

Developing Student Ministry Skills - Rural Mission Experience

Equipping young people for a life of
SERVICE



Mat. 9: 37 , 38

Providing for Youth Leaders a creative ministry strategy which will effectively assist them in developing student ministry skills.



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www.ruralchurchym.org

Developing
STUDENT MINISTRY
SKILLS
through a
RURAL MISSION EXPERIENCE

WHAT is a Rural Mission Experience?

A Rural Mission Experience is a **low cost, high impact**, 5 to 7 day creative rural mission trip any Youth Director can use for the more committed youth of his church. A Rural Mission Experience is a unique peer to peer ministry opportunity that can give students significant ministry experience. By serving in a rural church a platform for developing student ministry confidence is established. Youth Directors can bring about the spiritual depth and develop the ministry skills they desire for their own young people.

WHY should I do a Rural Mission Experience?

A Rural Mission Experience will provide your students with the highest level ministry experience **equipping them for a life of service**. While on a rural mission trip, your students will be challenged, stretched spiritually, and taken out of their comfort zone as they develop ministry skills through this hands-on ministry experience. By serving through a rural church your young people will encounter Jesus Christ in life-changing ways. Your young people will address the youth ministry needs of a rural church. They, also, will learn, and put into practice ministry skills which will equip them to be more effective back home as campus missionaries giving them a clearer vision for a life of service, all the while enhancing the youth ministry of the local rural church.

WHO, WHEN, WHERE, & HOW

Tom Horton, a veteran youth leader of over 40 years, desires to assist you in realizing this opportunity for developing your student's ministry skills. Tom, who served as youth pastor for 28 years at one church, developed this Rural Missions Experience strategy while with ProYouth for three years and is currently the Director of Rural Church Youth Ministries and an Associate Coordinator for the Northwest region of the National Network of Youth Ministries. While he was the youth leader at the church in south Seattle Tom went on and led 29 of his own rural mission trips. Since 1996, Tom has developed this ministry while helping to setup over 500 Rural Mission Experiences. Each mission involved a larger church youth group with at least one rural church. If interested, Tom can be reached on his cell phone at 206-954-4100 or through E-mail at ruraltom@juno.com – check out the web site at www.ruralchurchym.org -. If needed, He can arrange the most conducive rural setting for your Rural Mission Experience. You can plan for either a spring break or a summer mission trip. He also has materials available that will further explain how a Rural Mission Experience can work for you. In addition, Tom has materials that you could use in the training of your key young people that will prepare them for any ministry experience. **These materials and Tom's services are free.**

Think about it, when you produce student leaders you are entering into the spirit of Col. 1:28, "**And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man (young person) complete in Christ.**"

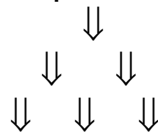
Developing Ministry Skills in your Students through a *Rural Mission Experience*

1. Youth Director



2. Trains Core Youth
& Sets up a Rural
Mission Opportunity

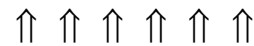
3. Students then
lead the Rural Mission
Experience



4. **Rural Youth are
Reached**



8. Home Youth Ministry
Deepened & Expanded



7. Students return as
Spiritual Leaders

6. **Students Develop
Ministry Skills**



5. **Rural Church's Youth
Ministry is Enhanced**

PRODUCING STUDENT MISSIONARIES:

1. Develops a Paul - Timothy type relationship between students and Youth Director.
2. Inspires other young people to maturity and service.
3. Creates devotion and loyalty within leaders.
4. Cultivates a spirit of producing reproducers.
5. Fosters a kindred-spirit within ministry team.
6. Focuses on depth rather than breath in the ministry.
7. Gives each student a clearer vision for life and service.

THE PRIMARY PRINCIPALS OF A RURAL MISSION EXPERIENCE

PEER-TO-PEER EVANGELISM

*4 nights includes food, activities & testimonies
Monday through Thursday*

SERVICE PROJECTS

*4 days – representing Christ & the local rural church
Monday through Thursday*

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

- Some teams include a children's program such as a Back Yard Bible Club or a Daily Vacation Bible School.
- Most teams arrive on Saturday, attend service on Sunday, have a pot luck dinner with the church family after church, do final preparations for the ministries which will start on Monday and head home on Friday or Saturday.
- Most teams sleep and eat at the host church – some have the girls stay in church family homes, keeping the boys at the church – while a few have the entire team stay in church family homes
- Every rural mission program is tailored in partnership with the rural church to reach community youth with the gospel while encouraging Christian youth in their walk with the Lord.

*“Expect great things from God; and
Attempt great things for God”*

William Carey, Pioneer Missionary to India

(As a full-time Youth Leader, evaluation is a critical part of your ministry in order to keep you on track in providing depth as well as breath to your program. Here is a simple evaluation tool.)

FIVE KEY QUESTIONS FOR ANY YOUTH PROGRAM:

1. What kind of young person does the church want to deploy into the world at graduation?
2. What kind of a youth program makes possible that kind of young person?
3. What kind of leadership team makes possible that kind of a youth program?
4. What kind of youth leader makes possible that kind of leadership team?
5. What must happen in the life of the youth leader which will make him that kind of a youth leader?

ADVANTAGES OF A RURAL MISSION EXPERIENCE

For the Sending Church:

1. Trains your youth in ***a variety of ministry skills*** & provides your youth with a ***variety of ministry experiences*** preparing them for a life of service:
Outreach/Witnessing Follow-up Lead Activities Skits Testimonies
Relationship Building Modeling Basic Christian Disciplines
2. Establishes a link with a rural church for future ministry possibilities.
3. Gives your youth hands-on ministry experiences that are life-changing and gives each youth a clearer vision for a life of service. This type of ministry develops a strong core of your youth for ministry involvement as student leaders in your home church and in their public schools.
4. Because you (the youth leader) ***share in this experience***, a unique bonding takes place building trust, loyalty, and a greater understanding of what ministry is all about in and through your students.
5. Provides youth a missions experience which is **low in cost while high in potential spiritual transformation** in the students going as they see God use them with their peers.

For the Rural Church:

1. Provides youth ministry opportunities not possible otherwise.
2. Causes your Christian kids to get excited about the Lord.
3. Brings new Christian youth into your church as community youth are converted.
4. Establishes the possibility of ongoing relationships between the youth of the two churches.
5. Gives lay leaders encouragement and resources with an increased vision for youth ministry in their rural church setting.

For Both Churches:

1. Inspires Spiritual excitement within the lives of all those involved.
2. Lays a strong foundation for a continuing relationship between the teens from both churches as well as the youth leaders.
3. Lays the foundation for future leadership in both churches. Through these type of ministry opportunities, young people catch a vision for what God can do through their lives.
4. Includes the adults in the youth ministry in ways that increases their understanding of youth ministry.

For the Sending Church: As the Youth Minister, consider the following lists in making a decision for a rural mission experience in a rural church setting:

HOW TO START PLANNING FOR A RURAL MISSIONS TRIP

1. This ministry experience needs to fall in line with your ministry convictions, vision, mission and ministry style.
2. Determine the location of your first rural mission attempt. Start small and later, build up to something bigger if you want to. (Don't think you have to do a V.B.S. at the same time as a youth outreach.)
3. Gain support to accomplish the vision.
 - A. Interface with the Pastor of the Rural Church and any lay-leadership for prayer and planning.
 - B. Have a strong prayer base. Recruit prayer warriors from your church to undergird your ministry venture with prayer.
4. Determine potential leadership.
 - A. Solicit from your youth leadership, those willing to commit to the outreach.
 - B. Determine from the older, more mature and experienced youth, that are in your youth group, those who can be involved in greater leadership roles (**remember your young people lead the mission you merely facilitate it**).
5. Have a knowledge or know some background of the Rural Church and their leadership.
6. Know and confirm that the rural church leadership possess confidence in your leadership ability to accomplish the objectives of the mission.
7. Think of how you would expand your style of doing youth ministry in order to gear the rural mission toward an outreach, such as adapting former Retreats, Overnighters, Activities, Bible Studies, etc., experiences to a rural type setting.
8. Involve the larger church family in prayer support for outreach. Through church monthly news letters, bulletins and inserts/flyers, enlist as many prayer warriors as you can. Then be sure to give a report to the whole church as to what God did. **Your success will be an answer to the prayers of others.**
9. Determine the particulars of the outreach. (This dovetails with the point #10) -- Training your youth, gathering resources, preparing materials and equipment, establishing a schedule, delegation of planned events and activities, etc. **Remember it is your goal for your young people to run as much of the ministry as possible.**
10. Determine goals for the Rural Missions Experience: (How to achieve those goals is your plan.)
 - a. The salvation of young people from the rural community.
 - b. The "making sure I am a Christian" process with the rural church's youth.
 - c. Exposure of youth to sound biblical teaching and prayer.
 - d. The setting of a godly example by both leaders and young people.
 - e. Showing young people that Christians have the best Fun! (Singing, games, activities.)
 - f. Igniting a vision to the rural church's leadership of how an effective Youth Ministry can be developed and how it can become a source of great blessing to all involved. (By sharing your resources and experience and understanding of Youth Ministry, you will produce spiritual fruit by establishing lay and even student leadership in the rural church. Then they will, in turn, reach and establish teens in Christ from their own community.)
11. This potential ministry opportunity can be accomplished even by those with a low budget

because a Rural Mission Experience can be executed at little expense for both sending and Rural (host) Churches. These ministries are usually extremely cost effective. *I know of nothing that gives more spiritual “Bang” for the investment that is put into it.*

By following through in this process, you can help a rural church to experience for themselves, **success** in their own Youth Ministry!

With a Rural Church:

1. Try to connect with a Rural Church desiring encouragement and assistance with their youth. Determine potential Rural Church opportunities through: Church denomination, Church family, Bible College, Seminary contacts, or Rural Mission Ministries, etc. (Enlist Tom Horton the director of Rural Church Youth Ministries to locate a hosting rural church, he is willing to help you in this way.)
2. If possible, plan a meeting with the Pastor and leadership of the Rural Church in order to evaluate needs and plan an outreach. Learn what the youth ministry experiences of the rural church has been and what the pastors youth ministry background is. *It is important that the existing youth leadership and pastor of the rural church be involved in the outreach in as many ways as can be envisioned.*

(If the rural church is very small, a possible option of a joint venture with other churches in the community could occur in order to make the venture a community wide event.)

Be sure to stress with your student leaders:

1. **That they must be prepared ahead of time for this ministry experience, this will be a spiritual warfare experience.** Therefore, you need to determine what you think is a reasonable plan for the preparation of your young people for a home mission venture like this one. What are your requirements, which they will need to meet in order to go? What are their financial obligations and/or fund raising expectations? When are the training times and what will they entail? (Remember, there are training materials available if you are interested.) Some groups started to get ready for a Rural Mission Experience at the beginning of the school year while others had a minimum of 8 weeks for their training schedule. If you are doing other ministries while on the camp like work projects or a children’s Bible School, they will add to your preparation needs.
2. Specific areas which you will need to emphasize with your young people and leadership team:
 - A. **A Servant Attitude** It cannot be overemphasized that a servant attitude is critical to a successful mission trip. A good passage to study would be John 13:2-17, or a topical study on the words servant and serve. Make sure your young people understand that they are going to serve the Lord by serving the people of the rural church and its community. Also, it is very important that before you leave for home, you clean up, thoroughly, the church building and grounds. This is critical as a final statement of your servant attitude to the rural church.
 - B. **No Small Town Talk** Instruct your ministry team that they all need to be very careful how they talk about the town you are serving in. Try to stay away from making comparisons which cause the young people from the rural community to think that you think their town is small, dumb, outback, Podunk, etc. Much care needs to be given to respect the feelings and pride of the people in the town. Reminders before and during the ministry week, of keeping a check on the talking down of the rural town you are

in, may be necessary. This can be a very sensitive area, so proper instruction will help in damage control.

C. **Representing the Rural Church** It is also important that everyone understand that even though you are from out of town, you are representing the rural church and the Lord Jesus Christ, as you live, serve and reach out to the young people of that community. You must not be an embarrassment to the rural church leadership nor leave them with unnecessary problems which they must resolve. If possible, you want to have an ongoing relationship with the rural church, so you need to build your relationship from the beginning. Your young people need to encourage the youth from the rural community (those they become friends with and lead to the Lord) to see that involvement in the local church is very important for Christian growth.

D. **Team Ministry** Another area which needs to be stressed is the whole concept of Team Ministry. Each person going on this Rural Mission Experience is a critical part of the ministry team. Members are dependent on one another though their individual roles are different. Each person's role is very important for the success of the mission. This is part of being a servant. Nothing will ruin a Rural Mission Experience faster than disunity and division in the ranks of your mission team (more about this later.)

E. **Peer to Peer Mission Experience** Your young people need to know before they arrive in the rural town for ministry, that the whole focus of the mission is for them to be actively involved in the lives of the young people of the community. This will not be a spectator event, rather, it is an 'every one is a player' event. In addition to your young people understanding that there are going to be evangelistic activities for 4 nights, they need to be skilled in a gospel presentation and prepared to share something that is true between them and the Lord through the giving of their personal testimony at one of the evening share times.

The qualifications of the students going: Each Youth Leader needs to decide the particulars for his own ministry team, here are a few suggestions:

1. **Prior spiritual vitality** Make sure the young people you take on a Rural Mission Experience have demonstrated through some practical means that they are ready to take another step in their Christian development. Guard yourself from taking young people who have not shown spiritual maturity nor compassion for the lost. (I Tim. 5:22)

2. **Trustworthy** Never assume because the young people are on a missions type venture that they will rise to the occasion. Trust is something you need to have already determined with every one of the young people you are taking on this trip. Trust involves decision making, role modeling, language, keeping ones word, money, the property of others, and etc. (Luke 16:10-12; I Cor. 4:1,2)

3. **Moral purity** Relationships within the group and with the youth in the rural community need to be guarded. Never allow couples to think their relationship is top priority on this trip. Keep an eye out for budding relationships and make sure only the couples who have self control are allowed to go. (I Tim. 2:20-22)

4. **Spiritually preparedness** Preparation for a Rural Mission Experience is essential. Every one of the young people from the sending church needs to be as spiritually ready as possible before hand. (Some preparations can only be done while on the ministry outing, but do as much ahead of time as possible.)

Training times are essential not only to prepare for this ministry experience but they also give you another opportunity to determine a student's spiritual readiness and moral character for ministries back home. (I Pet. 3:15)

5. **Respect for authority** As the leader, you need students who have a healthy respect for your authority and that of the rural church and community. To have a spirit of rebellion erodes the spiritual health of any ministry team. Attitude and verbal responses need to be under the Lordship of Christ. This is important not only between students and leaders but also between students and other students as well. (I Pet. 5:5)

6. **Team attitude/spirit** Harmony between team members is critical. The "Lone Ranger" mentality divides the unity of any ministry group and needs to be defused from the beginning. Jealousy, competitiveness, criticism, comparisons and complaining will make for a bad witness, both to the non-Christian and to the Christian youth in the rural community. (Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:1-5)

7. **Servant heart** Here is where the rubber meets the road. Constant emphasis on service is needed. No one should ever complain that what's required is unfair or too much to ask. Never allow anyone to get away with anything other than a servant heart attitude as you serve the Lord by serving the rural church and its community. (John 13:3-17; Matt. 20:25-28)

A WORD OF CAUTION:

Each leader needs to be sure that the depth in the spiritual life of the ministry team is not at risk by taking someone who should not be there or who would be too much of a negative influence. Pray for great wisdom in putting together a ministry camp team.

REMEMBER TO BE SURE TO:

1. Emphasize the use of a **4 spiritual law** type tract for the presentation of the gospel.
2. Make **response cards** and use them every night, having everyone fill them out each time (at least by signing their name)(this is so the young people will not 'feel dumb' in indicating any commitments they have made) , and then make a **phone list** from them and have some of your students call them the next day.
3. Make and use **Promotion Flyers** with the outreach schedule and location (they really work in rural communities).

THE BASIC FLOW OF THE ACTUAL GOSPEL PRESENTATION

((PRAYER SUPPORT: Make sure you have secured the prayer support from both churches, yours and the rural church you are ministering through. Either make prayer cards for your home church and give them out weeks in advance of the Rural Mission Experience or have the prayer needs of the weeks outreach published in the church's bulletin ahead of time. This is a critical ministry which the adults at home can have for the Rural Mission Experience. If it is possible to print the names of the young people and leaders going, so specific prayer can be made for them, please do it. The extra effort is worth it!!!!!!))

A FOR NIGHT GOSPEL PRESENTATION: (Each night builds on the previous night.)

Each night before you break up for your informal time of interaction, have all those attending fill out a response card instructing them, to write out any comments they may have. If they already have filled out a response card on a previous night, then all they need to do is fill in their names and mark any appropriate boxes, as well as make any comments that they would like to make about what has gone so far. Be sure to make a master list of attendees for the rural church, from the response cards.

1st night – A low key casual approach. At the end of your first night activity and testimonies, inform the whole group that the young people who are visiting this week are prepared to share with anyone interested, how they can become a Christian. (This whole idea here is to begin to set the stage for your youth to work from. Only on rare occasions, does anyone ever become a Christian on the first night, though it has happened.)

2nd night – A low key yet more direct approach. When you have finished the second night activity and testimonies, everyone is a little more comfortable with each other and with the whole Christian witness thing. At the conclusion of the more formal time, instruct the whole group that the young people putting on this week's events are going to ask the home town kids if they are interested in learning more about how to become a Christian. Your youth must interact with the rural community youth afterwards, getting into small groups or one on one situations, and just simply ask them if they would like to talk about how they can know they are going to heaven or how they can begin a relationship with Jesus Christ.

3rd night – A very direct aggressive approach. At the end of your formal time, share with the whole group of young people that the kids from out of town have a little booklet called “(What ever you are using.)” and that they are going to mingle with the local youth and ask if they would like to read through it with them. (Be sure your young people have plenty of the gospel tracts with them when they go out to share with the kids they have become friends with.) This is an exciting and spiritually challenging night for your young people. Remind them ahead of time that this is what they have prepared for. You will see some young people respond to the gospel and become Christians on this night, Praise God!!!! (Some youth leaders have been bold enough to have all the rural youth get into small groups with at least one of their young people leading the group through the gospel presentation.)

4th night – A more general large group approach. On the last night of the outreach, if possible, have the key youth leader or pastor from the rural church share the gospel and lead the whole group in a prayer of commitment. Then ask everyone to fill out a response card indicating any commitments they have made this week and share any final comments.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

1. SPIRITUAL WARFARE ---- The devil is not going to leave you alone. The stakes are high and the enemy is going to attempt to do everything and anything in order to make this Rural Mission Experience fail. In past experiences, spiritual warfare has been fought on these fronts:

A. Disunity among the ministry team members; between leaders, between leaders and their young people, between the young people from the sending church or even the rural church, between the rural church pastor and the visiting youth leader and/or his young people, (do you get the picture). The issue

of a critical spirit by anyone is a source of much contention.

B. Discouragement because of the spiritual battle, unmet expectations, the length of the ministry, tiredness, health, the critical mindset of the rural pastor and/or of the rural church family.

C. Obstacles which come from health, weather, transportation, change in schedule, or from limited resources.

2. DEAD TIME ---- As much as you try to anticipate your ministry needs and schedule accordingly, the reality of “DEAD TIME” can be a problem for you. “Dead Time” is when it seems that there is nothing to do at this moment. Your young people must be encouraged to take advantage of “Dead Times”, to make community contacts, prepare additionally for an up-coming event, take a nap, or create a new activity with the community’s young people. “Dead Times” are not an evil in themselves but they can be used by the devil if you are not aware of this problem.

3. YOUTH MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY DIFFERENCES ---- The philosophy differences between a larger church with a full time youth leader from a suburban community and a rural church with volunteer leaders can be tremendous. The seven last words of the church applies here. The “We have never done that here before” mentality can cause severe tension for a Rural Mission Experience. As much as possible, seek to determine “Policies” written and unwritten which the rural church may have, that can be a source of conflict between the two churches. The pastor of the rural church is key to this issue and must be respected by the visiting youth and their leaders while these philosophy differences are addressed. The reality of problems between a very conservative style of ministry (which rural churches have), with a contemporary “cutting edge” ministry style of a full time suburban church youth leader, cannot be over stressed here. “Traditions” are hard to change and maybe difficult for the sending churches youth and leaders to understand and adjust to. Again, these differences are not evil in themselves but they can be used by the evil one to accomplish his purposes.

4 A MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP ---- The involvement of the rural church in the Rural Mission Experience with the sending church is important. Ideally, partnerships need to be developed from the beginning. The ministry team from the sending church must be seen as an extension of the rural church leadership right from the beginning. The leadership of the rural church must not think that they are unneeded or unwanted in this outreach, but rather they need to be encouraged to participate in the outreach in some particular ways. While the full-time youth leader from the sending church is in charge of the ministry camp, it is best if the pastor of the rural church with any volunteer leaders be seen as part of the ministry team. Thus, they must have some ministry responsibilities. After the Pot Luck Dinner (which you want to have with the whole rural church family after the Sunday Services to get acquainted) invite the church members to pray for, and possibly even help or at least come and observe the youth outreaches of that week.

HOW TO BUILD ON WHAT GOD HAS STARTED?

Once you have established a relationship with a rural church, by doing some type of a rural mission, determine to continue an ongoing youth ministry involvement with that church, its volunteer leadership and youth. This can be done in several practical ways:

1. Encourage the youth that went with you on the mission to continue to be of an encouragement and support to the particular young people they became friends with while on the ministry outreach. Through letters, the phone and E-mail, young people are able to keep in touch with each other. Instruct your

young people to be sure to share spiritual things with these new friends and to encourage them to attend the rural church and its youth activities.

2. While on the week's outreach in the rural community, encourage the Pastor and volunteer leaders to build on the success of the ministry camp. Suggest to them that you would be willing to do whatever you could to be a support and resource to them. Establish a framework to develop an ongoing relationship with them in their efforts to build a growing youth ministry in their rural church. Give them some ideas on what that might look like.

- A. For instance, you might envision a way your best student leaders, who went on the mission trip, could be involved with their youth during the school year.
 - (1) by visiting once every three months for a weekend, special encouragement time.
 - (2) by inviting some of the rural youth over to spend a weekend with you and participating with them in the youth ministry activity which they would be attending.
 - (3) by establishing a "prayer partner" exchange between both youth groups.
- B. For instance, you might invite the rural church youth group over to join you on one of the retreats which you will run for your youth. This could be either summer or school year camps or possibly even a special training or mission experience retreat.
- C. You might volunteer to be a resource to the youth leaders and to the youth ministry of that rural church. Maybe you could be involved simply by sending your used youth ministry materials to them as a resource or involve yourself in leadership training and/or on a youth ministry consulting bases with those working with the youth in that rural church.
- D. Hopefully, you could plan on a repeat rural mission trip the following year. By returning to the same rural church and community, you are able to do so much more for that church and its youth. It is spiritually healthy for your young people to have a continuing involvement with the rural youth as well. Going back gives a whole new perspective on the ministry involvement for your young people and for the rural youth leaders and youth.

**I TRUST GOD'S BLESSING ON YOU AS YOU LEAD YOUR STUDENTS ON A
*RURAL MISSION EXPERIENCE.***

<>< Tom H.

Sample Application

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Main Email: _____

Other Phone(s): _____ Preferred T-Shirt Size _____

What Grade will you be in September (if any): _____ School: _____ Age: _____

Emergency Phone Numbers/Contact (provide min. of two): _____

TRAINING. You understand that training for this trip is a must. The training dates are June 27 and 28th. June 27th -from 6:30 PM to 9 PM- is especially designed for the person who has never been to Montana with us. Saturday, June 28th-from 9 AM to 4 PM-is for everyone. ALL team members must be a part of that. Veterans can opt out of Friday Night 6/27. One (1) make-up is available on July 12 (9-4 PM) for those that can't possibly make the June dates. We want you to arrange your schedule/work etc...to attend 6.27 and/or 6.28 if at all possible! **Please initial that you understand the previous mandatory times/dates: _____.**

PERSONAL. We want to get a good picture of you at this point. There may be something in what you reveal that we'd like to pursue further. Remember that one has to be at a Spiritual point of service to be effective on a mission trip! But one doesn't have to be perfect in any sense of the word. Just be honest and let's dialogue if we need to. **IF you do not hear from the Montana Leadership Group by June 10th, your application is A-okay and you'll be placed on a team. All others will be contacted for further info, dialogue, etc...before June 10.**

A. Rate your spiritual condition as of right now. (1 being distant from God and 10 being as really, really close to God) _____. Explain your answer and please give a **detailed** review of your Christian walk during this last school year (please use the back of one or more pages of the application for your answer).

B. What do you hope to accomplish this year in Montana 2008? What are your thoughts on the trip?

C. Good physical condition is required for this trip...do you have any debilitating injuries or allergies or conditions that would limit your full participation in any way, if so, what are they? _____

D. Are there any personal relationships that are strained RIGHT NOW that you need to work on/iron out before you go. If so, please briefly describe. _____

E. Special Interests or Talents. Please let us know what special talents you have or tasks you'd like to explore while you're on the trip. _____

F. How confident are you in sharing your faith (1 really not confident...10 really very confident) ____.
Explain your answer. _____

G. Evaluate yourself in the 4 spiritual exercises of the Christian Life. Discuss where you are in ea.
STUDY: _____

PRAYER: _____

MEDITATION/Quietness: _____

SERVICE: _____

H. Please initial the following:

- *You know that this trip is full of work and very little spare time? _____.
- *You know that you'll be expected to "jump on it" even tho' you may be tired? _____.
- *You know that we expect a lot of our students/staff & that the training is essential? _____.
- *You know that while on the trip your behaviour must be excellent! _____.
- *You do know that IF you go you'll be used by God in a cool way? _____.

General Commitment/Issues:

*I agree to be positive in my attitude and to follow Philippians 2:14 to a tee (please look this verse up and commit it to memory, initial here once you have done so _____ . Do not go any further until you do. Thanks).

*I agree to resolve any personal conflicts between anyone BEFORE July 15th...so that I will not be hindered on this mission. Please initial this commitment: _____.

*I agree to pray EVERY day from JUNE 27 to August 2 for the trip. For the doors to be open for our ministry, for safety, for the Churches we'll serve that they'll catch fire and a vision.

*I agree to turn in this application along with the \$50 deposit securing my spot on this trip. I know that after June 10th that this deposit is not refundable**. I know it costs \$139 and will pay the rest of the fee on or before July 17th _____.

*I will contact the Youth Secretary, Susie Fenton in the main office regarding a medical release. She may have one that is valid. I will make sure. Initial this commitment _____.

**It is un-refundable unless the entire Mission Trip comes out in the black which won't be known til the end of September and at that time all or a portion of it would be returned.

*I agree to be "other minded" for these 8 days and to follow the instructions given by the authorities given to you including reading assignments, van rides, rest, meds, etc. _____.

*I understand that I will **NOT** be allowed to bring my walkman, **cell phone**, pager, or any other electronic

equipment; Initial _____. (All adult staff will bring their Cell Phones).

*I understand that parents can reach us in Montana in case of a DIRE emergency through the cell phone numbers given in the Montana Missions Handbook which I will receive at the Training Meeting; I understand that to reach a particular student, depending on the time of day/project may take quite a while (hours!); Initial _____.

*I understand that if there is a problem medically that is deemed serious enough to call parents that only Ed Kelley, Rick Mortensen, Gene Hunt or Mac Hoover will be contacting folks. 98% of the medical issues are dealt with by our adult staff on site yet please understand that we err on the conservative side and emergency room visits are not unusual (migraines, smashed thumbs, etc.) and are the students/parents financial responsibility. Most of the time the parents will not know about minor mishaps until we return, but then again quite often we "FYI" parents depending on the severity of the situation. Please realize that YEARS of experience has taught us what is and isn't a serious issue AND that it is completely subjective! Initial _____.

*I understand that calling home, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, etc. in the middle of the mission from any phone is not allowed without express permission from Edward the Oracle; Initial _____.

*I understand that during this trip my focus is to be on others in Montana, not what is going on at home; Initial _____.

*I understand that there will be reading to do at home and am committed to follow the training instruction on that, and notes, and phone calls that may be required of me. Initial _____.

*I understand that doing dumb, risky, dangerous things is forbidden (no swimming in the river, no operating chain saws by yourself, no pounding nails into your fingers, no riding in vehicles without a seatbelt, no wandering off by yourself to watch the butterfly go by, no going inside anyone's home or car alone, no jaywalking, no wild bronco riding, no putting unprotected hands in dark places,...etc., etc., If you don't have total common sense, let me know and I'll assign someone to keep special watch over you. 😊 Initial _____.

As Student and Parent, we have went over each are of the General Issues/Commitment Section and understand together the statements therein.

As a Staff person, I understand the mission and what is expected of me.

X _____ X _____

Student/Staff

(Mom or Dad)

Date: _____

APPENDIX

Samples – Response Card

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____

SCHOOL : _____ GRADE: _____

I PRAYED TO RECEIVE CHRIST

I RECOMMITTED MY LIFE TO CHRIST

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

I AM INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE YOUTH PROGRAM

Did you come with someone? _____ Who? _____

Do you attend church regularly? _____ Where? _____

Remarks, prayer requests, suggestions - please use the back side of this card for additional remarks.

Samples -- COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Opening Statement: “Hello! (your partner’s name) and (your name) are from (church name) and we are asking people in our community 4 questions about heaven. Can we ask you these questions?”

1. Do you think that heaven is a real place? (if they say no skip down to #4)
2. If heaven is a real place, do you think it is possible for an individual to know, before they die, that they will be going to heaven?
3. What do you think qualifies a person for heaven?
4. Would you like to know what the Bible has to say about heaven and how to get there?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Comments:

HOW A RURAL MISSION EXPERIENCE HAVE WORKED

Example #1. This is the primary model.

(A four or five day Rural Missions Experience in a rural setting works very well. Use this type of missions experience as a **power tool** to develop student leaders in your youth group.)

CUTBANK MONTANA

9 days - 8 nights

A former young person from our church who is now pastoring a church in a rural community in Montana, invited us to come and reach the teens in his community. Our youth (28 total teens and leaders) did a daily Vacation Bible School in the morning and a Youth Outreach in the evening at the Cutbank Community Bible Church.

Three months before the camp, we started training sessions for the youth interested. We met weekly for six weeks of training and twice after that for briefing, planning and prayer. The youth learned to share a personal testimony, either of their conversion or of something personal of God's reality in their lives. They also learned to use the four spiritual laws, worked on skits, prayed together and planned other practical ministry activities.

Cost was covered by each youth going, paying \$75 apiece, and the sending church adding additional funds. The rural church put on the Daily Vacation Bible School on and we just helped. (*Note: The girls slept in church family homes, while the boys slept at the church and showered in church family homes during the day.*)

What a Ministry Schedule Looked Like: From Seattle to Cutbank and back --

Friday - Started out - travel day

Saturday - Travel day - visited Glacier National Park.

Sunday - Attended church, afternoon pot luck, met with church youth, made evening community contacts, and fellowship time.

Monday - Thursday - Breakfast at church, large group study, DVBS, ministry preparation & prayer, **phone calling**, free time, lunch at church, community contacting. Dinner at church, last minute preparations.

7 - 8:30 Activity - skit, testimonies, challenges

Gym game - 1st night

Pool party - 2nd night

Community Center - 3rd night

Pizza feed at church - 4th night

8:30 - 10:30 - After activity interaction

Friday - Traveled home (drove straight home, a 16 hour blitz).

Example #2. -- The Youth Director at Boulevard Park Presbyterian Church (BPPC) contacted a former church member, pastoring a small church in southwestern Oregon, about the possibility of a Rural Missions Experience. The Pastor of the small church, John, and the Youth Pastor at BPPC, Tom, prayed, met together and decided to test the waters by using a summer retreat opportunity to determine the feasibility of an ongoing ministry relationship. Two other pastors of the same denomination close to

John's church also joined in the youth retreat venture.

Tom's church provided eight student leaders and four adult leaders. For this kind of summer retreat, Tom was able to incorporate lesson materials formerly used on previous retreats along with all the necessary equipment for fun and comfort, as well as cooks with cooking facilities, (all things that already existed in their summer program). As part of this joint venture, the rural churches secured a number of camp sites at a State Park and invited teens from their churches to attend with several lay-leaders on a four night, five day, Water Ski Retreat.

The camp was a success, and youth from the rural churches encountered Jesus in life-changing ways. The student leaders from BPPC were excited that God used them, and the three pastors from the rural churches, with Tom from BPPC, planned a larger camp the next summer and are pursuing other Youth Ministry possibilities.

THINK!!!! Can you as the Youth Leader of an existing Youth Ministry see the vision for the extension of your ministry in a rural church somewhere? Will working with rural churches fit in with your existing ministry? I believe the answer is *yes* and *yes*! It is my desire to be of assistance to those involved in Youth Ministry to consider this outreach ministry opportunity. Catch the vision. Lead a ministry camp and watch God work through all involved.

MINISTRY CAMPS

FEEDBACK

Name: _____ Church: _____

Min. Cp. Dates: _____ Min. Cp. Church: _____

Min. Cp. Location _____ Rural pastors name: _____

Basic Min. Cp. Info: Number of youth brought: _____

Ave. number of rural youth in attendance: _____

Number of salvation decisions made: _____

Number of rededication's made: _____

Type of Min. Cp. (check one) peer to peer youth events only

peer to peer & DVBS ministry

peer to peer & service projects

peer to peer, DVBS & service projects

other - _____

Rural church involvement: _____

General rural church response: _____

Specific Information:

Impact on your ministry Team: _____

Any changes you would make: _____

Would you recommend this type of experience to other churches?

From John Rickenbacher:

On Being Courteous in Host Homes

1. BE POLITE!!! Please and thank you all the way ... your best behavior
2. Don't whisper or carry on inside jokes between you and other team members in front of hosts.
3. Limit bathroom time. Get in – Get out. Clean up after yourself.
4. Do not look through host's personal belongings, cupboards, medicine cabinets, etc. Ask where to find things.
5. Eat what is offered with a grateful attitude.
6. Be conscious of host's bed time. Be quiet and go to sleep. This is not a week long slumber party.
7. Respect their schedule in the AM. Find out what time they get up, when you can use the shower that won't interfere with their needs. Be flexible.
8. On calling home: if you need to use the phone, use a calling card or call collect and be sure your host knows that. If they insist that you call on their dime, keep it short. Even if you're paying for it, keep it short.
9. Keep your area and things tidy. Keep your things in your bag and bedding make or folded up. Clean up after yourself in the bathroom and in the kitchen.
10. Offer to help when it seems appropriate. Remember you are there to serve, not be served.

From Brian Aaby:

It is a good idea to answer as many questions before you go on the "Rural Mission Experience" as possible. This simple "Mission Survey" will assist you in the preparation and planning part of using a ministry camp as a strategy to developing your student leaders.

Mission Survey

Church/Organization Name _____

Address _____

Pastor/ Primary Contact _____

Office Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Church/Contact e-mail _____

What are the main areas (towns, etc.) your church/organization serves? _____

If a church, what is the average Sunday attendance? _____

Is there an active youth group? _____

How many in average attendance? _____

We will be prepared to function in many different ministry roles in your community, however, which of the following ministries would you expect us to be able to use?

VBS _____ Youth Outreach _____ Service Projects _____

Other (please explain) _____

We will be self-sufficient in coming to your town, however, we do need to know what plans we should have. We have had experiences staying in churches, parsonages, community centers, houses and tents (camping). We have used camp stoves and BBQ's and have been blessed with commercial kitchens for our cooking needs. We have had showers in churches, homes and no shower at all. Please answer the following questions to help us get an idea of what we might have staying in your town.

Where would we most likely be staying the nights? _____

Will we have a kitchen facility? _____

Will there be showers available? _____ Where? _____

Any additional information that you could give us on the back would be helpful, however, we will be contacting you in the near future to get more details.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR R.C.Y.M.

(Rural Church Youth Ministries)

WHY?? Mission Statement *(Why We Exist)*

To assist and encourage churches in bringing young people into life changing encounters with Jesus Christ preparing them for a life of service.

WHAT?? The Vision *(What We're Trying To Accomplish)*

To recruit metropolitan churches in order to serve the youth ministry of rural churches.

To assist lay leaders and pastors in the rural church to build solid Biblical youth ministry programs, by providing any combination of these four customized menus; partnerships (ministry camps), rural youth ministry notebooks/materials, the placement of a full-time youth leader (Youth Leader Cooperative), and through a consulting/mentoring youth leadership ministry.

HOW?? Goals *(Specific Steps)*

To cast a vision for and oversee a partnership type relationship between a youth pastor and a rural church volunteer (or pastor). This would set in place the possibility for encouragement, mentoring, the running of a ministry camp, providing training seminars, and sharing resources in order for the rural church to have a more focused and effective youth ministry. This would also provide the sending church with a practical way to develop ministry skills in their students.

To provide youth ministry materials that will enhance the ministry of volunteer leaders.

To encourage the placement of a full-time youth leader in a rural church partially supported as a home missionary. Thus, a youth director cooperative would realize the placement of a full-time youth director in rural churches.

Ministry Concepts:

1. Ministry Camps - Serving within the rural setting to develop student ministry skills.
2. Partnerships - Developing bridges with full-time youth workers and rural ministries.
3. Phone Consultation - Seeking to meet the needs of individual rural churches.
4. Youth Retreats - Sharing retreat concepts which will work for the rural church.
5. Training Notebooks - Providing volunteer workers helpful training materials.
6. Placement - Helping to place full-time workers in a rural setting as missionaries.
7. Training Seminars - Providing training for volunteer workers in the rural setting.
8. Connecting - Building bridges between ministries addressing rural ministry needs.
9. Sharing - Learning from others in order to work smarter not harder.
10. Networking - Determining how rural youth ministries can work together.

(from the early days 9/96) Introduction:

Ministry Camps – They will raise your student leaders’ ministry experience to another level.

Dear Youth Minister:

There exists a sense of urgency in the culture of the Rural Church in America today. Because of the rural community’s isolation, many rural churches feel neglected and forgotten. Consequently, rural youth ministries struggle in ways that reflect these negative feelings.

The reasons that Rural America and its churches are in the midst of an identity crisis are rather easy to identify. Because of the reality of a rapidly changing rural environment, fueled by economic challenges, urban to rural migration, and technological development, there is an unchurched generation of North American teens and struggling churches in the rural setting. The North American Church can no longer afford to ignore these needs which demand the prioritized efforts of our churches, mission boards, and educators as a valid home mission focus.

Recently, the critical needs voiced from these churches seem to be overlooked by the very ones who have most of the resources available to provide encouragement to rural churches. According to ProYouth’s Rural Youth Ministry director, Tom Horton, “Every church who has the resources and recognizes this need for encouragement and assistance, can help.” Encouragement through involvement can ignite the necessary spark to develop and maintain a rural Youth Ministry. It is time to be aware of this need and be willing to help.

“It really is a rescue mission”, says Tom. “A ‘Parent Church Youth Ministry’ would be committed to a vision of aiding and assisting the needs of the rural church’s youth ministry. We must act now, or these ministries will die and opportunities will be lost. With a ‘Youth Ministry Partnership’, a sharing of experiences, resources, and understanding of youth ministry in a rural church would take place. A partnership need not entail extensive emphasis on changing anything that a full-time youth leader already implements in his own Youth Ministry. Just by being an example and sharing what makes his youth ministry effective, the youth worker would be assisting a rural church in their youth ministry.”

As a “full-time youth worker”, your involvement with your trained core young people in a rural church setting, pays dividends which have a reciprocal effect. Can you envision the youth ministry needs of a rural church setting as a platform from which you can give your young people a genuine ministry experience? It can happen. Just think, that with your youth ministry style and experience, an outreach can be realized that will accomplish four significant objectives: 1. You will greatly enhance an existing Rural Youth program. 2. Your youth will be of great encouragement to the Christian youth in the rural church you are working from. 3. Your youth will reach non-christian youth with the gospel, resulting in many conversions. 4. Your youth will return home, having encountered the Lord in life-changing ways, and be eager to be part of your ministry team back home. Ministry camps may not have the appeal of an overseas mission experience, but they are as life-changing for your youth while being much less expensive and much easier to run and maintain for you.