

GUIDE FOR PLAYS

In addition to being the youth leader, you have an opportunity to become a “director” of a play. And the youth will have an opportunity to become a “cast member” in a play. During this time, you will invest in the story “The King’s Love for His People” and the “Young Leaders Agenda.” This will give you an opportunity to connect deeper with the youth.

They will learn valuable life lessons of trusting in God, and you will have the ability to teach basic drama skills along the way. The theme of each play will teach youth how God works in difficult times of our lives.

You will also see them develop and become “Young Leaders.” You have the opportunity in helping them discover gifts they did know they had which could take them further into what God is calling them to do.

Pray

The most important thing you will do as a leader is pray.

“The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.” Matthew 9:37-38

- Pray for each youth. (Young Leader)
- Pray for the residents, that each will hear and see God’s love for them.
- Pray for wisdom.
- Pray for parents and other leaders to help you.
- Pray about which play to perform.
- Pray about the dates of when the performances should be.



IT TAKES TEAMWORK:

It takes a lot of energy to keep up with youth (young leaders), and on some days you may feel like you are doing this all alone.

To build a team - there is no better place to look than the parents of the “young leaders” you are shepherding.

- To encourage parent support, print and hand out to parents the “Notes to Parents of Young Leaders.” The notes also encourage and assist parents in answering some tough challenges their children may face.

It is helpful to assign a parent or close friend who could help you with:

- Praying together for the youth.
- Helping the youth memorize their lines.
- Attend practices with you to give support and spiritual encouragement to the youth.
- Technician and Sound Crew for songs in between scenes.
- Creating a Stage with Props and Backdrops.
- Calling local florist to ask for a flower donation for youth to give a flower to each resident. (See a script for calling in the “Contact Care Facility Activities Director.”)
- Creating flyers to post and pass out to neighbors and friends.

Once you have selected your play and identified at least four or five youth, it is time to begin the process of planning.

Schedule Performances

- Days/Times to consider scheduling plays:
 - **Performing the play at two care facilities in one day will provide a great experience for everyone.** The youth may be unsure the first time they do the play. Each time they perform, they will have the chance to be more confident in their roles and fix the mistakes/lines missed.
 - Sundays after church may be a suitable time to schedule.
 - Or during the summer, Christmas and Easter weeks that school is out.
 - The best times for scheduling plays for most Care Facilities are 9:00-10:30 a.m., 1:00- 3:00 p.m., or after 6:00 p.m.
 - Once you have determined the performance dates, contact the activity director to schedule the performance.
 - Activity Directors will schedule activities for the month one to two weeks prior. This will give them a chance to print the calendar and have it ready to hand out to residents on the first of the month.
 - The performance, including the play and time to socialize with residents, lasts about 1-1½ hours. If scheduling two performances in one day, give your crew enough time to pack up and travel to the next facility.
 - Refer to the for a script to schedule plays.
 - You may have to contact several care facilities until you find one that is available on the date and time you have selected.
- Show up and God will do the rest! As the children become more comfortable, they allow God to use them in ways that will make this a life-changing experience. Respect develops for the residents that is beautiful to witness.

Create a Schedule of Practices and Performances

- We typically plan for 4-6 two hour practices.
- Practices can be condensed if the youth is eager and may memorize lines quickly.
- Go to create.microsoft.com to customize a free calendar template and then print copies for all the youth. (See Sample Photo.)



Create a Playlist of Music for the Play

- The “Song Cue Sheet” will help you create a playlist on Amazon Music, Spotify®, or another music streaming platform.
- During the performance, the playlist can be played directly from your phone to a Bluetooth® speaker. Just connect to the speaker and adjust the volume.

Identify Technical Equipment Needs

- Since the residents have difficulty hearing even the loudest youth, using Microphones is an important part of the play. (When you schedule the play, you can ask the activities director if they have sound equipment you can use.)
- It is always nice to have extra microphones even if the Care Facility has sound equipment and microphones.
- If you desire to invest in a speaker/microphone set, we recommend the Behringer MPA40BT-Pro PA System and the Behringer Ultralink ULM202USB Wireless USB Dual Microphone System.



Create a Stage

Divider:

- You may want to invest in a lightweight “8 Panel Room Divider” to set up as your stage.
- A lighter-weight divider is best for carrying in and out of the Care Facilities.
- A simple freestanding curtain rod with a sheet would work as well.
- **Creating a stage will provide a place:**
 - To gather and pray before the performance.
 - For the youth to wait when they are not part of the story
 - For youth to go when exiting the scene
- **Maximize your space:**
 - Place the divider where there are doorways or openings.
 - Use corners, plants or trees in the space that can



be made part of the action.

Backdrops:

- Hung over the divider and attached with large clips.
- Switched out by the youth between scenes. (Promotes teamwork!)
- Provides a large visual for the residents to see where the scene is taking place.
- Creating Backdrops
 - Refer to the script and prop list for scenes.
 - A white flat queen size sheet works well as a blank canvas. You'll need one for each scene. Paint the scene changes on separate sheets.
 - Simply draw large props like a sofa or fireplace into the scene.

Invitations

- Family, friends, and neighbors are always welcome to come watch the kids perform.
- In order to get the word out about your play you can create a flyer / invitation for the youth to hand out.
- See the photo for an example.
- Send parents the invitation by email or text



Begin Practices:

- As you begin practices print out and give each youth a copy of "Notes to Young Leaders." This will help the youth to more fully understand the impact they will bring to the residents and give them practical

ideas in the memorization of their lines.

Included with each play:

- Play Script
 - Full script indicating main and secondary characters
 - Detail revealing which characters can play more than one part
- Character Detail
 - Helps youth members to get into their character roles
- Song Cue Sheet
 - Helps technicians know when to play songs in between scenes
- Prop List
 - Helps keep props organized

Equip:

To equip the youth, first begin with. There are six questions throughout the story which is outlined on the “Equip Young Leaders Agenda.”

- Read a portion of the story each practice.
- Have the youth write down their answer to one of the six question for each practice. (Assuming you will most likely need at least six practices, including a dress rehearsal).
- Gives youth an opportunity to ask questions and share anything that may be weighing them down – which will enhance the quality of time you will have together.
- Plays take more practice time, and the question in the agenda is meant to nurture the relationship between you and the youth which also builds trust. Working your way through the agenda each practice, you will find the connection between you and the youth grows deeper.

Character Details

- The character details help bring the youth out of their shells and get into

character.

- Share the character details and the costume details with the youth members.
- Encourage the youth to be creative and allow them to add to their character.

- The more creative they can be, the more ownership they will find in the character they play.
- Suggestions for youth members to bring their character to life onstage:
 - Your character has a different body than you. Practice moving like your character.
 - How does your character stand?
 - Don't be afraid to be bold and do your own thing.
 - Improvise and stay in your role—no giggling.
 - Your character has a different voice than you. Your character's voice tells the audience exactly who they are. Practice with low pitches and loud or soft volumes:
 - A greeting (friendly or shy) "Hello, my name is..."
 - A shout (pleased or frightened) "Oh, what is this?!"
 - A laugh (happy or scary) "Ha Ha Ha, great idea!"

Voice –

The youth should prepare to do the play as if they are not using microphones. (Even if you plan to use microphones.) Teach them to project so their voices can be heard:

- The more clearly the youth's words and voices can be heard, the clearer the message will be during the performances.
- Projecting is making your voice fill the space versus shouting.
- Encourage the youth to open their mouths and move their lips carefully so the audience hears every word.



Voice Exercise – Have the youth stand together and try the exercise below. Instruct them to:

- Always face the audience when speaking.
- Stand with your feet apart.
- Breathe in so your belly fills up. Breathe out as slowly as you can.
- Try humming with your lips closed and teeth apart then feel the buzz vibrate through your body.
- Open your mouth wide. Try to make an open AH or OH sound, projecting your voice to the back of the room.
- Have the youth speak one of their lines and try to get their voice to reach ALL the way to the back of the room!

Add Some Fun to the Voice Warm-Up:

- Have one youth member or leader go into another room.
- One at a time, each youth member breathe in, so their belly fills up, and then project their voice with an AH or OH sound.
- Project loud enough to be heard in the next room.
- The youth member/leader who is in the other room can guess which one is making the sound.
- Continue until each person has an opportunity to guess.
- This experience allows each youth to see for themselves how projecting their voice truly does makes a difference.

Blocking and Stage Geography

A great stage setup and character movement will go a long way in making your play flow well, even if your stage is small. Consider the following:

- Show the youth how to enter and exit the stage area.
- To be able to accommodate most spaces, make the stage area small (During practices) yet large enough for the youth to move around easily.
- Plan out where each youth member will stand, move, and act.
- Encourage youth to face “full front” when delivering their lines.
- Spread out your blocking so that everyone can be seen.

Before the Performance

Prepare: You will find this section to be helpful in preparing the youth for the visit. Since most have probably never been to a care facility before, they may have some reservations and uncertain expectations.

Review:

- Review the “Invitation to Receive Jesus as Savior” section. Pray, asking God for wisdom and as you prepare to invite residents to receive Jesus as Savior. (Watch the Holy Spirit do only what He can do!)
- Review the “Curtain Call “(This is a time the youth will be introduced as “cast” and give each resident a flower.)
- Choose the Mingle/Dance song after the performance.
- Choose the playlist of songs to play while passing out the “Who I Am in Jesus” handout and packing up to leave.



Encourage the youth to:

- Whisper to help someone who is stuck when someone misses a line.
- Improvise. (To improvise is for someone to come up with something that will replace the missing line.)
- Do What They Do and Have Fun! The music in between sets is a great time to dance and sing while switching backdrops and props. We have seen amazing choreography come together as they do this.



Performance Day:

- It's finally the big day! This day will be the culmination of everything you and the youth have prepared for.
- Pray With Your Group Before the play.
Sample prayer: "Lord, here we are. We are here because we love You and want You to be glorified. We ask that You help us bring Your message with love and confidence. We know we can do all things through You who strengthen us. Thank You for what You have done, what You are doing, and what You are going to do! In Jesus' name, Amen."
- Trust that God is answering all your prayers, and watch, as He is glorified.



After the Performance: Enjoy Time for Lunch

- Provide an atmosphere where the youth can have fun during their lunch break and develop bonds with each other. Bring a ball or frisbee to toss around outside. Some youth members may enjoy blowing bubbles outside.
- After some fun, they will feel refreshed and ready for their next performance of the day.



Follow Up

- As a follow-up, here are a couple of questions to ask after the play. Have the youth write down their answers

on an index card.

- Why did you decide to do the play?
- Was this experience what you thought it would be?
- How do you see God moving in your life?
- Were you able to connect with any of the residents?
- Do you have any suggestions to make the experience better?
- Would you like to visit with a resident one-on-one?



Best Practices / Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do:**
 - Pray before each practice and play.
 - Keep your sense of humor and have fun!
 - Be flexible: mistakes will happen.
 - Make an invitation for residents to receive Jesus as Savior.
 - Enjoy lunchtime in between plays.
 - Give the youth an opportunity to exercise their faith by asking, "Who would like to pray before and after practices/play, or before we eat our lunch?" We have been surprised on several occasions by those who raised their hand to volunteer. God's Spirit is moving and working in ways that will amaze you!
- **Don'ts:**
 - Don't just do the play or skits once. The youth will take their place as leaders the more you show up. (The awkwardness in the youth becomes less, and you begin to see hidden talents and gifts you didn't realize were there.)
 - Don't forget the Memory Care part of the facility. (Be prepared to see God moving in amazing ways!)
 - Don't bring too many large props. (Make it easy on yourself and use Care Facility furniture. The residents will notice your love, smile, and care more than the props.)
 - Don't get overwhelmed. (When you feel yourself becoming overwhelmed or frustrated go back to the first bullet on the "Do" list! Pray! Jesus will guide you and give you wisdom.)

Prayer

Our Prayer for Youth Leaders:

Lord, bless these leaders in their role. Give them Your love and wisdom to serve You well. Encourage them, Lord.

Open the curtain of heaven and give them eyes to see the potential in these young leaders. Give these young leaders the heart to understand You, and see how You are working in lives all around them. Give them a spirit of humility, love, and truth to bring to the residents.

We pray from Your infinite love, power, and strength that You will guide each leader in this mission to equip leaders for You – and bring You glory!

Bless these Leaders and their families!

In Jesus' Name, Amen

