

Give Them a Reason to Come

Lately I have been reflecting on the growth of the Mission Adventures Network. I am amazed at how God has taken us from just a couple of bases here in Southern California to more than thirty bases across the continent and even the world. I am grateful to God for all the leaders and bases that have come together to make a difference in so many churches and so many young lives. We are truly honored to partner with you. Thanks for being with us in this Network.

What makes this thing work?

As I have been thinking about the Network, I've been trying to identify what makes this program work. I've been asking myself "What is it that inspires a youth worker to come with us?" As I pondered this question, I came up with the following:

Top five reasons why the local church works with us:

1. We provide an opportunity to make a difference
2. We provide real hands-on ministry opportunities
3. We provide group context ministry opportunities
4. We provide organized ministry opportunities
5. We provide staff supported ministry opportunities

What about the training?

You may notice that I didn't include training on this list. Yes, the training is important. It is so important that it has been a major emphasis in our advertising campaigns since the Network was founded. Training is so important that if you're not doing any sort of training with your teams, I think you had better start.

However, I don't think that the majority of groups that come with us come just because of the excellent training.

Training by itself is not compelling enough for a church to come through your program.

What a youth pastor wants.

Youth pastors want their kids to grow. And they know the James 1:22 Principle: When you do what the Word of God says, you'll be blessed. Spiritual growth happens like crazy on a short-term outreach. I am convinced that youth workers bring their kids because they want them to grow. They see Mission Adventures as a way to jump start their kids' spiritual growth.

Training is important to a youth pastor. But it's the doing that really inspires them to bring their kids. Make sure you give them a reason to come to your program. If you haven't done this already, ask yourself these questions:

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Give Them a Reason to Come Continued...

- What is your base's ministry focus?
- What are you passionate about?
- What do you cry about?
- Where are you called to make a difference?

The answers to these questions will be the very same things that inspire a youth worker to come to your program. It won't be the fancy cover on your Outreach Registration Manual. It won't be the really cool Network Web Site. It won't be the excellent training you offer or even the fact that we're "Full Service." Although all these things help, a youth worker is really looking for an opportunity for his kids to grow.

What will work is a passionate plea to come make a difference. The more specific you can make your plea, the more you make it real in a youth worker's mind, the greater your chances of inspiring him to bring a team. I believe churches will join us by the thousands if we give them a reason to come.

What we want.

Ironically spiritual growth for our participants isn't our main goal. Our goal is to serve and empower the local church so they can reach the world with the Gospel message. Our distinctive is in helping them become "doers of the Word." Spiritual growth is a by product of our goal.

How to market your program.

Here's a few things you can do to sell your program:

- Invite churches to join you in making a difference. People want to do significant things. Don't confuse activity for achievement.
- Give your groups strategic tasks. Don't just try to keep them busy with something. Give them an opportunity to do something significant.
- Be full service. Work out all the details for your groups. You do the work so they can do the ministry. Then tell them about it!
- Emphasize the training. Tell the teams about the preparation you will give them.
- There seems to be a "magic number" in North America. If the whole trip

can be accomplished for less than \$1,000, (including airfare) you'll have more success.

Remember, it's the destination that counts. Give them a compelling reason to come and you'll find that your program will grow.

—Sean Lambert with Craig McClurg