

5 Signs of an Excellent Youth Leader

By [Greg Stier](#)



As I travel down the youth ministry highway I get the privilege of encountering a lot of excellent youth leaders along the way. As I speed along it's hard not to notice the signs of youth leaders who are truly making a difference:

1. Yield

Youth leaders who are excellent are fully yielded to God in their own personal lives. For them their personal consecration to God is their top priority. They take the challenge of Paul in Romans 6:13 personally, *“Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.”*

Sure these youth leaders are working hard to produce talks that are impacting, small groups that are effective and a youth ministry model that rocks. But their top priority is their own walk with God. These youth leaders know that they can only lead their students as deep as they are willing to go personally.

2. Detour

“Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means ‘son of Timaeus’), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called to the blind man, ‘Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.’ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him. The blind man said, ‘Rabbi, I want to see.’ ‘Go,’ said Jesus, ‘your faith has healed you.’ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”

Mark 10:46-52.

Jesus took detours from walking down the ministry road before him to help those who needed it. Great youth leaders do the same. They keep their eyes and ears open to the silent cries of the hurting teenagers they encounter along the way. They make the time to love the unloveable and introduce them to the life-transforming power of Jesus.

3. One Way

Youth leaders worth their salt teach an unpopular message in a culturally effective way. They preach Jesus as *“the way and the truth and the life”* (John 14:6.) This brand of youth leaders share an exclusive message (Jesus is the only way) in an inclusive way (all are welcome to believe in Him!)

This exclusive message is unpacked in Acts 4:12, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”* The inclusive way is seen in Colossians 3:11, *“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”*

Youth leaders lovingly, strategically and boldly preach faith in Jesus based on his death, burial and resurrection as the one and only way of salvation. But they do it in a way that welcomes all who accept him through faith.

4. Rest Stop

Excellent youth leaders make time to rest, relax and reset. During these seasons they can have time to pray unhindered and seek the direction God wants them to go without a multitude of distractions vying for their attention.

Jesus took time to get away to pray. He took several *“rest stops”* on his ministry journey to get refueled by the Father. This is clearly demonstrated in Luke 5:16, *“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”*

When's the last time you took a DAWG Day (Day Alone With God) or just went on a prayer walk at a nearby park (leaving your cell phone in the car of course) just to rest a bit in the loving arms of your Heavenly Father? To be a youth leader who is effective you need to be affected by the reenergizing power of your Heavenly Daddy.

5. School Zone

The youth leaders I know who are getting it done have a heart for the schools that their students attend. They know that this is the mission field that God has placed their students on and are relentlessly equipping them to be missionaries there.

Some youth leaders become assistant coaches, teacher's aides and tutors just to be in proximity with their students, all the while encouraging them to live out their faith and reach other students for Jesus. By the way if you need some great resourcing in mobilizing your teenagers to reach their schools for Jesus check out www.everyschool.com. It has a ton of great tools (including many from [Dare 2 Share](#).)

These are five of the signs of excellent youth leaders. What are some other signs that should be added to the list and why?

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