

Location Lessons

Resource for all youthworkers who want their teachings to be memorable.

One of the core foundations of Wild Frontier youth ministry is that the youth ministry needs to be place where memories are created because it is memories of faith that form a faith for life. Think about it in your own life. Make a graph of your own spiritual journey. It will be marked with times of memories--the good and the bad. My guess is that those times are what formed your personal spiritual journey. One group training opening exercise I do is for everyone to write a list of the five most influential sermons you have ever heard. Then I ask them to write the names of the five most influential people they have had in their lives. Can you name five sermons which have influenced you? Can you name five people who have influenced you? My guess is you could have named ten people and still be struggling with the five sermons. That is because there are memories associated with those people which have influenced you and have made your faith what it is today.

You have the responsibility of teaching youth. With the insight of the short exercise above, you may feel futile in that job of teaching since it probably won't be remembered in the years to come. Or maybe even next week. Yet you must teach. That is your primary role. That is why you are in your position.

One way to mix it up a bit and to make memories is to move outside of your youth room and teach at a location. Your teaching will take life and be memorable as you are able to use all five of their senses to bring the point(s) across.

Yes, it will be more work for you as you have to do the planning. You have to figure out transportation--one of the unglorified yucks of youth ministry. You do not want to do this every week or probably not even once a month but scheduling such meetings into your calendar will be worth it. You'll hear about it in their memories.

You may have a few individual youth who are easily distracted and are distracting to others in the four walls of your youth room and you cannot imagine how to contain them when their five senses will be going off the scale. Prepare adult help in advance to work with these individuals.

If you have a small youth group, this will be easy to plan. If you have a large youth group, encourage your established small groups to do one of these or you set everything up and send groups out. Be creative. You wouldn't have gotten to where you are without learning how to take someone's idea and adapting it your group.

The following are fifteen locations with lesson ideas to spark your creativity. Fifteen--that is enough for two or more years of calendars. Do it. --Brenda Seefeldt



Funeral Home

Many funeral homes offer tours of their facilities to groups. Find one in your city and ask for a tour. During the tour, you will probably get to see the casket

showcase room, embalming room and tools, crematory room (if the funeral home has one) and an open question and answer with the funeral director. Use all of these as part of your lesson plan. Have each youth pick out their favorite casket. Ask why they chose that certain one. If your youth don't ask the questions, ask the funeral director how he/she has seen families deal with death--the good and the bad. Prepare for yourself other questions to ask the funeral director which will feed into your message.

After the tour, take the group into the private room/lobby you reserved when you set up the tour. Bring the tour and what was learned to a powerful conclusion with a lesson on how they would like to be remembered at their deaths. What would they like said at their funeral? What will be the accounting of their lives?



Baseball Field

This lesson can be set up in a couple ways. One is to place leaders/parents on each of the bases, outfield, dugout, and in the stands. Or you can write up the questions and send your youth out in groups of 2-3. Or you can go to all the place together as a small group. One thing for sure is you should all gather at homeplate together at the end of the lesson.

However you set this up, begin with your group gathered around the pitcher's mound to give them the plan. At every position spot, have the following questions (mixed with ones you add) prepared. The youth can go in any order as individuals or in groups. That is up to you.

First Base: How do you start out your life as a Christian?

Second Base: How do you grow your faith so you can walk by faith?

Third Base: What will it take for you to turn the corner in your Christian life?

Shortstop (position that controls the field): What are things that are controlling your life right now?

Left Field: How do you back up and support those you love in their Christian walks?

Center Field (up the middle position): What can you do to help your life be more God-centered?

Right Field (strong arm position and the farthest spot on the field from homeplate): When do you feel furthest away from God?

Dug Out: Who is in the dugout of your life preparing you as you live your life as a Christian?

Stands: What do those who are in the "stands" of your life think about your faith?

Near the end, gather together again at homeplate. Ask "What will your faith look like at the end of your life?" Then take turns having individuals run home from third base to homeplate while everyone is cheering them on. After everyone has had their chance, ask "How did it feel to hear everyone cheering for you as you scored?" Tie that into the joy of being part of the "family of God."



Football Field

Gather with your group on the 50-yard line and face toward the goal posts. Teach your prepared lesson on goals. You may even want to move your group to the next 10-yard hash mark as you make your points. End in the endzone and have everyone make up their endzone dance which they will do again when they have completed the goal they have set for themselves.



Track

Meet near the start/finish line of the track. The verses 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 are obvious to use here but you may have other Scriptures to use also.

Have your group run a sprint. Meet back together and discuss how they feel, how easy or hard it was and why. Next have your group run one lap around the track. Ask the same questions. Now have them run a mile (which is four laps). Some will finish easy, some will struggle, and some will not even attempt to try. Without embarrassing your not-fit crew, teach how the Christian life is more like the mile. You have to persevere through it all. Some will handle it easily. Some will struggle much. Some will quit. Some will quit and then start again. But all will need to finish the race one way or another.

Or have your group take one lap around the track. Then give them all 5 pound bags of flour (draw attention to how small they are) and run the same lap. What was the difference? What are the weights we carry in our Christian life that hinder our run?

Or have your group run a relay. Give every one a quarter of the track to run and pass the baton. Talk about passing on our faith, what would happen if one dropped the baton and our need of each other.



Soup Kitchen

While many youth groups have taken turns serving in soup kitchens (and that is a very, very good thing), this time gather your group together in the corner of the soup kitchen, before you serve, after you serve, or instead of serving (depending on your schedule). Find a corner somewhere out of the way of the workers and the visitors which will allow you to teach but still be amongst them.

Take the first five minutes in silence and let the group observe everything that is going on. Then ask them what they saw. Ask what emotions each individual player in the scene is having right now. What emotions are they feeling right now? Ask where is Jesus in this scene.

Ask the group if they have ever felt such emotions before. Prepare a lesson on being in need and/or being the help to someone need.



Museum

There are many, many sizes and types of museums. Some are huge, some are small. Some require admission, some are free. This lesson can be done in any type of museum as long as you can find a corner which will allow you to teach amongst the museum keeps.

Prepare a lesson about what is important to keep about our faith. What are the faith foundations which will grow our faith year to year? What about our beliefs is not worth keeping? What about our beliefs is worth keeping? What faith memories do you treasure?

If you are at a history museum, take the time to draw individual histories of their faith walks.



wedding Chapel

It would be nearly impossible to schedule your group into a wedding chapel on a weekend but during the week, there will most likely be little problem. While in the beautifully decorated chapel, creatively teach your group about the respect for marriage and the hope of having a God-honoring marriage. Maybe the wedding coordinator for the wedding chapel will be available to talk about wedding plans and share stories of beautiful weddings and horrific weddings.



Hidden Space at Church (bell tower, etc.)

If you as a church still worship in an actual church building (vs. a warehouse, rented school, or multi-functional building), find one of those formerly used corners and bring your group there. Or if you don't have such a church building, ask to borrow the space from another church in your community. Explain to them why this was part of the church and why it is not used anymore. Also use this opportunity to tell the history of your church (all of it, even the bad) that has made you the church you are today.



Nursing Home

While many youth groups have ministered in nursing homes (and that is a very, very good thing), this time gather your group together in the corner of the nursing home before you minister, after you minister or instead of ministering (depending on your schedule).

Take the first five minutes in silence and let the group observe everything that is going on. Then ask them what they saw. Ask what emotions each individual player in the scene are having right now. What emotions are they feeling right now? Ask where is Jesus in this scene.

Ask the group about times when they have been lonely. Hopefully you won't be surprised that they have. Prepare a lesson on loneliness.



TV/Radio Studio

Unless the radio or TV station is a big-city station, the area available in a TV or radio studio is going to be cramped. Adjust. That is part of the lesson. After getting the small tour and the question and answer time with the studio employee, teach your group on the messages their lives send out. Teach how some place so small can reach so many people.

Don't use this time to talk about the negative messages of the music aired or programs aired. Do that at another time if you want. Take the opportunity to tie in the visual of the actual communication equipment and the smallness of everything to the message their lives send out.



Day Care

While your church may have a daycare, take your group offsite and visit another daycare building. The new scenery will better prompt the five senses. After the brief tour, gather your group in the small chairs the children use or on their sleeping mats.

Ask individuals to share any memories they have of sitting in such small chairs or sleeping on such mats. There could be hilarious stories, sentimental stories (identify to the group the sentimentality so they can also understand), or sad stories. Whatever comes up, let everybody share and react in the appropriate ways.

From this setting teach your prepared lesson on remembering such memories and how our memories build our faith. Teach that the Jews were instructed time and time again to remember. Even if a youth has a bad childhood memory or memories void of church, bring out how those memories also make them who they are as a growing Christian today.



Cemetery

Take your group to a local cemetery. Distribute to everyone paper and crayons and have individuals do a grave rubbing by placing the paper over a tombstone's lettering and rubbing over the letters with a crayon. The words will appear on the paper. Make sure you explain to your group the respectful behavior expected while walking around the cemetery.

When everyone has their grave rubbings and has had a good amount of time to tour the cemetery, gather together and have each share what's written on their papers. Ask each person to imagine who their person was and what he or she was like.

As part of your teaching ask the following questions: How does it feel to talk about people who are dead? Explain. Do you think these people are forgotten? Why or why not? How do you feel about your own death? Explain. Are you afraid of death? Why or why not? What does it mean to die?



Junkyard

Take your group to a local junkyard or auto graveyard. Have everyone wander

through the junkyard instructing them to find one item which may be of value to them. Advise your youth to be cautious as they walk around trash or scrap metal. Gather back together.

Prepare a teaching on worthlessness and/or worth. Ask the following questions: Why did you pick this one item? Why was it thrown away? What does it mean to be thrown away, worn out, crushed? Share times you felt useless and unwanted. Why are we valuable? Can people bring value to themselves? Why or why not? What causes people to lose their sense of value? What makes you valuable?



Rooftop

Take your group to the rooftop of a building. The height of the building does not matter as much as getting your group up above everything. From this vantage point, teach them about the bigger picture. Teach how we can get caught up in the day-to-day struggles but there is a bigger picture to our lives. Teach how the energy spent on small stuff is wasted energy because it is small stuff.



Park

Take your group to a city park, state park, national park or someone's lush land. Give them the verse Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Instruct them to do just that. For the next 30 minutes (or whatever long length of time increment you have) they are to wander the park concentrating on this verse. Require that no word is to be spoken from that time forward until you declare the time ended. No talking. Encourage them also to use their five senses.

For the last ten minutes or so, have everyone debrief what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted and felt. Where did they see God?



Greenhouse

Take your group to a greenhouse. This is a great location to talk about Christian growth with ready-made visuals. You can talk about the reasons for right environment, the right food, and the right care. Or you can ask an employee to share the details on why everything is done the way it is and then you can piggyback on that information to bring out the Christian principles.

Planning this for the winter season bring another obvious comparison to life outside of the greenhouse during that season.

The correlations are obvious. The possibilities are endless.

Compiled by Brenda Seefeldt, founder of Wild Frontier. She would love to have other ideas added whether it is other locations or other ideas to use at the listed locations. Please pass what you have done on to us at info@wildfrontier.org so it can be added to this download.