



STUDENT MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Foundry – Houston, Texas

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BACKGROUND

The Foundry is a strong, multi-campus church with a commitment to missional engagement in their community and beyond. It is located in Northwest Houston in the Jersey Village area, a community known to maintain a small town feel in the midst of the Metropolitan Houston. Its proximity both to the downtown Houston area and roomier suburbs and exurbs make it a perfect middle ground for a variety of individuals and families. It was founded by a small group of 28 in 1978 seeking to meet the needs of a rapidly growing community. Pastor Godfrey Hubert arrived in 1984, and the church quickly grew under his leadership in harmony with the growth of the area. The church grew from 184 in 1984 to its current high of nearly 5000. 2008 brought another joyous expansion when the church expanded to include a second location on Fry Road.

Love is a core value at the Foundry as evidenced through mission statements highlighting love for God and love for neighbor. This love pours out as they seek to “transform all people into faithful servants of Christ.” The Foundry lives this out through weekly programming and special events throughout the life of the church.

The Foundry prides itself in offering a variety of ministries focused across the life span. Regular programs take place on campus during the week for seniors all the way down to toddlers. Sundays highlight Christian Education from cradle to senior saints. The Foundry also serves families in a variety of ways including hosting a preschool for 3 and 4 year olds as well as offering a Mother’s Day Out program for younger children.

There is strong guidance from senior leadership desiring to empower all members to grow in Christ and be wise stewards of all the blessings received from God. This guidance of course begins first with God and flows through a deep respect for scripture and all it entails. Community and collaborative ministry round out the core values of The Foundry. When asked, Foundry members describe their church as: “compassionate”, “motivated”, “warm”, and “caring.” The church is also described as “frustrating”, “secretive”, “disjointed”, and suffering from “poor communication.”

The role of youth pastor has been on a roller coaster over the years. There is a history of periods of excellence followed swiftly by periods of struggle, decline and even what some described as collapse. In recent history, Michael David (MD) is still held as a high standard with his positive contribution seeming only to increase with the passing of time. There is no question that what he did with the group was wonderful but there were frustrations that are fading with the more recent struggles. There have been a core of committed volunteers weathering many changes but left feeling bruised after neglect or exclusion. Currently the student ministry is described as “joyful”, “uplifting”, “helpful” and “authentic” as well as “program challenged”, “exclusive”, “boring” and “shallow.”

The membership of the church is 4500, and on an average week there will be 1900 members in attendance in worship. There are 771 youth on the rolls with an average of about 74 youth in Sunday school, which is made up of youth in grades 7-12. All in all, after eliminating duplicate attendance, there are about 135 7th-12th graders actively involved in some aspect of the church life in an average week.

The church has a budget of \$3,400,000 and the overall student ministry budget (including salaries and benefits plus funding related to student ministry programs and special events) is in the neighborhood of \$175,000.

There are approximately 24 adult volunteers involved at least 2-3 times a month in the regular programs of the student ministry. This includes 8 high school leaders and 16 middle school leaders. Others help out at special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

There are seven worship services at two locations on Sunday morning. Youth Sunday school is held at 9:00 am on the Fry campus and 10:40 on the Jones campus. The youth Sunday school is divided into 7th grade, 8th grade and high school group, (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th).

Youth group meets Sunday nights from 5:30-7pm on the Jones campus only. This is preceded by youth choir from 4:15-5:15 pm. Small groups take place during the youth group time with adolescents discussing topics while adults roam or supervise the entire process. Wednesdays bring another opportunity with a rotating model of activities held on the Jones campus. The average total attendance for youth group is 70 youth.

In addition to the regular weekly/monthly offerings, the student ministry participates in annual programs such as The Call weekend; Breakthrough, Mission Trips or Service Projects, and a summer beach trip.

Youth Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the student ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. We met with 61 individuals in 10 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future. The groups were largely attended by those who attend the Jones Road Campus. The student ministry of Fry Road is currently growing and finding success in its ministry.



YOUTH MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens we like to use for understanding youth ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Youth ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing and discouragement.

These three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, but they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff and the congregation at large.

Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church’s ministry. It will be important for a target number of participation level to be clearly agreed on by the church leadership, student ministry leadership and staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, student ministries are typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

Rent #2: PROGRAMS—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, leadership will need to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give youth, parents, leaders and staff “something to talk about.”

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—It will be necessary to establish a joyful, expectant culture among the active youth and parents for the benefit of the rest of the youth and congregation. A climate of enthusiasm will be essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and the parents.

As the leadership of this ministry develops its long-range vision, it will simultaneously need to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the Foundry Student Ministry faces parallel challenges.



1. Laying the Foundation: Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the ministries’ *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,
2. Continuing to Worship on Stilts: Maintaining the *current* ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of youth, families, staff and the church at large.



As the student ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, five rules of thumb – or what we call “ministry norms” – will be helpful to keep in mind:

1. **10% of the Worshipping Congregation**— In a typical church, the size of the student ministry tends to settle at a number roughly around 10% of the worshipping congregation. Thus a fair gauge for the target number of youth attending should settle at 190 youth. An average weekly attendance of 135 youth in some aspect of the church life is likely to lead to a sense of dissatisfaction among parents and the church leadership. At the current rate, the Foundry has nearly 7% of the worshipping congregation reflected in the size of the youth group. The current program is falling short of the national average.
2. **\$1,000 per Kid**—With \$175,000 in the church’s budget currently dedicated to the student ministry and a weekly participation level of 135 youth, The Foundry is above the range of normal and is more than funded for its current level of ministry. The student ministry is currently funded for a ministry to 175 youth. There is room for some numeric growth, but the budget actually falls short of supporting the 190 students that Norm #1 suggests would be average for a church this size.
3. **1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—In your current staff configuration the student ministry has a combined capacity to minister effectively to 220 youth (4 full time and 1 shared staff person). With 135 active students per week there is significant room for numerical growth under your current system. The concern is whether each staff member is in a position to work to his or her full potential. A plan for strategic ministry staffing should be considered in order to effectively reach the potential of youth on the rolls of the church.
4. **1 Adult for Every 5 Youth** — YMA likes to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five youth on an ongoing basis. The Foundry Student Ministry currently has 20 volunteer adults who have made a weekly commitment to interacting with youth at its major weekly programs on Sundays and Wednesdays. This number of adults gives the church the capacity to minister in a sustainable way to approximately 100 youth, leaving you short on weekly volunteers and unable to sustain meaningful growth. In order to grow beyond your current weekly attendance of 135 students you’ll need to recruit additional weekly volunteers.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH MINISTRY STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person – or even a single type of person – instability is a predictable result. We have found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three different kinds of people:



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- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The Construction Foreman:** A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, or particular skilling in planning and managing events, or particular skills in teaching.

Many churches hire, as their lead youth pastor, someone who may have gifts in a single area – for example, working with youth, managing a facility – but who simply don’t have the experience base or the skill set to oversee the complex components of a ministry of even 60 or more youth. The result in these situations can be a pattern of unrealistic expectations for the staff, which can lead to “scapegoating,” particularly in settings in which a sustainable infrastructure for ministry has not been established.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current student ministry

Commitment to Discipleship: The youth ministry staff is deeply committed to discipleship. They have a passion for changing student’s lives. That has been their main goal as they built the program that exists today. They are building Christ followers who are committed to sharing the Gospel with their friends. The students are growing and they are hungry for even more. The staff is also very relational, which is critical, as students often need a little one-on-one assistance.

“We want to change kids lives. They need the Bible.”

“We love it when the light comes on in a kids life...when they get it.”

Mission Possible! The Foundry is on a new journey to become a missional church. The Foundry will lead the conference in this renewed effort to serve the community and the world. The youth, their parents, and volunteers are all ready to jump in. There is a shared value for service. The student ministry has a long-track record of missional service at UM Army, JUMP, and Project Houston. These traditions and the memories that they created will serve as a launching point for a prominent mission emphasis in the student ministry.

“UM Army was awesome. We need to do stuff like that.”

“They worked with kids in a VBS, but they really want to sweat.”

“I really need to sweat and work hard. It helps me to grow.”

“I loved JUMP.”

“We need to do more stuff like Project Houston.”



Confirmation is Back on Track: Many parents and volunteers spoke of their concern regarding the problem of retaining the youth who have completed the Confirmation experience. The pastors, staff, volunteers and parents tackled the issue together. There have been changes to the time and structure of the program. Parents of Confirmands are more deeply involved in Sunday morning worship and study. There is a sense of hope and excitement regarding the outcome of these changes and the possibility of continued involvement of the Confirmands.

Balance is the word – Fun AND Biblical: Everyone seems to agree, balance is the goal. The parents want more depth and more outreach events. The students want to grow and do more fun stuff together, too. This is significant as all the parties involved in the student ministry are looking for something to rally around. As new, fun events are created, they will be supported. Students are ready jump into new study opportunities, and they will invite their friends to the fun stuff!

“We need more Bible study.”

“We need more fun stuff.”

“It’s important that these kids get a chance to go deeper.”

“We need more opportunities for kids to invite their friends to something fun.”

“We need more fun events on the weekends.”

“We need to bring back the home small groups.”

Potential Volunteers-a-plenty: There should be no trouble finding volunteers to support the current and new programming of the student ministry. Many, many people in the groups spoke of their sincere desire to help out. Some would like to help in a behind-the-scenes role. Others would like a little training, and they’ll step out in faith to lead a small group or a Sunday School class. This desire to get involved will allow the youth staff to be creative with programming. The youth will have the opportunity to build relationships with lots of supportive adults.

“I want to help out. Just give me a little notice and I’ll sign up.”

“I have always been involved in the student ministry. It’s important.”

“I would be happy to jump in and volunteer.”

“I’m a little nervous about leading a group. Just give me a partner to show me how and I’ll give it a try.”

Facilities: The student ministry is supported by a rare resource – a dedicated youth facility. Youth workers from all over the country cry out for such a facility. It’s a dream come to life and a wonderful resource for the staff and students. The facility is available and is even seen as being underutilized at times. With some creative touches and a little effort, this facility could even become a great place for students to hang out after school and on the weekends.

From Winter to Spring: The staff and pastors of the Foundry are ready for a new season. The student ministry has endured a fallow season for more than a dozen years. The staff is ready to turn over the earth and plant seeds that will lead to a renewed ministry that is filled with joy, hope and excitement. This fallow season serves as a motivator for parents, youth, pastors and youth staff.

“For 16 years we’ve never had a strong, dependable youth program. It’s time to get this right.”



“This year is critical. We’re laying a foundation and learning bad habits that will be hard to undo.”

“The youth ministry is critically important. Let’s work hard to give it a fresh start.”

Student Ministry Passion: 61 people showed up for listening groups with 48 hours notice or less. That says something! It is obvious that the parents, volunteers, youth and staff of the Foundry share a common passion for student ministry. It seems that everyone truly values this program. The youth are an important part of the church. Members want to see them more, hear them more, and provide them with a quality program.

Student Servants: The youth expressed a desire to serve the community and their church. They also have a real longing to serve within the student ministry. They are gifted and thoughtful. They would like to be organized into servant teams to provide music and program direction. They are also ready to be organized into a team that will welcome new visitors. Church members shared an interest in seeing students lead during worship and in other areas.

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to Moving the Student Ministry Strategically Forward

Adrift at sea without an anchor: The ministry is missing a person or program to hold things together. Leadership has not been cohesive across the board for some time. There is a confessed mistrust between groups who must work together for a healthy ministry. This lack of trust has allowed the winds of change to determine the levels of success over the years. Neither is there a strong program or plan around which staff and volunteers may rally until a leader is in place. Tied into this concern is an overall perception that the pastors are not supportive of the staff nor student ministry in general. This does not mean that there are not quality things happening, rather that overall the lifeboats are working fine and it’s time to get back to the ship.

“There is no anchor program, no trusted/consistent communication”

“Pastors have not been the advocates for the student ministry.”

“The staff is looking for a champion. The young staff doesn’t trust the pastoral team.”

“They believe the pastors are too numbers based.”

“There is no relationship anymore, kids to parents, parents to staff, staff to pastors.”

Fuzzy vision for the future

Most people, from youth to parents to volunteers to leaders, spoke about “successful youth ministry” in vague generalities. Some people have a fuzzy expectation that the ministry will be doing the same thing that it is now – but better. Others talked about a clear need for change – but the path to that change were less clear.

In either case, a clearly articulated vision of destination, goals and strategies is missing. Without clear standards of effectiveness and participation targets, the youth staff will continue to be evaluated based on nothing more substantive than each individual’s opinion of what the youth ministry ought to be doing. The tension can frustrate and freeze a youth staff trying to figure out what the priorities are.



Until there is a clear consensus among staff, parents, volunteers and students, the ministry runs the danger of being like the proverbial rocking chair – lots of motion but not a lot of movement.

Must cultivate, feed and water: While there are a number of adults currently serving, there are many more who would like to come alongside FSM but simply do not feel welcomed or as if they would be equipped. There is also a sense of neglect from past and current volunteers. Trust and the lack thereof is a common theme running through comments from all sides. There is a lack of team spirit stemming from a sense of not measuring up or simply not being utilized or appreciated. Adults mentioned wanting to be involved on some level but did not sense an openness or welcome.

“We just can’t find a youth worker who will work with adult volunteers, trust them.”

“Volunteers had to be tested for their worthiness.”

“Volunteers were fired and then never followed up with.”

“There ought to be a parent advisory committee. There was supposed to be a committee, a parent committee. We have leadership meetings that end up being dissolved.”

“We need teacher training”

Describing the Elephant: Perhaps you know the story of the blind men trying to describe an elephant. The blind man who feels the leg describes a tree trunk. The one holding the tail says it’s a rope.

Likewise, there seem to be two major and opposing threads of description when it comes the student ministry. On one hand the overall program is seen as too much fun, not enough depth, needing more spirituality, purely social, no prayer and lacking in Bible reading teaching or training. The other descriptor is that youth times are boring, lifeless, missing the connection with real life; discipleship has become an evil word, as it seems to erase all elements of joy. Somehow the description of FSM has become polarized lacking the possibility of how the two perspectives can actually complement one another offering a more full, balanced and sustainable ministry.

“The whole strategy of the YM is like ‘an Amish community.’”

“It was stated that Bryan was hired “as the ‘pastor of fun.’”

“Our program is very disjointed. Parent expectation, student expectations, youth staff ideas, and pastoral expectations are not matching up.”

“They can have fun on their way to Hell.”

“Keeping three groups of people happy is tough – Pastors, parents and kids. It’s not about parents concerns primarily. It’s about kids and the gospel.”

“Fun activities were great in summer and then they just stopped.”

“We’re missing the Biblical, there needs to be a balance.”

“We need to keep the active students engaged. Let’s keep it fun.”

Missing Curriculum Plan and Discipleship Pathway: One reason for the polarizing debate about fun vs. substance is a lack of agreement about how disciples are developed and how they “do life” together. The Foundry Student Ministry needs to enter into an intentional process to ensure a well-rounded, comprehensive plan for what curriculum is being taught. At the same



time, parents, volunteers and staff will need to develop clarity about the appropriate role of fellowship, service and spiritual disciplines. Until a plan has been hammered out and agreed upon, the tired debates about “what we really need” will continue.

Calendaring, communication and marketing – Oh My! : For most families today, life is an exercise in management and organization. Parents and teens expressed a great desire to connect, but felt like the information is neither available nor reliable. There is also a rather conspicuous absence of youth related information on the information wall at the Jones campus where it seemed all other age and gender specific ministries had at least a presence. The web site looks spectacular but the information is not planned out more than a few weeks in advance, making solid commitments from family difficult. There is also a perception that information is not adequately promoted and changes occur without warning. Repeatedly parents, staff and youth expressed a lack of clear communication.

“We need dates way in advance.”

“We need a website; ours is not maintained. We need to be texting and communicating better.”

“We need to communicate better. I didn’t even know about the changes to Wednesday night.”

“There are so many opportunities right here, but we just don’t promote them.”

Where’s the welcome mat?: First impressions make a huge difference. While many love this church and what is offered, there is an overall sense that they have been a part of FSM for so long that this is family and not a place where they can bring their friends. There is a lack of events or activities geared to welcome new friends to the group. Additionally, there is little perceived intentional programming to allow those teens who are present but do not feel connected to build friendships or bonds.

“Not relational, no acknowledgment of visitors”

“We’ve had a process of favoritism. We had a visitor on Wednesday night. He’s been coming for weeks, and no one knew his name.”

“I have not had any motivation to bring in friends. Everything is so tense. The staff has often discouraged our deeper discussions.”

“She just doesn’t feel at home here.”

“We’re missing that ‘big bang’, attractional activity.”

“It took 1.5 years for my daughter to connect. The connection piece is a big issue.”

“There aren’t those activities that draw kids to church. We need to find something to make them want to come.”

Identity Crisis: This is manifesting in two distinct ways that play into each other. First, there is an inherited feeling of inferiority that makes it difficult to dream. The result is often a resignation that things cannot improve. Secondly, there are diverse personalities within the youth staff and volunteers. Rather than viewing this as a strength and celebrating it as God’s plan for community, it is a source of contradiction and criticism. These two challenges reinforce each other, resulting in a vicious cycle of critical thought and fragmented vision.

“We are not clear about his role in leading the program.”



“For 16 years we’ve never had a strong, dependable youth program.” Parent of a 12-year-old

“We love the youth staff, but they have never been supervised in a way that pulls them to their full potential.”

Building challenged: Each campus has a unique situation when it comes to the actual facilities. Fry Road struggles for lack of space for meeting on Sunday mornings and no building access during the week. The Jones location has a youth facility but seems to prefer classroom space on campus other than what was dedicated to the youth. Currently the Jones youth area is being underutilized.

“Now we meet in a long hallway, and there are people walking by and three groups in one hallway.”

“We don’t use the big space for fellowship anymore.”

“We don’t use the Outlet the way that we want to, the other rooms too.”

Anemic Memory Makers & Phantom Limbs: It is hard to escape what once was, especially if it becomes greater in memory than reality. FSM has a wonderful heritage of specific activities that live stronger in legacy than in reality. Rites of Passage are a powerful tool in any student ministry. At one time or another in the history of FSM, several events served such a function. These include beach trips, Call weekend, Jump, UM Army, Breakthrough, SeaWorld, Monday Mania and Mystery Trips. All of these are fine in and of themselves and some may still work but the ghosts of “activities that once were” dominate the conversation, making reclaiming or beginning a new tradition extraordinarily difficult. Comments and reminiscing turned quickly to how the good old days had all of the powerful effective activities. Some activities continue for the sake of tradition though they have dwindled and lost their impact.

“UM Army – used to be cool, then it became an anchor on the neck of the student ministry.”

“Confirmation happens and then everything just drops off.”

Siblings, not twins: There are many good things occurring on the Fry Road campus, yet most programming is geared to the Jones campus. As the two groups continue to grow, the relationship will change. Many said it is time for regular meetings to be offered to those who are part of the Fry Road campus. Both youth and parents spoke of the frustration of timing when nothing is offered mid-week. They choose not to be involved or are unable to be involved at the Jones campus. While these are sister campuses, each has unique needs and personalities built upon those who attend.

“Many families took flight back to Jones campus, but I love our size.”

“Trying to get from home which is near my life group, to Jones, to my life group, back to Jones and finally home just doesn’t work. Something had to go.”

“My son goes with his other friends to their church on Wednesdays. He tried Jones but has no friends there and everyone there already knows each other.”

Counting the Sheep: Shelby is a great resource for record keeping. The difficulty at this point is that general participation is tracked, not specifically who is present at any given time or event.



Control Documents should provide specific details, allowing a clearer picture of who is present and participating for safety and logistical reasons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Reframe the next 16 months (through February 2012) as a time of direction setting and infrastructure building for the student ministry. Target March 2012 as the date for a sustainable structure for student ministry that will have been laid over the previous 16 months.
- 2) Present this report to the Leadership Council, requesting they approve the 16-month strategic renovation process outlined in this document.
- 3) Establish a Student Ministry Renovation Team, made up of four volunteer stakeholders in the church, who report regularly to the Executive Pastor of Discipleship. They will be charged with two overarching responsibilities:
 - i. Work with the student ministry staff to address the immediate pressure points facing the student ministry's transition toward sustainability.
 - ii. Establish a consensus for the direction of the student ministry and oversee the development of its long-term infrastructure.
- 4) Partner with Youth Ministry Architects (YMA) as a support system working in conjunction with the Renovation Team. Bring YMA in at strategic times to build momentum and bolster the Renovation Process.

TASK #1: Addressing the immediate Pressure Points facing the student ministry *(to be accomplished before any major changes in weekly programming)*

Pressure Point 1: Create a Sustainable Staffing Model that will utilize staff within their giftedness and also provide for long-term stability of the ministry. The current staffing configuration is not meeting the needs of parents, youth, and volunteer leaders. There will need to be a realignment to clarify expectations, establish accountability, and provide for sustainable growth.

- Prayerfully move toward a staffing configuration that will create clarity and provide the structure for spiritual and numerical growth.
- Consider this recommendation for a sustainable staffing model:
 - Jones Road – Full-time Director of High School Ministry
 - Jones Road – Full-time Director of Junior High Ministry
 - Fry Road – Part-time Director of Student Ministries
 - Jones Road/Fry Road – Program Coordinator providing administrative support for both campuses.
- Develop new, results based job descriptions for all student ministry staff positions.
- Seek to fill these positions using a patient process of goal setting and discernment.
- Conduct a nationwide search using YMA's search strategy.



Pressure Point 2: Develop a Leader/Teacher Training Plan that includes sufficient training and support for all volunteers and student leaders in the student ministry as well as regular meetings for celebration and fellowship.

- Hold a quarterly training event to build confidence and new skills within volunteer leaders.
- Send out monthly training/encouragement notes to all volunteers by email.
- Close out the school year with an event to celebrate the time that volunteers have given to the ministry.
- Plan an exciting leadership launch event for the beginning of the school year that will instill unity and common purpose within the student ministry volunteers.

Pressure Point 3: Retool Programming to build trust, dependability, and consistency with parents, youth and volunteers.

- Gather a team to study the weekly programs.
- Create a check-in/check-out attendance tracking process.
- Smooth out the schedule and transitions.
- Evaluate the curriculum being utilized in each area.
- Implement a new strategy for volunteer utilization and deployment during these programs.
- Re-evaluate the current use of the Jones Road facility. Seek creative ways to create a fun space for programming and future growth.
- Create monthly programming/outings that are unique to the Fry Road Campus.

Pressure Point 4: Communicate to leaders, parents, and youth a 12-month calendar of major student ministry events and programs.

- Set the final dates for the major youth events through December of 2011.
- Publicize these dates using all available methods of paper and electronic promotion prior to December of 2010.
- Recruit a “Good News” volunteer whose ministry is to celebrate the good things that are going on in the Student Ministry, by sharing stories and photos on the web, on the walls, and in the newsletter and bulletins.

Pressure Point 5: Add Open Door Events to the Major Events calendar.

- Enhance the programming calendar by adding outreach/fun events for each month.
- Create a variety of events: free/pay/onsite/offsite/overnight/jr. high/sr. high/fun/service
- Recruit a volunteer major event coordinator (MEC) for each of these events.
- Provide support for each MEC as they plan event logistics and pull together a support team for their event.
- Provide each MEC with a major event notebook to track event details and correspondence. Keep these notebooks for new MEC's to use when these same events are re-scheduled.

TASK #2: Establishing a consensus for the direction of the student ministry and the creation of its infrastructure, including the completion of the following tasks:



INFRASTRUCTURE TASKS THAT BUILD STABILITY

- **Control Document Development:** Complete a 15-Month Calendar, Major Event Notebooks, and Preventative Maintenance Calendar. Continually update the church database with current contact information. Develop permission slips for every offsite event.
- **6-Year Intentional Curriculum Plan:** Create an integrated template for curriculum, including a design for Sunday school, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening programming.
- **Attendance:** Begin collecting and entering roster-driven attendance for all Foundry Church weekly youth activities.
- **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, leaders and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the student ministry.
- **Building Utilization:** Conduct a usage study for the Outlet. Assess its creative use and consider new ways to leverage this valuable resource. Give students an opportunity to take part in this study as well as any creative design work.
- **Communication:** Establish normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, youth, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the youth page of the church's website, the dedicated student ministry website, Facebook, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Student Ministry Manual:** Develop a Foundry Student ministry Manual, including the most recent Youth Directory, a 15-Month Calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar and notes for every major student ministry event.
- **Fall Kick-Off:** Create and introduce a new, momentum-building event at the beginning of each school year. Plan to serve a meal, share the new Student ministry Calendar of Events, and introduce the weekly volunteers to the parents and youth in attendance. Give out medical forms to be notarized onsite, gather event deposits, give out a few free trips, and make it fun.

DEVELOPING AND NURTURING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- **Staff Development:** Continue to provide mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the student ministry staff.
- **Leadership Clarity:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the student ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- **Broaden Volunteer Definition and Opportunities:** Create new, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program. Encourage parental involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.



- **Event Volunteer Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with youth while others work behind the scenes. Create a “fishing pond” list of possible volunteers to call on for volunteer positions.
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer youth workers at the beginning of each school year.
- **Student Leader Development:** Create ongoing training and support systems for high school students who are leading middle school groups. Create pathways for students to use their leadership gifts.

DEVELOPING CLEAR STRATEGIES

- **Visioning:** Develop a Mission Statement, set of Core Values and Three-Year Revolving Goals, as well as a clear structure for the student ministry.
- **Weekly Fellowship:** Create a deliberate, visitor-friendly space within the weekly schedule to encourage/enable youth to invite their friends. This would ideally not include accountability based small groups.
- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new youth to the church and visitors (such as friends) so that they feel warmly welcomed at The Foundry. Develop a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the youth programs.
- **Spiritual Depth and Pathway:** Develop a plan to intentionally take youth deeper in their faith through teaching and discipleship in varied environments. This plan may include small groups and gifts-based service teams. Create and publicize a deliberate plan that allows youth and parents to understand where youth are in their spiritual lives and determine what programs and ministries will meet their individual needs where they are.
- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all student ministry events and weekly programs through December 2011 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- **Rites of Passage:** Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that will:
 - welcome and connect the new 7th graders and their parents into the Junior High ministry,
 - welcome and connect the new 9th graders and their parents into the High School ministry,
 - and launch the church’s high school graduates from the student ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults.
- **Missions:** Continue to build off the desire of youth and parents to make a difference in the world as well as their local community. Develop a clear, focused calendar for youth involvement in denominational service activities as well as local, regional, and possibly international missions. Evaluate the current mission trips for effectiveness. Create a plan for promoting and exposing the congregations to youth missions throughout the year.



PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides The Foundry with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a sustainable, long-term student ministry.

Many churches choose to use the services of Youth Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Youth Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 16-month transition, we are available to help.

November 2010

Focus: Starting Right

Outcomes:

- The Student Ministry Renovation Team is in place and they have presented the church leadership with the strategic plan for “renovating” the Foundry youth ministry.
- A list of all volunteer needs has been created and a master list of potential adult leaders has been developed, including people from a variety of age groups.
- The firm dates of all major youth ministry events and trips have been determined through September 2011 and the youth ministry calendar has been published in print, on the website and through all means of media accessed by the wider church. Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.
- Written job descriptions have been revised and approved for paid staff serving in the Foundry student ministry.
- Invitations have been sent for a January volunteer training event.
- Details of summer events are 75% finalized.
- Reasonable participation goals for youth ministry events and weekly programs have been set, and there are promotion strategies for meeting these goals.

Search Timeline

- The Search Team has been recruited and given an orientation to their responsibilities using the principles outlined in *Before You Hire a Youth Pastor*.
- The Search Team has begun to look into their sourcing options to bolster the search process.

YMA Option: 1 Day onsite - 1 Day offsite

December 2010

Focus: Communication and Job Posting

Outcomes:

- The Student Ministry Renovation Team has met once and been oriented to their unique roles and personal responsibilities over the coming 18 months.
- A date is set for a March Visioning Retreat and the event is publicized to leaders and parents.
- A team has met to evaluate current weekly program. The unique purpose for each event has been clarified. The flow and transitions for each program have been evaluated for consistency and quality.
- 60% of Major Event Coordinators for 2011 have been recruited.
- Most of the hands-on volunteers needed for remainder of the 2010-11 school year have been recruited.

- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the student ministry staff have been provided.
- Ongoing communication mechanisms are in place to communicate youth events and activities to parents and the church at large.
- The chair of the Student Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff have received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support from the YMA staff.
- “Good enough” curriculum that will meet short-term expectations has been chosen, purchased and distributed for the first-quarter of 2011.

Search Timeline

- Job postings and job descriptions have been written.
- Sources work has begun and position opening(s) have been posted in at least 20 different online and print locations.
- Job postings and source work have resulted in 25 resumes being received.

YMA Option: 2 days offsite

January 2011

Focus: Volunteers and Marketing

Outcomes:

- An enthusiasm building volunteer training event has been completed.
- A marketing plan has been created to intentionally celebrate the successes and celebrations of the youth ministry.
- The appropriate number of volunteers for summer trips has been recruited.
- A written, relational volunteer recruitment process has been developed, outlining when and how volunteers in the youth ministry will be recruited, with the goal of having all key positions in the youth ministry filled at least 2 months before those leaders are to begin serving.
- A template for Major Event notebooks has been created and notebooks have begun to be filled with information.
- The youth ministry is in full compliance with the updated child and youth protection policy developed by The Foundry.
- Processes for tracking attendance for all youth ministry events are in place.
- Bi-Monthly service projects have been scheduled for the students on the Fry Road Campus.
- Bi-monthly fun outings have been scheduled for the students on the Fry Road Campus.

Search Timeline

- At least 40 resumes have been collected.
- The top five candidates have been selected.
- Reference checks and background checks have been conducted for the top five candidates.
- Phone/video conference interviews have been completed.

YMA Option: 2.5 days offsite



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February 2011

Focus: Recruiting

Outcomes:

- Volunteer needs within the youth ministry have been identified. New, “safe” opportunities for first time volunteers have been created to give adults a variety of service options.
- A list of all volunteer needs for the 2011-2012 school year has been created and the recruiting of hands-on leaders and major event coordinators for the 2011-2012 youth ministry has begun.
- Monthly, onsite, fun events have been scheduled on the Jones Road campus in an effort to reach inactive and unchurched students.
- The date for a May Curriculum retreat has been set and publicized using all available means of promotion.
- Processes are in place for the timely and personal follow up for any first-time visitors to the youth ministry.
- A Preventative Maintenance Calendar has been created for the youth ministries that will help it regularly deal with on-going “behind the scene” ministry maintenance.
- The chair of the Student Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff have received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support from the YMA staff.
- The majority of the pressure points from the assessment have been addressed.

Search Timeline

- Face-to-face interviews have been completed with the top 2-3 candidates.

YMA Option: 2 days offsite

March 2011

Focus: Vision and Rites of Passage

Outcomes:

- Visioning Retreat with all major stakeholders has occurred producing Visioning documents for the Youth Ministry (Mission Statement, Values, Goals, and Structure).
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- Results-based, written job descriptions for all volunteer positions in the youth ministry have been developed.
- Recruitment of youth ministry weekly volunteers and major event coordinators for the 2011-12 school year is complete.
- A second youth ministry volunteer training event has taken place-helping leaders to clarify their roles, inspiring them to grow in their own faith, and equipping them to serve the youth of the church and community.

Search Timeline

- An offer has been made and accepted by the top candidate resulting from the search.

YMA Option: 3 days onsite, 0.5 day offsite



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April 2011

Focus: Programming

Outcomes:

- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month evaluation of the renovation process.
- Safe Sanctuaries policies and implementation processes have been reviewed and updated by the Student Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff.
- Plans have begun for a creative & fun event to kick off the new school year for the youth.
- Plans are in place for an end-of-the year volunteer appreciation event to occur in May/June.
- Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that will
 - welcome and connect the new 6th graders and their parents into the youth ministry,
 - welcome and connect the new 9th graders and their parents into the high school ministry
 - and launch the church's high school graduates from the youth ministry.

Search Timeline

- The new youth position(s) have been filled and have reported to work with the The Foundry.

YMA Option: 1 day offsite

May 2011

Focus: Volunteer Appreciation & Ministry Manual

Outcomes:

- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has been calendared for August.
- A Curriculum Retreat has taken place and a 7-year, integrated template for curriculum, including a design for small groups, youth group and Confirmation has been created.
- A deliberate discipleship plan that allows youth and parents to understand where youth are in their spiritual lives and determine what programs and ministries will meet their individual needs has been created.
- A date has been chosen for a fall event to kick off the new school year.
- Screening and background checks are complete for all hands-on volunteers for the upcoming school year.
- An appreciation event has been held for all volunteers in the ministry.
- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has been calendared for August.
- Using the discipleship pathway, new programming has been created and implemented to ensure that all youth are being challenged to grow in their faith.
- A manual for the youth ministry has been completed, including
 - Visioning Documents
 - Youth Directory
 - Volunteer Directory
 - Annual Calendar
 - Job Descriptions



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- Game Plans
- Curriculum Template and Record of Curriculum Resources Used for the Current Year
- Budget
- Recruiting Template, with a Record of All the Volunteer Needs for the Year
- Compliance Documents

Search Timeline

- New staff people have received an orientation to the YMA process.

YMA Option: 3 days onsite, 0.5 day offsite

June/July 2011

Focus: Fall Kickoff Planning

Outcomes:

- Invitations have been sent for the August volunteer training event.
- Final details are in place for a fall kick off event designed to welcome youth into a program they can get excited about, to introduce parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about, and to provide a forum for receiving information from youth families (sign up forms, surveys, etc.).
- A team of youth and adult leaders has met to create new small group programming within the weekly schedule, which will create space for the youth to go deeper in their knowledge of Scripture and the Christian faith.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- Invitations have been sent for the August volunteer training event.
- Curriculum resources for the 2011-2012 school year have been selected and ordered.
- Written game plans (including implementation timetables) have been developed to reach out strategically to youth who are not currently a part of the youth ministry.
- The calendar includes events designed calendar specifically to:
 - welcome and connect the new 6th graders and their parents into the youth ministry,
 - welcome and connect the new 9th graders and their parents into the high school ministry

YMA Option: 2 days offsite

August 2011

Focus: Planning for Next Year

Outcomes:

- All youth ministry staff and volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and revised to reflect the reality of the youth ministry.
- The processes put in place in 2010 repeat themselves for the youth staff and the Student Ministry Renovation Team plan for the upcoming school year.



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- An enthusiasm-building volunteer training event has taken place, leaving volunteers with the sense that they have clarity about their roles, their importance, and the plans for the upcoming year.
- The dates of all major youth ministry events and trips have been determined through September 2012 and the youth ministry calendar has been published in print, on the website and through all means of media accessed by the wider church. Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.
- Compliance documents and training are renewed and in place (volunteer applications, Safe Sanctuaries training, music and video copyright licensing, etc.).
- Registration forms are available for any youth ministry retreat or trip.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.

YMA Option: 1 day offsite

September 2011

Focus: Fall Kick-off and MEC's

Outcomes:

- A fall kick-off event designed to welcome youth into a program they can get excited about, to introduce parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about, and to provide a forum for receiving information from youth families has taken place (sign up forms, surveys, etc.).
- The youth ministry staff and pastors have met to critically evaluate the youth ministries use of the church facility and creative options have been discussed to prepare for numerical growth in the youth ministry.
- Major event coordinators for all major youth ministry events from the previous year have completed Major Event Notebooks.
- A new gameplan has been written that is designed to create spaces and programming for high school youth to serve within the new middle school programming as leaders and mentors.

YMA Option: 2 days onsite, 0.5 offsite

October 2011

Focus: Ensuring Lasting Stability and Mission Focus

Outcomes:

- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- All major event coordinators through August 2012 have been given an overview of their responsibilities, including how to create a notebook for the event to pass along to future coordinators.
- A quarterly volunteer training event has occurred.
- 4 local mission sites have been selected and a strategy for regular visitation to these sites has been developed.



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- A policy regarding regional, national, and international mission project selection has been written including a clearly articulated vision for future participation within each of these options.

YMA Option: 1 days (offsite)

November 2011

Focus: Moving into the new structure

Outcomes:

- The appropriate number of volunteers for summer trips has been recruited.
- Details of summer events are 75% finalized.
- The youth ministry staff has received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support from the YMA staff.
- A game plan is in place for transitioning from the 15-month interim structure for the youth ministry to a structure that can sustain the youth ministry for the long haul.

YMA Option: 2 day (offsite)

December 2011

Focus: Renovation Team Celebration

Outcomes:

- Major Event Coordinators for 2012 have been recruited.
- Hands-on volunteers needed for remainder of the 2011-12 school year have been recruited.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff have been provided.
- Communication mechanisms are re-evaluated to gauge their effectiveness. Changes and additions are introduced to improve visibility, etc.
- The chair of the Student Ministry Renovation Team and youth staff have received specific coaching, troubleshooting, and support from the YMA staff.
- Curriculum for the first-quarter of 2012 has been chosen, purchased and distributed.

YMA Option: ½ day (offsite)

January 2012

Focus: Renovation Team Celebration

Outcomes:

- An enthusiasm building volunteer training event has been completed.
- The youth ministry marketing plan has been critically evaluated for effectiveness. Recommended changes are being implemented.
- The appropriate number of volunteers for summer trips has been recruited.
- A “fishing pond” of potential volunteers to support programming during the 2012-13 school year has been created.
- Major Event notebooks are being utilized and updated with current information and evaluation data after each event.



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- The youth ministry is in full compliance with any additions to the Safe Sanctuaries policy.

YMA Option: ½ day (offsite)

February 2012

Focus: Renovation Team Celebration

Outcomes:

- The Student Ministry Renovation Team and the other teams of the Youth Ministry are celebrated, having discharged their infrastructure-building duties. Many members of these teams continue to be involved in the youth ministry in some role.
- The role and scope of the members of the Student Ministry Renovation Team have been redefined and the team has morphed into a more permanent team with oversight of the youth ministry.

YMA Option: 2 days onsite, ½ day offsite



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