . . Yesterday . . . . . Celebrations . . . Grades . . Learning . . . . . Soccer . . . Football . . . Basketball . . Pickleball . . . Humor . . Tommy . . . . . Parents . . . Finals . . . Embarrassment . . . . Energy . . . Money . . . . . Independence . . . . . Unity . . . . Prayer . . . . . AMEN.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

#15 CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER

Conversational prayer seeks to pray in a group using familiar words and sentences and conversations rather than a King James Version sort of prayer or something quite formal. Just as people don't finish their sentence with "end of sentence," in conversational prayer, instead of saying, "Amen" at the end of a sentence, it remains open so another person can pick up the conversation or even change to a new topic. Instead of a lengthy paragraph uttered by one person, keep your comments to a single sentence and let others add to it. You can add another sentence later. Times of silence are okay as well, just as they are in group conversations.

Examples

1. A Variety of Topics

Lord, I'm just grateful that we can talk with you like this . . . . And I hope we can find reach out to more people beyond our Youth Sabbath School class . . . . . Please give me more patience with my little brother who gets on my nerves so often . . . . . As we look into some verses in the Bible, please send your Holy Spirit so we get what it is You're wanting us to know . . . . I'm amazed, God, at how you're able to keep the universe on track . . . . I'd like to go on a mission trip, but I'm not sure I can raise enough money, so please help me, Lord

. . . . When our youth praise band leads in the church service, please have everybody join in singing and not criticizing . . . Jesus, please make us more like You. Amen.

2. Continuing on a Given Topic

Jesus, we're about to begin our Bible study portion of Youth Sabbath School . . . . Please send your Holy Spirit to guide us . . . . We don't want this to be just a head trip; we want it to move our hearts, too . . . . And our actions as well! . . . . We're thankful for our teacher who helps by making this a discussion rather than a lecture . . . . I'm so glad we have so many translations, especially where parts of the Bible seem difficult to understand . . . Jesus, we need your help to remember our study after we leave today . . . . and also to put it into practice in the way we live. Amen.

3. Other (give an example of your own)

SUMMARY

Prayer is talking with God—a conversation. We explained 15 ideas for praying. These included:

1. Just Talk With God
2. Help, Thanks, Wow, Others
3. Categorically Praying
4. Pray a Psalm (or Other Portion of Scripture)
5. Pray Another Person's Prayer
6. Push and Pull
7. Prayer Walk
8. Prayer Room
9. Breath Praying
10. Listening to God
11. Journaling
12. Drawing, Creating, Doodling, Jamboard
13. Music
14. Popcorn Prayer
15. Conversational Prayer

Try these as you and those in your Youth Sabbath School communicate with God through different forms of prayer—as a group and individually.

SESSION Z : "FLOW"
(SESSION 8 FOR 8-SESSIONS; DROP IF ONLY 6 SESSIONS)

YOUR PLAN

What is your plan for next Sabbath?

What about the next Sabbath?

Do you have a plan for the month?

How about for the next quarter?

Is there a plan for the year?

Putting together a plan can improve the quality of what you do for Youth Sabbath School because you aren't starting from scratch each week. You can also build on what you've already done. (A potential danger is to be so stuck to your plan that you don't adapt to what your group is doing, or needs to address, on any given week.)

Your PLAN is how to turn your PURPOSE(S) into reality. You might need to review your purpose(s). With these 3 purposes:

1. Fellowship
2. Bible Study
3. Leadership Development

We could put them into a flow in the annual cycle of young people.

THE "FLOW" FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

School takes up the majority portion of a young person's waking hours. It follows a daily and weekly cycle. Extra-curricular activities can make school even more dominant. Youth Sabbath School accounts for far less time, but it can still be potent. But you should anticipate the flow from a young person's perspective.

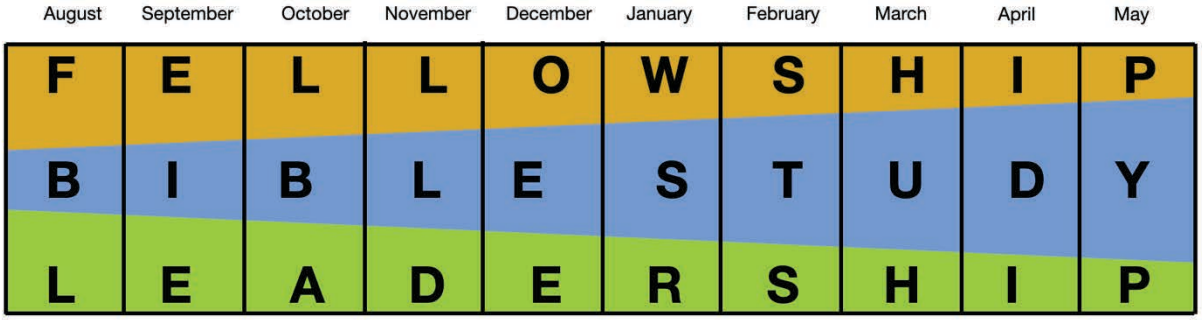
For example, when does a "new year" begin? January 1 is a more arbitrary start date than the first day of a school year. In fact, for those in school, there are two time segments in a year:

1. School Year (often mid-August to late May or early June)
2. Vacation (Summer—June-mid-August, plus Christmas, Spring break, long weekends)

For Youth Sabbath School, you can also anticipate graduations will move some young people OUT of your Youth Sabbath School. It will also move some young people IN to your Youth Sabbath School.

The start of a school year is a "natural" time to start to build fellowship. You would have more group-building activities and less Bible study than toward the end of the school year. The same would be true for your leadership development. Starting your school year is the time to put a lot into the leadership development. You could picture it this way:

The Flow of Youth SS—School Year



For the summer months, you've have a similar flow, but it would simply be a shorter cycle, depending on when school ends and when it begins. It would look something like this:

The Flow of Youth SS—Summer

Even though summer is obviously a shorter amount of time, it's a separate segment in the flow of a year. Instead of the "year" being January 1-December 31, or four equal quarters (January-March, April-June, July-September, and October-December), you have two parts of the year:

1. School Year
2. Summer

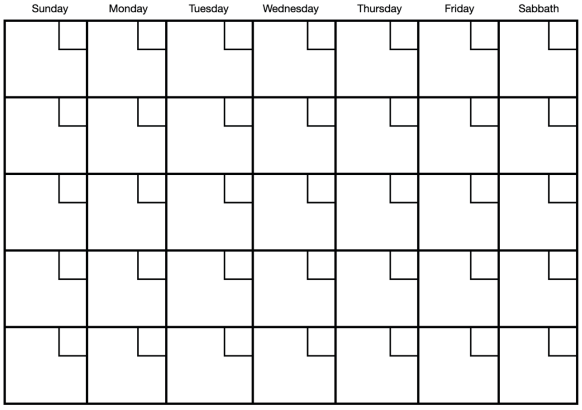
The school year should take into account what's happening at school. It's not wise to schedule a big Sabbath School event if you already can anticipate that half of your youth will be away for a school event. You don't need to cancel your Sabbath School then, but plan for a smaller group. If the older youth will be away, plan something for the younger youth. If you're at a boarding academy, don't plan a major Sabbath School when it's home leave weekend. But keep in mind there will probably still be some youth around even during home weekend, so plan accordingly.

Summer needs to have its own considerations. Some youth are gone for part of the summer or most of the summer. An out of town summer job, or multiple family vacations, or sleeping during the day most of the summer. But the reverse is also true. Some youth are looking for things to do during the summer. This is when your Youth Sabbath School can and should plan some bigger gatherings. Make this the happening thing. Youth who transition to Youth Sabbath School might seem young and nervous, but they want to fit in and be part of the action; they just need some help. Start with lots of group-building so you increase fellowship right from the start. It takes weeks for this to happen, so make that a regular part of what you do. Some new youth might move to town sometime during the summer. Reach out and include them.

MONTHLY PLANNING

With a flow of school year and summer vacation, with the three purposes of Fellowship, Bible Study, and Leadership Development, you're ready to start plotting your Youth Sabbath Schools. Two-thirds of the months will have four Sabbaths and one-third will have five Sabbaths. Some people keep track on their electronic device while others still use paper calendars to wall calendars available online or through office supply stores. You can even use blank sheets and create your own calendars.

Monthly Calendar for _____



Take into account school activities as well as other church activities. One of your Youth Sabbath School sessions might be to put on the Sabbath School for the children's SS classes. You might plan a "field trip" type of Youth Sabbath School one week. If you're integrated into an SDA academy, you might be hosting a football tournament one weekend in October. How many different schools are represented in your Youth Sabbath School? How can you provide a spiritual home for the youth at whatever school they attend?

Start making your plans, and adjust them as you need to do so. You are likely to start to see yearly cycles, with different emphases based on the youth who are involved.

SUMMARY

Making a plan for Youth Sabbath School involves a "Flow" which includes:

Keeping your purpose(s) as the driving force in what you plan

Look at the calendar from a teen's perspective—school

Two parts of a "year"

1. School year
2. Vacation(s)

Youth cycle "out" and cycle "in" each year

Emphasize group-building/fellowship, especially during the start of a cycle

Make plans from a bigger perspective and then adjust from week to week.

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.

Like us today.

YOUTH SABBATH SCHOOL IDEAS

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