

FOR STARTERS

What excites you most about your current ministry role?

What do you see as your personal ministry strengths? your weaknesses?

IN THE TRENCHES

Ron has been a youth ministry volunteer for over 10 years. He's done everything in our ministry; he's the type of guy who will plug himself in wherever there's a need. But after years and years of doing anything (and almost everything), he began to realize there were elements of youth ministry that triggered his passion and others that didn't (actually, some areas he even despised!).

Ron didn't love crowds, going on overnight trips, or making phone calls to students he didn't know. He *did* love teaching and spending quality time with students he knew, and he became passionate about those things. More specifically, he loved teaching students about evolution and Creation. Because of this and Ron's desire to spend more time doing what he loved, we created a new teaching role in our ministry. Now, each week Ron shows up at a different small group (as a guest leader) and conducts a Bible study and discussion on Creation.

Not only is Ron feeling more fulfilled as a volunteer, but he's also more effective because he's meeting needs that weren't being met before. Because of his passion, students and other volunteers benefit from his newfound ministry passion.

TRAINING on the GO

If you could make your youth ministry achieve three things, and you didn't have any limitations, what would they be? (Yes, try to limit them to three.) The answer to this question will identify some of your personal passions. It's not unusual for a youth worker to just go along with a youth ministry program or yearly calendar because of a sincere desire to serve. That's a great motivation, and your youth ministry needs this type of attitude. So, if that describes you, thank you. However, it'll benefit you, your youth ministry leader, and the ministry if you spend some time defining and *then* pursuing your passions.

While you may share similar interests with other people on your ministry team, God designed you with a unique personality and skills that add twists and depth to how you contribute. By paying attention to what you're passionate about, you'll discover ways to minister that will be more fulfilling to you, more effective to students, and more honoring to God.

On the surface, it might seem that the discovery of individual passions could be an action that may divide your ministry team. Actually, the opposite result usually occurs. God brings volunteers together because each has something special to offer. A healthy youth ministry team needs a variety of passions to minister to a variety of students who have a variety of needs—definitely more needs than one person can meet.

If all the youth ministry volunteers are passionate about music, your ministry may have a lot of singing but you'll most likely struggle in areas such as discipleship, outreach, and service. Singular passion leaves you with a lopsided and unhealthy ministry; while variety creates a healthy and vibrant ministry.

Once you discover your passion, you'll be released to pursue and develop your unique design—and you'll soon find yourself more focused, energized, and effective. When you understand your God-given passions, you'll see that you don't need to be at every program or feel guilty about not doing everything on the youth ministry calendar.

In some cases, discovering what you're passionate about may lead you to change your current involvements and responsibilities. So, how might you need to adjust your youth ministry activities? How could you expand your ministry into new areas and cut back on other areas? When you, and the other volunteers, are inspired by individual passion and create an orchestra of passions—wow! You'll hear some beautiful youth ministry noise.



CONNECT to God's Word

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." —1 Corinthians 12:7

- What in youth ministry energizes you?
- What drains you of energy?
- How is using your gifts in ministry an act of worship?

Write a response and prayer to God here...

TO THE POINT

- Reflect on what you're passionate about.
- Dream. Imagine how you might be more effective if your passion were tapped into.
- Go through the right channels to pursue a role in youth ministry based on your passions.

TRY IT

Make three columns on a piece of paper. In one column, list the things you are most passionate about in your ministry. In the second column, list your spiritual gifts (or your best understanding of them). In the third column, list your abilities and natural talents.

Then, ask two friends (who know you well) to create the same three columns, listing what *they* believe are your passions, gifts, and abilities. Thank them, and then meet up together to compare your notes with theirs. Based on the results, talk through possible ministry opportunities with your youth pastor.

MAKE IT PERSONAL