**52 YOUTH PROGRAMMES to keep you going…**

We all know, and anyone could tell you that no two youth ministries are the same. We know that the ministry to teens varies from church to church. We are in no way suggesting that these programmes and ideas will work in every church. I KNOW they may not. At the same time, however, I know that very often youth workers battle to come up with creative ideas to use with our teenagers. So, our desire is to put a whole lot of ideas into your hands. These ideas are not all my own, but rather ideas that have been used all over the country by different youth workers. **Feel free to try them out!** [Remember that you can ALWAYS adapt an idea to fit into your budget, or to make more relevant to your setting.]

One other thing: please don’t misread me by thinking that youth ministry is only about programmes, or about ‘entertaining’ teenagers. Rather, I believe that programmes are something that we can all use to ‘hang RELATIONSHIP on’. We can use programmes not only to draw young people into our youth groups, but also to get to know them and from there really minister to them and introduce them to Jesus.

**1. INDOOR CRICKET:**

An alternative to actually travelling to & paying for an official indoor cricket venue (which is an idea all on its own), is to create your own. Source the official rules, along with wickets/bats/ball. Use masking tape to mark out floor. With permission, get +/-6-8 bolts (with loop-heads that you drill into the wall), which will help suspend, with rope, netting you need to source (e.g. shade netting). Remember to cover up any windows. It’s a mission to set this up but the atmosphere is amazing!

**2. SPEED-MEETING:**

The idea is not to encourage dating, but interaction – especially if you’re trying to learn all the new youth’s names that’ve come in beginning of the year. Set up tables in a line, square or circle (with chairs). If you have table clothes/candles/juice/sound, it adds to the “vibe”. Separate youth in pairs (mixed – this way you avoid it feeling like a “let’s date” thing). Each person receives a card with pre-set questions. For 2mins they will ask their partner questions, and then for 2mins they will be asked questions. Then the MC’s will say something to the effect of, “alright, people on the outside of circle/square move one seat to the right/left”. To give it some variation we threw in an arm-wrestling contest every now and then, whoever won got a mint or a chocolate.

Examples of questions:

1. What’s your name?

2. What are you passionate about?

3. Tell me about your family...

4. How old are you?

5. Tell me one thing I don’t know about you...

6. What are your thoughts on love?

7. How are you doing?

8. How are you really doing?

**3. DUSTER HOCKEY (and the alternatives):**

If you’ve never played this before you’ve not lived. Most of us have played it too many times, thus it may not be as popular as it used to be. The basic idea is to have two goals either side of the hall, 2 rolled& taped up newspaper sticks and a ball (or a tightly rolled pair of socks, if you’re playing on a smooth surface). Youth are split into two groups and lined up either side of hall. Each player in each team will then be given numbers and, therefore, will have a corresponding opponent on the other team. When your number is called, the person from each team with that number will take to the playing field against your opponent trying to hit the ball into your team’s goals.

Those are the general rules. BUT IMAGINE... turning that newspaper stick into a proper hockey stick and that ball into a frozen chicken... or using a ‘ball’ made out of paper, and LEAF BLOWERS!

OR you could turn it into ice hockey by taking the same game and adapting it like this:

Instead of having one person on each team with a number, number the people in pairs. (First two people = no 1; second two people = no2 etc) So, when you call the numbers, you have 4 people running to the middle. One from each pair sits on a giant piece of ice with rope frozen into it (made in a cooler box), and grabs the stick and then hits a giant ice cube (2l ice cream tub) into a goal. The other person in each team's job is to push the guy on the ice block... This takes quite a bit of preparation, but has the potential to be awesome!

**4. CARNIVAL:**

This is a good program for the summer months. Source some gazebo’s, print out “tickets/tokens” (we gave +/-20 pp), make stacks of popcorn, get some music pumping and basically youth were free to spend their tokens as they please.

Some ideas for stalls:

\* Suspend a guy in a tree, get a pool noodle and play human piñata (he can drop them sweets if he feels they hit him hard enough).

\* Get a pellet gun, make a target and off you go.

\* You could also get a volunteer leader to stand against the wall while youth could throw shaving cream pies at him.

\* Or the more traditional carnival stalls: throwing darts at balloons, arm wrestling, throwing coins into jars, a jumping castle… the sky is the limit!

**5. BATTLE OF THE SEXES:**

Think up a couple of events (probably maximum 8), some that are typical ‘girl activities’ (sewing a button onto a shirt, doing a manicure, waxing a leg, putting make-up on) and some that are typical ‘guy activities’ (starting a fire from scratch, changing a tire, doing push ups, wiring a plug).

Then you can run the event in 2 ways:

1) You could select one or two guys/girls to represents their gender for each event, while everyone else got to watch. The girls would do the ‘guy activities’ and the guys would do the ‘girl activities’.

2) You could break the youth into groups (all guys or all girls), who would then do all the activities (get a leader to run each activity), but would be timed for each of them. The times would be added up and the group with the combined shortest time would win!

**6. DODGEBALL:**

This has been used a lot, but in case you have never played it: Basically you need 6 balls with a line dividing the hall/field into two. 6ppl per team, who need to dodge, duck, dive, dip...and dodge? The point is to not get hit, and if you do you’re out. You can find rules on the internet. If you would like to go a slightly cheaper route, you can make your own dodge balls. Purchase 6 plastic balls from a toy store (usually R10 each), wrap each ball generously with newspaper and them tape generously and tightly with thick clear tape. We found these balls sufficient in weight and injury-friendly. You could also purchase 6 giant green tennis balls.

ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE: Slippery dodgeball. You can get judo mats (from a local school) and cover them with plastic sheeting, and then put slime (can get from the fire department) on the plastic. The dodgeball rules are the same, but it is WAY FUNNIER. (But it is also a little more risky.)

**7. SUMO-WRESTLING:**

You can apparently hire proper sumo suits – maybe try that if you want. Or you could get 4 flexible mattresses (i.e. no springs), and wrap these around the ‘wrestlers’ with long belts (the kind you use to tow a car – the ones that have a tighten mechanism on them). Create a wrestling ring buy organising a big square carpet. You can make whatever rules you like. (Best out of 3 rounds wins, the point being to push your opponent off the carpet.) It’s a mission in-between each round to get the next contestants ‘wrapped’ up, but a worthwhile program... even for the girls.

**8. SPAGETTI WRESTLING**

A similar event to the above one, BUT make a ring by borrowing high jump- and judo mats (from a local school) and then putting the judo mats in the centre, with the high jump mats all around (i.e. creating a pit) Fill that pit with mushy spaghetti (you can get old or rotten spaghetti free from a supermarket) And then wrestle! Have a hose around to hose contestants down after rounds. (You could also use an empty swimming pool but it would be a mission to clean.)

[On the schools note, as you can see, there are a lot of things you can get from schools. Try cultivating a healthy relationship with the schools in your area – not only to get stuff, but also because that is where almost ALL the teens in your area are…]

**9. GUYS/GIRLS NIGHT:**

You could have an evening with 2 separate events, at different venues: one for the girls and one for the guys. A great idea for this is a boy’s camp out in the back yard of someone’s house, and a girls’ pyjama party at another house.

The idea is to obviously have a “girly” or “boyish” program that creates the opportunity to discuss guy/girl issues, and the opportunity for your girl leaders to really connect with the girls (without the guys around) and vice versa. You could send guy leaders to the girls and vice versa and allow the youth an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the opposite sex. (BE WARNED: The guy leader may have his hair straightened, and your girl leader may have to participate in a burping competition.)

**10. GUTTER SUNDAE:**

You need to source “gutters” (can get plastic ones from most hardware stores or from a building site – just wash those ones!!!). The idea is to get the youth to bring dessert items; you may want to ask each grade to bring something different therefore guaranteeing an even mix of jelly, ice-cream, toppings etc. Try get one gutter per team you will have (or you can cut the gutters into sections) and get them to create the best gutter ice cream sundae dessert. Once the teams are finished line up the gutters to make one long gutter, then give the winning team 2 minutes to eat as much as they’d like before the rest of the teams are allowed to join. Yum!

**11. LOCK-IN/STAY AWAKE:**

A lock in is a 12-hour youth program, and all you need to do is organise lots of options for the youth to keep them occupied: card/board games, playstation, movies, soccer, cricket, music, caffeine... You could work a Bible-reading marathon into the program too. You could even attempt to get Red Bull to sponsor it. **This is a program for the brave!** (I, personally, am not a fan…) IDEA: Create a rule: be willing to go through with it on the condition that all my youth leaders commit to spending the night, as you may need lots of supervision.

**12. AMAZING RACE/PHOTO RALLY:**

An old classic really, but another one that you can tweak (also, it has been made easier with digital camera’s or phone camera’s these days.) Divide your youth into teams of 4 (enough to fill a car) and allocate each team a car with a driver (get young adults in the church or parents to volunteer to drive for the evening - This is a great program to get your youth to interact with your young adults (or even their parents), but be careful because of the transport situation (make sure your drivers are responsible, and don’t overload the cars).

IDEA 1 - You could play this as a giant treasure hunt spread around your community, with clues leading them all around to different places. At each place, have a task that one member of the team, or the whole team has to take part in. The team that gets all the clues in the quickest time would win. (The tasks add the element of competition, as all the drivers will be going a similar distance and should all be keeping to the speed limit.) You can add little quirks to make the game more fun: they have to carry a balloon/egg with them the whole time; they have to wear something funny…

IDEA 2 – You could give each team a list of made up phrases and a digital camera. The teams must drive around town and interpret the catch phrases and take a picture of themselves in their interpretation. (E.g. the phrase 'Brrrrrr' and they could climb into the fridge at Spar! Or ask the police to lock them up in cells or hand cuffs for 'it wasn't me'.) You could also give the teams a list of tasks they would need to accomplish (e.g. get a picture of your team in a bath tub) At the end of the evening download the pictures and display them for everyone on big screen and give prizes for the funniest, most unusual etc

**13. OPEN MIC NIGHT:**

Great if there’s a lot of talent in your youth. Setup a coffee bar vibe, dim the lights (I normally just have a spot light on in the corner of the hall & drag carpets out to warm things up... couches also would help). Setup a P.A system with a mini stage and prep your youth in advance to bring their ‘talents’. Then let them go for it: poems, songs, skits etc. It’s a good idea to ask each youth leader to prep something for the evening, that way we’ve found the rest of the youth are more likely to participate (and at least there will be something to watch).

**14. WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAYS?**

You could use this as a youth/young adult combined event, or just a youth event. It really is just an adaptation of the TV show. Have about 15 of the games they play (and maybe a couple of your own) prepared for, but you probably won’t use them all. Then add your own flavour, and off you go. (REMEMBER - the success of this event is dependent on at least 1 or 2 really funny people (maybe keep them as the constants) and a great MC who can keep the game going, even if other contestants are not so funny...)

SOME OF THE GAMES TO USE:

1) PROPS - bring out wacky items (usually big... like an orange cone they use when doing construction) and then pull up 4 volunteers who work in teams of 2. The point is to see which teams lasts the longest. They have to come up with ideas of what the item could be used for or symbolise (e.g. orange cone – could be a hearing aid?). They obviously can’t use the same idea twice.

2) TV CHANELS – each volunteer chooses a TV channel (i.e. – wildlife, weather, soapie) and then the MC points an imaginary remote control at each player and they have to act in their ‘channel’ until he moves it on to the next person, when the last actor will freeze.

3) THE ALPHABET GAME – When 2 people have a conversation, but each person speaks one sentence at a time, and they work through the alphabet for the starting letter of the sentence. (Could go something like this: ‘**A**y’, ‘**B**et you didn’t think you’d see me here’, ‘**C**aught me by surprise’, ‘**D**ang, I’m good’ etc)

4) THE QUESTION GAME – Similar to the game above, but each person is only allowed to speak using questions.

5) THEATRE GENRES – The audience will choose a situation for the actors to act, and will choose a bunch of different theatre genres (Shakespeare, mime, sci-fi, Jackie Chan…) The actors will then act out the scene, but the MC can change genre at any time, and they must continue the same story, but in a different style.

6) LOVE SONG – Get 2 actors up on the stage, and get them to make up a love song on the spot. If you can have a good pianist to help you, they can play them through it.

7) PARTY DISORDER – You need 4 people to play this game. One is the host of a party. The other 3 people are guests to his party who will arrive, with different disorders, which can be as wacky as you like. (Phobia of touch, Believes he’s Michael Schumacher, Always has to speak starting soft and getting loud… whatever) The ‘host’ has to work out what the disorders are.

8) SOUND EFFECTS – Get two people from audience to act out a scene, and two of your other actors to make all of their sound effects. Can be hilarious!

**15. KIDS ‘R US:**

Games don’t go down well on Friday nights as they used to in the 80’s and 90’s. So, a good idea is to reserve them all for one night and make a big deal out of them. Pull out all the old school games, but maybe crank them up a notch! (Musical chairs, duster hockey (without a chicken), jockey mount, shuffle bums etc.

**16. MALL RATS:**

If the mall in your area permits, you would be able to go with this programme. I would advise asking for permission to prevent ‘hard feelings’. We spend R100 on this program. Split the youth into 5 teams and give each team R20. The point is to get as many till slips as they can from that R20. We had one group convince a shop to sell their toothpicks at 1cents each. The winning team gets all the goods purchased.

**17. WHERE’S WALLY?/DISGUISE EVENING**

This is a similar event, also run in a mall, but each team would be tasked to find Wally, a guy dressed in a stripy red and white t-shirt, with black rimmed glasses (like the books). To make this a little bit more interesting, you could ’plant’ other people in similar shirts in the mall. You could even use one of the secluded parking lots to do some worship.

You could also do a disguise evening, whereby each team would get a bunch of photos of people, and they would need to find these people and get them to sign the photo of them. These people could be dressed and ‘hidden’ anywhere. (A clown in SPUR, regular people walking around, a waitress in Milky Lane, someone in a security outfit, someone sitting at a restaurant…) The more wigs, make up and costumes, the better!

**18. KAREOKE DANCE PARTY:**

Source/borrow a playstation 2 and rent/borrow ‘Sing-star’ and ‘Dance Revolution’. It works best to project it onto a big screen, and plug the audio into a loud sound system. Volunteers would then come and sing-a-long to well known songs, or dance a bit. You could add some form of competition, or you could just have some fun with it.

**19. HORROR MOVIE:**

You would need to organize a couple of video cameras, and then split youth in groups. Give each group a bottle of tomato sauce and a few props and 1/2hour to create their own horror scene/movie. When they all come back together, project them (hopefully onto a big screen) and enjoy!

**20. DIY PIZZA EVENING:**

Get your leaders to provide the pizza bases (or use your youth budget). Then ask different grades to bring different toppings (ask the grade with the most teens to bring the cheese). And then cook your own pizzas. This will only work if your church has access to an oven, or more than one. Maybe rent a movie that evening.

**21. CHILL OUT:**

There is nothing wrong with these programs, especially during exam times. It is great for relationship building, if you get your leaders there with that in mind. Just make sure you have some activities available so people don’t get bored. (Music, coffee, hacky sack.)

**22. EXPERIENTIAL WORSHIP:**

Basically you set up stations (which I suggest you back up with Scripture) where youth can worship God in different ways (and for as long as each person wants – some do it for 20 minutes... others 1 hour). The benefit of this also is to use everyday objects and activities to show that worship is not only for when we sing.

Examples: (these are only a few – you can be VERY creative with this.)

Station 1: Confession (1John1:9) – youth can confess through writing a letter to God.

Station 2: Communion (1 Cor. 11:23-29) – provide the elements, youth partake in their

own time.

Station 3: Praying for others (Matt. 7:7-8; Eph. 6:18a) – provide a big cross with tea candles youth can light to represent the people they’re praying for. Candle can symbolise how our prayer are always before God.

Station 4: Casting Burdens (Phil. 4:6; Matt. 11:28) – provide huge bucket with water and an assortment of rocks. Youth spend time reflecting on personal burdens, letting the rock symbolise them as they place it in the bucket (symbolising a “letting go”). Again, emphasize there’s no magic in the rock; it is merely symbolic of an inner spiritual reality.

Station 5: Praising God (Ps. 13:5, 30:1-3, 145:21) – Provide print out of these Scriptures as well as huge sheet of paper where they can paint or write out praises to God.

Finally, I would suggest before you begin to explain and give a good intro to what the program is about, it may appear overwhelming & confusing to some. Also, most of this evening, or at least the venue set apart for worship, will be quiet with maybe some music playing or something. Make sure there is a good explanation at each station of what they are supposed to be doing to avoid confusion and talking.

**23. RELATIONSHIPS PANEL:**

This would be a different way of dealing with the topic of relationships, and allowing teens to ask questions. Source a married couple; a dating couple; and maybe 2 singles in your church and facilitate a panel discussion. You can just let the audience determine the questions, but it’s a good idea to pre-prepare some yourself and maybe guide the discussion a little bit better. You could have the teens ask questions openly, or have them write them I a box, or even have a central cell phone and allow them to sms the questions through. Let the discussion run for as long as you feel is needed. You could even maybe end it off with the Nooma: Fire DVD.

**24. DRIVE-IN PICNIC:**

It is amazing to find so many youth who have never heard of a ‘drive-in’. So, you could hook up the sound system/projector/DVD player outside the church on the grass and get the youth to bring their own blankets to sit on, and snacks to eat. This is a relatively easy programme - the hardest part is sourcing a good movie.

**25. OUTDOOR/INDOOR SOCCER:**

This is always a classic with boys (but we found the girls eager too). For outdoor soccer you could get permission from a local soccer club or a school filed to use their fields (a change in atmosphere never hurt anyone). In terms of indoor soccer you can purchase mini-goals from Mr Price Sport, or you could use chairs, if you wanted. Be sure to cover up any lights or windows, or play with an appropriate ball.

**26. SPONGEBOB SQUARE-EYES:**

First buy masking tape & a permanent marker to label all the wires & cables you don’t want to loose or misplace! This is a fun idea that you can make as big as you want it to be. Source as many TV’s or projectors, and TV games/consoles, both old & new... (Especially old school Nintendo) Plan to bring extra extension cords and basically create an arcade for the evening.

**27. DIGESTIVE WALKING:**

A.k.a. ‘Travelling Supper’. This is a good programme for during the summer months. Organise 3 homes within ‘walking distance’ of your church. Within your budget, plan to have starters at the 1st home, main course at the 2nd, dessert at the 3rd and then coffee back at the church. You could also do it backwards.

**28. LOOKING OUTWARDS:**

This is what you could call your ‘outreach’ program. If you have a children’s home (orphanage) in your area, try arranging to fetch them and bring them to youth for a program, or to go and do a programme at the orphanage. This is a great way to get your teens to serve and to ‘look out’.

**29. PAINTBALLING/GO-CARTING/ICE SKATING/TENPIN BOWLING/ADVENTURE GOLF etc:**

These all cost money, but are great to organise to do one of them once a term. Maybe invite your young adults to join (for mentorship reasons... and transport!)

**30. RAW TO THE CORE:**

Get your leaders to make rice, someone to purchase all the raw ingredients, and have yourself a sushi evening while it’s still popular. Ask the youth to bring R20 each to cover the expenses.

**31. SUPERSIZED BORED GAMES:**

This is an interesting upgrade on regular games. Pretty much, the idea is to take old school game ideas, board games or others, and make them huge – literally.

Some ideas of this are:

1) SNAKES AND LADDERS: Get stacks of masking tape, make a giant dice out of a box, get 2-3 real ladder & 2 hose pipes – and make a giant snakes and ladders game on your hall floor (if you can). If they land on a snake, their team will have to pay a forfeit (one of their team must sit with their feet in a bucket of ice water until the next move.)

2) FOUR SQUARE: just bigger.

3) TWISTER: Buy a bug piece or material and paint the colored circles on it. Make a spinning device to tell contestants where to put their hands and feet.

4) JENGA: With big blocks of wood, or polystyrene.

5) SPOONS: With serving spoons, or even with spades.

**32. ROTTEN FRUIT PAINTBALL**

We got a whole lot of rotten fruit from fruit and veg. city and other places, set up an enclosed course with hay bails and other obstacles. The youth played in teams of 6, wearing helmets (from 20-20 cricket) and goggles (from Osmans for R5). We had a referee and pretty much just went crazy. Again, have a hose available for cleaning.

**33. BB GUN WAR GAMES:**

This is similar to the above one, but done in an enclosed area, with BB guns. The guys really loved this one! Set up obstacles, teams and let the guys at each other. It might be smart to enforce that the guys wear goggles for this one as well. (Get goggles and BB guns from a cheap shop and get the youth to pay R10 each to cover the costs.)

**34. AFRIKAANS EVENING:**

You can get Afrikaans karaoke DVDs from Musica for about R39... Then get the teens to dress up like Boers, and have some fun. You can make vetkoek, koeksisters and milk tart. You can do the karaoke and also maybe get someone in to teach your teens how to sokkie and lang arm.

**35. PIMP MY… :**

You can do various versions of this programme, and it works really well for the more arty people who don’t often have programmes focussed on them. You can get great deals on t-shirts, township takkies or caps. Each teen can pay for one of these and then design it to make it look really great. Provide paint and brushes, and allow the teens to bring their own materials. Have a competition and a prize for the best one.

**36. STEP UP:**

If you have a youth will a lot of people who enjoy dancing (hip-hop, break-dancing etc) this will work well. Give your teens some warning on this for your youth to prepare something, and then allow them to come and 'battle'. You could also advertise it in schools and making it an evangelistic programme.

**37. BALLIES, BINGO AND BOWLS:**

 Your youth can dress up like old people (like grannies and grandpas). You can have best dressed prizes, and then do granny and grandpa activities: carpet bowls (found a couple old sets at pawn shops in our area and bingo. This goes down surprisingly well!

**38. GLADIATORS:**

This is an old school idea, but if done well, you can bring it back. You can get 5 young adult guys and 5 young adult girls to be the official gladiators (make a big deal of them, get them to dress up and have the gladiator names - giant, beast, titan etc.) Then you can do a whole bunch of different rounds from the show, eliminating people as we went until you have a final 2 in the girls section and in the boys section.
Round 1: gauntlet a row of judo mats (from the local school) with mattresses lining them. Each gladiator is in the middle with rugby practise bags, and the contestants have to make their way through.
Round 2: two buckets in the middle of a fixed area, and 1 on each side of the area, filled with those small balls from a ball pond. Have 2 gladiators in the middle, with rugby tackle bags, defending the inner buckets. The purpose is for contestants to get as many balls into middle buckets as they can, one at a time.
Round 3: - 1 gladiator and 1 contestant on a stage/raised area, with a rope. The contestant has to try to get the gladiator off the raised area in best time.
Round 4: - 2 black bins upside-down surrounded by mattresses. Have one contestant standing on each bin with a pillow. The first person knocked off wins.

**39. ALL NIGHT BIBLE READ/PRAYER MEETING**

This programme is way more serious, but could also be a lot of fun. You could read the New Testament from 8pm to 8am, or have a prayer focussing on local issues like drugs, gangsters and drunkenness...

**40. BOX CART RACING:**

This is a great programme, although it takes quite a lot of preparation ahead of time. Get the youth into teams and get them to make a box cart and bring it to youth. (Have guidelines they can follow in construction to make the competition even: must be push-powered, has to have steering facility and brakes, 4 people in a team, one driver…) Then make a course, and get the teams to race each other. It’s really fun!

**41. DEAL OR NO DEAL:**

This programme works really well. It runs along the lines of the game show on TV. Get ten pieces of paper with ten prizes ranging in value written, one on each page. (1c up to R100 and 8 values in between.) Put each paper into a separate envelope – these are your ‘suitcases’. Choose one contestant to play the game. Get 10 youth to hold the envelopes to involve more people, and get one of your leaders or a young adult from your church to be the banker. You can play 2 or 3 rounds of this game.

**42. PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN:**

Again, you can get the teens to dress up as pirates, and possibly have a feast. (Whole chickens, soup and rolls should suffice.) You could watch the movies, or just have this as an end of year banquet.

**43. EXTREME MAKE OVER:**

This is a great programme to do when dealing with self image. If you can, find some people from your youth or church who wouldn’t mind being ‘made-over’, and get them to come join you at youth. Get some of your youth to be the designers and then make these people over. It can be hilarious, especially if the volunteers are willing to have their hair cut.

You could also do this with photos. Split your youth into groups and give each group a photo of a person. Each group must then select a member of the group that they will make look like the person in the photo.

**44. AROUND THE WORLD:**

Pick a couple of countries and then allocate an area in your church grounds to represent this country. Have an activity, a food (just a taster) and decoration typical of this country that the teens can enjoy. You can either break the teens into groups and send them around systematically (10-15mins at each place), or just allow them to make their way through and stay as long as they like at each one.

**45. BATTLE OF THE BANDS:**

This programme requires lots of planning and advertising for it to work well. Allow for 4/5 bands to enter. Give the bands 20-30minutes each to perform, with a 10minute change over in between. Get a bunch of judges, who know about music, and some prizes sponsored from a music store. This is a great inter-youth or outreach programme.

**46. C.S.I./CLUEDO:**

This is a programme needing quite a lot of preparation ahead of time, but works really well. Write a ‘murder-she-wrote’ type script, with different characters and themes. Make sure each character has an alibi and a motive for the murder. Leave clues lying around, and allow the teens (as individuals or groups) to interview the characters and see the clues, and come up with their own theory. The group/person with the story closest to the real one would win the prize.

**47. TRAILER TRASH:**

Break the youth into teams and give them all the same amount of trash. (Newspaper, egg boxes, coke cans, black bags etc) Give them an allotted amount of time to make the best outfit out of this trash that they can. Then get the group member that they dressed up to model, with another member of the group doing the commentary. (‘Julie is wearing a rope skirt with tassels made from strips of plastic all the way from Spar…’) This can be really funny, and a cost free programme.

**48. FEAR FACTOR:**

This is another programme taken from TV (and possibly used a lot already). Start with as many contestants that want to enter (to include people) with a basic fear challenge, and then have an elimination process to limit it down in each round ‘til you have only 2/3 contestants in the finals. This programme takes a lot of preparation, especially if you want to do it well, but is awesome! A TIP: Try use real fears that people actually have – heights, creepy crawlies, enclosed spaces, even public speaking.)

SOME IDEAS:

1) HEIGHTS: Get scaffolding and set it up. Attach flags at different heights and laces along the scaffolding and have a bucket on the floor. Get the person to fetch one flag at a time and bring is down to the bucket in a certain time period. (You may want to have harnesses depending on the height.)

2) ENCLOSED SPACES: Get a coffin and put the contestant inside there with one lock and a bunch of keys. They have to find the key that opens the lock as quick as they can in the dark, enclosed space. If you get a coffin with the opening over their face, you could drop mice onto them at intervals.

3) FOOD ITEMS: Have 4 balls on a pool table, each representing a gross food item. Give the contestants 4/5 shots to sink the balls. They will nee to eat the food items represented by the balls they did not manage to sink, also in a specific time period.

4) CREEPY CRAWLIES: Get a bowl filled with sand and different creepy-crawly creatures (crickets, worms, etc) with bunch of Smarties mixed in as well. Have the youth get as many Smarties as they can out of the bowl using only their mouth in a certain time.

5) PUBLIC SPEAKING: Get a group of scary (older, formally dressed and intimidating) people in a room, and send the contestants in one at a time and make them do an impromptu oral. The ‘scarier’ the people, the better this will work. Have the people ask as many questions as they want, and also question the truth and validity of what they say. You could allow these people to be the judges, or you could even have a camera in the room and have it connected to a projector, so that the rest of the youth can see.

6) WATER: If you have a baptismal pool in your church (and non-strict church leaders), this may work. Cover up half of the pool, so it’s fairly dark and have something in the bottom of it that the contestants have to fetch with their mouths (eggs, crayfish, stones.)

**49. RECORD BREAKING EVENING:**

Select a whole bunch of records to be broken: How many people can you fit into a car? Who can eat the most hot dogs in a time period? Who can drink a coke fastest? And burp the loudest? Who can blow the biggest bubble out of gum? Who can eat 3 Marie biscuits in the fastest time? Who can transfer the most buttons from one bowl to another using only a straw and their breath? You really can do anything, but try to have a nice balance of activities and something would appeal to most people in your youth. Then allow the youth to partake in these and try out for the records they want to. This is the type of programme you could run annually, with the same, or similar, records to see if the youth could beat the records from the year before.

**50. BECOMING:**

This is a programme they run on MTV, which can be adapted. Split the group into groups and have clothing, makeup and hair products available to be used. Select a couple of clips from TV or movies (one per group) of famous people (Napoleon Dynamite, Oprah Winfrey, Jerry Springer, Serena Williams etc), and show these clips, allocating one to each group. Then give each group time to make one member of their group ‘become’ like this person: look like them and act like them.

You could do the same programme using youth leaders of well known people from your church (pastors/elders/worship leaders). You could either get clips of these people, or you could even get them to be there with you and spend time with the groups. This kind of programme works really well with a theme on role models.

**51. FRIENDS LIKE THESE:**

This is another programme adapted from MTV. Actually it is ‘adapted’ so much you may not even recognise it. It is a very simple idea, but works like a charm. Split the youth into groups, and get them to send up representatives they think will best fit into the category you give them. BUT they won’t fully know what the category is. So, for example ‘Who has the longest…?’ Each group would send someone up, and once each groups representative is up there, you would tell them you’re measuring for the longest pinkie finger. Give points for first, second and third position, and then move on to the next one.

Some ideas: Longest hair, shortest eyelashes, most common sense (give a riddle), most freckles, worst smelling feet, strongest breath (get them to blow a piece of paper across the floor), least hair on their arms, sharpest maths-brain (give a maths problem)…

**52. MCDONALDS EVENT:**

You could try to get permission to do a huge outreach event. You could use McDonalds or KFC or anyone who would be willing. (The evening is a great pull in term of sales for them so most of them would be willing if you ‘sell’ the idea correctly. They may even be willing to cover some of your costs.) Try to organize a stage and try to get a band or two to play outside, get some good MCs and some giveaways and they may even let you bring some skateboard ramps. Make sure the other youths in your area are on board with you for this, and you have teams of people doing relational evangelism, as well as helping out with security issues. Also make sure to do a lot of advertising and preparation for this. There’s potential for a great event!

If you would like to do a fundraiser, McDonalds have something called a ‘principle evening’ (which schools usually use to raise funds), where they let you help run McDonalds (kitchen and tills) with +/-8 volunteers (use your youth leaders). I think you get roughly 10% of the profit for the time you’re there.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

So, there are 52 ideas, one for each Friday of the year, so it should keep you going for longer than a year. As I mentioned, some of these programme will work really well at your youth, and some won’t at all, but feel free to try them all out.

FUTURE TIPS FOR PLANNING PROGRAMMES:

1) **Get a team** around you to help you out. Even some of your worst ideas could turn into good ones if you have some help.

2) **Don’t be afraid** of bad ideas! They could lead to better ones, if you allow them to play out a bit.

3) Try to take a simple idea and **expand on it**. Go crazy! When you plan, don’t put any limits on what you could do. Once you have a great idea, bring yourself back down to earth with regards to finance and facilities, and then make it into a version you can do. (But remember, you can borrow and make a lot more than we think we can.)

4) Be sure to give yourself **plenty of preparation time**. This would probably mean you would need to plan in advance.

5) **Look at what teens are watching** on TV. There are some great ideas and themes that are out there. We can adapt these and use them for God’s Kingdom.

6) When you find something that really works with your teens, **don’t kill it**! Try save it for 6 months time, or a year’s time. If you do that, you could probably use the event way more times, and then adapt it and use it some more. If the teens are sick of it, however, that idea is gone.

7) **Food ALWAYS works!**

8) Don’t be scared to **ask people for help**. If there is a youth fraternal in your area, join in with it, so you can brain storm together and help each other out. If there’s not one, why don’t you start one up! We HAVE GOT TO get over being intimidated or whatever with other youth groups. This is the KINGDOM OF GOD. And let’s face it; our teens go to school with the teens from the youth down the road. It really would benefit them if we communicated better.

That’s it for this edition. Feel free to e-mail any ideas of programmes that have worked with your youth group to me, and I’ll add them to next year’s edition. If you need more clarity on anything written, feel free to e-mail as well. (debbie@westvillebaptist.co.za)

But most importantly, remember that having successful programmes does not equal a successful youth ministry. Programmes are simply a way to facilitate REAL ministry, something to hang ministry on. And I pray these will aid in that!

**GOD BLESS AS YOU MINISTER TO THE TEENS OF SOUTH AFRICA!**