

Training the Iconographer - All Those Who Work With Youth



- Writing your own Icon while striving to write Others
- Maintaining your spiritual balance and growth while working in ministry



Very Rev Dr. Joseph F. Purpura

Personal Preparation

- **The Youth Worker: Personal Preparation for Youth Ministry**



- This class will examine personal preparation for youth Ministry – *most which also applies to virtually all other ministries.*
- We will look at ways of developing the spiritual life of the youth worker so as to enhance the youth worker's ministry with youth and other adults.



Personal Preparation

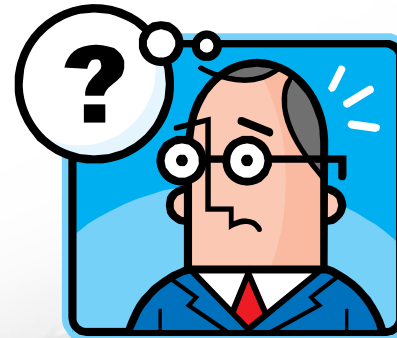
- Further, the student will examine management of time and resources of the youth worker towards helping to keep the youth worker in ministry for the long term, preventing burnout and other issues that tend to lead to the end of a ministry.

Why?

- Longevity in Ministry is essential
- The average paid youth worker moves on within 2 years – this not longevity
- The average lay volunteer lasts on average 8 months
 - This provides little stability for youth
 - To be successful in youth ministry you need to be there for the long term

Reasons for Leaving Youth Ministry

- Typically Youth Workers are poorly trained
 - They do not know what to do

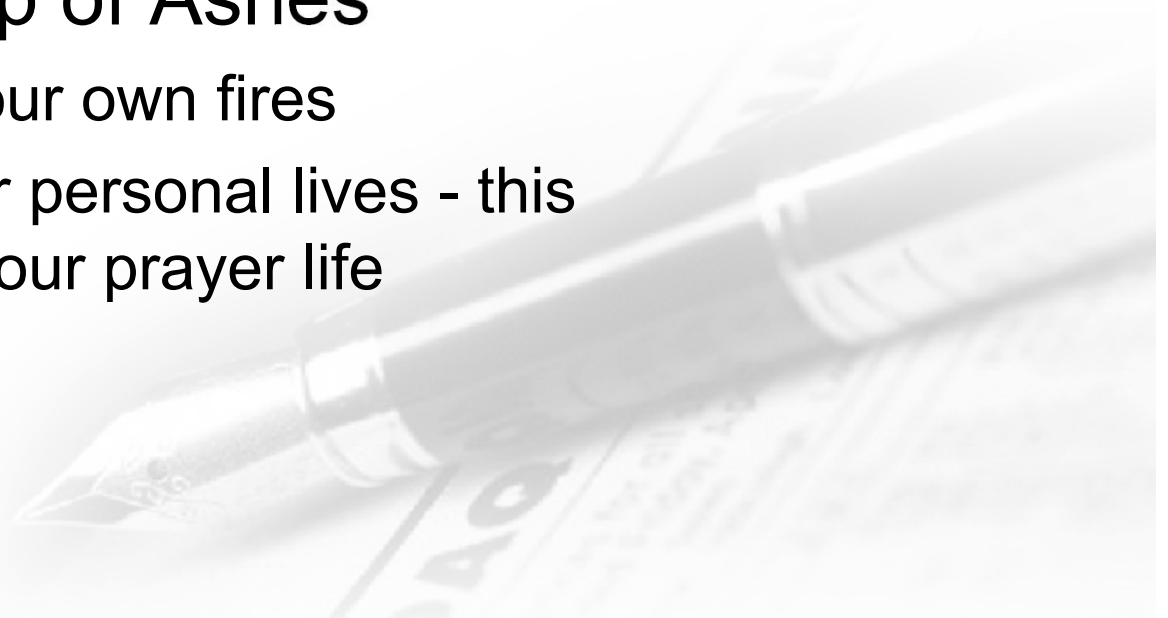


Reasons for Leaving Youth Ministry

- **Burn Out**

- Gail McDonald wrote
“Untended Fires usually
become a Heap of Ashes”

- We must tend our own fires
 - Meaning our personal lives - this
begins with our prayer life



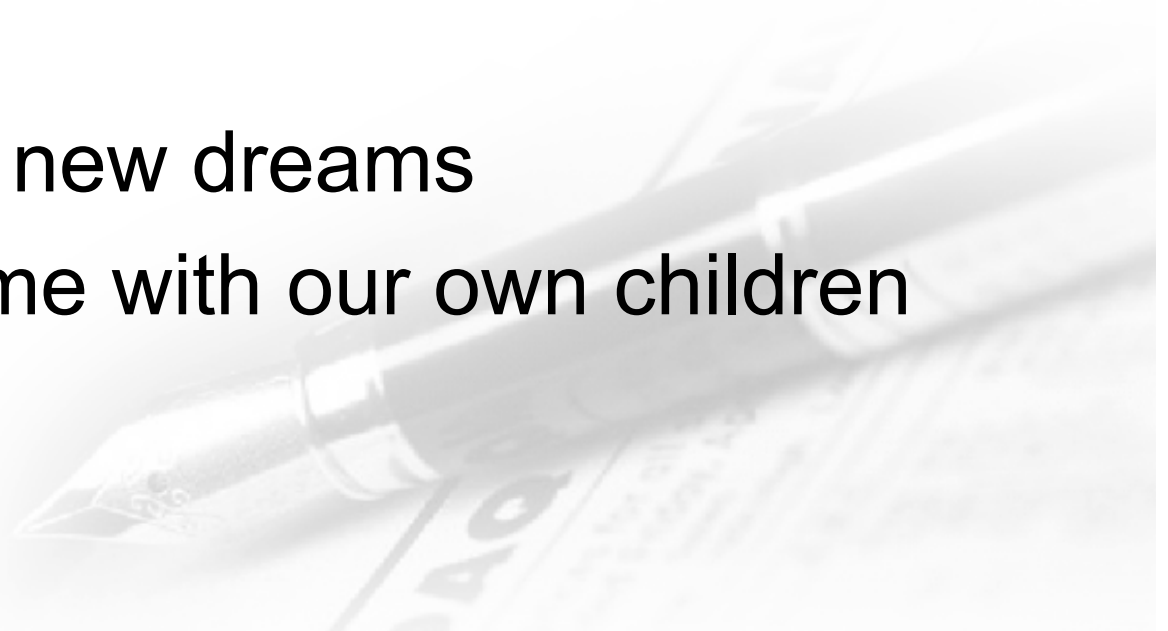
Prevent Burn-out

- Quiet Study Time
 - Be intentional about being educated – always
 - We can learn from all people and all situations
 - Read a variety of materials and often



Recommendations

- Personal Time
 - Time alone
 - To think
 - To do nothing – be quiet – listen to God
 - To dream new dreams
 - Special time with our own children



Special Moments of Learning

- The following was written by Dr. Michael Purpura in the context of an argument that: the function of academic learning (edification) is to make us sophisticated in how we share with others what we learn directly from God.
- He writes, "I am under the impression that our level of sophistication determines the reach of our ability to redeem the world to Christ."
 - "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts 7:22).
 - Paul "studied under Gamaliel [the highest ranked rabbinical teacher of his time] and was thoroughly trained in the law" (Acts 22:3).
 - Progress results from reliance on the spirit; sophistication sets a direction and gives us clarity of purpose."

Opening our hearts and minds to God

He continues to write in his personal notes:

- "Real progress exists only through increasing reliance on the Spirit; this reliance is the aim, the goal, the purpose of all our efforts, of all our ritual, of all our ponderings, our meditations; being with God is not earned by being holy, rather we become holy through the time we spend with God who is in the silence, the darkness, and the stillness.
- This is why the liturgy blasts all our senses, to wear them down, to break the defenses we put up to keep God out, and when these defenses momentarily break down we can finally hear and see and feel God.
- This is what it means to enter the Spirit. This is why we ought never hesitate to commit ourselves to divine work every day, for the work of breaking our fixation on the world is what releases us to make contact with our Lord, and without this the rest of what we do cannot have any direction, use, or purpose."

What our children learn from us...

- When he was asked who and why this was written, the Response from Dr. Purpura was
 - I wrote this piece in St. Augustine. The words prefacing it were something like "One of the most important things I learned from my father is..."

We should never underestimate what our children learn from us in our quiet moments of conversation with them. (Fr. Joseph Purpura)*

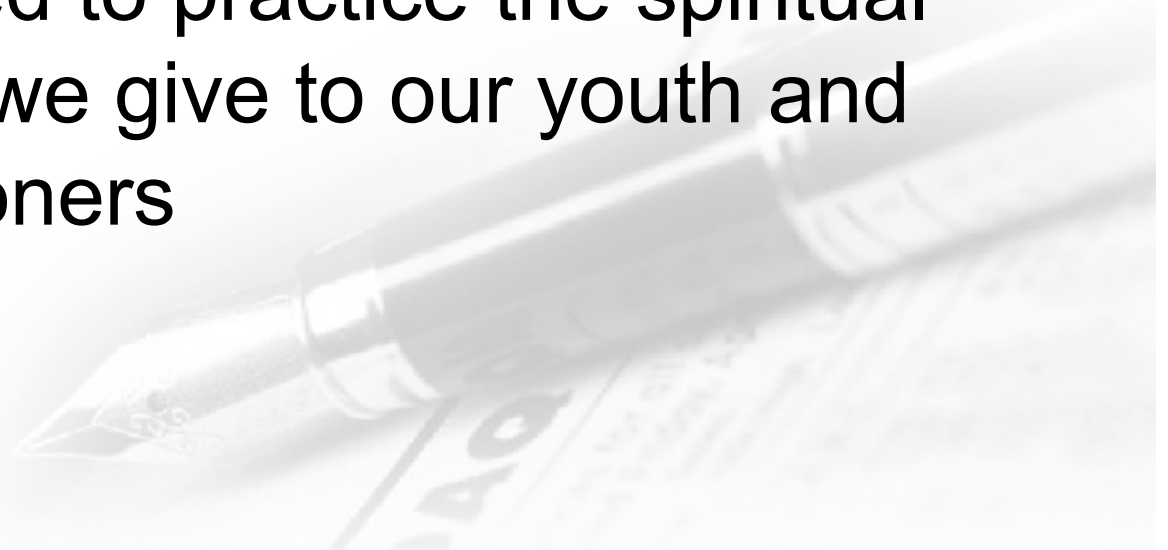
*I believe this is a conversation I had with my son based on my notes from discussions with my spiritual father – Fr. Alexander Schemmann

Ongoing Training and Development

- Commit to some means of formal training every year
 - St Stephen's Course
 - Graduate Programs
 - In your field or others of interest to you
 - One Day or One Week Courses
 - Such as the Annual Youth Worker Conference
 - To enhance your skills in various areas
 - The Key is ongoing training and development

Spiritual Life

- I Timothy 4:7: “Discipline yourself for the purpose of Godliness
 - If we want our people to be holy then we must be holy
 - We need to practice the spiritual advice we give to our youth and parishioners



Prayer

- Conversation with God
 - as well as listening to God
- Formal and Informal Prayer
- Personal and Group Prayer
- Family Prayer
- Public and Private



Worship

- Are we worshipping God?
 - What are we doing while we are at Church?
 - Are we in Church
 - Are we worshipping or busy doing other things
 - Are we helping or preventing others from worshipping
- Are we engaged in Worship?
- Are we taking advantage of the Liturgical Cycle of Worship
- Are we including our teens in Active Worship Opportunities?

Meditation

- Time to think upon what God wants us to do
- Time to reflect
- Time to simply be still and hear our mind



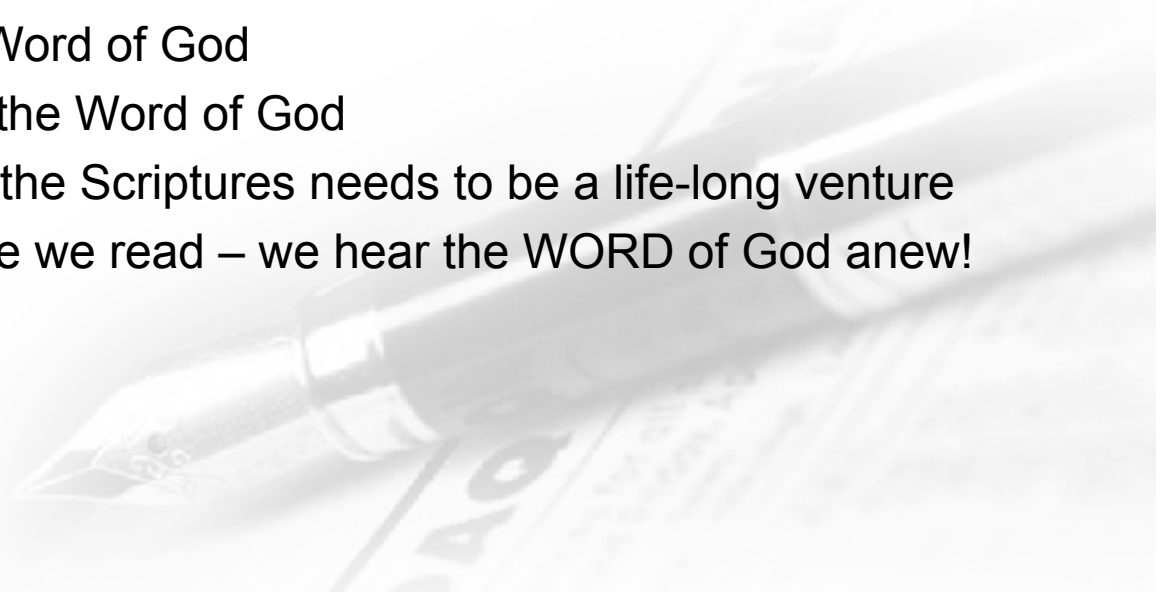
Scripture Reading

- Daily Scripture Reading
 - Are we reading the Word of God daily?
 - Are we encouraging those in our care to read?
 - This is Gods Word to each of us
 - The Word of God is alive
 - The Word of God speaks to us today in the Scripture



Scripture Reading

- Daily Reading of the Scripture Really Matters
 - We know the WORD of God by Reading the WORD
 - God has given us His WORD
 - If we want to know God we must know His WORD
 - Too often we quote God without knowing what He has said
 - We need to read the word of God
 - Re-read the Word of God
 - » Re-read the Word of God
 - » Reading the Scriptures needs to be a life-long venture
 - » Each time we read – we hear the WORD of God anew!



Effects of reading the Bible on behavior

Active in the following behavior...	Read the Bible at least Daily	Read the Bible at least Weekly	Do not read or read less than once a week
Pre-marital Sex	0.63% [1]	1.77%	7.85%
Drunk Alcohol in the past twelve months with friends	2.02%	6.08%	34.43%
Smoked cigarettes in the past month	1.14%	3.16%	20.12%
Smoked marijuana in their lifetime	0.89%	2.78%	17.21%
Very or Somewhat Worried that I might commit suicide	0.38%	2.28%	17.59%
Have considered committing suicide	0.76%	4.05%	23.92%

[\[1\]](#) Percentages in this chart are based on all 790 teens who participated in the survey.

Be Intentional

- Be Intentional in your preparation
 - And in all that you do
 - Things do not happen accidentally



Be Physically fit

- Physically fit
 - to run the race you must be healthy!
 - If we do not care for the body God has given us it will reflect on our Spiritual Life
 - Spiritual and Physical discipline go hand-in-hand
 - Be strong physically so you have the will and power to be strong spiritually!
 - God has given us our bodies He expects that we will care for them
 - The Resurrection is of both Body and Soul!

Physical Well Being

- Keep yourself Physically Healthy so you can Minister to others
 - by what you eat
 - and what you do
 - Exercise – be physically disciplined
 - Gym
 - Running
 - Swimming
 - Walking



Physical Well Being

- Studies show that exercising 3-4 times a week for at least 30 minutes straight increases life expectancy
- More importantly this exercise can increase physical independence by as much as 20 years.
 - ➔ That may mean 20 more years of ministry in one form or another. ←

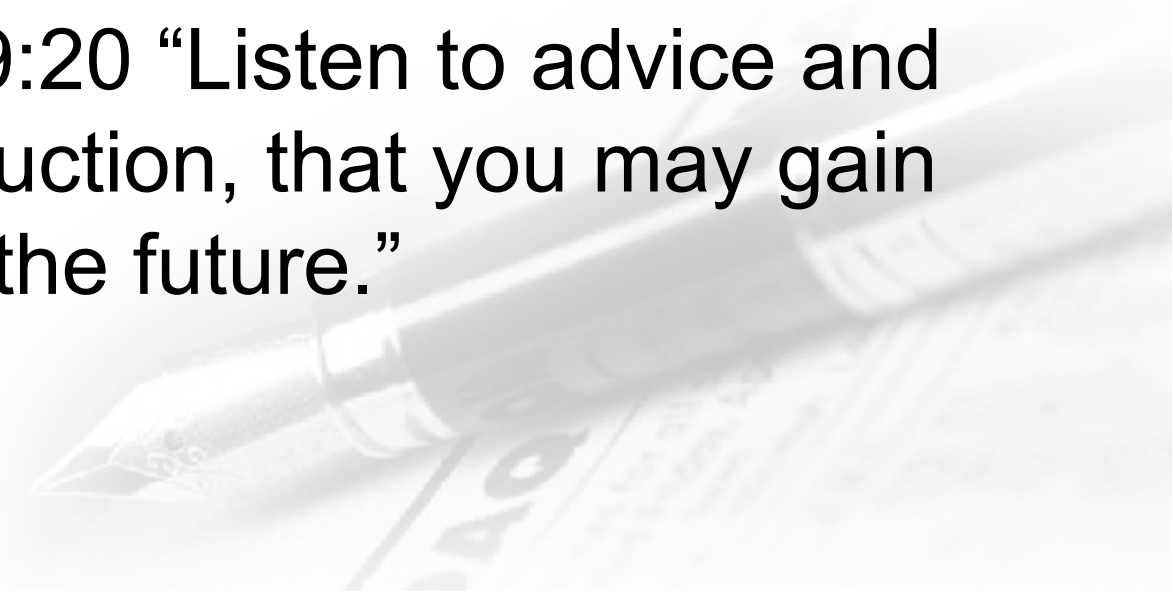
Sleep

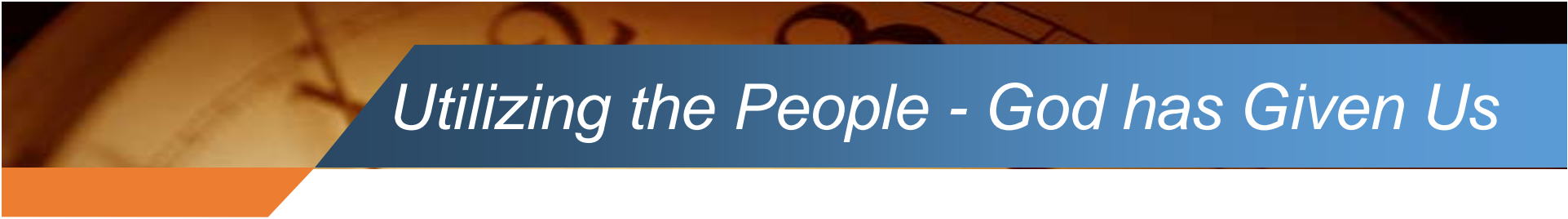
- Minimum 7 - 8 hours
 - To retain what you learned that day
 - To fill your spine with needed fluid
 - To be awake and focused to do the work at hand.
 - More Sleep – less hunger – less weight gain






Utilizing the People God has Given Us

- Seek Advice
 - Proverbs 12:15 “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”
 - Proverbs 19:20 “Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.”
- 



Utilizing the People - God has Given Us

- Seek the advice of men or women who appear to have good youth and/or administrative skills
 - Ask your brothers and sisters how they manage their ministry – listen and learn
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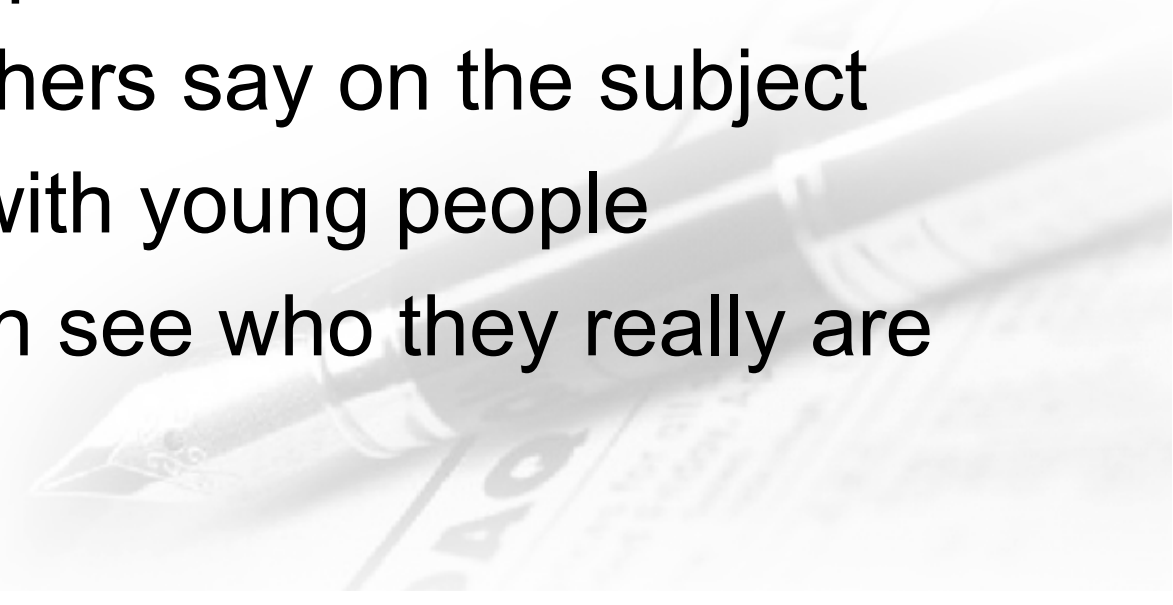
Know the Culture You are Ministering Within

- You do not need to live in their culture
 - but you must know it
 - In order to take them from where they are - towards where they need to go



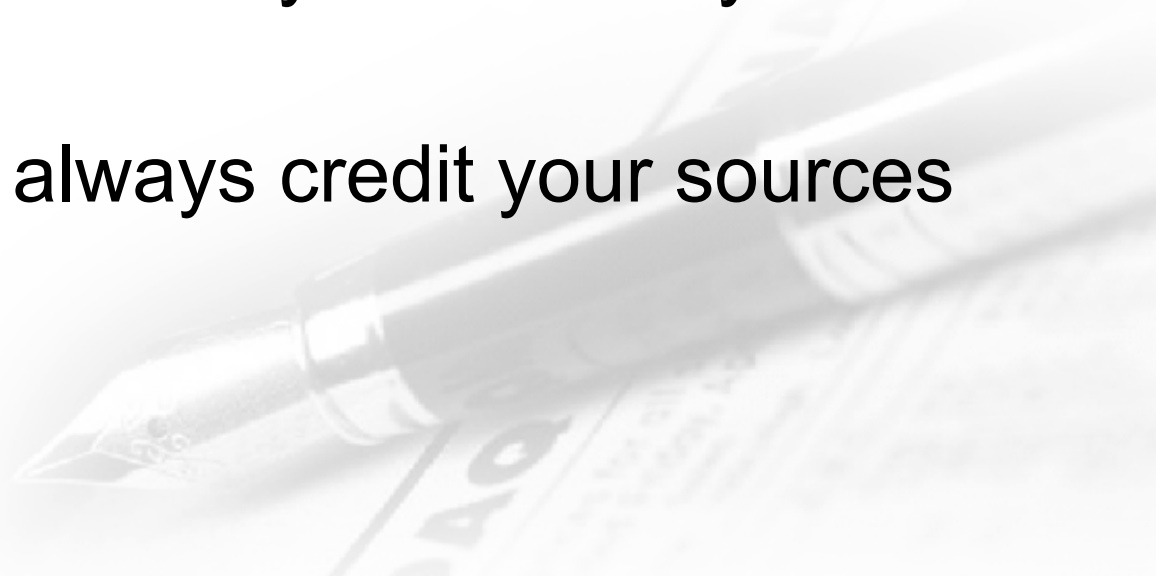


Know the Culture You are Ministering Within

- To know young people
 - talk with young people about their life
 - ask and review what they read and watch – to a point
 - read what others say on the subject
 - spend time with young people
 - So you can see who they really are
- 

Be Prepared

- Whatever you do with youth - Prepare
 - Prepare well and often
 - Pray - Plan – Prepare – Practice
 - Use Resources
 - “Essence of Creativity is the ability to copy”
 - Though always credit your sources
 - Be creative

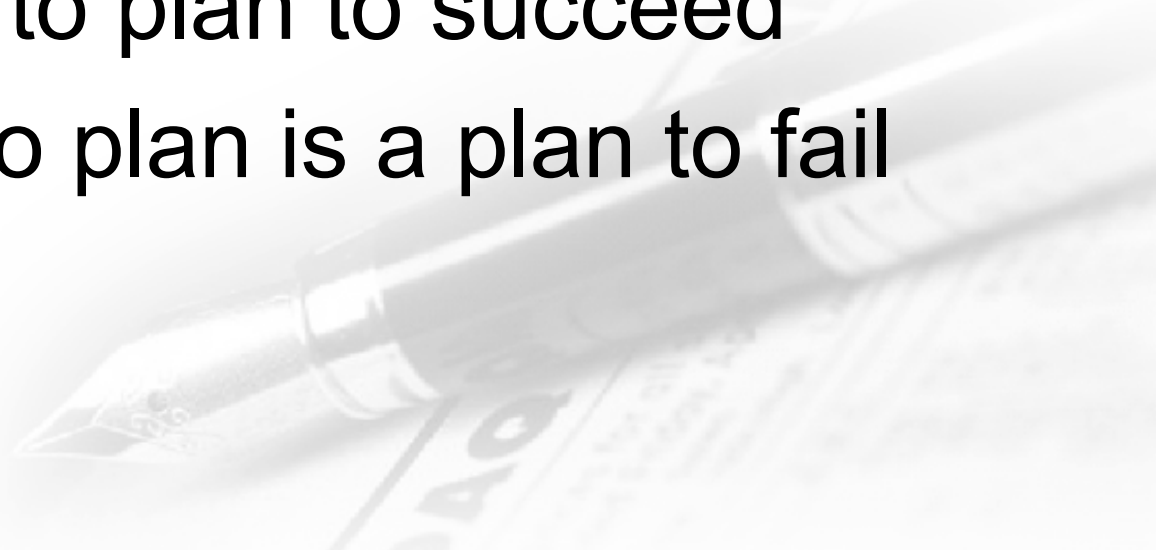


Be Prepared

- Remember why you are doing what you are doing
- Remember who you are ministering “to and with”
- Remember who has called you to this ministry
- Be mindful of whom you serve

Administration - Keeping Order

- Administration will make or break a program and ministry → or even you
 - You need to plan to succeed
 - Failing to plan is a plan to fail



Administration - Keeping Order

- Plan ahead – know where you are trying to go
- Do not let things creep up on you
- Organize time for each project
- Plan your week and day



Administration - Keeping Order

- Start each week and day with a written list of what needs to be done
 - Pray for specific guidance each day and moment as needed
- Be flexible
 - Sometimes God interrupts our plans with a more important matter

Managing Your Plan

- Planning means knowing what you need to accomplish
 - This year
 - This month
 - This week
 - » This day
 - » This hour
 - » This half hour
 - » This minute

Break things down into smaller components where they become more manageable.

Administration - Keeping Order

- **Feel free to say no***
 - You can always change your mind and say yes later if needed
- **Prepare and Plan out your meetings**
 - Never walk into a meeting without knowing what you want accomplished and how you are going to go about it. – Prepare!
 - * There are exceptions to this rule – for example I would not say “no” to my Metropolitan, since I work for him and do the ministry he has called me to do – this means I say no in other areas to accommodate his wishes, since I serve at his pleasure.

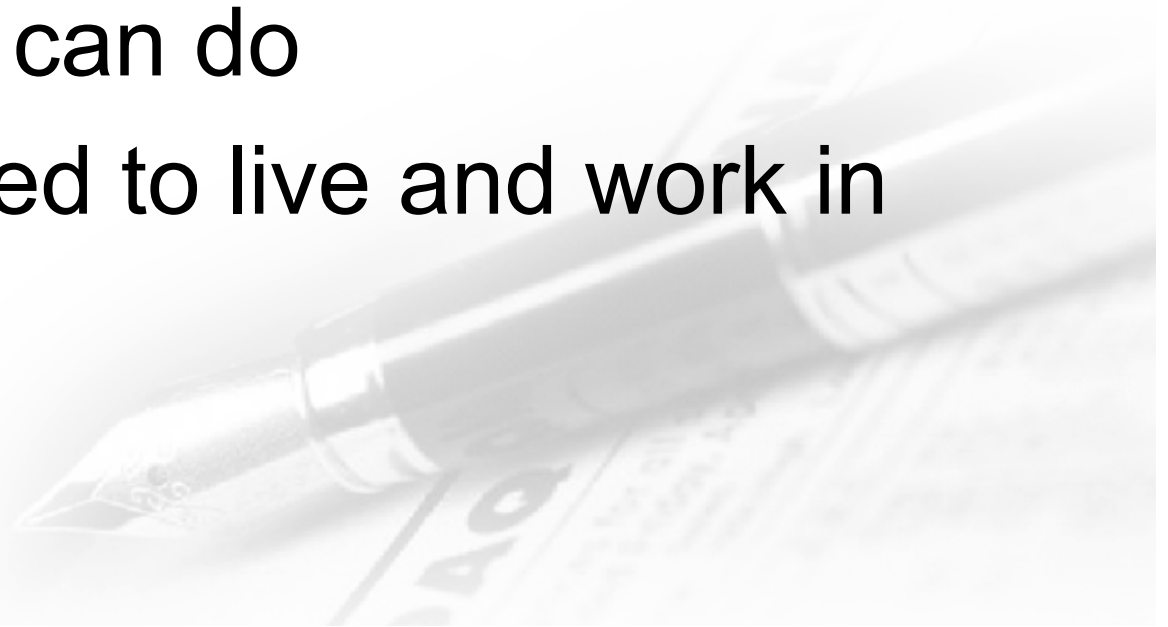
The same is mostly true for a parish youth worker in relation to their pastor under whose pleasure they serve. Listen to my oral comments to better understand this issue

Administration - Keeping Order

- Read books on Management Style
 - While management may be a gift for some – most of us need to use the gift of our brain to learn how to be good managers of the affairs that God has called us to watch over.

Delegation

- “A Christian Alone is No Christian”
 - As leaders we need to lead and inspire
 - so others can do
 - We are called to live and work in community



Delegation

- Jesus Christ never ministered alone
 - He gave authority to his disciples for parts of the ministry
- Jesus Christ never sent his disciples out alone – but he did send them out to do ministry in two by two
 - If Christ expected his disciples to minister alongside others and never alone, who are we to think we can do better than His disciples.

Delegation

- Goal of delegation is to become replaceable
 - so you can move on and attend to other areas that need your attention
 - While others do what you were doing
 - So you can start on the next needed area of ministry
 - If you do not delegate and give away parts of your ministry the ministry will NOT grow

Delegation

- Christ's model of Delegation
 - He first ministered and His disciples watched
 - He and His disciples ministered together (both were teaching and healing)
 - He sent them out in pairs – they came back and reported
 - Jesus Ascended to Heaven and let His disciples Minister
 - He moved on to other matters

Having Vision and Getting There

- “Without a Vision the People will Perish”
 - but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty. (Proverbs 28:19)
 - Leadership is about looking at the future, future direction and future vision. As the wise saying goes, " Without vision, people perish!" So leadership without vision kills not only the leaders but also the people they lead. (Extraordinary Leadership by Dr Daniel Choo)
- Wandering without knowing where we need to go will leave us
 - lost
 - going in circles
 - and possibly dead.



Vision

- We need short-term and long term goals
 - Write them down
 - God often places visions in our hearts and minds
 - But we may forget what He has given us because we have not taken care to preserve them, so we can act on them.

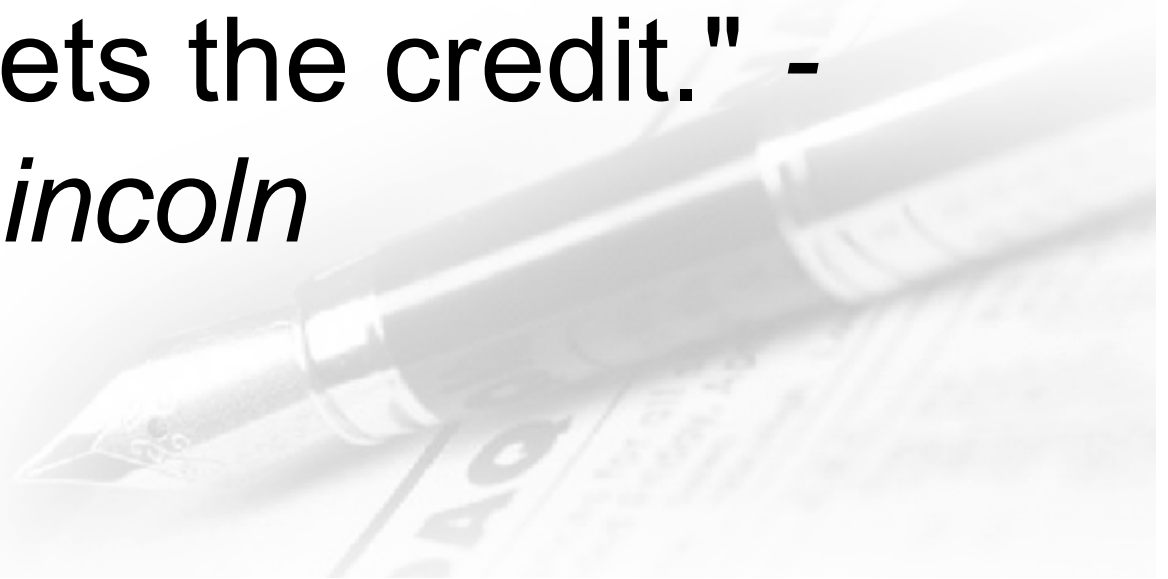


Vision and Ownership

- Involve others in developing the vision
 - So there is ownership
 - So they understand and can work with you
 - So it also becomes their vision and goal
 - God has gifted others as well with many gift we may or may not have

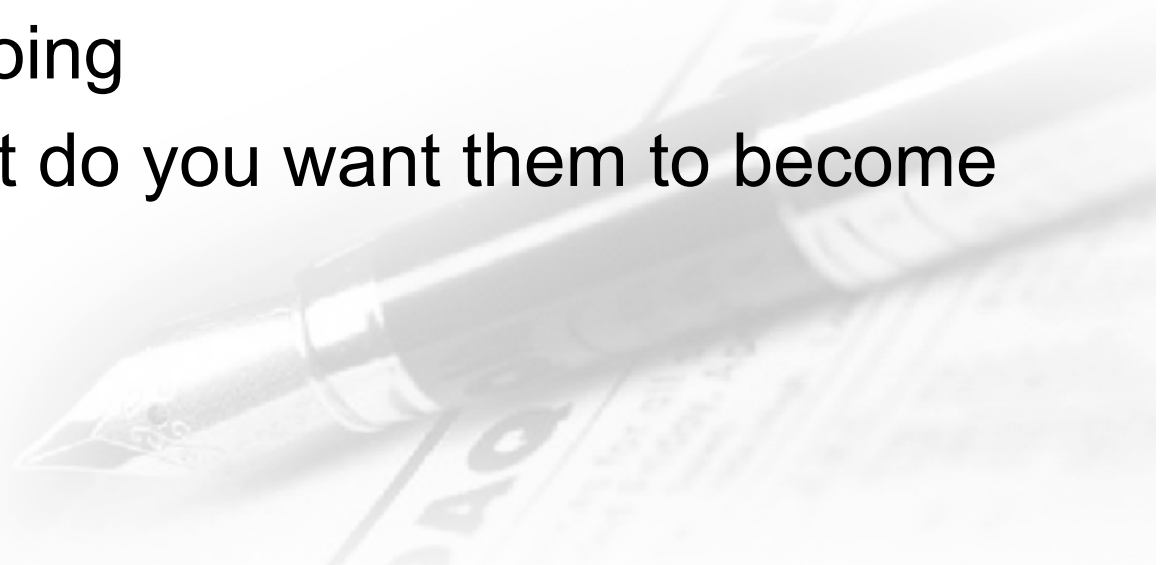
Give Credit to Others

- "It's surprising how much you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit." - *Abraham Lincoln*



Setting Objectives

- Know where you want to move your youth in both the short and long term
 - What do you want them to learn and understand along the way
 - What do you want them to become proficient in doing
 - Who and what do you want them to become



Setting Objectives and Balance in Ministry

Planner Guide for Teen SOYO

Living the Orthodox Faith in Christ through

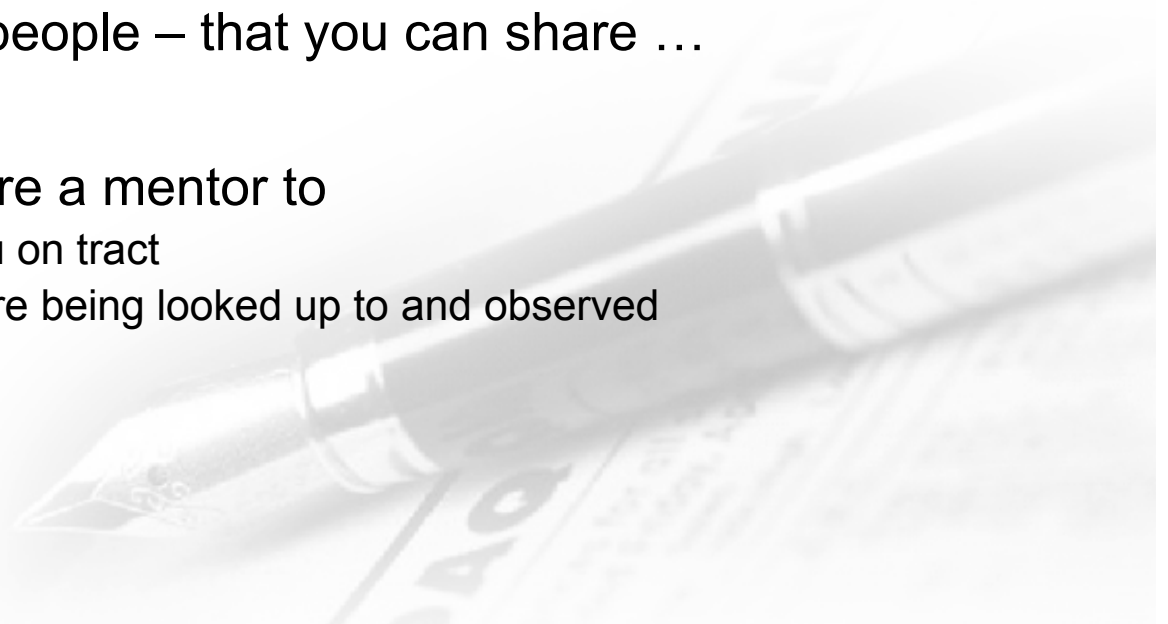
Worship	Witness	Service	Fellowship
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Support

- Support is not an Option – It is a Necessity
 - Longevity and success in ministry is impossible without support
 - We were not create to do it alone
 - To think we can do it without others is simply false pride

Support

- Three Types
 - Mentor
 - Someone who you look up to you for guidance
 - perhaps your Spiritual Father
 - » though may be another person
 - Support Group
 - Small group of people – that you can share ...
 - Disciple
 - Someone you are a mentor to
 - This keeps you on tract
 - knowing you are being looked up to and observed
 - accountability



Your Family

- Make your family a priority
 - 1 Timothy 3:4-5 (the Bishop)
 - He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?

Your Family

- Often our families are the last ministered to – we need to change this
 - as it is contrary to Scripture
- Shared Fatherhood
 - No other child has to share their father as father with so many others as the priest (Bishop BASIL)
 - His children listen to others call their father – “father”
 - Often the priest is out ministering to others at the time when their children are home – nights and weekends



*Orthodox Ministry is Dependent
on our Relationship with God*

- It is God's Ministry
 - His Vision
 - His People
 - His Kingdom
- 