

Best Practices – Great Ideas that have worked

(From Southeast Y.O.U. Sponsors)

Lesson Ideas

1. The first week of December we decorate Christmas stockings and hang them up in our room. We do a corresponding lesson on “gifts from the heart” versus material gifts, often using Chicken Soup stories about the most meaningful gifts people remember were heartfelt messages or unselfish acts of love. Then all during the month of December we fill each other’s stocking with “gifts from the heart”... We write each other notes telling what we love about each other, we share copies of our favorite poems, we put in our favorite positive quotes, artwork, lyrics to songs, handmade cards, etc. As a sponsor, I’ve added little gifts like Prayer for Protection cards, laminated cards with the meanings of their names and a corresponding Bible verse, bookmarks with spiritual/Bible messages, pins with positive messages, inexpensive puzzles with an added message on the back: “When life gets puzzling, use prayer and meditation to find the answers!”, candy (hugs and kisses), etc. This year, one of our church members added gifts of her own – Christmas socks and a tiny stuffed animal for each YOUer. Last year, the church added the book *The Simple Truth* to each stocking. The YOUers are not to peek in to their stockings until the Sunday before Christmas. At the end of the YOU session that day, everyone gets their stocking and starts going through the contents. Their favorite part is reading all the love messages from other YOUers. It does so much for their self-esteem. Many of them say they keep these messages and read them over and over again throughout the year. It’s an activity that really bonds them together and gives them an experience of giving the gift of love to each other. (Daytona YOU, Joy)

2. After a lesson on the history of Unity and the basic principles, we played a Jeopardy-style game to go over what we learned. We had the following categories: BACK IN THE DAY (the history of Unity), YOU ARE WHAT YOU BELIEVE (basic Unity principles), JOY TO THE WORLD (Joy songs), RIBBIT (SE YOU traditions and rallies), and THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME (our own chapter’s favorite memories). The questions got more difficult as their point values went up. We split into two teams. Each team member had an equal chance to answer questions as we went down the line each round. The person whose turn it was to answer got to pick the category. (Of course, it could be played any number of ways.) The YOUers loved this game, and in fact they stayed an extra half hour to keep playing since we had plenty of questions. I had a bag of candy for “prizes” for everyone. (Daytona YOU, Joy)

3. Christmas Idea – In October, we write achievable goals (desires of our heart) on paper and wrap the paper inside a Christmas gift box. We talk about using our spiritual gifts and giving ourselves gifts. Then, we write an affirmation to use during October & November. At Christmas time we set these gifts to ourselves under the tree and open them along with our other gifts. I had forgotten what I wrote in mine. It said “a meaningful career”(I was long unemployed when I wrote it). I was so surprised a new job

in a whole new direction – a job that was personally fulfilling. My YOUers had similar experiences.

4. Valentine Idea – At Valentines I gave the YOUers construction paper, doilies, paints, glue, glitter, lace, ribbons, etc and told them to think of the person they loved most in the world and create the most beautiful valentine they could. I also asked them to leave a space on the front to write a name. They created some truly amazing designs. When they were all finished, I asked them to write in their own names on the Valentines they had created. We then talked about loving ourselves and being lovable, deserving of the best we can imagine.

5. Thanksgiving Graffiti – Have YOUers hang up a large blank sheet of paper (or create a ‘brick wall’ like we have at some events) in a well-traveled area in your church. The minister can announce that after the service people are invited to write, print, or draw something that represents what they are thankful for. Be sure there are pens, markers, crayons available for people to use. If this is done early in November, the resulting graffiti can be displayed in a prominent place to remind people of how much we do have to be thankful for.

6. The Game of Life and How To Play It. When dicussing the Law of Cause and Effect, I made a comeback can. I can send you the instructions later. Anyhow, I will try and use some of this lesson this week, while that is still in the minds of my YOUers. Also, I have had a letter bottle for years. It is a tall skinny glass bottle that we put the cube letter beads inside. It seals with a cork. I use it differently each time, but the kids love it when we pass the bottle. Often times it will reveal the order we will share.(a-z or z-a) Sometimes, it may be used as we have guests and each person tells something about themselves using the letter on their bead. When we are finished, all of the beads make it back into the jar to be used again at a later time. (Michelle, Wilmington)