

## Parents and Youth Ministry

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Love it or hate it the fact remains the same parents are inextricably linked with youth ministry. I have experienced the good, the bad and the ugly side of the relationship but it is clearly one that is here to stay. I suggest, therefore, that you spend some time thinking the issues through to enable you to increase the good, reduce the bad and eliminate the ugly.

One great way to get parents on side with what you are doing is to involve them in the work there are way more positives to this than negatives.

- Parents usually only see their children in a home setting where there are tensions at times. It will help them to see their son/daughter in a group setting it may even surprise them to see a different type of behaviour.
- Just because they are parents of teenagers means that they have a level of understanding of the issues young people face and they have developed certain communication skills etc. By allowing those to be involved also means that they will be able to use these skills with a larger group.
- Criticism from parents can almost be considered as part of the job [although I have yet to see it included in a job description!] and maybe it is because they don't understand the issues faced and the pressure youthworkers are under. If they were taking part in some way then these issues would be drastically reduced.
- Sometimes volunteers are hard to find and by refusing to let parents take part we are restricting our resource pool.

Of course some young people wouldn't want their parents to be involved [some for right motives and some for questionable ones] and there may well be keen parents that are totally unsuitable. However I wouldn't let those factors put you off.

The way to involve them is to ensure that they are aware of your need for volunteers, that you can't [neither do you want to] do it all alone. Assure them that any involvement they have is important and that there are several levels that they can help [car pool, food provider, activity leader etc.]. And of course there is nothing to stop you giving greater encouragement to the gifted ones!

However, whether you involve parents directly or not you still need to keep them fully informed of your plans and vision. Their children are their responsibility our task is to support them in their sons/daughters development.

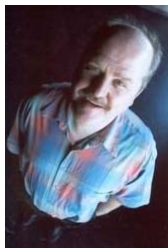
Hold regular [2 or 3 times a year] briefings where you can explain the overall aims and objectives of the program and answer any broad questions. A regular parent's newsletter can keep them up to date with any happenings month by month. It would also be good if you could host seminars for parents on topics like:

- Preparing to parent teenagers
- Understanding teenagers
- Helping your child reach their ultimate potential

## To name but three

Listen to their concerns, maybe even set up support groups, see them as friends of the youth ministry not as enemies.

The truth is that you both have the same vision and goals healthy, mature young people confident to face the adult world.



### About Nigel

Nigel has been paid to work with young people since 1991 and did it voluntarily before then. He actually believes he hasn't been to work since then because he enjoys himself so much. He is available for private consultation and coaching as well as having resources available e.g. **Understanding Teenagers A-Z**.

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**Teencoach - Helping Young People Find A Better Way**

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