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How do I use this guide?

This guide is simply a list of ideas and suggestions to promote your Youth Group and its events. It is by no means an exhaustive list and we hope that with an excellent team in your group, you can come up with even more excellent ideas.

Quick idea...

If you haven't seen a face around in a while and you think they'd still get a lot out of your youth group, send them a postcard or letter in the mail. A personal touch is really valuable! Nothing heavy, just a quick note to say you'd love to see them around again.

Promoting Your Youth Group

Ok so you have just started up an amazing youth group and/or maybe your brilliant youth group could do with a boost in numbers.

Plan it... The best way to accomplish the best result is through planning. With any recruitment drive, sit down and plan out your timeline for promoting - you may find that the best times for recruiting are NOT during exam periods! Delegate different tasks across your group and allocate a recruitment person to make sure they follow through on all those action items. A good idea is to have a recruitment drive EVERY year - you can never have too many people!

Social Media... Use Facebook, Twitter or a website (if you have one!) – keep it up-to-date and the information clear. Make sure someone is in charge of replying to emails, posts and enquiries promptly. Make sure a few trusted leaders have access so that if one person is away, the content is still fresh and enquiries are responded to.

Parish bulletin/newsletter... Run a social event and pop a notice in the bulletin, sometimes people just need to know when and where to turn up. Food also can be a good incentive.

Mass... Ask your Parish Priest if you can talk for just two minutes at your Parish Masses, let them know who you are, what you do and when and where you meet. Keep it short and share the load with other members of your group. After Mass, hang around as you might get questions from parents, grandparents or young people. You can also try talking to young people after Mass. We all notice when there is a new face in the parish, especially if they are a young age, so go and have a conversation – you'd be amazed at the power of a friendly face.

Friends... Recruit your friends... Anyone who has been in a youth group knows that this is the best way and one of the most difficult ways. Asking a friend to come to your youth group and give it a try takes a lot of courage from both the person asking and the person agreeing, but it can be incredibly rewarding. Maybe your group could have a social night where everyone brings a friend.

Schools... Depending on the average age of your youth group, you may be able to promote through a local school. The key here is to develop a good relationship with the school. If your parish is connected to the school, ask your Parish Priest for his advice on approaching the school and then try to build a relationship with a key contact. Once you have a good relationship with the school, this will open many doors, such as allowing you to put a notice in the school newsletter.

Universities... If your Youth Group is near a University or you attend a Uni, why not have a chat to the University Chaplain and let them know about your youth group.

Use the AOY... If you are a new youth group – let the AOY know! We have a list of Youth Groups sorted by suburb on our website, just send us through your group's name, parish, suburb, contact person and a brief description detailing when and where you meet, what you do and what age group. You can check out some other examples at: www.cam.org.au/youth/get-involved/-Find-a-Youth-Group.aspx We have been told genuine stories of new members who have been found via our website!

Promoting Your Events

Now you have great numbers and want to see lots of new faces at your events – here are a few suggestions to help promote your events...

Be organised... To get the most out of your marketing, you need to plan. With any new events, sit down and plan out your timeline for promoting working backwards from the event date or deadline. Delegate different tasks across your group and allocate a communications person to make sure everyone follows through on all their tasks.

Promo materials... Flyers are still a great promotional tool, you can send them to surrounding parishes and also get them to the AOY and we can put them out at Six30 Holy Hour. It's a good idea to get to know the people around you – is there someone who can do your graphic design in the parish (a uni student or parishioner?), is there a printer in the parish congregation? You'd be amazed at what you can find. Pop a notice in your parish bulletin asking for help! If not, have a go yourself – just remember to keep it simple and the information clear.

Social Media... Use Facebook, Twitter or a website (if you have one!) – keep it up-to-date and the information clear. If you are using Facebook, try not to bombard people too much – they might start to ignore you! Mix up the promotions by making a funny short video and get it online... might be a viral hit!

Parish bulletin/newsletter... The bulletin is there to promote parish events and you are a vital member of your parish community. Keep the message short and simple – there is always limited space available.

Mass... If your event is really big then ask your Parish Priest if you can talk about it for just two minutes at your Parish Masses. Do keep it short and share the load with other members of your group. Simply tell them who you are, explain the group and tell them what and when the event is. If it's a fundraiser, let them know about that too. Hang about after Mass just in case there are questions from parishioners.

Schools... Depending on the target age group of your event, you may be able to promote through a local school. You can email and/or post any posters or flyers that you have produced for them to display.

Universities... If your Youth Group is near a University or you attend a Uni, why not have a chat to the University Chaplain and see how they could assist in promoting your event.

Network... Get to know other youth groups and their leaders in your local area. They might want to join in too and bring their whole youth group to your next trivia night.

Use the AOY... So what can the AOY do for you? You can send through your event details to aoy@cam.org.au and we can post it to our calendar with your event flyer for download. An example of the information we need is:

Title: World Youth Day Southern Region Info Session

Description: If you are interested in learning more or have questions about the upcoming World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in July 2013, join us at a regional information day near you.

When: Sunday 7 October, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Where: St Gerard's Parish Hall, 71 Gladstone Road, Dandenong North 3175

More information / Contact: Brendan Lindsay, on 9412 3306 or email: wyd2013@cam.org.au

You can also post your event to our wall on Facebook or if you have flyers, we will put them out at Six30 Holy Hour on the flyer table. We can also add your events to the Six30 Holy Hour Songsheet (space permitting) in a similar format to the above and put your events out through our Parish Youth Leaders Network.

Think ahead... Think about setting up a contact list database at your event. Put a signup sheet at the door asking for permission to use emails to contact people about future events. You can also ask people to join your Facebook group or like your page to keep in touch.

Don't forget to always be creative!