

How To Use Your YLO Membership

by Dave Weiss

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I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was riding from one sales call to another with my coworker Bob. Bob was an experienced volunteer youth leader and I was starting to test the waters about working with the youth of my church.

We had a long time to talk and I asked him what resources he used. I was really hoping to find something that would allow me to use my love of music to teach kids. He said, “You need to try interlinc.” When I became the official youth leader of the church, the first thing I did was to become a Youth Leaders Only member.

I was a volunteer youth leader in a small rural church with a smaller youth budget, so there was only one way to afford the membership—buy it myself. So it had to be good.

It was and it is!

(Okay, I’m biased – but YLO has helped me immensely from the start of my ministry with teenagers.) When asked to write an article on how to use YLO, I was delighted. You see, what you hold in your hands is a lot more than a box full of inexpensive CDs – you’re holding a powerful ministry tool.

Step One: Use The Lessons

I know this sounds painfully simple but I know a fair amount of YLO members only get YLO for the inexpensive CDs. Honestly, as a person of very limited means, I can’t relate to that. If this were not a teaching tool, I could not have justified the expense. I know that YLO is not a comprehensive curriculum, but the topics touched on in any given issue can be useful in the context of your ministry. Even if we somehow missed the hot issue you’re facing, we include a comprehensive theme listing of every song in the box for you to craft your own lesson.

Step Two: Be Flexible

Our writers span the gamut of church experience – from tiny church volunteer types with just a few teens like me, to megachurch youth pastors, to folks on the mission field, and everyone in between. We cover a wide range and we write for a wide range—from the student small group leader to the veteran. The key for you is to prepare and adapt what is written to your ministry context. What works with my suburban-rural students here in Pennsylvania will not necessarily work with Ken McCoy’s students in Escondido, California and vice versa. We build the lessons around the hottest in Christian music, but they are grounded on solid Biblical principles. Your goal is to know your kids, and adapt. If a study is not deep enough for your kids, add some meat. If it’s too deep, lighten it up. The Warm Up won’t work? Try something different – there are probably twelve others in this magazine alone. There are times where we need

a raucous game, but other times what the students really need is some time to talk about what is going on in their lives. The only way to know for sure is to know your kids and be open to the leading of the Spirit.

Step Three: Use the Music Video Loop

Maybe because I am a visual learner, one of the most useful tools for me has always been the “Video Loop.” A well-done video can often lead deeper into the topic than any sermon. We try to tie visual elements from the videos into our studies wherever possible to encourage deeper discussion. Videos are an immensely versatile tool. Use them in the context of the lesson, use them as lead-ins to messages, use them as background/entry media. The visual combined with the music will even spark a student’s interest in a band. This is great, not only because we want students to get into the music, but also because they can see people—many who are only a few years older than they are—being used by God in ministry.

We’re all about kids and Christ, first and foremost. This resource can be a great way to expose kids to music that is good for their soul – which is great, but only scratches the surface. By properly using this resource, combining the music with the study guides, you not only expose kids to new music, but also give them a gift: a song that draws their minds back to the Biblical principles you teach them and help them to hide the Word in their hearts. Isn’t that really our mission?