

## Creating a Family Culture in Youth Ministry

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Carrie Brooks & Micah Marshall

### Summary

This video discusses the importance of creating a family culture within youth ministries. Carrie Brooks from Connection Church shares her insights and strategies for fostering a sense of belonging and community among youth. She emphasizes the need to consistently use family-oriented language, maintain regular communication and engagement with students outside of weekly meetings, and build strong relationships through small groups. The key points include referring to the ministry as a 'family,' contacting students individually through texts, calls, and handwritten notes, attending extracurricular activities, and structuring small groups to facilitate long-term connections. The overall goal is to provide a supportive environment where youth feel known, loved, and accepted, especially for those lacking a stable family structure.

### Main Points

#### Talking Family All the Time

Carrie stresses the importance of consistently using family-oriented language and referring to the youth ministry as a 'family.' This includes using the term 'family' in announcements, conversations, social media, and even disciplinary moments. The goal is to reinforce the idea that the youth ministry is where students feel known, loved, and included, regardless of their family backgrounds.

#### Showing Up for Students

In addition to using family language, Carrie emphasizes the need for leaders and volunteers to engage actively with students outside of weekly meetings. This includes praying for students by name, sending individual texts, calls, or voice memos, and handwritten cards. The key is maintaining regular communication and showing students they are valued and cared for. Leaders are also encouraged to attend students' extracurricular activities, such as sports events or performances, to support and cheer them on.

## **Building Family Through Small Groups**

Carrie highlights the importance of small groups in fostering a family culture within the youth ministry. Students are placed in the same small group throughout their time in the ministry, allowing them to build long-term relationships and a sense of community. Small group events and activities are organized to facilitate bonding and connection among group members.

### **Action Items**

- Consistently use family-oriented language and refer to the youth ministry as a 'family' in all communications, announcements, and student interactions.
- Implement a communication plan for leaders and volunteers to regularly reach out to individual students through texts, calls, voice memos, and handwritten cards.
- Encourage leaders and volunteers to attend students' extracurricular activities, such as sports events or performances, to show support and build stronger relationships.
- Structure small groups to facilitate long-term connections by keeping students in the same group throughout their time in the youth ministry.
- Organize small group events and activities to foster bonding and a sense of community among group members.