

BANQUET HANDBOOK



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NOTE: This handbook was compiled by a group of committee planners from all over the country.

For general questions regarding a banquet or other event, please call the Young Life Service Center at **719-381-1929**.

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend:

For years, banquets have been a part of the Young Life tradition. They continue to be one of the best ways to bring a community together to see and hear the great things that are happening because of Young Life. It's a chance to show off kids, applaud staff and volunteers and thank the many donors who support Young Life.

Of course, banquets are also a great opportunity to sustain and even enhance that support. When people can experience the excitement and see the impact this ministry has on thousands of kids every year, they can't help but be enthusiastic about offering their support prayerfully and financially. So, tap into that potential and make the most of your event! Have fun. Work hard. Laugh a lot. Pray expectantly.

This handbook was created by Young Life committee members from across the country who are experienced banquet planners. Use any ideas that will enhance your banquet and further this successful Young Life tradition.

We're glad you've said "yes" to help plan your local banquet, and we truly believe you will be blessed and encouraged when you see what God will do through you. Thank you for the time and energy you are giving so that more kids meet Christ.

In Christ for all kids,



Newt Crenshaw
President



HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

We realize that some of you have years of banquet planning experience under your belt while others are doing this for the very first time. Regardless of your experience, this handbook is easy to use.

Consider it a guide for developing a handbook for your local area. We suggest a three-ring binder or file folders — something for filing information specific to your area that you add to year after year. Paperwork accumulates quickly while doing this job, so your handbook is a place to organize resources for easy reference. Ultimately, your handbook should be passed along to future banquet planners in your area so the groundwork is already in place.

Make this handbook your own. Write in the margins, highlight new ideas, photocopy pages — whatever it takes to make your banquet the best it can be.



ICONS FOUND IN THIS HANDBOOK

WORTH NOTING

Practical suggestions that are applicable to most Young Life communities.



FIELD-TESTED IDEAS

Tried and true methods working effectively in other Young Life communities.



QUOTABLE COMMENTS

Good advice from other committee members and guest reactions about the banquet experience.



FOR MORE BANQUET TOOLS AND RESOURCES, VISIT THE FIELD EVENTS SECTION OF THE STAFF RESOURCES WEB SITE.

** See page 49 – 50 of this handbook **

YOUNG LIFE'S VISION, MISSION AND APPROACH

YOUNG LIFE'S VISION: Every adolescent will have the opportunity to meet Jesus Christ and follow Him.

YOUNG LIFE'S MISSION: Introducing adolescents to Jesus Christ and helping them grow in their faith.

YOUNG LIFE'S CORE PROMISES: As followers of **JESUS CHRIST** ... we are **OUT THERE** in the world of kids, we are **INVITING** in all that we do, we witness **CHANGED LIVES** as kids meet Christ and we stand on a **FIRM FOUNDATION**.

YOUNG LIFE'S APPROACH: Young Life meets kids where they are by going to them and loving them unconditionally, regardless of their choices about faith. Young Life leaders enter the world of teenagers in order to earn the privilege of sharing God's love with them. They find opportunities to walk alongside kids who need safe, loving adults in their lives. We call this incarnational approach to ministry "contact work." We also create opportunities for sharing the gospel: weekly meetings called club, Bible studies called Campaigners and adventure-filled camping programs. The foundation for Young Life's ministry at the local level is the adult committee, who desire kids in their community to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Young Life is a community of believers committed to sharing the gospel and building positive relationships with middle school (WyldLife), high school kids (Young Life) and college students (Young Life College). Young Life reaches suburban, rural, urban and multiethnic kids. In addition, Young Life reaches out to teen moms (YoungLives) and kids with disabilities (Capernaum).

Young Life began when a young pastor, Jim Rayburn, decided it was time for people of faith to step outside the church building and walk across the street to the local high school.

Rayburn learned that going where kids are and loving them as they are "earns the right to be heard," opening the door to share the message of Christ. Today we call it "incarnational ministry" — but the principle remains the same: Go to the kids. Love them unconditionally. Inform them about the truth of Christ and let them make their own decision about Him.

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

— Matthew 9:35-38, NIV

“We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”

— 1 Thessalonians 2:6-8, NIV

Today, Young Life impacts nearly two million kids each school year and, annually, nearly 300,000 kids attend Young Life camp worldwide.

Suggested Reading:

- ***Made for This: The Young Life Story*** by Jeff Chesemore
- ***Back to the Basics of Young Life*** by John Miller



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Since this is God's work, let prayer envelop the entire event. Weave prayer into every detail — from the guest list, to the program, to the finances, to the menu — nothing is too little or insignificant to bring before God. Look on pages 46 and 47 for a day-by-day calendar that you can adapt to your own area.

A PURPOSE IN THE PLAN

The Young Life fundraising banquet is a significant event with defined purposes. Its impact extends far beyond the money it raises. Your banquet should include these elements:

- **Financial Support:** Traditionally, the Young Life banquet has been an important tool in local area fundraising. But we continue to learn that your area's financial health will be best served if your banquet is a component of your committee's overall donor relationship strategy and plan. Ideally, the banquet is where we raise the last 20% of the budget from 80% of our donors. This happens after we have raised the first 80% from the 20% of givers we see in personal visits or small groups. By recognizing this 80-20 rule at play in fundraising, your banquet plans can proceed with clarity, meaning and realistic purposes.
- **Celebration:** Your banquet should be fun because Young Life is fun. It should be an event that people look forward to every year — a time to thank God for His work in kids' lives, a time for enjoying each other's company, a time to laugh, a time for encouraging and thanking the Young Life staff and volunteers — a time to celebrate.
- **Information:** Prospective donors want to know what Young Life does. They want to understand its mission, know its credibility and grasp its potential. Our established history and our local impact provide a strong testimony to the effectiveness of this ministry. The banquet is a platform to share that success with new guests and an ideal time to remind your faithful donors that their support truly matters.
- **Proclaiming the gospel:** No matter where we are in our faith, it never hurts to be reminded of Christ's immeasurable love for us. So live out the gospel at your fundraising banquet. Someone's life may be touched in a whole new way!
- **Affirmation:** There's no better setting to show off your club kids than at a community event like the annual banquet. What an opportunity to demonstrate what Young Life is all about — kids' lives being changed. God accomplishes this work through a network of staff, volunteers, committee members and donors. Affirm that truth. Recognize your leaders. Applaud their service. Thank them for their faithfulness.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PLANNING YOUR BANQUET

In Young Life, there aren't any rules ... just strong suggestions. When it comes to planning a successful fundraising event, there are quite a few of these suggestions — we'll call them The 10 Essentials. What follows are those essentials together with some field-tested ideas, helpful hints and creative suggestions to adapt for use in your own area. The appendix contains more detailed explanations, step-by-step guides, sample letters and a host of creative ideas to assist you as you plan the ultimate banquet.

THE 10 ESSENTIALS OF A BANQUET

- #1** Delegate committee assignments.
 - Chair
 - Co-chair
 - Table hosts
 - Guest list
 - Phone liaison
 - Program
 - Table sponsors
 - Prayer support
 - Catering
 - Registration and greeting
 - Invitations/nametag chair
 - Decorations
 - Follow up
- #2** Set the date, time and place of event.
- #3** Reserve banquet location.
- #4** Determine the right event style for your area.
- #5** Recruit table hosts.
- #6** Generate a guest list.
- #7** Invite guests.
- #8** Make table/seating assignments.
- #9** Plan the program.
 - Theme
 - Decorations
 - Entertainment and/or skits
 - Speaker(s)
 - Printed materials at tables
- #10** Conduct banquet follow up.
 - Financial
 - Donor communication
 - Participant appreciation
 - Fellowship



WHO?

Young Life is about Christ and kids. Clearly, your fundraising banquet is about both, and the “who’s” of this event are numerous.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #1 DELEGATE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Who’s in charge?

- **YOUNG LIFE COMMITTEE**
The banquet provides the committee one of its greatest opportunities to serve Young Life. In addition to being the primary work force behind the banquet, committee members also ensure that regular donors and key prospective donors are personally invited.
- **AREA DIRECTOR**
Your area director is your best resource for recruiting kid and leader involvement. However, if you delegate additional assignments to your area director, be careful to protect their ministry time.

Who’s invited?

- **TABLE HOSTS**
Table hosts can also expand the guest list and ultimately your area’s donor list as they invite additional guests to join them at their table — building an exponential element into your invitations. Table sponsors are not required to pay for their table, but if they choose to, it is 100% tax deductible. They are simply inviting previous, regular and prospective donors to the banquet. Some guests and table hosts choose to sponsor the cost of a table. This option may be offered to perspective hosts, who in turn may discuss with guests.
- **GUESTS**
Guests are the most important element of your banquet, and how they are treated determines the success of the event. Areas that have experienced consistent success, connect with their guests personally (i.e., send personal invitations and/or make phone calls) so the guests understand they are valued and important to the local ministry. Because of those personal connections, people are more likely to invest in a ministry when they feel personally connected.

“One year in Northwest Fairfax, the keynote speaker introduced the fundraising concept in a lighthearted walk-on skit just as people were finishing their meals. A pleasantly surprised first time guest said: ‘This was the most inoffensive fundraiser I’ve ever attended. From the beginning, when the fundraising component was introduced in such a lighthearted manner, there was no doubt about the purpose of the event!’”



Who participates?

- KIDS

Some effective ways to incorporate kids into the program include:

- Greeting guests at the door.
- Have a “work crew”-type welcome. Place kids in two lines facing each other, forming a “gauntlet” that guests will walk through as the kids clap and cheer for them.
- Escorting guests to their reserved tables.
- Buffet servers (when and where appropriate).
- Group singing to kick-off program.
- Participating in skit(s) during program.
- Personal testimonies from stage (be sure they are well coached and well prepared).
- Personal testimonies at individual tables (effective only if kids are well prepared and acoustics are conducive).

- EMCEE

The key person for setting the tone of the event, the emcee should be someone with good stage presence, effective speaking abilities and experience in Young Life.

- KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Keep these thoughts in mind when selecting a keynote speaker:

- High-profile personalities do not guarantee success.
- Keynote speaker should have significant personal experience with Young Life — as a former Young Life kid, a financial supporter, a staff or committee member, a parent, high school teacher or principal.
- Know your community dynamics. Who will be well received by your guests? What kind of speaker will be most effective in your community?
- The Development department has a list of experienced Young Life banquet speakers.

- SPECIAL MUSIC PROVIDERS

Effective banquets usually include at least one, but often a combination of the following music formats:

- Pianist or guitarist providing background music as guests arrive.
- Pre-recorded music to fit theme (beach party, '50s, western).
- Special soloist during program.
- Song leader to direct kids in club songs during program.
- Music for the “giving” time.

- SKIT PARTICIPANTS

- Select people who will participate enthusiastically. Keep the skit moving.
- Rehearse the skit. Time it.

- **FINANCIAL “PITCH-ER”**

A crucial role, this person usually speaks for only a few very important minutes (see sample program agenda on page 26 for specific time limits). This person should exhibit the following qualities:

- Effective, tactful and experienced public speaker
- Personal knowledge of the Young Life local financial picture
- A financial supporter of Young Life
- Knowledgeable and comfortable discussing financial matters
- Boldness to clearly communicate local financial need

This person does not “sell” Young Life — your program up to this point will have done that already. Be sure your financial pitch-er receives a copy of page 35 of the appendix.

“I didn’t think I would like the speaker. In fact, I didn’t expect much. But, WOW! I’m sold. I’m impressed, informed and inspired. I want my own kids involved in this! Here’s my check. I support this ministry!”

— First-time Young Life banquet guest



**PRINT
INEXPENSIVE
T-SHIRTS** for kids to wear at the banquet or encourage them to dress according to your banquet theme. You want kids to stand out.



“We’ve found that folks appreciate having our own area director give the keynote address.”

— Greensboro, North Carolina



“To maintain continuity in this vital part of the program, our keynote speaker also gives the financial pitch.”

— Northwest Fairfax, Virginia



KEEP THE KIDS in a location that is separate from the banquet audience, secure and sound-proof (if possible). Make sure you occupy kids while they wait to participate in the program.



JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Delegating tasks varies on the size and tradition of your local committee and Young Life area. Here are some suggested assignments, brief job descriptions and ideas to consider. Keep in mind, many of these jobs can be divided among many people or combined and delegated to just one person.

- **Banquet Chair**
Oversees entire event by providing leadership and direction to all other chairs involved.
- **Banquet Co-Chair**
A co-chair makes a two-year commitment by assisting the chair the first year and assuming the lead role the following year. Including a co-chair ensures future experience in the chair's seat.
- **Table Host Chair**
Oversees enlistment of table hosts. Responsible for communicating responsibilities to table hosts and overseeing Training and Work Session (See Garland Method "Table Host Night" pages 37-39).
- **Guest List Chair(s)**
Uses area's donor and prospective donor lists to produce and maintain master guest list. Record guest reservations, changes and cancellations.
- **Phone Liaison**
Some areas have a phone-a-thon to personally invite guests. Other areas make follow-up calls to invited guests. Regardless of how much or little you use the phone, it is helpful to designate one person as a phone liaison. This person can be in charge of recruiting others to make calls or simply be the contact person for guests seeking banquet information.
- **Program Chair(s)**
Recruits speaker and entertainment, and coordinates involvement of club leaders and kids in the program. Plays a key role in determining and carrying out banquet theme. (Often the area director assumes this role with input from the area committee.)
- **Table Host Chair(s)**
Solicits targeted area businesses and individuals to underwrite tables. Ensures that sponsors are listed in printed program, mentioned at the banquet and receive personal thank-you notes. See page 36 for ideas for recruiting.

"Being chairperson is a big job full of prayer! It typically requires an organized, dedicated, experienced individual. Personal Young Life experience and/or involvement is a particular asset. The rewards are precious and often lead one to volunteer again in the future!"

— Cincinnati, Ohio

"A thoughtful way to show your appreciation to table hosts is to deliver a plate of homemade cookies or bread during the week that they are making phone calls — a nice touch."

— Scottsdale, Arizona

- **Prayer Support Team**

Commits to pray for the entire project. Could include committee members, parents, churches, local business people or pastors. Refer to sample prayer calendars on page 47 and 48 for more ideas.

- **Catering Chair**

Secures location for banquet, usually six months to one year in advance. Works closely with restaurant/hotel catering director for details regarding menu selection, price, parking, seating arrangements and technical and program arrangements (microphones, platform, podium, lights). See pages 23-25 for seating assignment ideas; see page 13 for banquet contract ideas.

- **Registration and Greeting Chair(s)**

Arranges for registration table and door greeters to escort guests to tables quickly and efficiently. A good, visible place to involve some of your top-notch local kids. See page 28 for ideas.

- **Invitation and Nametag Chair(s)**

Works closely with program chair to incorporate banquet theme into invitations and nametags. May also be responsible for obtaining place-setting literature and any special printing (brochures, placards) that may be needed.

- **Decoration Chair(s)**

Helps create an inviting atmosphere by designing centerpieces and other appropriate decorations that reflect the banquet's theme. Enlists others to help make or prepare decorations and to help decorate on day of event. Works closely with program chair and invitation/nametag chair. Usually oversees cleanup at conclusion of event. See page 27 for winning theme and decoration ideas.

- **Follow-up Chair(s)**

Provides direction for immediate follow-up in four areas: financial, donor communication, thank-you notes to participants and fellowship. See page 31.



“This can be a unique opportunity for ministry to the catering staff. As you share what



Young Life is about and the purpose of the banquet, you may have the opportunity to share the gospel, as well.”

“A key word for follow-up is ‘accountability.’ It’s an intense job, probably best for a Type A, outgoing personality.”

— Cincinnati, Ohio



WHEN?

Schedule the banquet for the best time for your community and stay consistent year after year.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #2 SET DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF EVENT

When planning, keep in mind:

- Your area's donor relationship plans.
- Other community functions (*athletic events, church rallies, other fundraisers*).
- School calendars
- Weather
- Timing in area's fiscal year
- Other nearby Young Life area events (*Important in cities that are divided into multiple Young Life areas.*)
- Be consistent year after year after year.

For a year-at-a-glance schedule, turn to page 43.



WHY WE HAVE OUR BANQUET IN THE FALL



- Clubs have started.
- Momentum is building.
- Curiosity is surfacing, especially among parents.
- Funding is critical.
- October is available (before holiday season).
- Tradition — area expectancy and delight.

— **Cincinnati, Ohio**

WHY WE HAVE OUR BANQUET IN THE SPRING



Since there are several Young Life areas in our community, a spring banquet helps prevent overlapping similar events with bordering areas. Also, in our part of the country, golf is extremely expensive in the spring tourist season. Therefore, for budget reasons, we moved our fundraising banquet to the spring and hold our golf tournament in the fall when green fees are more reasonable.

— **Scottsdale, Arizona**

WHERE?

The location of your banquet should be a familiar place with an excellent reputation. Visit several alternatives. Ask around. Select the best.

Instead of an in-person event, you may choose to have a virtual event using a video conferencing platform. Beginning in 20-21, there are NEW virtual resources available in the banquet materials section of Young Life Staff Resources.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #3

RESERVE BANQUET LOCATION

Your banquet location should have:

- First-class atmosphere.
- Reputable banquet food and service.
- Menu selections within your budget.
- Adequate seating, lighting and acoustics.
- Room layout suitable for up-front program.
- Audio-visual equipment on site or rental options.
- Convenient parking.
- Central location.
- On-site banquet manager.
- Wheelchair accessibility.

Miscellaneous

- Don't be limited by hotel menu; a quality banquet facility should be flexible.
- Request a tasting (at the hotel's expense) if you are uncertain about the menu. (Tastings are typically done after a contract is signed and menu selections have begun.)
- Lower-budget functions (desserts) may have to be held on off nights (not weekends) since they generate less revenue for the hotel.
- Ask if table decorations are available from the hotel.
- Use outdoor marquis if available.

— Colorado Springs, Colorado

What to expect in a banquet contract:

- Some type of a deposit.
- Minimum number of guests.
- Guarantee number of guests three days prior to the event (e.g., Your contract minimum stated 200. Three days prior to the event you guarantee 250. Only 240 attend the event. You still pay for 250).*

* Always guarantee fewer than your actual number because the hotel will typically prepare 5% over your guaranteed number. Discuss this before contract is signed.

What you should request in the contract:

- Specific banquet room reserved and notification/approval if the hotel wants to change the location.
- Maximum capacity of reserved room.
- Time for servers to clear tables before the presentation.
- Depending on banquet size, request a free overnight guest room for the speaker. (e.g., "If Young Life guarantees 400 for the banquet, hotel will provide one complimentary sleeping room.")

— Colorado Springs, Colorado

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT: WHAT?

Young Life values excellence. Because the banquet is one of the most visible of all Young Life adult events, everything about it should be top quality as a window into Young Life.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #4

DETERMINE THE RIGHT STYLE OF EVENT FOR YOUR AREA

- Traditional Dinner Banquet — Ever-popular with a history of success.
- Modified Dessert-Only Banquet — A budget-saving alternative or simply a change of pace.
- Sunday Brunch — In some communities, a popular alternative to evening events, especially in more metropolitan areas with long work weeks.
- Dinner Dance Banquet — Some areas make a full-blown party out of the banquet with an intergenerational dance — Usually on a Friday or Saturday night. This option resembles a wedding reception.
- Virtual Fundraising Event — Using a video conferencing platform. Beginning in 20-21, there are NEW virtual resources available in the banquet materials section of Young Life Staff Resources.
- Your Idea_____

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?

The right style of event for your area varies according to the event's purpose. Fundraising is the most common. But some banquets are more informational or celebratory in nature. The type of event you hold depends on the needs of the area. See the next page for different types of events that can be held throughout the year to contribute to your area's goals.

Stay focused on the primary purpose of your event. If it's informational, then save fundraising for another time. If you're trying to raise funds, don't let other aspects distract from that goal.



ALTERNATIVE EVENTS

WHAT

Parents night
Spaghetti dinner

WHEN

During school year

PURPOSE

Information meeting
Model club

WHAT

After-camp dessert

WHEN

After summer or
weekend camp

PURPOSE

Share camp videos
Hear testimonies

WHAT

Teacher appreciation
luncheon

WHEN

Anytime

PURPOSE

Expose local school
staff to Young Life

WHAT

Donor appreciation get-togethers

WHEN

Anytime

PURPOSE

Express appreciation to donors



WHY WE HOST A BUFFET



- Buffet lines can be set up in an adjacent ballroom.
- Hotel can close buffet lines and clear serving tables without disturbing the event.
- Guests can be served and dining can be completed in 45 minutes, with coffee/tea available for the next 15 minutes while clearing is accomplished.
- Club kids can carry drinks and escort people to their tables.
- Moving through buffet lines promotes fellowship and conversation rather than sitting in one place for the entire time.
- Videos or photos (camp, club) can be shown and/or music can be provided during that time.

— *Temple, Texas*



WHY WE HOST A SUNDAY BRUNCH



- Sunday brunch is very popular in our area since people work late and go to work very early during the week.
- The fundraiser follow-up session can be held the same day as the event, which means:
 - ✓ Committee people already have committed their time to this day.
 - ✓ All follow-up letters are sent in a timely manner to the guests/ sponsors/ hosts.
 - ✓ All financial matters are prepared for mailing to Young Life Mission Services, pending area director's review.
 - ✓ Those interested in committee (as indicated on their donor commitment cards) can be contacted quickly and invited to the committee-interest night held one to two weeks following the brunch.
 - ✓ The area director and leadership staff are freed from following up on the myriad of details, so they can spend their time reaching kids for Christ.
 - ✓ The entire adult committee can be together for fellowship and to take ownership of this event.

— *Northwest Fairfax, Virginia*

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #5

RECRUIT TABLE HOSTS

Being a table host is a job for people who know, understand and support the ministry of Young Life.

When inviting people to serve as hosts, be sure they know:

- They are not responsible for paying for their table.*
- They are a primary source for inviting potential donors.
- To use discretion when inviting guests. A fundraising event isn't for everyone.
- Attendance at a scheduled Training and Work Session is crucial (Table Host Night).
- Attendance at the banquet is required.

* *The banquet is usually funded by the area budget, but sometimes the area may charge a small fee to attendees to cover the cost of the event. In other cases, many areas obtain corporate and private underwriters table sponsors) to cover banquet expenses. For some helpful hints for obtaining underwriters, see the field-tested idea below*

Have you considered ... ?

Generating and using a brainstormed list of all potential table hosts because it:

- Provides a working document that can be passed along each new year.
- Is a brainstormed list and therefore is more inclusive.
- Creates less chance for overlooking someone or double-contacting a potential host.

See page 36 for table host recruitment strategies.



HOW TO RECRUIT AND WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH TABLE SPONSORS AND UNDERWRITERS



- Tap into committee member business contacts.
- Strategically target businesses and individuals with connections to Young Life (attended Young Life as a kid, has children involved in Young Life, previous or current donor).
- Ask parents of club kids, Campaigners kids and campers.
- Companies/people are willing if they know the REAL benefits. Take time to make a personal visit or phone call, then follow up with a well-written letter.
- At the banquet, acknowledge your table sponsors by including their names in your printed program as well as thanking them during your up-front program.
- Be sure to send special personal thank-you notes promptly after the banquet.
- Be sure to put these donors on your area's donor or contact list to keep track of them for the next year — especially any who are listed as "anonymous" on the banquet program.

* *Please refer to the Appendix for tips for recruiting table hosts.*

"We always include the names of all committee members at the bottom of letters such as these.



We have found that sometimes people are more inclined to say 'yes' simply because they recognize a name."

— Northwest Fairfax, Virginia

SAMPLE LETTER THANKING TABLE HOSTS FOR ACCEPTING POSITION

Dear _____,

Thank you for saying "yes" to being a table host at the Anytown Young Life banquet. We are grateful for you; your faithful support is the heartbeat of Young Life in our area.

As a table host, please begin gathering the names and addresses of people you would like to invite to the banquet. Each table seats 10 people. Of course, if you can invite more than one table-full, please do so. We will arrange to have them sit at a table next to you.

SAMPLE LETTER FOR RECRUITING TABLE HOSTS

Dear _____,

Young Life Anytown, is gearing up for another challenging year of reaching out to the kids in our local high schools and middle schools. This is also the time of year that we begin planning our annual fundraising banquet.

The banquet is always an exciting opportunity to bring kids, leaders and adults together to celebrate the mission of Young Life. Will you consider being involved in this special event by being a table host/hostess this year? We've reserved the grand ballroom at Any Name Hotel for Tuesday evening, October 12, and anticipate a fun-filled, informative and worthwhile evening for all.

As a table host/hostess, you play a very important role in inviting guests to attend the banquet. We ask you to think of at least eight people who would be interested in learning more about Young Life and would support this important local mission. You are not responsible for paying for the cost of your table; as a table host/hostess you simply provide a personal touch to the event by inviting friends, family, neighbors, coworkers and others to be guests at your table.

A local committee member will be contacting you sometime next week about your decision. We hope you will prayerfully consider this opportunity to be involved — saying "yes" to the banquet is saying "yes" to hundreds of kids right here in Anytown and to the God who loves them all.

Thank you for your consideration,

A Table Host Training and Work Session is planned for Sunday evening, September 1, from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at John and Joanne Doe's (see enclosed map). Your attendance at this special pre-banquet event is crucial. We'll be sure to have plenty of fun as we share the important details of being a table host and your responsibilities at the banquet.

We are looking forward to a productive and fun evening together. Dress casual and come ready to receive your information packet. Enjoy an evening of celebrating what God is going to do at this year's banquet!

In His Service,

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #6

GENERATE A GUEST LIST

Give all potential donors the opportunity to attend the banquet and the opportunity to be blessed for giving.


Key points to remember when generating/maintaining your guest list:

- Draw from a list of priority prospects.
- Include donors from the past two years.
- Include people who are new to your community.
- Include parents of all club kids (and from camp).

Also, consider adding the following to your guest list*:

- Pastors of nearby churches.
- Administrators from area schools.
- Young Life alumni, past committee members and former Young Life leaders.
- Board members of the foundations who help support Young Life.
- Key figures in the community (for example: school board or city council members).

* *But remember to use discretion when inviting guests. A fundraising event may not be for everyone. See Banquet Essential #7 for more on this topic.*



"We have developed a unique and practical system for building and utilizing a master list at what they call the Table Host Night. It encourages fellowship among the table hosts and makes the work session more fun than work."

— **Garland, Texas**

For a detailed explanation and step-by-step instructions for the Garland Method, see pages 37-39.

"When it comes to generating the guest list, we've had two different approaches. One way is to simply have the table hosts be responsible for filling their table. Another approach we've used entails table hosts turning in list of people they'd like to invite. All these lists are collected and duplicates



are eliminated. Then we have an Invitation Party, when hosts receive their revised 'final' invite lists. We also have a master donor list that they can pick any 'unclaimed' names off of."

— **Tulsa, Oklahoma**



BANQUET ESSENTIAL #7

INVITE GUESTS

Invite people who *already* know, love and support Young Life and those who *will* know, love and support Young Life.

Use our online registration software for RSVP (free events) and ticket sales (pay to attend). This allows you to send confirmation and reminder emails. (SEE APPENDIX X)

Key points to remember when inviting guests:

- Draw from your donor list.
- Be sure they are invited by only one person.
- Be sure they know this is a fundraising event
- Marketing has plug-and-play emails as well as an email schedule for event reminders available on SRS. (For details about email template SEE EVENTS OR (APPENDIX V).

SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION FOLLOWING UP AFTER A PHONE CALL

Dear _____,

We are delighted that you will be able to attend Young Life's annual fundraising banquet on _____, at the _____ located at _____. The banquet will begin promptly at _____ so be sure to arrive a few minutes early to have time to visit with friends and find your seat. You can expect a wonderful time of good food, fellowship and entertainment as we become better acquainted with the local mission of Young Life.

There is no charge for the banquet. However, since Young Life is responsible for all reservations, please notify us by _____ if you have a change in plans. Additionally, please notify us if you would like to increase the number of your reservations (adults only, please). We will be happy to accommodate your request. Please call the area office or _____ at _____ with any changes.

Thank you for your interest in the young people of our community. We look forward to seeing you on _____.


Sincerely,

Anytown Young Life Committee
John Doe, Chair

Anytown Young Life Committee

Bob and Sue Anderson
Fred and Marie Brown
Ron and Angie Green

Louise Miller
Mike and Mary Smith
Joe and Judy White



"Our area uses several different formats for inviting guests. Some people are called during a phone-a-thon, while others receive formal letters. Still others receive flyers."

— Northwest
Fairfax, Virginia

For details about this unique approach, turn to page 41.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #8

MAKE TABLE/SEATING ASSIGNMENTS


Your banquet hall should be full — full of people, energy and excitement — but not overcrowded and uncomfortable.

Key points to remember when organizing table and seating assignments:

- Always fill empty seats near front of stage/platform area.
- Fill in open spaces with committee members or participating kids.
- Keep school tables in same area for parent recognition and interaction.
- Refer to last year's chart to try to avoid placing same hosts at back of room.
- Scatter leaders throughout room.
- Use bold, visible table numbers.
- Sit at every table before the event to ensure that all guests will be able to see, especially if a video is going to be presented.

The basics of organizing table and seating assignments (SEE APPENDIX V FOR DETAILS):

- Obtain table arrangement chart from hotel or banquet facility (including table numbers).
- Assign a host to each table.
- Assign individual reservations to tables matched with appropriate hosts.
- Add extra or last-minute reservations to vacant seats.
- Prepare two table and seating assignment lists: 1) alphabetically and 2) by table number.
- Provide seating chart and lists to appropriate committee member four days before event for last-minute changes.
- Users of YL Connect Events will be able to check guests in as they arrive so that Table Hosts don't have to be responsible for tracking attendance at their table.
 - Table host makes any necessary corrections once guests have arrived.
 - Table host calculates exact number in attendance.
 - Table host highlights no-shows to receive follow-up letter and financial commitment card.



"Because we hold our banquets in a community hall, we use rows of long tables rather than round tables. This arrangement seems to promote conversation (round tables of 10 are often too big for conversation — especially in a noisy banquet hall). Also, if a table host has several no-shows, it's not nearly as obvious in this setting."

— Temple, Texas

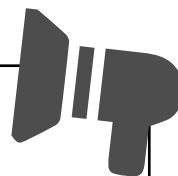
USING PLACE CARDS FOR SEATING ASSIGNMENTS



- Have someone with legible and attractive handwriting make place cards for each couple or individual attending. (You can use nametags instead, but you need one for each individual.)
- Group place cards (or nametags) by table.
- Two to three days before the banquet, use hotel floor plan to assign table numbers by table host name.
- Use Post-It® notes to allow for rearranging as many times as needed on the chart.
- On day of the banquet, finalize guest list and make last-minute adjustments.
- Using final arrangements, write the appropriate table number on each place card or nametag.
- Arrange cards alphabetically on the table near the entrance.
- Greeters can instruct the guests to use the place cards or nametags to find their table.

— Alpharetta, Georgia

Nametags are ...



- Essential.
- Good for promoting friendly outreach and verifying guests.
- A complementary addition to the banquet format, theme and colors.
- A lot of work, but well worth it.

YL Connect Events software works with a Dymo label printer to easily print your guests' name tags as they check in.

CHECK-IN TABLE — REGISTRATION

- Print out computer address labels with name and table number. Peel off and stick onto a seating chart map.
- Labels not peeled off become your list of no-shows to be sent appropriate follow-up.



CONSIDER USING SPECIAL NAMETAGS

for staff, committee and volunteer leaders. This identification helps guests know who to approach if they have questions.



Banquet themes and materials.

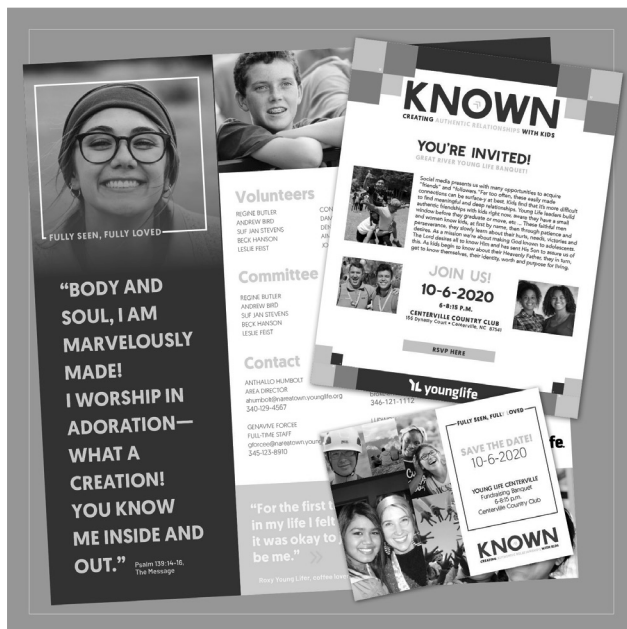
Young Life Creative Services in Colorado designs a themed suite of invitations and programs for banquets every year. A variety of themes with colorful materials and decorating ideas are available. These include materials for special events and anniversary celebrations. Creative Services will custom print your information in the spaces provided. They will mail them to your local Young Life office and directly charge the area. Allow at least two to three weeks!

Suggested place-setting literature.

At each table, be sure to include:

- Programs/commitment cards/pens
- Nametags (and a few extras)
- Young Life brochures
- List of local Young Life staff, leaders, clubs (can be inside program)
- Young Life Annual Report
- Camp information
- Other opportunities for involvement

“Be sure leaders, committee members and table hosts get special nametags that are easily read.”
— Greensboro, North Carolina



Sample table host instruction sheet



Table host, please:

- Wear your nametag.
- Greet your guests and make sure they have nametags.
- Verify number in attendance on computer printout provided in manila envelope.
- At the appropriate time, encourage everyone to detach and fill out donor commitment cards. White envelopes are provided so donations can be private. Please fill out your donor commitment card at the same time to set an example. Or use text-to-give (custom giving url).
- At the close of the banquet program:
 - ✓ Collect all donor commitment card envelopes and place them in large manila envelope.
 - ✓ Place computer attendance list in manila envelope.
 - ✓ Thank your guests for coming.
 - ✓ Turn in your manila envelope to follow-up chair.

BANQUET ESSENTIAL #9

PLAN THE PROGRAM

At the end of your program, guests should have a very clear picture of what Young Life looks like and what it is — its mission and its method. Keep in mind: Short, impactful, introductory videos about Young Life are available through Creative Services.

Keys to remember when planning your program:

- It should look and feel like Young Life.
- Kids should be involved and visible.
- Everyone involved should know the agenda.
- People giving personal testimonies should be well coached. No surprises. Keep testimonies to about three minutes.
- Speaker should be associated with Young Life.
- Be organized. Keep it focused. Keep it moving.
- Entire function should last no more than two hours. (Less can be more.)
- Allocate time prior to the day of the banquet to rehearse. Check all microphones, practice lighting changes and as many elements of the program (with the exception of the keynote speaker) as possible.
- Be creative! Get ideas from other conferences or fundraisers. The best banquets are yet to be done.
- Start and end on time!



<i>Suggested times</i>	<i>Sample agenda</i>
15 min.....	Guests arrive and are seated
1-2 min.....	Welcome
1-2 min.....	Introductory prayer
30-45 min.....	Meal and/or dessert served
5-7 min.....	Entertainment
1-2 min.....	Emcee introduces self and entertainers
2-3 min.....	Emcee recognizes banquet sponsors and other key individuals and groups
6-7 min.....	Skit or other entertainment
10-20 min. total.....	Personal testimonies (options: students, volunteer staff, parents, teachers)
15-20 min.	Keynote speaker
2-3 min.....	Financial pitch
1-2 min.....	Music to commit by
2-3 min.....	Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you • Closing prayer • Resume background music

WINNING THEME IDEAS



- A Time to Build (hard hats, blinking barricades, tools)
- Backstage Pass
- A Place at the Table
- County Fair (patriotic — red, white and blue — good for election years, purchase discounted decorations after July 4)
- Be True to Your School (pom-poms, school colors, mascots)
- Roundup for Young Life (western)
- Going the Distance for Kids (sports related decor)
- Visit Creative Services via the Staff Resources site for more theme ideas.

WINNING DESIGN IDEAS



- Mylar/helium balloons never fail
- School pennants
- Decorative gift bags with colorful tissue paper and ribbon filled with Young Life memorabilia: shirts, bumper stickers, hats, etc.

“At the end of the banquet, consider giving away the centerpieces to someone at each table. Select the winner by placing a sticker on the back of a chair before the banquet. Selling centerpieces really isn’t in the best taste — especially at a top-notch fundraising event.”



— **Committee member**

“These are some things that we have done that have proved to be successful:

- *Immediately after two testimonies, we have all of the kids come stand on the stage. As music plays loudly, each of them walk individually to the front of the stage, holding a larger poster board with a word on it (e.g., "lost," "afraid," "focused on myself"), and then turn it over and on the back it reads something like "found," "alive," "focused on God." The kids decide what they want on their sign.*
- *Trace the spiritual lineage of Young Life kids by showcasing about five or six testimonies (about two minutes each) that link that kid to a Young Life leader from the past. Consider having each person light candles as they share and light candles throughout the audience.*
- *When the banquet gets big — a live feed on a big video screen helps those in the back be engaged.”*



— **Harrisonburg, Virginia**

PLAN THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

BACKGROUND MUSIC

while guests are arriving helps set the tone for the event. When possible, combine music selections with your theme. Be sure it is first-rate. First impressions happen fast, and they can remain for a long time.



SUBMIT A SCHEDULE

to catering manager in advance. Also, advise the head waiter/waitress of schedule and encourage him or her to keep things moving rapidly.



TO KEEP PROGRAM MOVING

list committee members, local Young Life staff and volunteers, and other key individuals on program insert. Introduce them as a group by having them stand to be recognized. Having everyone stand at the same time can have a powerful impact!



HAVE YOUR CLUB KIDS

help welcome guests and escort them to their tables — an ideal opportunity to show off kids right away. Make sure they wear easy-to-read nametags and include school names. Print up special T-shirts for kids to wear or encourage them to dress to the theme.



BE SURE TO RECOGNIZE

the sponsors/underwriters of the banquet. Also, list them on a printed program. Any opportunity you have to spotlight these people, do it. Personalize the list by describing their connection to Young Life.



DURING INTRODUCTIONS,

it adds a nice touch to express appreciation for the hotel and/or catering staff. Bring them out for a “work crew thank you” — it’s a great way to make the banquet a ministry to everyone involved.



“To make sure the entire banquet runs smoothly, consider canceling club or Campaigners and instead do a full ‘dress rehearsal’ of the banquet. Have the emcee and other speakers rehearse if possible. Also, run through the program — the skits, the testimonies. Rehearsing will help you know how to make the banquet run smoothly and to end on time.”



— Committee member

PLAN THE PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

ENTERTAINMENT

should be something lively that looks like and feels like Young Life — kids singing, a walk-on skit, audience participation skit, a slide show, a video — something in good taste. Always be sensitive to a diverse audience by using good, careful judgment.



OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

or high-profile personalities are not necessarily the key to success. Local speakers who have a personal connection to the ministry are much more effective. Best of all is someone who is directly involved in kids' lives NOW — someone who knows the Young Life style, understands the local situation and personally knows kids.



BE SURE KIDS

are well coached to keep testimony brief and to the point. Consider inviting a leader and/or a parent to also say a few words about Christ through Young Life. Use leaders to introduce speakers — just another way to get Young Life faces in front of the guests. Practice in front of area director before banquet. No surprises.



SINCE THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

and local budget information should be included in the printed materials at each table, keep the financial pitch brief and to the point — about two to three minutes. You can talk your way out of money if the point is belabored. Also, the one giving the pitch really needs to speak from personal experience, “I am a donor” See financial pitch on page 35 for ideas.



BANQUET ESSENTIAL #10

CONDUCT BANQUET FOLLOW-UP

Quick and accurate follow-up translates into successful future banquets. Follow up is a great opportunity to advertise and invite guests to next year's banquet or upcoming events.

Your follow-up session should have four areas of emphasis:

- Financial
- Donor communication
- Thanking participants
- Fellowship

"It's time to celebrate! But, not time to quit! Follow-up is one of the most important aspects of the banquet. Without proper bookkeeping and prompt expression of thanks, your area looks less than professional. In today's battle for contributions, we must be organized, professional and prompt!"

— Temple, Texas



THANK-YOU NOTES

to table hosts are written ahead of time and mailed the morning after the banquet. They are handwritten on Young Life notecards.

— Temple, Texas



See page 31 for step-by-step procedures for organizing and calculating donor commitments at the end of the banquet.

Sample follow-up letters can be found on pages 33 and 34.



APPENDIX I

BANQUET FOLLOW-UP SESSION

Your follow-up session should have four areas of emphasis: 1) financial, 2) donor communication, 3) thanking participants and 4) fellowship.

FINANCIAL

1. Donor Commitment Cards

- Donor commitment cards are usually a tear-off section of the program.
- You must have a donor commitment card to match each check.
- Divide donor commitment cards into Batch A and Batch B.
- Use this information to update your prospective donor list.
- a. Batch A — Donor commitment card with check
 - Write check number, amount and check date on the donor's commitment card.
 - Be sure the donor commitment card has the donor's address/phone.
 - Annualize the check by recording the following information on the donor's commitment card:
 - ✓ One-time (x 1)
 - ✓ Monthly (x 12)
 - ✓ Quarterly (x 4)
 - List two totals on front of the donor's commitment card:
 - ✓ Total amount of check.
 - ✓ Total annual value of commitment.

These checks will be sent to the Young Life's Income Processing center, so the information you write on the donor commitment cards is vital for local office records.

- b. Batch B — Donor commitment card with no check
 - Annualize the commitment and record on card:
 - ✓ One-time (x 1)
 - ✓ Monthly (x 12)
 - ✓ Quarterly (x 4)
 - List total annual value of commitment on card.

- *Make selections on donor commitment cards simple and easy to calculate.*
- *Keep "other interest" boxes limited to five options.*

2. Donor Commitment Tally Reports

- a. Batch A — Donor commitment cards with checks. List as follows:
 - Total combined check value \$ _____
 - Total annual commitment value \$ _____
- b. Batch B — Donor commitment cards with no checks. List as follows:
 - Total annual commitment value \$ _____

DIRECTING DONORS TO ONLINE GIVING IS ALSO AN OPTION

DONOR COMMUNICATION

1. Promptly after the banquet, send appropriate information to donors.

Most areas use one of four letters to each person accordingly:

- a. Monthly commitment with first check included at banquet, receives:
 - Letter 1 (page 33)
 - Bank authorization form (if applicable)
- b. Monthly commitment with no check, receives:
 - Letter 2 (page 33)
 - Bank authorization form (if applicable)
 - Return envelope addressed to your area office
(*Note last sentence of first paragraph: To activate your monthly commitment, please send your first contribution in the enclosed envelope.*)
- c. One-time gift, receives:
 - Letter 3 (page 34)
- d. No-shows, receive:
 - Letter 4 (page 34)
 - Donor commitment card and return envelope addressed to your area office.

2. Hand address all envelopes for the above letters.

3. Make a list of those people who checked other interest boxes on your donor commitment card.

THANKING PARTICIPANTS

1. Promptly after the banquet, send personal, handwritten thank-you notes to banquet participants.

- Table hosts
- Speaker(s)
- Musicians (if applicable)
- Minister or lay person who gave invocation and benediction
- Kids who gave personal testimonies
- Table sponsors*
- Hotel staff, banquet manager (building spiritual bridges)

* *Table sponsor thank-yous should receive special attention and perhaps include a quality, Young Life gift of appreciation.*

2. Writer can sign own name and “for the Young Life committee” on thank-you notes.

3. Remember, banquet materials ordered through Young Life Creative Services offer thank-you notes in the banquet theme.

APPENDIX II

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

1

COMMITMENT WITH CHECK

Dear _____,

Thank you for attending the recent Anytown Young Life banquet. We hope it was an entertaining and informative time for you.

Thank you, too, for your willingness to financially support the ministry of Young Life in Anytown. As a result of the intended donations from the banquet, we raised \$_____ of our \$_____ budget for this year. After processing your first check, Young Life will send you an acknowledgment and receipt.

We are grateful for the opportunity to get better acquainted with the adults concerned for the teenagers in our community. Please let us know how we can be of service to you and your family. Again, thank you for being with us at the banquet and for your interest in and support of Anytown Young Life.

Sincerely,

Anytown Young Life Committee
John Doe, Chair

Dear _____,

Thank you for attending the recent Anytown Young Life banquet. We hope it was an entertaining and informative time for you.

Thank you, too, for your willingness to financially support the ministry of Young Life in Anytown. As a result of the intended donations from the banquet, we raised \$_____ of our \$_____ budget for this year. Upon receiving your first check, Young Life will send you an acknowledgment and receipt. To activate your monthly commitment, please send your first contribution in the enclosed envelope.

We are grateful for the opportunity to get better acquainted with the adults concerned for the teenagers in our community. Please let us know how we can be of service to you and your family. Again, thank you for being with us at the banquet and for your interest in and support of Anytown Young Life.

Sincerely,

Anytown Young Life Committee
John Doe, Chair

COMMITMENT NO CHECK

2



Dear _____,

Thank you for attending the recent Anytown Young Life banquet. We hope it was an entertaining and informative time for you.

Thank you, too, for your willingness to financially support the ministry of Young Life in Anytown. As a result of the intended donations from the banquet, we raised \$_____ of our \$_____ budget for this year.

We are grateful for the opportunity to get better acquainted with the adults concerned for the teenagers in our community. Please let us know how we can be of service to you and your family. Again, thank you for being with us at the banquet and for your interest in and support of Anytown Young Life.

Sincerely,

Anytown Young Life Committee
John Doe, Chair

4 UNABLE TO ATTEND

Dear _____,

We are sorry that you were unable to attend the recent Anytown Young Life banquet. It was a memorable time of good food and an entertaining and informative program. We sincerely wish you could have been with us to hear from the leaders, staff, speaker and some of the kids involved with Anytown Young Life.

One of the purposes of the banquet is to raise money to support the work of Young Life in our area high schools. This year's budget is \$_____.

I hope you will prayerfully consider how you can participate in helping us reach our goal this year. For your convenience, a donor commitment card and return envelope are enclosed. Thank you for considering supporting Young Life Anytown. Please let us know how we can be of service to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Anytown Young Life
Committee
John Doe, Chair

3 ONE-TIME GIFT



APPENDIX III

THE FINANCIAL PITCH

The following is a suggested outline for a very strategic part of your banquet — the request for financial support. This time is critical ... all the planning, prayers, hard work and expectations come to focus during these few minutes, so make them count. Keep it to two to three minutes.

A PERSONAL WORD

The person giving the financial pitch should begin with a brief personal word of his or her own involvement with Young Life: how he or she was introduced to the ministry, what roles he or she has played in local, regional or missionwide programs or the personal value of Young Life.

HOW YOUNG LIFE IS FINANCED

It's no secret how Young Life is financed. There's no pot of gold in Anytown, and no big endowment. The fact is, Young Life is supported by the thoughtful gifts of some ____ folks like yourself who want to see more and more kids' lives being touched through this ministry. The whole idea is to generate *local support for local programs*; people reaching out to the kids of their own community.

THIS YEAR'S BUDGET

- This year our local program will cost \$_____.
- Already ____ people (families) have committed \$_____.
- So, tonight we need \$_____ to make sure our program is supported this year.

YOU CAN PLAY A PART IN THIS MINISTRY

- It's very simple: first, please pick up the commitment card in front of you (describe card and hold it up).
- Please review the information, especially the space for writing your commitment.
- Consider the appropriate level of your support: \$10 a month? \$50 a month? More? We encourage you to consider monthly giving over a one-time gift.

MUSIC TO COMMIT BY

- To allow a few minutes to think through your commitment, we'll now have some "music to commit by."
- Discuss the matter with your spouse.
- Then, write something on the card, preferably your intended financial commitment or, if that's not possible, just your remarks about Young Life or tonight's program.
- Finally, put the card in the envelope and hand it to your table host (the one with the outstretched hand).

THANK YOU

- Your participation and support is vital.
- Thank you for being a part of this important outreach.

APPENDIX IV

STRATEGY FOR RECRUITING TABLE HOSTS

1. **Three to four months before the banquet, develop a potential host list which includes:**
 - Targeted table hosts from a donor development list.
 - Last two years' table hosts.
 - All local committee members.
 - Targeted leaders and other friends suggested by area director and staff.
 - Parents of club kids suggested by staff, volunteer leaders or committee members.
2. **Plan a Training and Work Session (Table Host Night) five to six weeks prior to the banquet.**
 - Establish date, time and place of Training and Work Session (Table Host Night).
 - Make it more than a meeting:
 - ✓ Decide on a format: brunch, luncheon, dinner, dessert or punch and cookies.
 - ✓ Incorporate a theme that preludes the banquet (if appropriate).
 - ✓ Impart enthusiasm and encouragement for the mission ahead.
 - ✓ Provide information efficiently and effectively.
 - ✓ Have table host packets prepared in advance
3. **Through a phone-a-thon, invitation, letter or in person, contact everyone on the list and invite them to serve as table hosts** (two-and-a-half to three months before the banquet).
 - Record their responses.
 - Invite them to the Training and Work Session (Table Host Night).



APPENDIX V

THE GARLAND METHOD

COMPILE BANQUET MASTER LIST*

- If you have an up-to-date priority prospect list, you have completed this step in a way that is strategic and will carry from year to year with minimum work. If you don't have one, ask all committee members to compile a list of people that they feel should be invited to the Young Life banquet. (Include names, addresses and phone numbers.) Brainstorm possibilities, including:
 - ✓ Church leaders administrators
 - ✓ Local teachers, coaches,
 - ✓ Friends and neighbors
 - ✓ Business contacts
 - ✓ Family members
 - ✓ Civic organizations
 - ✓ Parents with kids involved in Young Life
- Add names of current area donors to banquet master list.
- Get additional names from area director, staff members and leaders.

*Final list will be very long.

ENTER NAMES INTO YL CONNECT DATABASE

- If you have a developed priority prospective donor list, you have completed this step in a way that will carry from year to year with minimum work.
- This is a one-time job. In future years, you will only modify the list by adding or deleting names, changing addresses.
- Duplicate entries can be automatically deleted through this process.
- Select one person to be in charge of maintaining and updating the banquet master list.
- Include the following data fields:**
 - ✓ Last name, first name(s)
 - ✓ Address, city, state, zip
 - ✓ Phone
 - ✓ Table host (who is his or her table host?)
 - ✓ Number attending
 - ✓ Table number
 - ✓ Type (type of donation: monthly, one-time)
 - ✓ Amount (amount of gift)
 - ✓ Total (total gift for the year)

** Additional fields may be included to show previous year's attendance and gifts. Customize to your needs.

PRINT BANQUET MASTER LIST TO USE DURING TRAINING AND WORK SESSION (TABLE HOST NIGHT)

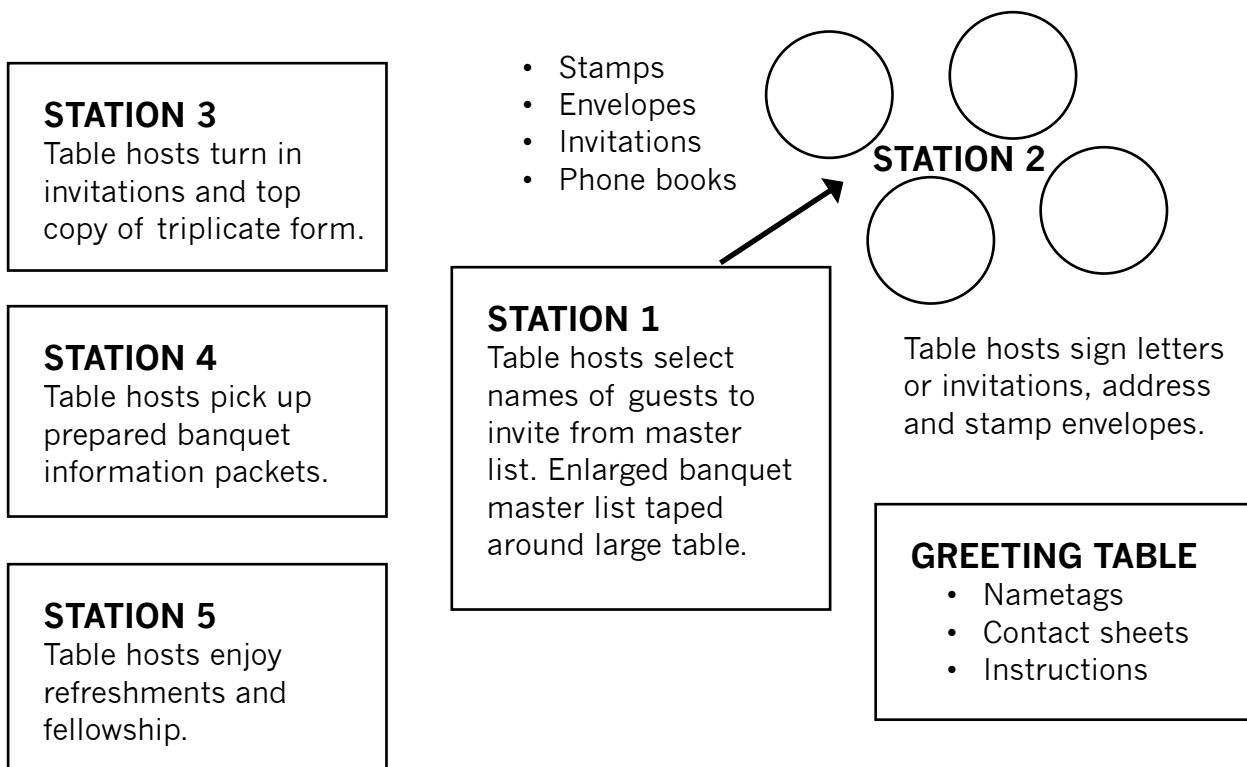
- Print list in alphabetical order.
- Print list triple-spaced in a large font (14 to 18 points).***
***Very important for Station 1 at Training and Work Session (Table Host Night).

INVITE ALL TABLE HOSTS TO COME TO TABLE HOST NIGHT TO SELECT AND INVITE GUESTS

- Send instruction sheet with invitation.
- Designate a two-hour period for table hosts to come and go. (Usually takes 30-45 minutes to complete entire process.)

SET UP FIVE STATIONS

- Banquet master list.
 - ✓ Lay out banquet master list to cover several tables (see diagram below).
 - ✓ Have erasable ink pens and preprinted triplicate contact sheets available.
- Invitations — Have invitations, envelopes, pens and stamps available.
- Collection — Set up one to two tables as collection points for invitations and contact sheets.
- Table host banquet information packets — Have information packets ready for pick up.
- Refreshments — Serve refreshments during Table Host Night.



MOVE THROUGH STATION ROTATION

Station 1: Table hosts select names of guests to invite from banquet master list.

- Table hosts may add any names and addresses to the banquet master list at this time.
 - Add in alphabetical order.
 - Write in names and addresses in space provided between names.
- Table hosts write their own last name in left margin by the guests' names that they select. This serves two purposes:
 - Prevents guests from receiving multiple invitations.
 - Prevents potential guests from being overlooked (those names left unselected at the end of the evening are noted and assigned to someone's table).
- Table hosts immediately transfer their selected guests' names and addresses to contact sheet (see sample on page 40).

Station 2: Table hosts sign letters or invitations, address and stamp envelopes.

(Table host chair mails invitations immediately after Table Host Night.)

Station 3: Table hosts turn in invitations and copy of contact sheet.

Station 4: Table hosts pick up prepared banquet information packets.

Station 5: Table hosts enjoy refreshments and fellowship to end Table Host Night.

Table host banquet information packets

- General table host responsibilities.
- Committee assignments (who to call with specific questions or concerns).
- Important dates for table hosts.
- What to do at the banquet.
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope for contact sheet mailed to table host chair.



APPENDIX VI

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

UPDATE BANQUET MASTER LIST BY ADDING HANDWRITTEN NAMES AND ADDRESSES FROM TABLE HOSTS

TABLE HOSTS CONTACT POTENTIAL GUESTS

- Table hosts call everyone on their contact sheet to confirm that guests have received their invitation.
- Table hosts ask recipients to be guests at their table (or one nearby).
- Designated committee member takes care of seating arrangements.
- Table hosts carefully record responses and all information concerning each call on contact sheet.
- Table hosts mail copy of contact sheet to table host chair by designated date. (Provide self-addressed, stamped envelopes in table host banquet information packet.)
- One week before banquet, table hosts call those guests who accepted invitation and confirm date, time and place of banquet. Report last-minute cancellations to table host chair at this time.
- On day of banquet, table hosts should arrive 15 minutes early to be available to greet guests.

Banquet | Example

Young Life Service Center

Newt Cashew events@sc.younglife.org

Ticket Options *

☒ Guest (\$25.00)
We're glad to host you as our guest free of charge!

☐ Table Host (\$200.00)
If you're passionate about Young Life, we hope you'll consider hosting a table of 8 at our event!

☐ Table Sponsor (\$1,000.00)
Enable more people to hear about Young Life in our community! This sponsorship is 100% tax deductible.

☐ I Can't Attend, But I'd Like to Make a Donation (\$0.00)
Can't join us for the fun but want to invest in the kids in our community? You can donate here!

Our ministry is able to thrive because of our faithful monthly donors.
To make a monthly contribution to Young Life, [sign up in our donor portal](#).

Guest Information

Name * First Name Last Name

Email * Email Address

Table Host (Choose One) ▼

**UTILIZE YL CONNECT
EVENTS TO MAKE THIS
TASK EASIER!**
(SEE SAMPLE TO THE LEFT)

SAMPLE PRINTED TABLE HOST CONTACT SHEET

Young Life Banquet Contact Sheet

Table Host _____

Phone _____

Guest _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Attending _____ Declined _____

Comments _____

Guest _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Attending _____ Declined _____

Comments _____

APPENDIX VII

NORTHWEST FAIRFAX VARIABLE INVITATION METHOD

An idea that originated in Northwest Fairfax, Virginia, this method uses different forms of invitations for different types of potential guests. The basic elements are as follows:

PREVIOUS DONORS

All donors from previous years are called by committee members and sent appropriate follow-up letter.

1. Plan a phone-a-thon for personally contacting previous donors.
 - Obtain lists of previous donors from the past two years (and others at the discretion of area director and staff).
 - Set a time and place for work session (plan for two nights).
 - Arrange a work session to take place in an office with 10–15 phones.
 - Provide training session, instruction sheet, colored pens.
 - Arrange for food (order pizza, bring salads, soft drinks).
2. Hold phone-a-thon/work session.
 - All committee members should participate.
 - Divide lists of names and numbers among those making phone calls.
 - Use different colored highlighters to mark responses.
 - Send appropriate letters to each previous donor according to response.
 - ✓ “Yes” responses receive acceptance letter with tickets (optional) or invitation.
 - ✓ “No” responses receive letter with return envelope and donor commitment card.
 - Sample schedule:

6:00 p.m.	Dinner
6:30 p.m.	Training session
6:45-9:15 p.m.	Calls and letter stuffing

GUESTS INVITED BY TABLE HOSTS

Guests invited by table hosts receive personal phone call and optional follow-up letter.

1. **Compile list of other potential guests.**
 - Table hosts provide names of potential guests to be compiled on one list.
 - Names and numbers are dispersed among table hosts.

2. Table hosts make personal calls to potential guests.

- Record responses.
- Pass along confirmed reservations to designated committee member.
- Optional: Send appropriate follow-up letter according to response.

CAMPAIGNERS' PARENTS

Campaigners kids hand deliver invitations to their parents. Invitations stress importance of reservations.

CLUB KIDS' PARENTS

Flyers are sent home with club kids inviting parents to banquet. Flyers stress importance of reservations.

NOTE: All those with reservations are called to reconfirm the week of the event.



APPENDIX VIII

YEAR AT A GLANCE

ONE YEAR PRIOR TO EVENT

- Select banquet date.
- Reserve location.
- Select banquet chair.
- Generate guest list

NINE-10 MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Delegate committee assignments.
- Develop prayer support team.
- Select/reserve keynote speaker.
- Decide on banquet theme.



SIX-10 MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Prayer support night.

THREE TO FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Recruit table hosts.
- Recruit table sponsors (if applicable).
- Plan entertainment/skits/music.
- Reserve A/V equipment.
- Select menu.
- Meet with hotel catering manager for decoration ideas, hotel supplies, restrictions.
- Purchase needed supplies for decorations.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Meet with table hosts (instruction and training).
- Print invitations or letters.
- Establish seating arrangements/floor plan.
- Order selected literature from the Service Center.
- Make arrangements for any other printing needs (brochures, programs, nametags).
- Begin making/preparing decorations.

SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Purchase supplies (pens, donor commitment envelopes).

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Work Session/Table Host Night.
- Plan follow-up strategy.

THREE TO FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Address and mail invitations or letters.
- Select/coach testimony speaker(s).
- Follow-up calls for RSVPs.
- Order letterhead or note cards and envelopes if using for follow-up.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Make preliminary table and seating assignments.
- Prepare table setting envelopes.
- All printed materials ready.
- Select and organize registration table materials.
- Prepare follow-up materials.

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO EVENT

- Write thank-you notes (to be mailed after banquet).
- Committee prayer night.
- Call guests to remind them about banquet.

THREE TO FOUR DAYS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Guarantee number of guests to

catering manager.

ONE DAY PRIOR TO EVENT

- Finalize table and seating assignments.

BANQUET DAY

- Make last-minute seating assignment changes.
- Decorate banquet facility.
- Place literature and information packets on tables.
- Check all A/V equipment.
- Set up registration table.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE BANQUET

- Collect all donor commitment cards/checks.
- Address and mail follow-up letters.
- Mail thank-you notes (participants, table hosts, sponsors).
- Send appropriate follow-up information to the Service Center.



APPENDIX IX

TABLE HOST HELP

Below is a script for recruiting table hosts for the banquet.

- **Identify yourself**

- ✓ Asking in person is the best approach, but it can be done by phone.
- ✓ An example of what to say: “Hey Mary, this is Patti, the area director from Young Life. Do you have a few minutes to talk about our upcoming banquet?”

- **Build excitement**

- ✓ “I wanted to share our vision for the Young Life banquet that is planned for March 3. This event is exciting as we have had a team praying for it for the past two months.”

- **Explain the purpose of the event**

- ✓ ‘The purpose of the event is to introduce adults to Young Life, to share the gospel, to raise volunteer support and to raise financial support to continue our ministry in this community.’
- ✓ ‘I wanted to invite you to participate in this vision by being one of our 30 table hosts. You will play a critical role in the success of this event and of the ministry.’

- Explain responsibilities.
- Ask them to pray about this decision.
- Answer any questions.
- Be yourself and change script to reflect your relationship with the person.
- If they agree, thank them and send a follow-up letter with all the information you discussed and the date of the table host committee meeting.
- If they want to pray about it, thank them and discuss a date and time you can follow up with a call. Also send them a thank-you note for considering being a host.



APPENDIX X: HELPFUL HINTS FOR A SMOOTH REGISTRATION

BEFORE THE BANQUET:

- Select volunteers who are passionate, friendly, outgoing and not easily stressed. These volunteers should be serving or have served on the Young Life and/or banquet committee, and know people in the community.
- Determine the right number of registration volunteers so that guests do not have to wait in a line at registration.
- Train volunteers to familiarize with YL Connect Events check-in app.
- Practice registration. Do a “run through” registration at the location where registration will be held to ensure there is adequate room, flow, etc. Coordinate with decorations chairperson and facilities chairperson for any special needs. Make sure those handling registration know how to handle the “what ifs” and have a protocol available in writing for them to follow when a guest’s name is not on the list, a nametag is spelled incorrectly, too many guests are at one table, a guest requests to sit at another table or guests show up who aren’t on your list.

AT THE BANQUET:

- Have Young Life kids, under the direction of a Young Life leader, seating and/or greeting guests. This allows for the kids to be involved and seen. Tables need both table number and table host name for clear identification. Do not have kids working at the registration table.
- Give staff and banquet committee members wearing distinguishable nametags so that they can be easily identified to help with a problem.
- Position banquet committee or table hosts at the front to be greeters.
- Consider having the following registration tools on hand:
 - ✓ An alphabetical listing of the guests
 - ✓ A list of all guests by table host
 - ✓ A diagram of the tables with numbers on them and the total number of guests sitting there (Use this if you have extra guests to fill in these empty spots)
 - ✓ Markers
 - ✓ Blank nametags (extra)

THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS TO HANDLE NAMETAGS:

- Organize pre-printed nametags on the table in alphabetical order. Guests pick them up themselves. This way those nametags left at the end of the event did not attend. You will have to keep track of those who came and did not RSVP. Also, have blank nametags for guests to make their own.
- Have nametags with pens for guests to fill out once they arrive at their tables. You would then have to instruct table hosts to turn in a list of guests who were at their table. This option may be less time consuming but you do not have control of who actually was in attendance and have to depend on the table host to complete the list.
 - ✓ Tracking attendees
 - ✓ Make sure you have a process to ensure you know who attended. Keep track at registration table (see nametag suggestion #1) and ask the table hosts to keep track as well.

APPENDIX XI

BANQUET PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
17	18	19	20 Table hosts will carefully read their invitations and make all plans necessary to attend Sunday night. That the table host packets are correctly prepared.	21 Committee members will personally contact table hosts reminding them of Sunday night. Table hosts will attend and call to make appointment for next week.	22 That Young Life's ministry will continue to touch lives. Table host list will be kept up to date.	23 Wisdom for area director as he or she considers any additional leadership needs. Good bonding between leaders as they meet tomorrow night.
24 Room will be set up right for the meeting, committee members manning stations. That table hosts will be willing to take names that may not be their first choice.	25 Pray for leaders as they prepare for club tomorrow night.	26 Leaders will meet kids who the Lord draws to club tonight.	27 Discernment in setting up a student board for Young Life. That area director would find the Lord's choices for which kids should serve.	28 Festive decorating ideas to set the stage for a successful banquet. Decorating committee's need for supplies.	29 God-given wisdom for planning the banquet program.	30 God will call out a young person, and possible a leader, to give bold testimony at the banquet.

BANQUET PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 That other Young Life areas will receive needed contributions during their fundraisers this year.	2 New Young Life leaders will quickly learn what they need to know.	3 The Lord will give our area director words to speak as he or she prepares his or her banquet speech. That tonight's club will be enthusiastic and exciting.	4 That each Young Life mailing and all banquet invitations will be carefully handled and preserved by the Postal Service.	5 God will provide a visual presentation of the work of Young Life for guests to view at the banquet.	6 That all invitations are received joyously, leading to community excitement about the upcoming banquet.	7 Table host will be able to contact each guest and that they are willing to accept the invitation by clearing their calendars to attend.
8 That God will prepare the way for the Young Life ski trip in December.	9 The Lord will direct our area director as he or she trains Young Life leaders.	10 Young Life staff will have a productive morning at the office. That the banquet seating will be arranged in the best way.	11 God will cause us to be an encouragement to one another as we meet together for prayer tonight.	12 That table hosts remember their responsibilities in the coming weeks.	13 God will bring to mind any details that may have been overlooked and that He will help committee members manage their time wisely.	14 That all printed material will be ready and correct.
15 The Lord will provide a fundraising idea for summer camp this year.	16 God will prepare the hearts of young people and adults as the banquet approaches.	17 The Lord will protect the relationship of Young Life at our local high school and that kids will be open to the area director and all leaders. That Christ's love will be conveyed at club.	18 Today's meeting to finalize banquet plans will go smoothly.	19 That the banquet chairs will remain calm during the upcoming weeks and that they will find all the volunteers they need to complete their many banquet tasks.	20 Protection and good health for all: staff and leaders, committee and families, table hosts and families, kids and banquet guests and participants.	21 That table hosts will reach all guests and that the Lord will enable all to attend the banquet.
22 That the Lord will clear any obstacles. That committee members will remain focused on Christ.	23 That individuals will give joyfully and generously to the work of Young Life. For good weather on Wednesday so the banquet is well attended.	24 God-given strength and energy for the job ahead. That we each serve the Lord well in our assigned banquet roles. That decorating will go well tomorrow.	25 Banquet Night! That all logistics at the banquet location will go well (sound, temperature), enthusiastic table hosts, bold speakers, bookkeeping and great joy at banquet.	26 That thank-you notes mailed today will express love to valuable table hosts.	27 That all follow-up letters will be properly prepared.	28 That the committee will provide helpful feedback and evaluation for future banquets.
29 That the Lord will show us additional ways to support and encourage the work of Young Life now that this year's banquet is completed.	30 For our area director as he or she prepares for club tomorrow.	31 That club will be exciting and fun. That kids will receive the message of Christ's love.				

APPENDIX XII

FIELD EVENTS

In response to a growing interest in new fundraising events, and a growing collection of resources in centralized Mission Services, Young Life has created a concierge service specifically for event planners like you.

Call this group your “easy button” for event planning. The team bridges the gap between your fundraising ideas and the tools you need to make it happen.

Field Events has assembled:

- ✓ Best practices from the field.
- ✓ Materials and services readily available through Young Life Communications.
- ✓ Software, apps and other reviewed and pre-approved tools from outside vendors.

These resources can help you with: promotion, communications, event materials, apparel and prizes, online giving and sponsorship options, social media tools, event web pages, registration, receipting and more.

CAN YOU HOST? ...

- ☐ Online Auctions
- ☐ Half-marathons, Triathlons, and Challenge Runs
- ☐ Golf Marathons
- ☐ Road Rides and Trail Rides
- ☐ Skeet Shooting Events
- ☐ Fishing Tournaments
- ☐ Friend-to-Friend fundraisers, and
- ☐ Banquets of all sizes and themes

REMEMBER THE YOUNG LIFE STORE

for customizable
event apparel, drinkware,
journals, awards and gifts.
Staff discounts are available.
Younglifestore.com



Field Events can help.

Contact Us at events@sc.younglife.org or 719-381-1929.

Field Events



- ✓ **Auction Best Practices:** for online or event auctions
- ✓ **Credit Card Swipe Devices:** for easy mobile payments
- ✓ **Banquet Resources:** everything you need in one place
- ✓ **Sports Events:** Golf outings, races and any Team Young Life events
- ✓ **MSites:** micro sites for event-specific web pages
- ✓ **Online Marketing Systems:** for registration, tickets, donations and more

VISIT FIELD EVENTS ON STAFF RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

STAFF.YOUNGLIFE.ORG/MISSION-SERVICES/FIELD-EVENTS/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX