

Youth Group Exit Strategy

Leader's Guide

This is a personal plan to help your students take charge of their faith by finding their next Christian community after they leave your youth group/small group.

➡ Step 1 – What's after graduation for you?

Work with each senior to assess what their immediate plans are after graduation. Ask them to fill in Step 1 on their *My Youth Group Exit Strategy* sheet. (You can use the Life After Youth Group video, *The Last Semester*, to pique your students' interests about this topic. See www.gradguidies.org/resources to watch videos online for free.)

➡ Step 2 – What will you do for fellowship after graduation?

This step will help you identify who is staying in town and who is leaving. It will also help your students to start identifying their strategy for fellowship. Ask them to fill in Step 2 on their *My Youth Group Exit Strategy* sheet. (You can use the Life After Youth Group video, *Find Your Puzzle*, to pique your students' interests about this topic. See www.gradguidies.org/resources to watch videos online for free.)

➡ Step 3 – What are you looking for in your next fellowship group?

This step will help your students to really do some thinking about the Bible teaches about church and fellowship. It has two parts: evaluate their current fellowship experience and think through what they would like in their next fellowship experience. This step can also afford you the opportunity to assess how your ministry is doing through the eyes of your graduating seniors. The goal of this step is not to create critical spirits about all that a church is not doing, but to help them own what is important to them. Ask them to fill in Step 3 on their *My Youth Group Exit Strategy* sheet. (You can use the Life After Youth Group video, *A Recipe for Church*, to pique your students' interests about this topic. See www.gradguidies.org/resources to watch videos online for free.)

➡ Step 4 – The Fellowship Shopper's Guide

Much of the difficulty in finding a new fellowship group is that it involves a sense of shopping and some people hate to shop. Plus, most students have not had the freedom to “shop” for their own fellowship because it's usually determined by where mom and dad attend church. The rest of this Exit Strategy will attempt to help your students have some practical steps in discovering their next fellowship group. The remaining steps are outlined as follows: 1) Those going away to college, 2) Those staying home (working and/or going to college), and 3) Those entering the military. Those going to college will make up the vast majority of your students. Looking for a campus or base ministry is suggested before looking for a church only for practical reasons: it's easier to find a church after finding Christians in your environment. It also makes going to church more likely in that your student will have someone to go with.

Ask them to fill in each remaining step on their *My Youth Group Exit Strategy* sheet. (You can use the Life After Youth Group video, *The Fellowship Shopper's Guide*, to pique your students' interests about this topic. See www.gradguidies.org/resources to watch videos online for free.)

➡ Step 5 – Learn the brand names.

Give your opinion and recommendations for the 3 or 4 campus ministries on their perspective campus. Encourage your student to get their parents feedback (if they are believers) and other trusted believing adults.

➡ Step 6 – Narrow your options.

Help your student narrow down the campus ministries referred by you, their parents and others. Write them down the student's *My Campus Ministry Shopping List*.

➔ **Step 7 – Make a list of questions.**

Help your student look through this obsessive list of questions below. Encourage them to find their Top 5 Questions they would want to ask a student involved in each campus ministries at their college. Pick from the list below or write your own list of questions.

➔ **Step 8 – Start the inquisition.**

Go with your student to their bookmarked web pages of campus ministries from liveabove.com and your college's website. Help them find a contact person from each of the campus ministries on their *Campus Ministry Shopping List* (Step 6 above). Encourage them to email their Top 5 Questions above to each campus ministry on their list.

➔ **Step 9 – Enjoy your summer with your graduated seniors.**

Check in them periodically to see if they have heard back from any campus ministries. Pray with them and talk about their upcoming transition to college.

➔ **Step 10 – Select your Top 3 Campus Ministries to Visit**

Through the summer ask your students if they heard back from any campus ministry. Ask them which groups were most responsive and helpful. Ask them to pick their Top Three ministries they would want to visit when school starts (use list below). Help them find out when and where their first fellowship meeting is on campus and schedule it into your calendar so you can pray/email them how it went. Encourage them that they can confidently trust the Lord as they start looking for their new Christian community in college. Encourage them to attend all three groups on their list during their first week. Pray with them about where God might want them to get involved.

If you're staying in town...

	<i>I'm staying at my local church.</i>	<i>I'm looking for a change from my local church.</i>
What are my options?	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm staying at my current church and will find my next group by.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Getting involved in the College Group <input type="checkbox"/> Joining a small group of singles or families <input type="checkbox"/> Joining the After Service Donut Team <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering with the Junior High ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering with the High School ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging out in the back with other disgruntled congregants and complaining how the services are not geared for young people. <input type="checkbox"/> Going to services occassionally and seeing people at church once in a while. 	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to see what God is doing in other churches for people my age so I need to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with my youth pastor about my plan <input type="checkbox"/> Get his blessing that I'm not just "bailing" <input type="checkbox"/> Ask him for churches/ministries to consider trying <input type="checkbox"/> Ask friends who have visited other churches/ministries for their recommendations. <input type="checkbox"/> Visit some of those churches/ministries <input type="checkbox"/> If I find a different church/ministry I like, make a commitment to get into a small group Bible study. <input type="checkbox"/> If I don't find a church/ministry I like, talk with my youth pastor about finding my next place.

If you're going into the military...

What are my options?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify which base you are being assigned to. <input type="checkbox"/> Go to www.cadence.org/maps and see if they have a ministry on your base. <input type="checkbox"/> Go to www.militaryministry.org/locations/ and see if they have a ministry on your base. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact your base's Chaplain's office and talk with the Chaplain. <input type="checkbox"/> Tell him about your church background and that you are looking for a similar church near the base. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask him if the Chaplain's office offers small group Bible studies.
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