

Middle School Methodology

FIRST THINGS FIRST

- ❖ Middle School youth want to be treated like adults but still have the opportunity to act like children.
 - They're in-between
 - They're not kids anymore, but sure act like it sometimes.
 - They're certainly not adults yet either, but they pretend to be.
- ❖ Quality middle school ministry takes place in the context of meaningful relationships and meaningful ministry opportunities.
 - Your kids won't become spiritual giants because you deliver excellent youth talks.
 - Your kids will grow spiritually when they see Christ at work in your life and then model themselves after you.
 - These young people need opportunities to do ministry, focus their efforts on modeling Christ and steering them into ministry.
- ❖ The single most important element of any meeting, event, or program is to know why you are doing it.
 - Purposeless middle school ministry is only negligibly different from babysitting.
 - Without a purpose, nothing you can do has excellence.

WORKING WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ❖ Atmosphere
 - Develop a handful of rules essential to building an atmosphere of trust and safety
 - Learn names
 - Present on a level they can relate to
- ❖ Small groups
 - The number of youth in a group is critical to the success of the meeting (1 to 6 ratio is best.)
 - Middle school youth work better at times in gender specific groups
- ❖ Cognitive Development
 - Middle School youth begin to think abstractly, they experience new emotions (and old emotions in new ways). This emotional roller coaster throws them into the most topsy-turvy, hot and cold time of their lives.

- This time period opens their life to a whole new world of social possibilities. Girls tend to form friendships groups of two or three, while boys tend to run in groups. This social scene impacts self-image.
- The spiritual development of young teens ties directly with the cognitive development. These young people are reformatting their personal files on God. No longer are they willing to just go with the flow, but begin questioning and taking personal ownership.
- Individualism is the key word. This is the process that teens and young people into their twenties go through to answer the question – Who am I ?
- Physical changes – puberty

❖ Affirmation

- Your words carry power, use them wisely
- Choose to affirm
 - Do it all the time
 - Affirm the annoying as well as the likeable
 - Affirm character / behavior / dress
- Affirming youth earns you the right to be heard and increases your effectiveness in ministry directly and indirectly

TIME TO TEACH

- ❖ Middle school youth are ten times more likely to remember what they say than what you say – ask their opinion – let them feel they an question and share
- ❖ Ask youth to record their opinion on paper before sharing
- ❖ Use the HOOK – BOOK –LOOK – TOOK method
 - HOOK – Why do I care about this subject?
 - BOOK – What does the Bible or Catechism say?
 - LOOK – What does the Bible or Catechism mean?
 - TOOK – How do I apply this?
- ❖ Learning
 - Should be fun
 - Should be relevant
 - Should interactive (translate knowledge into action)