

Building for Youth Ministry

Your church's youth ministry is where the future leaders of your church or other churches are being molded and disciplined into productive, responsible, evangelistic young adults. Investing in the youth ministry area of your church and providing for them a safe-haven of acceptance and unconditional love is crucial. More and more of these teens come to church on their own in search of family, support, and sound direction. It is the responsibility of the church to take advantage of every opportunity to touch the lives of these teens. A well-equipped, well-maintained, attractive facility tells a teen that the church cares about them and is willing to spend time and effort on them.

As a committee, work through the following list of recommendations and suggestions for building to the unique needs of youth ministry.

Space and Usage Needs

Assess the present space and determine whether renovation or a new building is needed.

Check the square footage of present youth ministry space.

Square footage requirements:

Department rooms: minimum 11 square feet per person

Classrooms: minimum 13 square feet per person

Large group space: minimum 12 square feet per person

Analyze current attendance and usage of current space (enrollment plus 50% of the prospects for Sunday school).

Determine the amount of additional space you will need in the future (based on projected growth). Remember that when space is 80% full, growth stops.

Assess the space needs specific to your youth ministry by asking the following questions:

Will the space be used for Sunday school, Wednesday night, youth discipleship times, etc.? If the space is to be used for all three, how flexible will the space need to be in order to adapt for the different needs of each meeting time?

What are your audio-visual needs?

Will you need to provide a stage area for a band or drama team?

How many students attend each meeting time and what will their future needs be?

Will this space be used for other age groups in the church or youth only?

How will the rooms be set up for each type of event? (I.e. tables, folding chairs, stack chairs, etc.)

Classroom and Large Group Area Needs

Use sound-resistant, durable materials for walls, floors and ceilings. Youth events often create more noise than other church events. Walls must be durable to allow for thumbtacks, tape, staples, and other fasteners used to create the unique décor of a youth area.

Choose flooring that is easy to clean. Youth often sit on the floor during their events and meetings, making it important to keep the floor clean and comfortable.

Arrange for high ceilings. High ceilings lessen noise and open up smaller spaces.

Install double the normal number of electrical outlets and install independent, larger amp breakers. Youth events often use a great deal of electricity for sound equipment, lights, televisions, computers, etc.

Use glass doors for classrooms for the protection of both students and workers. Parents and other passers-by should always be able to see what is happening inside the classroom.

Install top-quality blinds on windows leading outside. Many youth events use video or drama effects that require total darkness.

Select durable and functional furniture. Stacking chairs are often more durable and stable than folding chairs.

Consider all options in building design, such as opening all classrooms and department rooms into the hallway instead of into other rooms to allow options for room use.

Additional Room Needs

Welcome area or foyer:

Provide a spacious welcome or check in location where workers and students can greet guests and register members without causing congestion.

Provide an outside entrance into the youth area and a way to lock off the rest of the building from the youth area. When students return from trips or gather for events, it is often at a time when the rest of the congregation is not meeting and the entire building need not be unlocked.

Install a phone line in the main youth area so that youth can call home for a ride at the end of a trip and so that the youth leadership can have access the Internet. Be sure to put a block on long distance calls from the youth line.

Restrooms:

Make sure that restrooms are readily accessible.

Make sure that restrooms are accessible for the physically impaired.

Kitchen and/or Eating Area:

Strongly consider providing a functional kitchen area including the following appliances and conveniences:

Refrigerator

Oven and/or Range

Counter Space

Storage Space for Serving Ware and Dry Goods

Microwave

Deep Freezer

Consider installing vending machines for convenience.

Storage Area:

Provide lockable storage space large enough to house all sound and video equipment if necessary.