



Trips Planning Strategy Guide

WHY SHOULD I HAVE A TRIP STRATEGY:

Trips offer uninterrupted relational ministry time between adults and young people which serve as an important catalyst in beginning and developing ACSR'S (Authentic Christ Sharing Relationships). We want to engage as many young people as possible, without the trip planning process becoming a distraction from the local effort to meet and build Authentic Christ Sharing Relationships with lost young people. With a well-thought out trip strategy, we will be better positioned to see the mission of YFC accomplished. As in all things we do in YFC, we must become intentional in our trip planning and be able to clearly answer WHY we are doing what we are doing. A trip strategy serves to answer the question WHY we spend our time/effort in the way we do related to trips.

WHAT IS A TRIP:

A trip is a strategic opportunity to take young people out of their daily environment and provide extended overnight shared experiences for building Authentic Christ-Sharing Relationships with YFC leaders. Please reference the YFC USA [Trips - Ministry Site Leader Process](#) for more details on what a trip is. A trip is different from a bigger "Image" Building Time in that it includes an overnight spent away from home and lines up with the Trip RMA purpose and desired effects. "Image" type Building Times are very impactful and are included in the [Building Times RMA Process](#). Some examples of "Image" type Building Times could be taking a larger group of young people to a professional sporting event or a day at an amusement park.

CONSIDER YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS:

Every ministry year and group of young people is different/unique. Ministry at some sites might just be getting started and only have a handful of young people involved. Some sites might have a huge influx of freshmen, or a group of key graduating seniors. The make-up of a ministry site can change - the "vibe" of the young people attending might vary. A site might have a group of young people who love to skate and surf, or might have a group of young people who are all teen parents, or a group of young people who all come from significant poverty or wealth. Each group is different; therefore, the needs of each group of young people will vary as it relates to the kinds of trips you should think about offering. Never assume what worked for the last 10 years will continue to work. Be willing to think creatively about the needs of young people at your site or chapter/affiliate and what kinds of trips will move them along in their relationships with adult leaders, and relationship with Christ.

Questions to ask:

- 1) What do the young people I'm in relationships with like to do?
- 2) What are their ages?
- 3) Where are the majority of them spiritually? Lost? Believers?
- 4) What kinds of trips would be a healthy challenge for them for the biggest impact?

TYPES OF TRIPS AND THEIR DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Your trips might be chapter-wide or site-directed trips. It is good to consider how many trips per year should be chapter-wide in order to gain efficiencies by sharing the planning/organization burden, and how many trips should be site-directed which offers more creative and flexible options for the Site Director. You also don't want to have ALL your trips be just one type of trip, but instead you should offer a variety of trips to engage young people wherever they are on the spectrum spiritually or wherever they are in their interests. Knowing your young people will help you to know if they need a **Relational Building** trip, to simply begin to like the adult leaders and to have a fun shared experience. Maybe they are ready for an **Evangelistic** trip where they will be introduced to Jesus. If most of the young people are Believers they might need to stretch their faith by serving others and learning servant-leadership biblical principles on a **Discipleship** trip.

Types of trips include: See [Trips – Ministry Site Leader Process](#) for Standards on Trips for each National Ministry

- 1) **Relationship Building** – these types of trips connect with the widest audience. This is the beginning of the funnel. These would be young people who have given their name to a leader or young people who are in a conversation with a leader, who might not have had a spiritual conversation with a leader yet. The point of a trip like this is to build quality relationships between young people and leaders. These trips are likely not about overtly sharing the Gospel, but rather about relationship building. (Ex. ... Chapter Wide Fall Trip, Overnight Amusement Park Trip, Camping Trip, Overnight Sporting Event Trip)

Note: "All-Nighters" fall under the Building Time RMA and associated process, purpose, desired effects and tasks. See [Building Times RMA Process](#).

- 2) **Evangelistic** – these trips are designed for young people who are in a conversation with a leader, lost young people in an ACSR, or new believers. This is the middle of the funnel – we want there to be a lot of young people on these types of trips! We want to have the greatest number of trip offerings here because we are hoping that young people put their faith in Christ and we know that trips are a likely place for those decisions to take place. (Ex. YFC Camp, Spring Break, wilderness/backpacking trip, Ski Trip, Chapter or Region Wide Trip)

- 3) **Discipleship** – these trips should focus on young people engaged in discipleship, young people who are plugged in fellowship/church, and young people in an ACSR with a lost friend. The intention of these trips is to move young people along in their journey toward Christlikeness. These trips might be smaller in number, and much more specific and tailored to a certain type of young person (Ex. Core students or City Life's Indigenous Leaders). These trips should be exclusive for the young people that are growing in their faith. You could also occasionally and intentionally collaborate with local church trips to accomplish this type of trip. (Ex. Domestic or Intl. Missions trip, Project Serve, Christian conference, student leader camping trip)

HOW MANY TRIPS SHOULD I DO AND WHY?

Please reference the YFC USA Trips Process for the minimum and maximum number of trips expected in a given calendar year – the number varies by ministry model. If you do too few trips in a calendar year, you don't have enough variety in your offerings to connect with different young people with different spiritual needs. Date conflicts and personal interest in the trip might also limit the number of young people who participate.

You don't want to do too many trips for several reasons: 1) Spending too much of your time doing logistical/detail work can actually take away from time you could be spending relationally with a young person. 2) Needing to have adult leaders on trips can place a burden on your volunteer ministry leaders who need to take time off work 3) Too many trips could target the same young people over and over again.

For maximum impact, consider this frequency per type of trip for each calendar year:

- 1-2 Relational Building Trips (Fall and Early Winter)
- 2-3 Evangelistic Trips (Late Fall/winter, Spring and summer)
 - *Strongly consider making YFC Camp a part of your overall trip strategy for one of your evangelistic focused trips which meets the "1 four to five-night outreach focus Trip with an opportunity to respond to the Gospel" Standard for Campus Life HS, MS, Military, DTQ and City Life.*
- 1-2 discipleship trips (anytime)

WHEN SHOULD THESE TRIPS BE PLACED IN THE CALENDAR YEAR AND WHY:

Consider one trip per quarter, and 1-2 in the summer months. Develop a cadence for when trips will happen, based on how your group evolves spiritually over the course of the school year. Consider that the fall is typically relationship building and image creation, and the spring/summer are more natural for leaders to invite young people to place their trust in Christ. Trips should be strategically separated from one another in the calendar year for several reasons: 1) Not overtaxing your chapter/site staff with too many overlapping trip efforts. 2) Not constantly asking young people for money for the next trip. 3) Not overlapping with other strategic chapter-wide initiatives. (Ex. Banquets, fundraisers, staff retreats)

PRICE POINTS:

Your trips offered throughout the calendar year should have varying price points so you can engage the greatest number of young people possible. On the calendar, strategically separate your most expensive trips. Intersperse more inexpensive options, so that your young people aren't perpetually raising money year-round, and your staff aren't burdened by this either. Some trips should cost \$75 to \$100 and others might cost \$1500. Have a well thought-out reason for how the price points are placed inside your calendar year. Consider placing trips of \$1500-\$2000 every 2-3 years, as a special offering (Ex. Overseas missions trip, which could be done in partnership with a local church).

NUMBER OF NIGHTS AWAY:

In the same way you intersperse pricing points for trips, the # of nights away should be strategically considered. Usually, fewer nights away means a less expensive trip. Consider the level of trust your young people and their parents have in the program before planning a 4-5+ night trip. When doing trips, always plan to engage parents/guardians in as much of the trip communication as possible. Also, realize that parents of middle schoolers have a harder time seeing their son/daughter go more than 5-6 hours away from home. Save the long road trips for older young people who have more independence. Also consider whether the young people's behavioral patterns will allow them to be successful in a longer trip that is far from home, realizing that all trips are not for all young people. Consider starting with shorter/closer trips for young people who may have behavioral issues. After they demonstrate their ability to be successful in that setting, then consider allowing them to attend a longer trip.

FUNDRAISERS:

Once you've planned your trips calendar and their pricing structure, it will naturally bring about a need for significant fundraisers as well. Raising funds for trips can come in many forms. Consider some chapter-wide fundraising efforts that help underwrite your trips throughout the year. Some examples of these might be: banquets, golf tournaments, auctions, etc. Additionally, you'll want to consider fundraisers for each trip that individual young people can do. Some examples of these might be: work projects, selling things with good return, and pre-sold tickets for a car wash. Consider only running 1-3 different types of fundraisers for each trip, as too many will overtax your young people, adult leaders, parents, and community. Alumni who themselves benefitted from a YFC trip experience are a great source to raise scholarship funds. Please see the Development resources provided by YFC Camp on their website for a list of the most effective fundraisers being done around the country (http://camp.yfc.net/resources/camp_development_resources).