

PROGRAMME PLANNING

GOAL:

To develop an understanding of the skills involved in planning purposeful activity and effective ministry

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- a.
 - i. write functional long and short term goals
 - ii. outline the steps needed to plan a specific event
 - iii. show how they will allocate time needed for the different aspects of the job
 - iv. list the essential elements and processes of a publicity campaign
- b.
 - i. explain how time management, goal setting and programme planning are essential
 - ii. give an example of how they would publicise a specific event.
- c.
 - i. design and implement a comprehensive long term plan which includes: goals, time-frame, evaluation, report to governing body and funding source.
 - ii. design and implement a comprehensive short term plan which includes: goals, time-frame, planning for a specific event

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WHAT TO DO

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| Step One | Why plan? | 45 mins |
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1. Read the 'Introduction to Planning', page 5.
 - a. Discuss with your mentor a time when you have been frustrated or embarrassed by bad planning. What are the consequences of not planning well, or at all?
 - b. List 5 advantages of planning ahead in youth ministry. For each one give an example of how this would benefit your ministry. Discuss with your mentor.

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| Step Two | What is Planning? | 1 hour |
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2. Think of an event that you helped plan recently.
 - a. Write down all the steps that happened in planning that event. Start with the original idea, then what planning you did to make it happen, through to what happened afterwards. This may be in the form of a list, written description, or a diagram.
 - b. Reflect on what happened. Was the way that event was planned adequate? excellent? frustrating? What did not really work?

Write a half-page evaluation of the event.

3. For each of the following concepts briefly write
 - a. a definition
 - b. one example from your ministry

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| Goal | Mission Statement |
| Evaluation | Objective |
| Consultation | Report |
| Strategy | |

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| Step Three | Models of planning | 1 hour |
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4. Read the Models of Planning section of the Resources (pages 6 - 10).
 - a. Which model seems closest to the way you plan ... which is most 'common sense' to you? Write a paragraph briefly describing the main steps of the model you have chosen.
 - b. Choose a model that is new to you. Write a paragraph briefly outlining the main steps in this model. Then write another paragraph highlighting the differences between this and your 'common sense' model.
 - c. Compare the model you have chosen in (a) with your planning experience in question (2). List any similarities and differences.

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| Step Four | Keeping track of your time | 1 hour |
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5. Read the section on Time Management in the Resource Material (pages 15-16)
 - a. Use the Total Time Sheet (page 25) to record what you do for at least two days. Chose one normal working day, and one other day. Fill in the optional categories at the top of the Sheet. Write in what you do, then tick each 30 minutes under a category.
 - b. Add up the totals for each category you have. From these, calculate roughly what percentage of your time you actually spend on the different categories.
 - c. Reflect: Do you feel happy with the way you spend your time? What do you do that is not important? What does not get done that you would like to do? Why? Discuss this with your mentor.

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| Step Five | Taking Charge of your time | 1 hour, 45 min |
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6. Refer to the Ten Timely Tips in the Time Management Resource Material (pages 18-23) Which of these Ten Tips do you struggle with the most? Choose three areas that you sometimes find hard. For each one, write a few sentences on:
 - a. What is your usual way of dealing with this?
 - b. How would you like to deal with this differently?
 - c. What is one thing you will do to grow in this area?
7. Plan your time for a whole week:
 - a. Use either the 'Areas of Work', (page 26-27) or 'Priority Tasks to Do' Sheet (page 28) to write your goals and tasks for the week in advance.
 - b. Make 7 copies of the 'Time Schedule' Tasks to Do Sheet, (page 29) one for each day. Decide on your priorities for that day, estimate the time each task will take, plan it into the diary, then keep a record of what you actually did and when.
 - c. After the week, reflect on the exercise. Write a page on:
 - i. What did you find difficult about planning your time in this way?
 - ii. What did you learn about yourself by doing this?
 - iii. What aspects of this process will you use beyond this module?

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| Step Six | Promoting Your Plans | 3 Hours |
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8. Read the Publicity section of the Resource Material (p13-14).
 - a. Prepare a piece of publicity material for a youth ministry programme, (e.g. a camp registration form, a poster, or something more active such as busking in the Mall).
 - b. Copy the Checklist for Written Material (p 14) for 2 people in your target audience. Ask them to fill it out to evaluate your publicity.
 - c. Evaluate the publicity yourself Write a reflection on its success, using the Checklist in the Resource Material. In particular:
 - Who was your target audience?
 - How were you trying to communicate?
 - How did you attract their attention?
 - Did you include all the necessary information?
 - What response did it generate?

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| Step Seven | Programme Planning | 6 hours |
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9. Prepare and carry out a plan for a specific programme in your youth ministry. It could be an ordinary youth group activity, or a special event. You may use any planning process you chose, but you need to show that you have put in place some of the learnings from this Module
- Write down a detailed description of the, whole process, including
 - the purpose of the event - **why** you are doing it
 - your goals/hopes/objectives - **what** do you plan to achieve
 - your methods - **how** you are going about it. **When** it is happening. **Who** is doing what.
 - your report - **who** you reported to.
 - your evaluation - **whether** it achieved its purpose

Afterwards reflect on the whole process with your mentor, or leadership team.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Introduction to Planning

Planning. Does the word make you feel 'Yes! Great! Let's do it!' or 'Oh well, I know I have to but it's really a big drag'? Some people just don't like planning. They see it as trying to control life when it's much more fun to just 'go with the flow' and take life as it comes. Some people decide what they are doing for the day, in what order, before they have finished breakfast. Others only have the vaguest idea.

< Which sort of person are you?

< Are you looking forward to this module, or are you only doing it because you have to?

WHY PLAN?

The starting point for planning is your basic purpose. Something must be motivating you to be involved in youth ministry, and it is only when you feel you are making progress that you will stay with it. The problem is that it is very easy to get distracted by lots of other things (some of which seem urgent), so that what is really important falls by the wayside.

"I became a youth leader because I really wanted to get to know the kids. But lately I have been so busy organising activities and dashing from one thing to the next that I haven't had any time to just sit and talk to anyone. I'm so frustrated I feel like giving it all away. "

A goal is a dream with a deadline. Planning is a vital in helping you stay on track with what you really want to achieve. It encourages you to dream big dreams, and forces you to choose what is most important. Then it makes sure that you put in place small steps that lead you in the right direction, that close the gap between the reality and the ideal. Pinning your dreams down into goals takes courage and hard work, but staying with vague hopes just leads to getting disillusioned and frustrated.

Planning is essential in youth ministry, ensuring that you:

- clarify the needs of young people and your hopes for them
- don't waste energy on things that aren't appropriate
- are accountable to the young people and to the faith community
- build team work through honest sharing and involvement
- make the most effective use of the time, energy, money and resources that you have.

< *Why are you in youth ministry?*

< *What are your dreams?*

There are many examples in the Bible of people planning ahead. Look up and reflect on: Joseph's planning in Gen 41:46-49, Jer 29:1, Jesus sending out the 70 in Luke 10, Acts 2:23, and Eph 1: 10. Jesus says that it is vital that we are planning and worrying about the right things (Luke 12: 12-34).

BUT ... Fortunately for us, it is not all up to us. We can't be always in control. "The best laid plans of mice and men ... " All our planning must have flexibility built in, some space for God to surprise us.

"Sometimes the best times I have with young people is when they interrupt my carefully planned programme. They are real, surprising individuals, not numbers in my plan. "

There comes a point in every plan when we have to let go of our human hopes and expectations and simply trust in the One who "by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we ask or even imagine" (Ephesians 3:20). Also Proverbs 19:21.

God give me the courage to change the things I can change, to accept the things I can't and the wisdom to know the difference. (Serenity Prayer)

Models of Planning

Everything we do has some element of planning. How we go about it is mostly unconscious and just 'common sense'. Here are three different ways of structuring this, to make sure that our planning really does achieve what we want it to. They are all rather long-winded, and may seem clumsy to read. At first it is good to work through them carefully. Then you are free to incorporate parts of these models into the way you naturally work.

ABCDEF starts from the needs of the young people, and works by brainstorming ideas then choosing those most appropriate. **The Framework model** starts from the existing realities of your ministry, and juggles competing hopes and expectations to set the plan. **The 13 Step approach** is a clear logical structure from start to finish, with a special emphasis on teamwork.

ABCDEF

This approach to planning works through 6 steps which start from the needs of the people you are working with, to clarify the purpose, set goals and practical objectives, run a programme, and evaluate it.

This planning model is described in full detail in "Looking Ahead, Planning the year's program for youth group", by Mary-Ruth Marshall, produced by the Joint Board of Christian Education in Australia. It may still be available from Epworth Bookshop

On page ? there is a worksheet to guide you through the planning part of this model.

A. Analyse Needs

Good program planning always begins with needs. When planning for youth ministry, the needs of the young people are the starting point. So how can we find out what their needs are?

Ç **Ask the members** ... hold a discussion at the group about what they want to do; have survey of checklist; involve young people in your planning group.

Ç **Ask other adults** consult others who work with the young people, eg parents, teachers.

Ç **Consult the research** ... there is material written about the needs of young people which is worth reading: for instance the national church's youth policy, material produced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, youth work books in the library.

Once you have gathered some material, analyse it with the planning group. Brainstorm all the youth needs you can think of, then choose the 5-6 you feel are the highest priority.

B. Bring in your organisational goals

Practically any programs you will be planning will be part of a wider organisation, and so need to reflect the priorities, and help to implement the aims of that organisation. Youth ministry is part of the local faith community, which is itself part of the wider church. This step works out what the goals of the youth program are, and ensures that they are in line with the direction of the wider church.

Goals are general and long-term aims, or points to be reached in the future. They are most helpful when they are measurable and achievable, and well planned and phrased. This means that the goal describes behaviour appropriate for your group and the level of maturity and ability of its members.

Brainstorm:

1. What are the stated goals relating to youth ministry ... of your youth group? your local faith community? the wider regional/national church?
2. What are other goals or expectations, which may not be stated, but which are also important?
3. What else would you like to achieve?

Choose: 3-5 goals which are most important to your ministry. Write them down. Be specific.

Clarify Objectives

Objectives tell us where we are going, and how we will get there. They also spell out the signs that will tell us whether or not we have accomplished what we wanted to. They arise out of the needs and goals we have already identified, and are a practical expression of some ways to achieve them.

Take your needs and related goals one at a time. For each area, write 3-6 objectives, which would work towards meeting the need, or achieving the goal. Set a time frame for the objective. State what you will achieve in that period of time. Say this clearly and in a way that provides direction and stimulation for planning particular programs. Give some measures of progress. This is hard in ministry which is mainly subjective, but some objective tests are helpful.

D. Design Programme

A program is the total sum of activities of your youth ministry over a given period of time. Within the broad program, there will be several specific programs, such as a Youth Group night. **The key question is: what activities, programs and procedures might we use to achieve this objective?** Programs may achieve one or more of your objectives. Brainstorming is a useful tool for this, especially working with other people.

STEPS

1. Choose which objective(s) you will focus on.
2. Brainstorm all the ways you could go about achieving it. Value all ideas, however wild or impractical they may seem.
3. Choose which ideas are most appropriate and practical for your youth group.
4. Use resources to help you, eg ideas in books.
5. Get out your calendar, and put in the activities you chose, taking into account other things that affect the life of the group, such as holidays and other church events.
6. Be practical. Work out details of who will take responsibility for what, how much time is needed, and what resources/equipment you will need.

Use the 'ABCDEF Worksheet' to help with the planning process. An exemplar Worksheet is also included, on page ? as a sample of how to work it.

E. Enact the Programme

Some hints for putting your program into action:

1. Be **relaxed and flexible**. Spontaneity works best when it rests on a foundation of good planning.
2. **Assign responsibilities** and expect them to be carried out.
3. **Check carefully** over every detail.
4. **Show your interest** in what members and leaders are doing. Be involved yourself.
5. Make sure you have all the **helpers** needed, and that everyone knows what is expected of them.
6. **Anticipate** what's coming in the program. Keep looking ahead, and never leave any parts of planning to the last minute.
7. Expect the same standard of **reasonable behaviour** from everyone (including yourself)
8. Give members some responsibility for the program.
9. Provide **options** wherever possible.
10. Keep everyone **informed** about what is happening.

F. Find out how things went

The program isn't over until the evaluation is done. Finding out how things went, reflecting on your

progress in achieving the goals and objectives is essential. The more specific your objectives, the easier the evaluation.

FRAMEWORK MODEL

This model describes a practical way of making connections between where the kids are at, the Youth leaders' hopes, and the expectations of the Faith community. It uses down-to-earth language and concepts, and is straightforward to operate. It is particularly appropriate when there is an already existing youth group and a successful programme to build on. *The example shown is programme planning for a Parish Youth Group for the winter term.*

Step One: Gather Information

Hold a planning meeting. It can be helpful to find some things out beforehand.

What is happening ...

- in your faith community? (*special services*)
- in the Region? (*a regional youth event?*)
- National programmes? (*Youth Sunday*)
- Holidays dates (*School holiday dates for the different schools, mid-term break*)

What is going on for the kids? ...

- other activities (*some are busy with rugby, others have new after-school jobs*)
- how many are showing up?
- group dynamics (*Jane and Sean are going out, Nick and his sister are not getting on*)
- what interests them at the moment?
- what's going on at home? at school? (*exam stress at mid-year*)
- what are the gaps? what do they feel they're missing out on?

What do the kids want to do?

- Toss around some ideas, write down everything everyone has suggested.

What do you want to do with the kids?

- Think about what you'd like to achieve. Write down your own thoughts.

Who is going to be involved in leadership and support?

Gather a group of people to be part of the programme. This should include at least one youth group member, and a parent, plus someone from the faith community (*e.g. the minister*) to meet with the youth leaders.

Step Two: Set the Framework

Lay out on the floor a large piece of paper. Draw out the period of time that you are going to be planning. Mark down the months and days. Use a 'time-line', or draw circles/boxes for each session or use a big dairy or wall-planner.

Write in (using different colours?) the activities that are already planned that you will go to (e.g. Regional Youth Service), and prior commitments (e.g. regular time-slots), as well as holidays, and anything else that could affect your programme (e.g. exams)

Step Three: Make Connections

Get another large piece of paper. Draw a large circle in the middle, and divide the surrounding area into four. This is a brainstorming exercise, so write down everything that is said, even if someone else in the group doesn't agree with it.

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| What we want to communicate | What kids have energy for |
| What resources are available | What the Church expects |

1. In one quarter write down '**What do the kids have energy for?**'. Look back at the other questions in Step One about what is going on for the kids, and discuss any relevant information from that. The focus is on the things that the young people bring into the youth group that will affect their level of commitment and interest in the group.

(e.g. They are quite musical, or they are having hassles with their parents)

2. **What do you, the leaders, want to communicate** to the young people? What outcomes would you hope would flow out of the work you will be putting in to working with these kids? Write your response to this in the second section.

(e.g. I want these young people to catch a glimpse of the love of God,. or the importance of accepting one another in the group.)

3. In another section, write down what you see as **the expectations of your faith community**. This might include the place of the youth ministry in the wider mission of the church, the hopes of the parents for the youth group, or what the members of the congregation want to see happening (or not happening!).

(e.g. The oldies feel great when they see young people in church; or the parish wants to have an outreach to kids in the area.)

4. The fourth section is **what resources are available** for your programme. These include: available space in the church building, homes you could visit, budget for materials, books, outside help, who is willing to help in leadership, as well as how much time you are able to put into the youth work for this term/year/week.

5. **Making the links.** In the middle circle, brainstorm all your ideas for what you could offer the young people ... programme ideas, study themes, games, social activities. What could you do?

Step Four: Fill the Gaps

Now put both bits of paper side-by-side, and make some decisions about what you will do when. This involves setting priorities, and ensuring that your programme will flow naturally, and fit well within the limitations you started with.

Once you have set out the overall programme, then go through and work out what tasks need to be done to make it happen, and who will do them.

Remember to consider:

- Who do you need to consult with?
- How will you inform everyone? (including the kids, parents, and church)
- What resources will you need? (money, games equipment etc)
- Set a deadline for tasks to be done by (e.g. I will book a venue for the camp by next Tuesday) and accountability (and I'll let you know how I go).
- Keep a record of your decisions. It is very helpful if someone writes up some notes from the discussion, and everyone there gets a copy, so that action can be followed up. It is also important that a copy of all youth minutes get put in the church records.

13 STEP PLANNING MODEL

*This model was developed by John and Bonnie Hebenton,
from a Youth Ministry Resource Manual from the Diocese of Niagara.*

Step 1: Develop a planning team

A good size for this group varies from 2 to 6 people - at least someone else. The planning team should include members of the target group (e.g. the Youth Group). This is important to prevent your programme being a 'one-man-band'.

Step 2: Study the situation

Gather together all that you know about the group you are working with: ages, numbers, previous experiences, kinds of things the group likes doing, other things they do, influences such as environment, education, social and spiritual. Also: find out about the resources you have: budget, people, energy, skills.

Step 3: Set the purpose

If the group does not have a stated purpose for its existence, put one down in writing. A good clear purpose is the cornerstone for every design. It takes a lot of time to hammer it out and agree on it, but a clear purpose makes ideas come easier, and decisions quicker, clearer and more effective.

Step 4: Set priorities

Out of everything you would like to do, which will best achieve your purpose? Be realistic about the time and resources available and chose your priorities.

Step 5: Set Goals

Goals are short measurable statements that fulfil your purpose. See the 'Guidelines for setting goals' on the next page.

Step 6: Brainstorm Methods

Be free to brainstorm any and all methods that might in some way work towards the purpose and goals. Then choose those methods that the group thinks will be most effective.

Step 7: Outline the Methods and Design of the Programme

Put in writing how you will reach the goals. Work out your design and timetable from beginning to end.

Step 8: Check Resources

Think of and list the different resources which you will need to use; including venue, budget, materials.

Step 9: Assign Personnel

Choose the best people to do the various tasks. What will they need to know? What support will they need? Who will co-ordinate everything?

Step 10: Check the first 8 steps

Check back over your purpose, goals and programme to ensure that what you are planning will be appropriate to the situation.

Step 11: Plan for Evaluation

Set a date to reflect on how it went. Work out what you want to know and how you will find out other people's perspectives.

Step 12: Begin the Programme

'Just do it'

Step 13: Evaluate the Programme

Evaluation always happens in some way. The challenge is to do it in a way that gives you insights that help you do things better next time.

Ask:

- did we do what we set out to do?
- how did we work together?
- what worked well?
- or not so well?

Notes on Step 5: Guidelines for Setting Goals

Goals need to be **SMART**

| | |
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| Specific | You must have a clear picture in your mind of the goal ... what things will look like, sound like, be like, when the goal is achieved. |
| Measurable | Your goal must not only be something that you want to do, but that will encourage growth. Make sure it will not harm anyone else. There must be a way to tell when you have reached your goal |
| Achievable | If you plan to include others, make sure they are kept well informed and included |
| Realistic | The goals you set must be able to be done with the time, people and gifts you have. They must be consistent with your values and you must believe that you can reach your goal |
| Timed | Set a time frame and some way to tell whether you have achieved the goal or not |

Notes on Step 6: Exercise for Creating Ideas

Use these questions as starters for discussion – with young people, youth leaders, and others involved in planning. Try putting your answers up on big pieces of paper around the room, and invite responses from others. This should give you lots of ideas and information

What would you do for or with young people if ...

- you were the Mayor? the prime Minister?
- you were the church's minister?
- you had unlimited money?
- you could do only one thing?

Setting Personal Priorities

What am I doing here? ... an optional reflection

A lot of planning assumes that you actually know what basically you want to achieve in life. But in reality most of the time we drift along waiting for things to be decided for us. If we do want to really get somewhere, a basic question is 'Who do I want to be?' This Reflection is an optional exercise to become clearer about this. Write down your answers to the questions, or discuss them with your Mentor.

First read the first of the 'Ten Timely Tips' on page 18

1. What sort of person do you want to become?

Respond to this question by one of the following:

- Write down what you would like people to say at your funeral.
- List the qualities you admire most in other people.
- Draw a symbolic picture of yourself, as you would like to be in 10 years time.

1. Write a list of all the things you are trying to achieve at this stage in your life.

2. Re-write them under three headings:

- a. Top Priority Goals (things you are totally committed to)
- b. Wish-list Goals (things you would like to do if you have time)
- c. Clutter (things that I would rather not bother with)

3. Choose one Priority Goal that is not being developed as much as you would like.

Write a long and short term plan for achieving this goal, including:

- its purpose (why do you want to achieve this)
- objectives (what specific things do you want to achieve?)
- strategies for achieving it (what will you do about it?).

Publicity

Publicity is about communication. Everything we do or say, or not do or say, communicates something to someone. We can't **not** communicate. In our over-informationed society, publicity and profile are highly valued commodities. When the church attempts to enter the communication 'market', it is generally going to be out-priced and out-trended by big business. So it is absolutely essential that we know about what we are trying to communicate to whom. If not, our voice will just get lost in the noise.

Here are some suggestions as to how to develop excellent publicity material.

IT HELPS TO..

- **Be clear about what you want to say, and why you want to say it.** For instance, why are you holding the youth group dance? What do you hope to achieve?
- **Know whom you are communicating with,** and what motivates them to respond. Be clear about your 'target audience', and match the material to their language, interests, concerns, hopes and priorities.
- **Be creative.** Keep on looking for the winning formula that will grab people's attention. Have fun!
- **Find people to help you,** who have skills and resources, e.g. good computer person, a graphic artist, a kid who draws cartoons.
- **Collect other publicity that works.** Look at what makes it work, and use ideas. You may not have the resources to make glossy colour productions, but simple things can still make an impression.

PRACTICAL POINTERS

- ❖ Make sure that the important information stands out the most.
- ❖ Make sure that everything is legible.
- ❖ Use dramatic shapes and bold lettering.
- ❖ Find the 'catch phrases' that young people can relate to easily. This can also bring humour into it.
- ❖ KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid. Less is best.
- ❖ Be careful of your details. Get it right; check all dates, times, numbers and addresses before printing. Make sure that you include the name that cheques must be made out to.
- ❖ Don't assume that people will know much about you. It is easy for new people to feel excluded, even by simple things such as only signing your first name.
- ❖ Don't clutter up the page. Blank page can be more eye-catching than lots of words or pictures.
- ❖ Keep some consistency of image and colour if you are doing a series of events, so that people can easily identify your publicity. Developing your own special logo is a great help.
- ❖ Use pictures that add to what you are communicating. Avoid pictures just for the sake of them, or cliché repeated graphics.
- ❖ Think about the shape of the paper. It can be simple and very effective to cut the page into unique shapes (e.g. a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' ad can be cut into a teddy bear shape easily) or folding things into triangles ... anything to look distinctive.
- ❖ Choose distinctive colour paper. There are excellent bright papers available for not much extra cost. **STAND OUT!**

Checklist for Written Publicity Material

For use with task 9 (a), to evaluate your piece of written publicity. Make a copy of this and give it to 2 people in your target audience to evaluate

CHECKLIST

Good publicity needs to ...

1. Catch the eye.

The page is a winner in the paper war, because people will notice it.

2. Look professional

The appearance of the sheet communicates what you want it to.

3. Communicate something of your ethos and style.

The publicity creates a positive impression of your organisation.

4. Be appropriate to the motivations of the target audience.

The images and words are easily understood.

5. Contain all the necessary information:

- ❖ What the event will be, and a catchy name
- ❖ The date of the event
- ❖ The start and finish times
- ❖ The venue (*and direction, or transport available*)
- ❖ Any costs
- ❖ The name of the organisation running the event
- ❖ A contact person, address and phone number

6. Satisfy any legal requirements

Such as the signature of the parent/guardian if the young person is under 16 for a live-in event.

EVALUATION

How well did it catch your eye?

Great Some Not much

What did the look of it tell you?

If you didn't know who wrote this, what would you guess about them?

Was it appropriate to you?

Yes Sort of Not really

Did it include:

- What the event will be and a catchy name?
- The date of the event
- The start and finish times
- The venue (*and directions, or transport available*)
- Any costs
- The name of the organisation running the event
- A contact person, address and phone number

Can you think of anything it left out?

Overall how good was this publicity?

Excellent OK Useless

Any other comments?

Time Management

Alice sighed wearily. 'I think you might do something better with the time,' she said, 'than wasting it asking riddles with no answers.'

'If you knew time as well as I' said the Hatter, 'You wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's him.'

'I don't know what you mean,' said Alice.

'Of course you don't' the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. 'I daresay you never spoke to Time!'

'Perhaps not, 'Alice cautiously replied, 'but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.'

'Ah! That accounts for it,' said the Hatter. 'He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you like with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: you'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one, time for dinner!'

INTRODUCTION

Our time is the most valuable resource we have. It is an inescapable feature of human life. It characterizes every aspect of our lives: our work, our leisure and our relationships all unfold within time. Yet we seem to spend most of our lives frustrated by not having enough of it, killing time, wasting time, losing time or trying to squeeze too much out of it. Like the old joke that I would write a book on the problem of time, just as soon as I find the time! Those involved in ministry with people are especially prone to feeling that they are constantly running behind. There is always so much more that could be done, if only there were more hours in the day, more days in the week, more weeks in the year!

The way we make decisions about what we do with our time, and when, arises out of a complex mix of who we are as individuals, what drives us, as we interact with what is expected of us from our society. In the clash of pressures and expectations it is all too easy to lose our balance, and fall into exhaustion and ill-health.

"The starting point for most time management is self-knowledge. Before you can begin to tackle your difficulties with time in any practical way you must discover how you use your time: how you actually use it, not how you think you use it! Thus most time management techniques begin with the exercise of time logging, keeping a record of what you actually do with your time.

Having opened your eyes to what you actually do, time management then offers a variety of strategies for managing your time more effectively. Most of these are no more than codified common sense.

However, time management is not a complete answer to the time problems of modern society.

It tends to stress the personal dimension, and does not question the structures and assumptions of the society in which the problems arise. Thus it tends to reinforce the status quo. It can reinforce our culture's obsession with the clock and the diary. Time management encourages the setting of goals, and can be very work-orientated. It can also create the illusion that we are in control of our time. Thus it may subtly deny our creature-hood. It is not us, but God who is Lord of time." (Osborn, p 11-12)

HELP! I'M LOSING IT!!

Suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her. There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!' but when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet.

Different people need different levels of organisation, but everyone from time to time gets to the point when it feels like things are getting out of hand. Which of these can you relate to?

- I'm losing the paper war! My desk gets lost under piles of papers.
- I am always racing around doing what other people say is urgent.
- The house is a mess. There's no food in the fridge, and I haven't mowed the lawns.
- I feel that the harder I work the less I get done. My 'Jobs To Do' list just gets longer!
- I keep forgetting appointments, and not meeting my deadlines.
- I feel lousy, because I know I am letting people down.
- The longer I leave it, the harder it is to start, because I feel really guilty about it.
- I find myself doing small, unimportant things just because they're easy, and at least I feel that I can achieve something.
- I feel distant from my friends and family - and from God. I am always tired!
- There is never enough time to do what I really want to do!!

Disorganisation gets us into a down-ward spiral, leading us further and further away from the rightness of living 'in tune' with who we truly are in the will of God.

Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in all her life. ...

The chief difficulty Alice found was in managing her flamingo: she succeeded in getting its body tucked away under her arm, with its legs hanging down, but just as she had got its neck nicely straightened out, and was going to give the hedgehog a blow with its head, ... it was very provoking to find that the hedgehog had unrolled itself and was in the act of crawling away; besides all this, there was generally a ridge or furrow in the way wherever she wanted to send the hedgehog to, and, as the doubled-up soldiers were always getting up and walking off to other parts of the ground, Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very difficult game indeed.

Biblical Principles on Time

1. Time is an essential part of creation

- The Biblical account of the creation of the universe is set in time. In the act of separating light from darkness, God names day and night, and establishes the basic framework of our lives. The seven-day cycle of a week is still how we operate today. (Genesis 1)
- Unlike some other ancient religions, which saw time as destructive, a symptom of a decaying world, the writers of the Bible saw the passage of time as natural and good

2. God is known in the rhythms of human life

- God has acted through human history, bringing release from slavery, healing and celebration. The Jewish religion is structured around festivals at certain times of the year that help people to remember the loving actions of God in their history. (e.g. Exodus 13:3-10)
- The God who is beyond time, whose "steadfast love endures forever", is the same God who is closely involved with people in their everyday lives (Psalm 136 and 139).
- Within the rhythms of life, there is "a time for everything" (Ecclesiastics 3:1-8). God is with us through good times and hard, pain and joy.

- Jesus honoured the normal rhythms of life: he was born in a human body in the right time for birth (Luke 2:6), he respecting the rituals of death, marriage, work, family, while transforming them. (e.g. John 2: 1 -11)

3. Rest is absolutely vital

- The fact that God rested on the seventh day is integral to the story of creation. The task was not completed until God had rested. (Genesis 1:2-3)
- The Sabbath became a vital part of Jewish life. Hundreds of laws and regulations were developed to help people preserve the special quality of the Sabbath, because it was the key to preserving their identity as a people. (It was the fourth of the Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:8) The Sabbath was time to rest, spend time with family, touch base with cultural roots, and study of the scriptures and pray.
- Jesus did not get much time off, so needed to take time to be alone with his God when others slept (e.g. Luke 6:12), or to sleep while others worked (Luke 8:23)

4. Living in the present is the way of faith

- 'Live as though **now** was all the time you have', is a theme in the New Testament: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ... Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?" (Luke 12:22-26) "Give us each day our **daily** bread." (Luke 11:3)
- Entering into the new life of Christ enables us to start afresh, letting go of past hurts and limitations, forgiving and being forgiven. (Luke 1 1:4, Acts 2:3 8, Col 3: 1 -1 1)
- Now is the time to act for justice, to be fully involved in God's mission. Do it now, before it is too late! (e.g. the parable of the rich fool, Luke 12:15-21)

5. Trust in the future

- Life in Christ has a different time-scale; a new perspective which points beyond the limitations of the present, to the renewal of this world, and life beyond death. Paul expressed this in his writings: "Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) It is a full confidence in the future that frees Christians from unnecessary worry.
- With the Prophets, Jesus warned people of the future collapse of their society (Luke 19:41-44). He also spoke of the new life through him that opened up a much larger time-scale than the limitations of earthly human life. (John 11:25-27)
- Be expectant of the future, being ready for whatever is to come. "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit. ... You must be ready." (Luke 12:35-40)

6. The starting point for good use of time is clarity of purpose

- Jesus was always under pressure. He was constantly in the public eye, his power and wisdom in demand, his authority challenged, his security under threat. Yet he never lost an incredibly vivid sense of the purpose of his life that carried him through. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work." (John 4:34)
- The Israelites lost in the wilderness for 40 years seems an incredible and dangerous waste of time, but Moses' unshakeable belief in the promised land kept them going.

7. God's priorities may not be our priorities

- Jesus' priorities often ran contrary to the expectations of others, and the religious rules. For example the time he stopped on the way to an urgent visit to Jairus' house to heal his daughter, or to respond to the woman who touched him - shocking the crowd! (Luke 8:40-48)
- His attitude to the Sabbath expressed his concern for people above external rules about what was appropriate when. "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27)



8. Our time is God's time

- Time is a gift from God, and needs to be continually offered to God, as in the parable of the talents, Matthew 25:14-30. Time is to be used to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to love God with all of our being.

Ten Timely Tips

A response to time management, by Silvia Purdie

"Your challenge will not be in separating out the good from the bad, but in grabbing the best out of all the possible good." (MacDonald, p90)

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing." (Jesus, in Luke 10:41)

1. Be clear about your purpose and your priorities

Why are you doing what you are doing? What are you hoping to achieve through it? Unless you have an answer to these questions, you will be like the doubter James describes, "like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind ... double-minded and unstable in everyway, (who) must not expect to receive anything from the Lord." (James 1:6-8).

Understanding our purpose and priorities happens at different levels:

Personal. My starting point for how I allocate my time starts from what is most important to me, for my life. My husband got freaked out by the question "What are you doing with your life?", but found "What sort of person do you want to become?" more helpful. A useful approach is to think about the people you admire most. What is it about them that appeals to you? How could you go about developing those qualities in yourself? Having an understanding of your personality is a useful tool.

Some people have a clear sense of being called by God to do particular things. Others choose things that they enjoy, or that provide satisfaction, or meet material needs. *How would you rank the importance to you of work, youth ministry, money, partner, family, friends, spiritual life, health ere? How would you like to be in 3 years time?*

Professional. Businesses these days all have Mission Statements, Performance Criteria, Personal Career Objectives.

What are you basically trying to achieve in your work/study/youth ministry? Who sets the priorities? What comes first when hard choices have to be made?

One of the biggest struggles in managing time is to balance the **important** with the **urgent**.

Important things are what helps you achieve your goals, including long term plans, keeping your mind fresh by reading articles and books. All too often responding to everything that should have

been done yesterday pushes out these things! The solution is to plan your time; set aside time for things that are important even if they don't produce immediate results.

2. Plan your time well in advance

Time that is not planned tends to get swallowed up in unsatisfying mucking around, or in fulfilling other people's agendas. Once you have established your priorities, make them happen! Write into your diary weeks ahead of time your 'non-negotiables', the things that are a top priority. Days off, retreat time, regular workdays, youth group, planning time, holidays - write them in, two months in advance! I love being spontaneous, 'going with the flow' of how I feel at the time, so this is hard. But it is wonderful to wake up, look in the diary, and see "DAY OFF" written big over the whole day.

Of course, filling up your diary is only half the job. The self-discipline to do what you plan, when you planned it, is harder. A big part of planning ahead is to set realistic deadlines for your tasks (and write them in your diary!), and to only commit yourself to what you honestly believe is achievable. Learn from your mistakes, and plan things better the next time.

3. ... and each day

Most people find that writing lists is helpful in managing their time. A list helps you:

- keep focussed on what is most important
- feel satisfaction from achieving things and crossing them off
- remember everything
- get a realistic idea of what is achievable in the time available

Ways to plan your day:

a) Areas of Work

Draw up for yourself a 'To Do List' with headings for the different areas of work you are responsible. Write in any regular tasks, and allow space for the tasks of that day. (page 26)

b) Priority List

Write in the tasks to do in order of priority; do them in order, then tick them off when done.(page28)

c) Time Schedule

Plan by writing the tasks to do on one side of the page, then fitting them in, along with other commitments, meetings etc, on the time-sheet in the Plan column. Keep a record of what you actually did in the Record column. This provides useful information about how long things took, and how much you worked. (page 29)

4. Stay focussed. Say 'No'

"Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'." (Jesus, in Matthew 5:3 7)

Lawrence and Diana Osborn name five reasons why so many people end up trying to do too much, and say 'Yes' too often to new demands.

- Over-estimating** how much I can do, and under-estimating how much time things take. "I'm trying to be Superwoman".
- Seeking to please people.** "It can be easier to work myself into the ground than to risk someone getting angry at me, or rejecting me".
- The myth of being indispensable.** "When someone says "We can't do it without you!" I feel valued and important."
- Guilt and a sense of duty.** "Underneath all my fancy theology, I still feel that God is an angry father. No matter how hard I work, I'm still not good enough."
- Action addiction.** "I love the thrill of new challenges far more than the boring work of finishing things. I can't bear to miss out on the action! "

These happen mostly at a sub-conscious level. The way to get out of ways of destructive ways of responding is to be totally honest with yourself. Journal your feelings and thoughts; talk about them with your mentor or close friend. Try some new ways of responding when someone makes a demand of you, and see how it feels.

One good way of dealing with new requests is to never commit yourself immediately. It is always OK to ask for time to think about it, which helps put it into perspective.

You are not helping yourself or the church if you say 'Yes' to everything. This can even deprive other people of valuable opportunities to learn. It can be OK if the job doesn't happen - we can't do everything. Keep going back to your sense of purpose, what God is calling you to. If this new job doesn't fit that, it is someone else's responsibility.

Do you find it hard to say 'No'? If so, why?

5. Work smarter, not harder

Working hard for the sake of working hard is no virtue. It can even work against what you are really trying to achieve. Again, clarity of purpose is essential. So is taking time for creative planning. The challenge is to find those things that produce greater results for less effort, or activities that meet several of your objectives at once.

Time spent setting up good systems always pays off many times over (such as computerised address lists, and telephone trees, so that one person doesn't have to do all the phoning).

'Delegation' is a good buzzword in youth ministry. Getting other people to do tasks that you would normally do is hard work at first, but can have excellent flow on effects in building skills and confidence in other people, and in getting the job done. Often the hardest part is letting go of control, taking the risk that the way I would do it isn't the only way.

It is also smart to make sure that tasks are done by their deadlines. I normally find that the longer I leave a difficult job, the harder it gets, and the more time and energy I waste feeling guilty about not doing it. As the old saying goes, "A stitch in time saves nine." Leaving things until they get to crisis stage is not good time management.

6. Be strong in making time for what nurtures you

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. " (Jesus, in Matthew 7:24,25)

We used to believe that the explosion of labour saving technology in the last few decades would result in a leisure society, where everyone would work part-time, their jobs taken over by computers and gadgets. Somehow the opposite has happened. If you've got a job you have to work very long hours, and free time is easily gets squeezed out. Everything we do is supposed to achieve something, produce some visible result. So leisure time is valued only in as much as it makes us more productive in our working time.

Even in the Church we value work more than rest, and most church leaders are chronically busy. Yet if the church is to fulfil its mission of proclaiming Christ, and modelling his life in all its fullness, we must learn to stop, learn to nurture ourselves and each other, instead of constantly demanding more committees, more voluntary work from over-busy people. The martyrdom instinct is alive and well!

"When God created humankind, he created physical beings with physical needs and physical limits" (Osborn, p54) When we try to deny our needs and limits, we easily 'burn out', and are unfair on ourselves, God, and those with whom we are called to minister. Taking care of our own needs in

a healthy way is like building your house on rock. Without a firm foundation, our ministry will crumble away under pressure. Without pauses, music becomes noise. Without rest, humans become machines.

What nurtures you?

Here's what I have found to be essential for me:

- Sleep - at least 8 hours most nights
- Healthy food - with plenty of variety, and fresh fruit and veges
- Exercise - to get outside at least once every day, and to keep fairly fit
- Alone time - space away from everyone and everything, just for me
- Affection - touch, compliments, a hug, some flowers, someone saying 'Thanks'
- Prayer - time at the end of the day to let the events and feelings of the day flow over me, and into the glory of God
- Routines - little habits that keep me sane: brushing my teeth, what I eat for breakfast
- Letting my hair down - times to get out and have a good laugh, or dance, or sing
- Out in Creation - there's nothing like climbing a hill in the sunset, or sitting under a tree, or by the sea.
- Blobbing out - videos, a good book, a cosy lie-in, sharing with good friends, or a mentor.

7. Know your body clock

I was cooking for some men working on a building site recently. They ate heaps, and on time. To them it is vital to "Eat before you get hungry." They couldn't afford to lose any body energy. Anticipating your body's needs, and meeting them before you lose energy is much healthier than resting when you're exhausted and eating when you're starving. Regular patterns of sleep, food and exercise are vital for maintaining yourself at top efficiency. Time spent on these things is certainly not wasted.

A key to making efficient use of time is to do things when you find them easiest. Some people have more 'brain-power' in the morning, while others would just end up staring blankly into space if they tried to be creative early in the day. All jobs have some parts that are simpler. Do these when you feel more vague, and give your best time to the harder tasks.

Taking short breaks regularly is what the research recommends. Apparently the human brain only works at full potential for about 50 minutes at a time, before it needs to stop and rest. No wonder everyone winds down and gets frustrated towards the end of a two-hour meeting!

When do you work best?

8. Deal with pieces of paper only once or twice

It is easy to waste lots of time picking up bits of paper, reading them, and putting them down again. Good systems of dealing with mail and reading matter make a big difference in time efficiency.

- Open the mail at the same time each day
- Try to read it and respond to it straight away. Then put it in the bin, file it, or pass it on.
- Write down any tasks arising from it on a 'To Do' sheet.
- Do your filing at least once a week

9. Be accountable for how you spend your time

I believe that everyone should be accountable to someone else for every aspect of their working life. I don't mean having someone looking over your shoulder, checking up on you all the time. I do mean making commitments to yourself, to God, to other people, and asking someone to help you keep to them.

Accountability can happen at different levels. For instance, I am accountable:

- to my employer for the work that I am paid to do. I report monthly to my Management Group (or boss, or Parish Council) on my progress, spending, leave, hours etc. (**Direct accountability**)
- with the youth ministry team for the youth work in the church. We set goals and report back our progress to each other. (**Mutual accountability**)
- to my Supervisor for how I have been doing my ministry. We meet every month to talk about any issues that have arisen for me, check that I'm not over-working, etc. She helps me to assess the impact my work is having on my personal life, and make wise decisions. (Professional outside **Supervision** is now considered essential for anyone in ministry roles.)
- to my husband for my part in our relationship, and for how I juggle priorities in my personal life.
- to my Spiritual Director for my faith development.

Being accountable to people is very helpful in setting priorities, and making decisions about how to spend time. It is an essential part of making sure that the work you do is of a high standard, and that you don't get into ethical difficulties. Youth ministry can be vulnerable to manipulation and human frailty. Being accountable gives you a backstop, a safety net.

It also means that you don't have to carry the entire burden yourself for the decisions you make, because you have another point of reference. When criticism comes your way, it makes a big difference if other people share the responsibility.

Who are you accountable to ... for your work? for your study? for your spiritual life? for your family and friendships? for your health?

What commitments have you made, and who helps you keep them?

10. Review your use of time and your priorities regularly

Every month or so, it is an excellent idea to get out your diary and timesheets and To Do lists and evaluate how you are going.

- How many hours have I worked?
- What goals have I achieved?
- What have I not done?
- How am I going to ensure that both the urgent and the important things get done this month?

This would also be a good time to ensure that your partner/colleagues know what you are doing, and to plan together.

Get a Life!

All this is all very well, but it is still very easy to just work all the time. Our society offers us the choice of being unemployed or a workaholic. Many companies (often including the church) expect employees to work outrageous hours. Addiction to work is an epidemic illness. In a recent article in the Listener (6/5/95), British actress Lesley Manville says, "I'm very lucky. I've never been out of work for long. But I'm driven ... I find it hard to relax, so it's just as well that I've been so busy." A friend of mine told me that she wanted to get a life this year, but she's forgotten how, so she just keeps working. People work for many reasons: satisfaction, money, obligation, to escape boredom, or the monsters that lurk beneath the surface of our ordered lives.

Taking time to stop is essential if we are to grow as whole people. Spiritual disciplines can be wonderful guides along the way; such as a regular quiet day, time to sit still in the sun, or walk through town doing nothing. Time to look and listen. It is often at times like these that God can get a word in edgeways through the static.

I have always been convinced that it is who we are as people that has the most impact on young people, not the programmes we run. If we are tired and worn out, then why force ourselves to perform for them? They will just see through our act. If running a programme is too much work, then find other ways to be with kids, to build relationships with them.

Our society values work above rest; noise above silence; quantity above quality; rich above poor people; production above relationships. The gospel of Christ turns this around, offering us life in great abundance. The invitation is to live in Christ's time, to be renewed in Christ's way.

BOOKS QUOTED:

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Gordon **MacDonald**, *Ordering Your Private World*, with study guide, Highland Books, 1992 (\$18.95 from Epworth Bookshop)

Lawrence and Diana **Osborn**, *The Time of Your Life*, Darton Longman and Todd, 1993 (\$31 from Epworth Bookshop)

New Revised Standard Version of The Holy Bible

Worksheets

ABCDEF Planning

Brainstorm

(list all ideas)

Prioritise

(choose 3 to focus on)

A. Analyse needs of the young people

B. Bring in your goals for youth ministry

C. Clarify your objectives

D. Design your programme

Activities

| Date | Programme | Venue | Start Time | Finish Time |
|------|-----------|-------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | |
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Resources needed

Publicity required

Tasks allocated

Total Time Sheet

| Date | Activity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|-------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
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KEY:

- 1: Work - Job 1
- 2: Work - Job 2
- 5. Rest
- 6. Recreation
- 7. Relationships
- 8. Eating

- 3. Youth Group
- 4. Sleep
- 9. Cleaning/ Chores
- 10. Travel
- 11. Reading/Study
- 12. Other

Area of Work: Tasks to Do

Date: _____

Area 1: _____

Tasks

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Area 2: _____

Tasks

- 1.
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- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Area 3: _____

Tasks

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Area 4: _____

Tasks

- I.
- 2.
- 3
- 4
- 5.

Area 5: _____

Tasks

- I.
- 2.
- 3
- 4
- 5.

Area 6: _____

Tasks

- I.
- 2.
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- 4
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Priority Tasks To Do

Date:

| Priorities | Time Needed | Done | Notes |
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Time Schedule - Tasks to Do

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