



## SERVE LEADERS' MEETING

One of the most exciting elements of a Youth Unlimited experience is that adults from the Sending Churches spend a huge amount of time with their students. These compressed relationships help make a short trip a significant part of their life journey and set the environment for relationship follow-up at home.

You will need to equip the adult leaders for their responsibilities. Some come thinking they are “just a chaperone” and others come as an “enforcer.” There are even a few that think they are cool enough to fit in like a kid in an adult body. We want to make sure each adult comes as a co-learner in Christ and as a mature mentor and friend.

Please make sure you have one adult for every five students you bring, and one adult of each gender represented, and make sure you take them through the following outline at least three weeks before leaving for the experience.

This outline will help guide your meeting with the designated leaders. Also included is a PowerPoint presentation that you can use during this meeting. The words in italics below are ready to use. All other text is information for you to read beforehand. Grab a friend or ministry partner to share the responsibility. Two are better than one!

This information is condensed—just add passion. Feel free to adapt or change the tone as you need to for your setting and the time of year. Stick to the content, though. It's vital.

There are six handouts that accompany this outline. While that seems like a lot, they are quite concise, and all are essential. It is noted in the text below when there is an accompanying handout.

### 1. Prepare for the meeting well ahead of time:

- Make sure your church leadership is informed of the trip. Your pastor or other church leader will have had to approve the registration form for each adult attending. Youth Unlimited counts on the Sending Church to screen adults.
  - There are three questions that apply to adult leaders when screening them. If any of your adult leaders have:
    - Been convicted of a crime, they will need to check ‘yes’ and explain.
    - Been convicted or plead guilty to child abuse/sexual harassment, they will need to check ‘yes’ and explain that in writing. Even with a pastoral recommendation it is difficult for adults with this in their background to be approved for an extended student excursion.
    - Had vehicle moving violations in the last five years, they will need to check ‘yes’ and explain. If this has been a recurring situation, the adult will not be allowed to drive.
- Be sure every adult can make the meeting or follow up with ones that cannot. If you substitute an adult at the last minute, make sure to take them through this material as well.

- Keep the meeting brief. If it's more than 90 minutes, it's probably too long. Simply introduce the documents, and hand out copies of them. Review a few major points in each, and let the adults take them home to read them more thoroughly.
- Keep the environment informal and relaxed. Enjoy yourselves. (Maybe even bring a snack to share)!
- Recognize that some adults come with anxiety, and others come with a sense of peace because they've done this before. All need to know a few basics for the sake of the teenagers, the work of the Lord and even for the sake of legal liability.

## 2. Open the meeting with a greeting and prayer:

- PowerPoint screen one: SERVE logo

## 3. Share about Youth Unlimited. We trust you to accurately share our mission and vision. Here's what you need to articulate:

- PowerPoint screen two: Youth Unlimited website home page

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- PowerPoint screen three: Youth Unlimited helps churches challenge youth to commit their lives to Christ and help transform this world for him.

*SERVE is a one-week service trip that introduces students to missions and justice. Through working and learning, students better understand how to share the gospel to a needy world.*

- PowerPoint screen four: *SERVE* emphasizes:
  - *Opportunities to worship*
  - *Pursuing a deeper walk with God*
  - *Revealing God-given strengths*
  - *Opportunities to serve*
  - *Showing a broken world in need*
  - *Strengthening adult and student relationships*

*Youth Unlimited is unique in that it partners with churches. We will be one of about 150 Sending Churches involved this coming summer that will go out to about 30 different Host Churches.*

## 4. Share the big vision of this trip and experience:

- PowerPoint screen five: Restoring a broken world

*As followers of Christ, we are co-laborers with him, restoring a broken world. Our youth ministry is praying about where to serve and how to expand our view of what God is doing in this world. We want to serve and learn so we can impact our community for Christ and help inspire our own congregation.*

*When we talk about being committed to Christ or impacting this world for him, it's because of who he is according to Scripture. Let's look at the statement of faith together. Of course, Youth Unlimited wants adult leaders who agree with and live according to this statement.*

Hand out the document entitled, "What We Believe."

*There are Church leaders in other communities in Canada and the U.S. that are praying for help with their community outreach. We'd like to be an answer to that prayer. Name the specific SERVE Site you are going to, and share the site description verbally, or hand it out at this time.*

*The Host Team in (site name) has mobilized their congregation to pray for and work in the community, and we want to help them for one week so that we can not only serve but also learn from them. The impact on the Host Team and the community energizes the local body of Christ and shares the gospel in a loving and tangible way.*

*Here's what two Host Churches have said about the impact of SERVE:*

*"Hosting Youth Unlimited's SERVE is a great extension of the ministry we do throughout the year and helps us continue to advance the Kingdom work God is doing here." -Host Team, Midwest USA*

*"We are looking forward to hosting SERVE for a number of reasons. First, it has been monumentally important to the spiritual growth of our students individually as well as a huge factor in the growth of our unity, community and the relationships within our student ministry. Second, we desperately want to share the spiritual experience that has impacted our students with the parents of our church, praying that it will be a catalyst in the growth of the student/parent discipleship and relationship. Third, we want to use SERVE as a new way of reaching into our community, capitalizing on the connections that we already have and developing more missional relationships that will allow us to live the gospel out practically and intentionally in our city." -Host Church, Ontario*

## **5. Our students will learn from those they are serving:**

*There are people in every community praying that God would meet their needs. Some of those needs are tangible, work-related projects that have a significant bearing on that person's financial, social and emotional well-being. Meeting that need and sharing the gospel will impact them spiritually as well.*

*The typical schedule will include five to six hours of work per day. At SERVE our students will be put into work teams that double as their small groups for discussion after the evening worship sessions.*

*Students will get up around 7:00 AM, eat breakfast, have personal devotions and then leave for a site where they will work with and learn from the person or organization they are serving. The worksites are overseen by the Host Team and the adult leaders who bring the students.*

## **6. Students will be doing meaningful work:**

➤ PowerPoint screen six: types of work in major categories of community revitalization  
*Students will learn about: revitalizing the community, showing compassion for the marginalized, caring for creation, providing recreation for children and performing acts of kindness that can lead to evangelism.*

Groups may be assigned to rake a lawn for an elderly woman who lost her husband last year. They will meet her and hear her story. Or they may build a wheelchair ramp that is used by a young man who was in an accident. They will hear his story and be able to encourage him. It could be that they sort groceries or clothes for several hours, then spend time with people who live on the street or are underemployed and in need of a meal or something to wear.

- These are five areas that students could have the opportunity to serve in. You can read some of the following examples, or cut and paste them into a handout.

**Community Revitalization:** This may include light construction; maintenance; cleaning; demolition; general improvements to homes, non-profit offices, local government buildings and land; cleaning vacant lots; building wheelchair ramps; etc.

**Compassion for the Marginalized:** Those in need of food and clothing benefit when SERVE participants sort and distribute these essentials with hope and joy. Also benefiting from this are persons in need of social acceptance and genuine affirmation such as the developmentally, physically or cognitively disabled. The “working poor,” though they may not be destitute, often feel overlooked and have legitimate needs that a student workforce can help to meet. Tangible and non-tangible needs are addressed as SERVE participants listen to and learn from the life stories of those receiving the work.

**Creation Care:** Some tasks in this category seem like mundane chores until we consider that God himself commanded that we be wise stewards of his world. Things like community gardening, cleaning up a park, repairing bike trails, feeding horses used for therapy and installing erosion fencing all have a profound impact and help to change lives.

**Recreational Ministry for Children:** Whether in a city park or a community outreach program, caring for children can help impact the entire family and the future. Games, crafts, songs and Bible stories can be used to educate and minister to children and their parents.

**Acts of Kindness Leading to Evangelism:** This goes far beyond busy work, turning the receiver’s thoughts and attention, if only for a few moments, to the love of Christ. This also helps the Host Team Church/Organizations with their relationship in the community, canvassing an entire area, building Christ’s reputation in the greater community.

## **7. Impact on our students:**

- PowerPoint screen seven: Students will grow in thankfulness, generosity and prayer, learn about justice, investigate their strengths and wrestle with current life issues.

*We want this to be more than just a short trip. We want this to become a significant part of students’ life journeys by helping them connect their Christian life to actual transformation, personally and in a community. The environment will be set for students to grow in thankfulness, generosity, prayer, justice-thinking, investigating their strengths and wrestling with their current life issues.*

## **8. As adult leaders we are expected to know and use our influence to lead the students in the following areas:**

- PowerPoint screen eight: Covenant for Participants, Adult Responsibilities, Adult/Student Relationships, Safety, Leading Small Groups.

Let's look at each of these areas together briefly. I will highlight a few points on each and then let you do some reading at home.

- A. The Covenant for Participants (handout). Review it.  
*Our attitude as adults helps set the pace. We are going to bless the Host Team, so abiding by their rules with a good attitude is essential. Serving the Host Team is the priority for us as adults. We need to keep our focus on the glory of God, the gospel and keeping small things small.*
- B. Responsibilities of Adult Leaders (handout). Review this document.
- C. Guidelines for Building Relationships (handout). Review this document.
- D. Guidelines for Serving Safely (handout). Review this document.  
*There is typically some "hurry up and wait" on the first day. If it takes some time to get organized, that's OK. Good relational ministry can happen when manual labor is put on hold, if we are flexible.*
- E. Guidelines for Leading Small Group Discussions (handout). Review it.
  - *This can be an intimidating responsibility for adults who do not have experience in student ministry. It is also one of the biggest blessings of the week.*
  - *We want to emphasize confidentiality without promising complete confidentiality. Be sure to tell your small group something like, "What is shared in our group stays in our group. The exception is if something is shared that involves harming yourself, harming someone else or someone harming you. Then, because I'm concerned about you, I'll ask a few questions and we will decide what to do next. If you've hurt someone or are being hurt, I may feel like I need to share that with the Host Coordinator here so that I can get some wisdom. That's because I care enough about you to not let you or someone else keep getting hurt."*
  - *Students often face big life issues during a week like this. God will give you wisdom to guide them through. Students need adults who are mature in their behavior and in pursuing Christ's wisdom.*
- F. Preparing Your Group. You can opt to hand this out, or, if you are the primary youth leader, simply implement some of the principles. You have already covered a lot of material in this meeting.

### **Background Check. (No handout)**

All Adult Leaders (21 and older\*) are required to complete and submit a current background check to the Youth Unlimited office before May 15, 2019. To be considered current for the 2019 SERVE season, the check must be completed after June 15, 2016. For more information about how to submit a background check visit: [youthunlimited.org/background-check-information](http://youthunlimited.org/background-check-information)\*The exception to this is for "student" participants at one of our Special Need Serve sites; a background check is not required for them even though they may be over the age of 21.

**9. Nearly everyone on a mission trip goes through some crisis. Since we give up so much control for the week (our schedule, our menu, our work, our bedtime) everyone faces attitude adjustments. For some, this is hard, while for others it's very manageable.**

When students need help, they go to their assigned small group leader. If the leaders need help, they bring it up at the Leaders' Meetings or ask a Host Team member for help. If the Host Team needs help, they go to their Host Team Coordinator. If the Host Team Coordinator needs help, then the Host Team leadership is approached and the Youth Unlimited office is brought into the situation.

*We have a lot of support from the Body of Christ. Let's make the most of it and work in unity for the glory of God to impact the students, the Host Team and the community.  
Let's spend a few minutes in prayer together now.*

*God may have lured you into this by letting you think you're only here to help students. You volunteered because you wanted to see God transform their lives. That's great. Or, maybe you feel dragged into this because there weren't enough leaders and "someone had to do it." Thank you for stepping up. We couldn't do it without you. Maybe you really want to serve and help the needy. Wonderful! God is pleased with your commitment to go and to help out. But more than that, he has a plan to work with and on you. God has planned for you to step away from your ordinary schedule, get out of your comfort zone and spend significant time with him. This is as much about his work in your heart as it is about his work in the students or the Host Team or the community.*

*Let's dedicate ourselves to the Lord and ask him to do a work in our own hearts and minds.*

*Now let's pray for the Host Team—they are working hard to find worksites, prepare meals, plan worship, coordinate volunteers, etc.*

*Let's pray for their community.*

## **10. Review the Calendar**

## **11. Q & A:**

*I won't have the answer to every question asked, so if I don't know the answer, I will make a list of your questions and make sure we get the answers.*

- Found on the Youth Unlimited website is a list of Frequently Asked Questions. You can print those off ahead of time in case some of those questions are asked. It covers items like travel information and insurance.
- Have a SERVE Planning Calendar, and make sure key people in your church leadership have a copy.

Youth Leader: If there are any questions or additional information that we can get for you, please do not hesitate to contact us by:

Phone: 616.241.5616 ext. 3040

Email: [missions@youthunlimited.org](mailto:missions@youthunlimited.org)

End with something like:

*We have an amazing opportunity to support and encourage the body of Christ in another community. The Host Team is counting on our adult leadership to submit to their authority and help lead the students through the SERVE experience. Thanks for being a part of this.*