

MY GUY-CENTRIC HERESY

Why Youth Ministry Should Be GUY Oriented

Let's get the nasty part over with right away. I think that youth groups should intentionally orient themselves toward males.

Let me be clear. I am NOT suggesting that we ignore girls or refuse to throw support towards ministries aimed at girls. Neither am I suggesting that males are superior, more spiritual or somehow more worthy than females. I am making the claim that youth groups will grow faster, be stronger, be more attractive to both genders and serve the best interest of the church at large if we aim our sights strongly toward guys.

Now, for those of you who haven't torn up this page in disgust, let me explain why I make those bold and politically incorrect statements.

My first reason is that girls tend to attract other girls to a youth group (and maybe a couple of lotharios), but guys attract both girls and other guys. Here's why...

The hobby of guys is activity: skateboarding, basketball, hunting, skiing, surfing, wakeboarding, football, biking, snowboarding, video gaming, etc. The hobby of girls is *relationship*. (Yes, I know that girls do have other interests, but I am painting with a broad brush—girls are far more relationship oriented in their middle school and high school years than are most boys.) Get the guys and you will get the girls too.

Another reason is that guys bring an important balance and energy to a youth group. A youth group that has mostly girls will have a decidedly feminine feel that will tend to drive off stronger males and dominate weaker ones. Guys usually sense this, and are hesitant to join this kind of group. However, a group that is evenly balanced or even tilted towards males will generally have a different kind of energy and dynamic, which tilts the excitement level up a bit. In order to attract "Alpha" males or strong all-boy types the youth group needs to be a place that welcomes them; the kind of youth groups that are girl heavy are a good place for male predators, but not male participants.

A third reason is that the leadership for the church of the future is often developed in places where youth ministry takes place. And the leadership of the church in America could surely use some strong males. Look at your youth group. Are the girls running the show? Do they outnumber the guys 2 to 1? This is a picture of your future church—where weak men ineffectively try to be leaders in a world of strong, dominant women.

Now I know that girls are easier to work with—they are far more responsible, respond much more spiritually, smell better and leave much less of a mess than the guys. Plus they are far easier to reach. Get one and the whole network will come with them.

Boys, on the other hand, are far more volatile. They are harder to come by and a challenge to keep involved. They get distracted more easily and won't sit passively if the Bible study turns boring. But without them or with only a few malleable ones, a youth group is not only lopsided, but it also pretty much insures a future church where guys are noticeable by their absence.

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