

YOUTH DEPARTMENT

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The **purpose** of the Youth Department (ages teens and early twenties) is to promote a healthy lifestyle and to encourage youth to be drug-free.

Goals: Use technology and other youth-friendly methods to reach youth; promote healthy lifestyle choices; make resources available to teach and encourage.

A basic list of **projects** for this department is given below. Use the interests and creativity of your members to add other projects but use the purpose of each department as a guide for the correct placement of the projects.

1. Look for opportunities to present a drug education program to youth in schools and/or churches. Prepare a program in advance.
2. Advertise the youth website: www.drug-freeyouth.org.
3. Mentor a young person.
4. Sponsor a fun night for youth. Demonstrate a good time without drugs.
5. Contact youth ministers and offer material, programs, and other assistance to encourage drug-free living.

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I called on my two sons to help me invite youth in their teens and early twenties to brainstorm ideas to help our WCTU to engage youth. These are ideas they generated. Hopefully some of the ideas will work for you and you may also get a group together to formulate ideas.

When you have a group together and demonstrate they can have a good time without alcohol and other drugs, you have made an important point. Of course having food and drink for them is important. Then be sure to have pledge cards available and briefly explain the importance of making a good decision for their lifestyle - one of total abstinence. Encourage them to sign the pledge.

Here are suggestions for strategies to reach youth:

1. Talent shows - this may bring youth who want to show case their talents as well as spectators. Sensitization of alcohol and drug abuse and be done at intervals
2. Organized sports by youth
3. Drama/ plays
4. Motivational talks on selected issues
5. Regular Dinners/ Lunches/ Breakfasts
6. Musical concerts
7. Prayer groups
8. Peer coaching
9. Monitoring
10. Establishing guidance and counseling clubs for both parents and youth
11. Cultural activities
12. Camp outs
13. Public campaigns, e.g. bus or train ride and distribute material (from one town to the other)
14. Writing clubs/ posters
15. Visit other youth clubs and schools and share the WCTU message

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16. Engage members using Facebook accounts

17. Give quizzes about our WCTU message and where possible give tokens

Research has shown that youth are more influential on other youth. It will be very important to allow youth to work with their peers as much as we can. However, they need a lot of support from family, community, and other youth.

Two weeks ago a group of my youth visited one of our churches in Bulawayo, 50 km away. We addressed the whole church about WCTU and we explained how this message could be spread by everyone. The parents were thinking about starting a guidance and counseling club where they could get an expert to teach them about parenting because we realize that some of the challenges that youth have may be a result of bad parenting.

We encouraged the youth to start cell groups in their neighborhoods. We also encouraged the young mothers to discourage their age group to avoid tobacco, alcohol and prevent FAS. Let us pray for all members as we implement these strategies and keep our youth safe.

Dr. Elisa Masuku (Zimbabwe)