



Paul's Parent Meeting Guide

(For those who dread meetings and/or parents)

Introduction

Some people love parents meetings and others dread them . I am the former. Well, now I am. Now that I have teenagers of my own I am more comfortable, but when I was in my twenties, I was clueless. I thought parents were obstacles in the way of having a successful youth ministry and my job was to jump over them or get around them. What I realized is, they are people looking for answers, direction, and above all, hope for their families.

I am offering a few simple tips to help you conduct a parents meeting. This is not so much a “do it this way” but a collection of thoughts that have served me well over the years. Enjoy.

Paul Turner

What kind of meeting is this?

Deciding what kind of meeting this will be is the first step to planning it. Here are some options

Informative

Is this a meeting to share information on the coming year or quarter? If it is, this kind of meeting make sure families have the following:

- Calendars of all the months you are covering.
- An opportunity to comment on potential conflicts.
- Potential costs for events (or add TBA)
- Potential fundraisers to pay for these events
- Yearly Permission Forms

Training

This kind of meeting is asking parents to learn a new skill like social media or learning about new trends in teen culture. Some things to consider for this meetings:

- Is the subject matter compelling? Is it relevant?
- Are you the best or only person to give this talk or is there someone else better at it?
- Will you be using a power point or keynote presentation? Will you or someone else run the run the technology?
- Do you have fill in the blank hand outs or a booklet as a take away?
- Is there a time of small group discussion or interaction vs just straight lecture? This could be a very informative time not only for them but for you to see where blind spots and biasses exist.

Setting the date

Busy schedules make it tough for parents to get to many meetings. Here are some thoughts on picking the right date.

- **Look at the church calender for conflicts.**
- **Look at the your school calendar(s) for conflicts.**
- **Take a quick poll of the parents and see which day of the week is best. I choose Sundays and feed the parents after church.**
- **Pick a date and stick with it. A sudden change in dates can throw parents into a panic and you may not have time or the means to inform many parents of the change.**

Time

Meetings can turn from blessing to curse in a matter of minutes. Time each segment of your meeting so you will have ample time to cover each area:

Devotion- 10 min.

Eat- 15 min.

Calendars- 20 min.

Q and A- 10 min

Closing Prayer and Comments 10 min

I try to keep my meetings to an hour if they are informative and ninety minutes if they are training.

Promoting your meeting

Using a multitude of ways to promote your meetings will increase your attendance.

- If you do a year long calendar include future parent meetings. Keep the dates consistent such as the third Tuesday of every month.
- Put the meeting in the bulletin a month out (and every week after)
- Create a Facebook Event if many of your parents are Facebook users: three weeks out.
- Make calls to key parents you want in attendance. The rule of thumb is: If you want key parents to show up, give them a job like sharing a devotion or a testimony (two weeks out)
- Send post cards two weeks out. This is especially good for the new parents in your church you don't have e-mails on yet.
- Send out an e-mail or text blast the week of the meeting.
- You may want to include incentives for coming to the meeting like: free camp give away or family movie packages, etc.

I have a Get The Word out promotions checklist in the freebie section of [my website](#) to make sure you are not missing a promotions opportunity.

Note: Every meeting is a great time to do a survey. I have included a simple survey at the end of this guide. This survey was to gauge what our parents thought about our current programs.

Post Meeting Follow Up

Unfortunately, there will be many parents who will not make these meetings for one reason or another. Be sure to:

- E-mail a complete outline of the meetings and all the paper work you passed out along with the date of the next meeting.
- Send a thank you to all the parents who did come or served with a date of the next meeting.
- Send out material you were not able to cover or bonus material that complements or reinforces the material you covered (links to articles, etc.)

Most of my meetings have a sampling of each of these elements. Here is a brief list of what I try to have at each meeting

- Food (a real meal not pizza) . I usually try to have this catered in. Subway is a good bargain and it's healthy.
 - A devotion (given by me or another parent i.e. giving away a job)
 - A look at where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.
 - Q and A time, Usually after each section I will open it up for questions or comments
 - A snippet of the latest cultural facts. You can find plenty of re-tweeted links on Twitter by entering #teens or you can subscribe to the [Center of Parent and Youth Understanding](#) newsletter.
 - Family prayer. I usually have students stand and have parents lay their hands on them and pray for them together.
- * I have included my notes from a recent parents meeting I had on the next page.

Parent Meeting Notes

Four Things Our Youth Ministry Can't Do (And Two Things It Can)

1. **It can't spend it's way to making your kids spiritually healthy.** In other words, to build a strong youth ministry, we don't need a new _____, we need loving relationships.
2. **It can't out entertain MTV, Video Games, or Movies.** Although youth ministry is entertaining at times, our chief function is to challenge students to own and live out their faith.
3. **It can't save our kids or keep them saved.** When our children trust in Christ, it's our role as parents, to help them understand this faith and what does it mean to live it out. Youth ministry is a collective organism, of varying faith levels. We, the youth ministry, in partnership with parents, help students understand what it means to be the church individually and collectively.
4. **It can't have more impact or influence than you.** Every poll I've seen, says we, the parents, still have the greatest influence on our kids. As hard as the youth ministry (the youth pastor and the caring adults who help) may try, we are not the silver bullet for changing lives, we the parents are.

Two Things Our Youth Ministry Can Do/Should Do

1. **Create an Atmosphere To Know and Worship God.** This is where our Wednesday night Fusion comes in. We do our best, through bands, videos, teaching, etc, to give students a worship opportunity among their peers. We give them a chance to let it all hang before God.
2. **Create Opportunities to be Like Jesus.** The youth ministry also offers a collective opportunity to be more like Jesus. We use foreign and local missions to expand students expectations of their place in the world. We offer students the chance to be a part of change and to be changes by these experiences.

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Parent Survey

Name _____

Address _____

Phone# _____

E-Mail _____

What Is the Best Way To Connect With You ?

_____ Facebook _____ Text _____ Email _____ Other _____

Please rate the following student ministry programs on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not helpful, 5 = very helpful):

_____ Wednesday Night Fusion	_____ Missions (Speed the Light)
_____ Sunday School	_____ Camp and Retreats
_____ Church Service	_____ Endeavor Student Leadership
_____ Fine Arts	_____ Outreaches (5th Quarters, etc)

What topics would you like the Youth Ministry to cover in 2011?

In what ways can the youth ministry do a better job of equipping you to disciple your child? Check all that apply

_____ Parent Conferences

_____ Sunday School Class (once a year)

_____ More links and article in the Infused News

_____ Parent Prayer Meetings

_____ Small Coffee and Conversation Meetings

_____ I would like to help coordinate some of these

Three Month Look Ahead

December

- Progressive Dinner Saturday Cost \$5 (bring a gift, minimum of \$10.00)
- Live in the Mountains (details) on the 27th-31st
- Parents Sunday School (sign up)

January

- Discipleship Camp January 14-16
- Ministry Fair Sunday January 16th
- Parents: Leadership Rocks Equipping Conference January 20th
- Saturday January 22nd Endeavor Leadership Boot Camp Cost \$20

February

- February 4-6 D-Now (Cost \$25)
- February 12th Winter Jam Concert \$10
- Small Groups Kick Off (Sunday February 13th?)

March

March 4th Leadership Rocks

March 11th Lock In (Cost \$10.00)

March 24-26th Youth Convention

Books on Parent Ministry

Youth Workers Guide To Parent Meeting - Marv Penner

Partnering with Parents - Jim Burns

Engaging Parents as Allies by Wayne Rice

After You Drop Them Off- A Parents Guide To Youth Ministry by Jeramy Clark

People To Follow On Twitter

@DiscipleLikeJesus

@ParentLikeJesus

@ParentsCoach

@TalkingTeenage

@KaiserFamFound