

# Committee Ownership of Church Collaborations



Young Life is on a quest to build strong relationships with local churches in every area. We want to share resources as we collaborate to impact adolescents in each of our communities.

Staff are already burning the candle at both ends ministering to kids and recruiting and training leaders to do the same. In most communities, committee members are involved in a variety of churches and have relationships with several more. Therefore, they are the most effective entity to take the lead in building bridges to local churches.

True collaboration should benefit all parties involved. Here are some assets Young Life can bring to the church, and vice versa.

## What can Young Life offer the Church?

- New kids begin attending church, often times with their families close behind.
- Meaningful roles for service are offered to church members (mentoring leaders, serving with Capernaum, YoungLives, committee roles, volunteer leaders).
- Church youth are offered YL weekend camps and weekly programs to further develop their faith. This is especially useful when no full-time youth pastor is in place.
- Church youth staff are invited to join local YL leadership for training and fellowship with no strings attached.
- WyldLife weekend camps
- Training for how the church can attract and welcome Gen Z.

## What can the Church offer Young Life?

- Potential young adult leaders to train.
- A place for new believers and families to grow in their faith for life.
- Lend credibility to help YL connect with other churches in our quest to be fully ecumenical.
- Prayers of church people buoy Young Life leaders and their efforts.
- Financial resources that help stabilize areas through staff transitions.
- Space for meetings
- Committee representatives to serve as liaisons between the church and Young Life

## How to Get Started

- Compile a list of area churches and people within them known by a committee member. Then, prioritize the first few to contact.
- If the area already has a working relationship with a church, meet with them first to discern next steps to grow their involvement. Sometimes it's helpful to develop a written agreement.
- If there is a church pastor who is excited about collaborating with Young Life, recruit them to join you in prospecting to other churches.
- Decide with your area director which collaboration model(s) are the best fit right now.
- Familiarize yourself with the tools for speaking to churches so you feel confident.
- Request a meeting with the pastor and/or missions committee. Invite your staff person to attend. Remember, this is a relational process and will likely involve multiple meetings.
- Keep records of progress with each church on your list.

## Going Forward

- Determine a useful cadence for updates and communication that includes church feedback.
- Be looking to grow each church's involvement – what is a good next step?

## Pictures of Collaboration at Work *(check those desired - a minimum of 4 should be in place)*

- Church youth leaders (volunteer or staff) serve as volunteer leaders on a local Young Life team.

- Campaigners replaces high school youth group, and club is offered to church kids to reach their friends.
- WyldLife becomes the junior high ministry of the church.
- Church adults are offered roles in Young Life; including, volunteer leader, committee, mentor, Capernaum buddy or YoungLives childcare worker.
- Meeting space is provided for Capernaum or YoungLives meetings. Church volunteers are recruited to help.
- YL kids who have already been to camp participate in church service projects and mission opportunities.
- Previously unchurched kids are invited to attend this church (and their families may follow).
- Students from the church are invited to attend Young Life weekend camps and other retreats.
- Occasional Young Life updates are shared in front of the church for prayer. A Student testimony can also be powerful.
- Pastors recognize Young Life kids and leaders from up front so they feel welcome.
- The church supports Young Life financially.

Seed \$ for Shared Staff – Young Life provides seed money to be matched by a primarily black or brown church for the hiring of a youth staff who would lead a Young Life club as well as minister to youth at that church. Contact [Bebe Hobson](#) to apply.

### **Church Collaboration Talking Points**

*Once you and your area staff have agreed on what types of collaborative relationships you seek with churches, it is time to set up some meetings. Obviously, you should start with the low-hanging fruit which is typically where a committee member or YL advocate attends. Below are some suggestions for these conversations...*

#### **Confirm a Working Knowledge of Young Life** (you might give them a “YoungLife, In it with Kids” brochure)

- Our history - Gainesville Presbyterian hired Jim Rayburn in 1939. Jim’s head pastor felt burdened for all the youth in town not involved in church. He told Jim to leave the church building and spend time with kids on their turf. He began club meetings in student homes. YL incorporated in 1941.
- Our mission – “Introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith.”
- Our scope – 105 countries, all 50 states, and working with over 4 million adolescents a year. Share what is happening in the local ministry.
- Our programs – the 6 C’s of YL (Contact work, Club, Camp, Campaigners, Church, Committee). Beginning with WyldLife and extending through YL College. Also mention Capernaum and YoungLives as they are very attractive to churches.
- Our limitations - acknowledge that we only work with kids for a short while with the goal of meaningfully plugging them into the church for life. We want to build this bridge while they are still under our influence. How can we work together?
- Ecumenical - We are not parachurch, but Para Parochial; meaning, we do not desire to work separately from the church but to be sent by the church into our various communities. We are now, and have always been, ecumenical and invite all denominations to work together. We share the gospel and let the church do the doctrinal fine tuning.

\*We may not have the same views on some minor doctrinal matters, but we agree on the essentials; specifically those included in [Young Life’s Statement of Faith](#).