

# FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH CHURCHES

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE:

We have listed several categories of questions that Parent Life Ministry leaders should be prepared to answer with concise clarity. As we build trusting relationships with church leaders and congregation members, we anticipate a long growth period and need a plan that helps us represent ourselves, Parent Life and Youth for Christ with excellence.

**STEP ONE:** As you read through the questions, write 2-5 sentence answers and practice saying them out loud.

**STEP TWO:** Make a list of YFC-friendly churches in your area. Make a second list of churches with whom YFC has not yet built a relationship.

**STEP THREE:** Choose 2 churches from the first list and one from the second. Practice reaching out! Use the sample script provided below for introductory emails and phone calls. Repeat this step each month.

**OTHER FUTURE STEPS:** Consider inviting someone from your ministry team to join you in building these collaborative relationships.

Track your contacts, appointments, names, and details. This helps when you return to continue building relationships.

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS A CHURCH MAY ASK

*These will help you describe Parent Life and YFC to churches who are not yet familiar.*

- What is Youth for Christ? What is Parent Life?
- What is your purpose for wanting to meet with our church? What is your agenda?
- Why do you (personally) have an interest in working with teen moms and dads?
- We (the church) are already partnering with other ministries. What makes you different?
- We already have outreach ministries. Why should we collaborate with you?

## CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ABOUT PARENT LIFE

*These will help you describe the intent of Parent Life and give churches a better understanding of what Parent Life could look like with their involvement.*

- What does Parent Life programming look like?
- What other churches does Parent Life partner with? Can we talk with them?
- Can you tell a story about a church ministry site impacting a specific teen parent that demonstrates the PL vision and evokes deeper interest from church?

## QUESTIONS THAT HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE CHURCH

*Make these questions your own as you relationally connect with church leaders, understanding that your goal is to help the church advance its mission. We suggest you frame these in several conversations rather than a "one-shot-interview" type of meeting.*

- Talk about your congregation's passion in missions.
- How does your church currently get involved in the world, in the US, in the city and your local community?
- Do you have a Mission's Committee or a Mission's pastor? When appropriate, could we meet your mission's committee members?
- What type of events do you do that introduces your congregation to mission's work?
- Would we be able to share about our ministry with a small group/Sunday morning?
- What activities are part of the youth ministry at church?
- Are there church members you can think of who might have an affinity toward teen parents?
- Are there others with whom I should speak about potentially collaborating?

### **QUESTIONS THAT HELP CONNECT CHURCH VISION AND YFC VISION**

*As stated above, make these questions your own as you relationally connect with church leaders, understanding that your goal is to help the church advance its mission. We suggest you frame these in several conversations rather than a "one-shot-interview" type of meeting.*

- Tell me about the church's' experience with teen parents. Have members already engaged with this population? What has worked well so far? What hasn't worked?
- What other ministries does your church embrace in order to reach lost teenagers? How many youth are currently connecting with your church and in what capacities?
- How do you recruit and train volunteers?
- How might we (Youth for Christ/Parent Life) help your church meet outreach goals?
- What do you think your church needs? Do you see any cross-over areas where we could collaborate?
- What materials do you use to teach your youth?

### **SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR FIRST CONNECTION EMAIL:**

Dear Mission Pastor,

In reading through your church website, I noticed that (name of church) is active in our community. I'm a missionary working about 10 minutes away from (name of church) with Youth for Christ, a youth-serving organization reaching at-risk and high-risk youth. Specifically, I serve in Parent Life, our ministry connecting teen moms and dads in small groups with adult leaders from our community.

It seems your church has a heart for missions and I wanted to see if we could get together so I could learn more about your church's passions and share a bit more about what we do with Parent Life Ministry. Also, I'd like to invite you to a See the Story, our 1-hour tour of Parent Life Ministry Sites to see first-hand the youth and ministry we do, our next one is [date of See the Story].

I would like to call you in a couple days to see if you got my email and see if it would work to grab coffee or attend our See the Story. Please reach out if you have any questions for me or I can further clarify anything else. I can be reached at this email or cell phone #.