

Committee Chair Handbook



You were made for this.®

877-438-9572 • younglife.org

Young Life © December 2003

YL-234005 • Printed in USA • 1018

Copyright © 1994, 2014, 2017, 2018 by Young Life. No part of this handbook may be reproduced in any form without written permission in advance from Young Life.

The information included in this document are the copywritten materials of The Focus Group, LLC and may not be distributed, sold or given to any person, firm or corporation, other than Young Life employees and volunteers in conjunction with the performance of their duties as specified in The Purchase Agreement between The Focus Group, LLC and Young Life dated January 1, 2000, without the express written consent of The Focus Group, LLC.

Taking Donors Seriously is a registered trademark of The FOCUS Group, LLC.

Table of Contents

Young Life's Mission Statement	1
Introduction	3
How to Use This Handbook	4
Effective committee chairs ensure implementation of the characteristics of effective committees, which are listed below.	
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES	5
CHARACTERISTIC #1	
Effective committees are built on the right foundation	6
CHARACTERISTIC #2	
Effective committees have goals and action plans for success	7
CHARACTERISTIC #3	
Effective committees are structured to accomplish goals and action plans	9
CHARACTERISTIC #4	
Effective committees ensure adequate financial support	11
CHARACTERISTIC #5	
Effective committees understand authority and decision making in Young Life	12
CHARACTERISTIC #6	
Effective committees plan and hold effective meetings	13
CHARACTERISTIC #7	
Effective committees appreciate, celebrate and say thanks	14
CHARACTERISTIC #8	
Effective committees evaluate themselves	15
Additional Support and Information	16

Our Mission

INTRODUCING ADOLESCENTS TO JESUS CHRIST AND HELPING THEM GROW IN THEIR FAITH.

We accomplish our mission by ...

- Praying for young people.
- Going where kids are.
- Building personal relationships with them.
- Winning the right to be heard.
- Providing experiences that are fun, adventurous and life-changing.
- Sharing our lives and the good news of Jesus Christ with adolescents.
- Inviting them to personally respond to this good news.
- Loving them regardless of their response.
- Nurturing kids so they might grow in their love for Christ and the knowledge of God's Word and become people who can share their faith with others.
- Helping young people develop the skills, assets and attitudes to reach their full God-given potential.
- Encouraging kids to live connected to the body of Christ by being an active member of a local congregation.
- Working with a team of like-minded individuals — leaders who volunteer, committee members, donors and staff.



Introduction

Backbone. Bedrock. Beachhead. What synonym captures the Young Life committee in one word? There are, after all, over 20,000 committee members for more than 7,800 ministries worldwide, and they deserve to be defined.

On one hand, the local Young Life committee is similar to a beachhead. It's a team of committed Christian adults who have decided to stake a claim for Jesus Christ in the community. The committee secures local financial support, then launches staff and leaders into the area to reach kids with the great news that God loves them. Without this strategic beachhead, leaders and staff are simply stray soldiers wandering through the battlefield alone.

In another sense, the committee is like bedrock. The personal integrity and reputation of each committee member lays a firm foundation in the community upon which viable ministry can grow. Committee members establish credibility for the Young Life ministry among their friends and throughout the community-at-large. At the same time, committee members lend wisdom and insight to the direction of the ministry, further securing a firm foundation for healthy growth.

Then again, the Young Life committee serves as the backbone for the body of leaders and staff who extend themselves daily to reach kids for Christ. Without the personal encouragement and support of the local committee, the movement of staff and leaders is restricted and reduced. With that vital connection to a team of caring adults, however, staff and leaders grow and thrive, reaching kids with grace and strength.

Frankly, it's impossible to capture the significance of the Young Life committee in a single word. So, how do we begin to capture the importance of the person who steps up to lead as the committee chair? You hold the answer in your hands.

Thank you for your strategic service as the committee chair. We hope this handbook encourages you, equips you and gives you at least a glimpse of your incredible value to the Young Life team.



The personal integrity and reputation of each committee member lays a firm foundation in the community upon which viable ministry can grow.



The Characteristics of Effective Committees

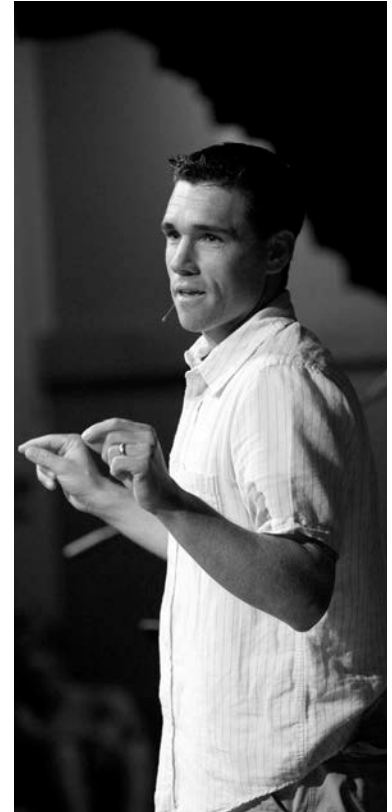
Many new committee chairs ask the question, “What am I supposed to do?” This handbook has been developed as a companion to the *Young Life Committee Handbook* and is organized around the eight characteristics of effective committees, which are listed below. This handbook explains how committee chairs, working with area and regional directors, can ensure the implementation of those characteristics.

Effective committees ...

1. Are built on the right foundation.
2. Have goals and action plans for success.
3. Are structured to accomplish goals and action plans.
4. Ensure adequate financial support.
5. Understand the authority and decision-making in Young Life.
6. Plan and hold effective meetings.
7. Appreciate, celebrate and say thanks.
8. Evaluate themselves.

Additional Resources on the Web

Additional resources are available to you on the Young Life Staff Resources Site, staff.younglife.org. The website will supplement this handbook, offering you more details and regularly updated information. Your area or regional office can help set you up with access to the Staff Resources Site.



Characteristic #1

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES ARE BUILT ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION

The relationship between the committee chair and the area director is critical to the success of the ministry. The committee chair and area director must develop strategies to consistently build a collegial working relationship. They must spend time together discussing meaningful personal and ministry-related issues. The committee chair may need to initiate contacts with the area director. The following are some suggestions for developing a committee chair/area director relationship:

- Meet regularly (weekly/biweekly/monthly). Share with each other about your lives, pray together, discuss ministry issues and plan committee meetings.
- Develop mutual accountability.
- Give each other regular and clear feedback (particularly affirmation).
- Share the decision-making responsibilities.

The committee chair and area director are also responsible for providing training for the committee and staff on the biblical basis for effective committees, the mission statement or purpose of the committee, and the 10 basic roles of effective committees. Check with the regional director to see if there is a regional committee trainer who might be able to facilitate this training. Helping committee members and staff internalize these concepts will

provide a solid foundation upon which to build the local ministry.

Teach the Biblical Basis for Effective Committees

At least once a year, take time at committee meetings or at a committee retreat to teach the biblical basis of Young Life's committee concept (*Committee Handbook*, Page 5). A staff person or committee member with the gift of teaching or a regional committee trainer can present the Scriptures. Allow time for discussion. This is a time when the power of God's Holy Spirit can enlighten and motivate staff and committee members to fulfill their God-ordained responsibilities.

Develop a Committee Purpose Statement

Young Life's mission statement — to introduce adolescents to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith — is the mission statement for every part of this ministry. It's important for each area, region, division, camp or other department in Young Life to own the mission statement by adopting it to its particular situation in a prayerful way.

As a committee, discuss, reflect on and pray about the committee's purposes and goals in your community in light of the mission of Young Life. This discussion will lead the committee to develop its committee purpose statement. Here is an example:

Committee Purpose Statement

"Our mission is to introduce

adolescents in the Tri-States area to Jesus Christ and help them grow in their faith by actively supporting the ministry of Young Life through fundraising, securing administrative resources and encouraging staff. We will protect the integrity of the ministry, ensure fiscal responsibility and pray for the spiritual strength of the leadership."

If the committee has a purpose statement, it should be periodically reviewed and revised. If the committee does not have a purpose statement, time should be allocated at a retreat or committee meeting to develop one.

Review Members' Roles

Committee chairs should periodically review the 10 roles of effective committees with the staff and committee. The roles provide committee members and staff with practical examples of what the committee should do (*Committee Handbook*, Page 6).

Worksheet:

Building a Committee Purpose Statement

1. I believe our Young Life committee exists to
2. I believe our Young Life committee's purpose is to
3. We would be closer to attaining our purpose if we focused on

Have each committee member complete these statements. Use the various responses to identify common themes that can be developed into a committee purpose statement.

Characteristic #2

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES HAVE GOALS AND ACTION PLANS FOR SUCCESS

Every Young Life area should have one to three long-range goals. These goals should be tangible and fairly broad. Each goal should be attainable in one to two years. Both area staff and committee members should be involved in the development of area-wide goals. To establish these goals, follow a process that involves the committee so that there is a sense of ownership of the goals. An example of this process is:

- Pray prior to and during the goal-setting/action-planning processes.
- Review the committee and area mission statements.
- Review the local ministry's internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and potential barriers.
- Use group processes to brainstorm potential goals (*Committee Handbook*, Page 7).
- Review all goal possibilities and develop a consensus about which goal ideas are currently most important.
- Develop action plans for each goal.
- Create a document that states your area mission, goals and action plans.

Goal Examples:

- Vibrant Young Life clubs will exist in 100 percent of the middle and high schools in our area by fall 20__.
- Our area will fully implement the *Taking Donors Seriously*[®] (TDS) strategies by January 20__.
- We will develop a prayer network for the area by August 20__.

Action Plans

Action plans are needed to help implement established goals. They consist of specific steps that need to be completed in order to achieve a goal (*Committee Handbook*, Page 7). Committee and/or staff can design an action plan (see Action Plan Template). Once the action plan is developed, designate a staff member or committee member to follow through with the plan. The action plan creates the basis for measuring the successful accomplishment of the goal. Review these goals and action plans frequently at committee meetings.



Commit to the Lord
whatever you do,
and your plans will
succeed.



— Proverbs 16:3, NIV

TRIED AND TRUE #1

Involve a Facilitator

Enlist the help of a facilitator to guide the group through the process, so that the area director and committee chair can participate fully in the process.

TRIED AND TRUE #2

Keep Goals Up Front

Print the committee's current goals on committee communication pieces such as letters and newsletters that are sent to the committee.

Action Plan Template

Mission					
Goal					
Action Plan General Statement					
Step No.	Action Step	Resources Required	Assigned To	Start Date	Due Date
1					
2					
Plan of Evaluation					

Action Plan Example

Mission: To give every teenager in our area the opportunity to know Jesus Christ.

Goal: Our area will have WyldLife in one middle school by January 20__.

Action Plan Steps:

- Develop a parent support team at the identified school by August 20__. (Tom)
- Recruit and train parents and other volunteers to lead a club by May 20__. (Steve)
- Staff develops an implementation strategy by January 20__. (Veronica)
- Meet with school personnel to inform them about new WyldLife program by November 20__. (John)



Characteristic #3

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES ARE STRUCTURED TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

The committee structure involves four basic components that require the attention of the committee chair and the area director. These components are:

- The type of committee organizational structure.
- The size and composition of the committee.
- Processes and strategies for member recruitment, selection, retention and retirement.
- A process for selecting a new committee chair and treasurer.

Committee Organizational Structure

The committee chair and area director should provide an

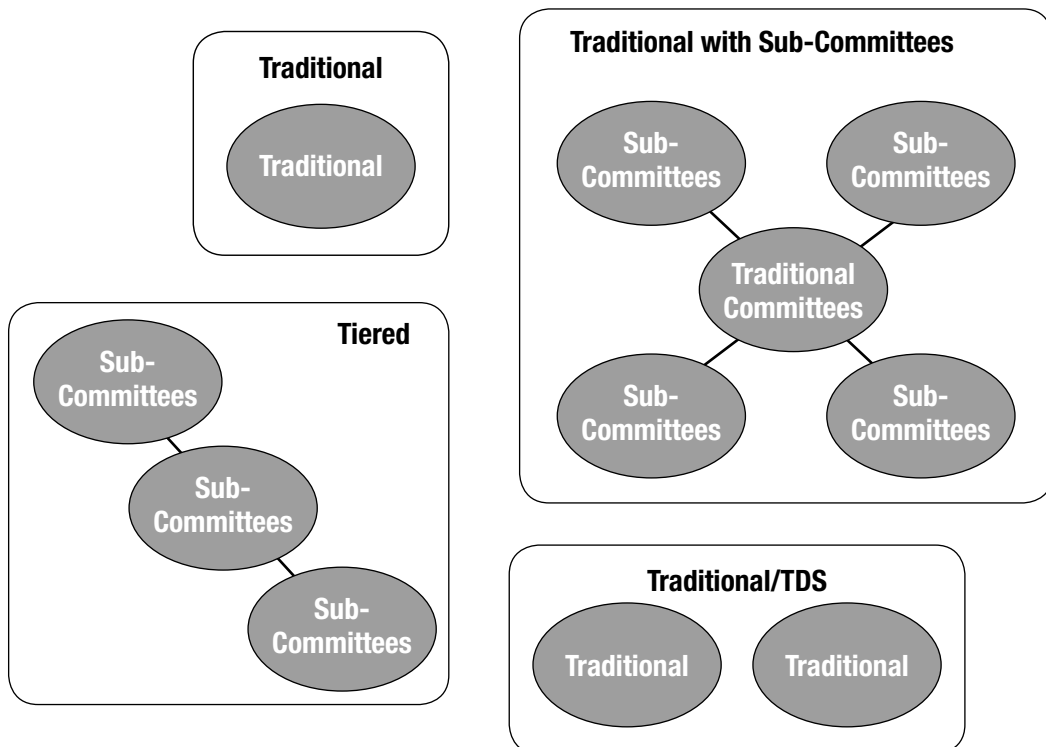
opportunity for the committee and staff to review the current committee organizational structure. Is the current structure meeting the needs of the ministry? If the structure can be improved, then changes should be made. Examples of possible committee organizational structures are below.

Size and Composition of Committee

Each year, the committee chair should schedule time at a committee meeting to review the number of committee members needed to support the organizational structure. This review should also include a discussion about the

TRIED AND TRUE #3 Brainstorm First!

- List the characteristics of the current committee members. For example: male, female, parents with kids in high school.
- List characteristics that are missing that would be helpful to have. For example: Latino parents, parents of middle-schoolers, someone gifted at event planning.
- Pray for this second list. Ask God to find people who meet those needs.



composition of the committee (*Committee Handbook*, Page 8). When the committee has determined the number of committee members needed and the necessary characteristics, the committee chair should develop and implement a process to recruit and select people.

Recruitment and Selection of Committee Members

The committee chair should have the committee review the basic committee member characteristics and responsibilities and helpful guidelines for finding new committee members (*Committee Handbook*, Page 9).

The committee chair and area director should develop a process that allows the committee to recruit and select committee members on a regular basis (*Committee Handbook*, Pages 9-10). The following are important suggestions for making the recruitment and selection processes more intentional.

- Pray, pray, pray for potential new committee members who possess certain characteristics or gifts.
- Look for prospective members at Young Life activities.
- Members/staff should brainstorm potential members.
- Have staff approval prior to approaching prospective members.
- Make sure prospective members understand their potential responsibilities.

Member Selection Process How to Be Intentional

- Make a personal contact to see if prospective members are interested.
- Invite prospective members to a meeting/ dinner to discuss member expectations.
- Solicit a two- or three-year commitment after they have had time to pray about their responses.

Retention and Retirement of Committee Members

The committee chair and area director should develop a process that allows committee members to decide whether or not to remain on committee at the conclusion of their tenures. This works best when it coincides with the selection process (*Committee Handbook*, Page 10). Design a method that allows members to leave the committee with dignity or stay on the committee with renewed enthusiasm.

Committee Chair/Treasurer Recruitment and Selection

Identifying and selecting quality leadership for the committee is critical. The existing committee chair/treasurer should notify the area director of his or her intention to step down six months prior to leaving. The area director and current committee chair should review the committee chair and treasurer qualifications and functions (*Committee Handbook*, Page 9). A process should be developed to fill these vacancies. Are there individuals already on

the committee who are likely candidates, or is there someone from outside the committee? Potential committee chairs and treasurers should know that a two- to three-year commitment is an ideal amount of time to commit to a leadership role, either as chair or treasurer.

DON'T go into a committee meeting and ask, "Who would like to be committee chair for the coming year?"

DO develop a prayerful, intentional process to select committee leadership.

Example

- Be intentional.
- Pray for guidance.
- Identify candidates with area director's approval.
- Approach candidates with area director.
- Gain committee support for candidates.
- Let the committee select if there are multiple candidates.

TDS Chair and Team Recruitment

As noted in Characteristic Four, some committees have *TDS* sub-committees or teams, which are highly recommended. These groups have the responsibility for all fund-raising strategies and events: major donors, small groups, banquets, letters with phone follow-up, golf tournaments and more. This team is best chaired and staffed with people who own their own businesses, because most of the functions of *TDS* are what business owners do day-to-day.

Characteristic #4

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES ENSURE ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As committee chair, it is your responsibility to ensure that the committee has a treasurer and or a *TDS* chair and is implementing the *Taking Donors Seriously*® principles and practices. Even if the committee is functioning productively in the previous three characteristics, without adequate financial support, Young Life will cease to exist in that area.

Financial Support

The committee chair and area director should make sure the area has a competent treasurer. Treasurer qualifications and functions can be found in the *Committee Handbook*, Page 9.

TDS —

Taking Donors Seriously®

TDS is a set of principles and methods to fund ministry in a relational manner. Several committee members should work with the area director to implement these principles, because that will help your area be financially healthy. Many areas have a separate sub-committee/team that implements *TDS*. This sub-committee/team not only includes members who work on major donor strategies (including churches and foundations) but oversees the main fundraising projects, such as the banquet, golf tournament and call-a-thon. They also pay special attention to strategies relating to the top 20 percent of

your donors, and create effective area-wide communications.

Check out the *TDS* eLearning course at staff.younglife.org by typing “go eLearning” in the search feature.

Resources

The following resources are available at resourcesandsupplies.younglife.org.

- *TDS* Handbook
- Banquet Handbook
- Golf Handbook
- Call-a-Thon Guide
- Committee Handbook
- Committee Brochure

Note about the Service Charge:

The service charge represents a portion of the costs associated with managing any complex international enterprise. Areas benefit from the service charge through administrative services in such areas as accounting, communications, legal, human resources, and training. By providing these services, Young Life frees field staff to work with kids. To order a flyer explaining the service charge, go to: resourcesandsupplies.younglife.org.



Characteristic #5

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES UNDERSTAND AUTHORITY AND DECISION MAKING IN YOUNG LIFE

Decision making is of the most misunderstood concepts in Young Life, and as a committee chair it will be necessary for you to understand and manage decision making along with the area director and regional director.

Authority

(See the *Committee Handbook*, Page 12, for Young Life's authority structure regarding committees.)

A board of trustees oversees Young Life. This board hires a president who is in charge of Young Life staff. The Young Life Board of Trustees and staff have sole legal authority for the organization. Young Life committees are advisory in nature and have no formal authority except that granted by the staff.

Decision Making

The area director and committee should develop a relationship that values trust and collaboration. At the local level, the area director and the committee should be involved in long-range, major decision making. Committee input and ownership of important decisions are critical. Committee members should not become



involved in the day-to-day operational decisions that are regulated to Young Life staff.

It is up to the committee chair and area director to be proactive about decision making. Discussions should take place ahead of time about issues that may arise at a committee meeting or in the ministry and about how the final decision will be made. Will the area director

make the decision? Will the committee be allowed to make the decision? Will the area director want input from the committee prior to making the decision? Discussing the process beforehand and explaining it clearly to the people involved will ensure more successful operations.

Characteristic #6

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES PLAN AND HOLD EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

It is important that committee meetings be planned and conducted effectively.

Young Life loses many great committee members because meetings are poorly planned and led. Committee chairs should collaborate with the area director to develop the committee agenda. Committee chairs should lead committee meetings. Too often area directors are asked to facilitate the meetings, which adds to their full workload. In order to plan and hold effective meetings, review the *Committee Handbook*, Page 13. In order to facilitate more successful meetings, the committee chair should use group-processing skills at various times. If committee members know they can express their ideas and opinions, they will remain engaged during the meeting. Three process skills that provide for member discussion in an organized fashion are outlined below.

Sample Meeting Agenda

- 7 p.m.
Gather-early option for fellowship/dessert/coffee.
- 7:30 p.m.
Actual meeting always includes:
- Devotional/Jesus/open the Scripture.
 - Kid and/or leader testimony.

- Area ministry report.
- Prayer (vary times and ways).
- Committee business (sub-committee reports and action steps).

9 p.m.
Meeting concludes.

Skills Necessary to Lead Meetings

- Ensure that the meeting honors God.
- Create an effective agenda.
- Design processes for each agenda item.
- Observe, listen to and clarify participant comments.
- Interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Confront participants when necessary.
- Facilitate discussion about differing opinions.
- Collaborate with others.

Strategies for Group Discussion

Think/Pair/Share Strategy

- Ask members to think about a specific topic.
- Members share ideas with a partner or small group.
- One member of each group lists key ideas of members.
- Report ideas one at a time to the entire committee until all ideas have been shared.

Walk and Talk Strategy

- Break committee into small groups.

- Assign a specific topic or issue to discuss.
- Have them take a 10- to 15-minute walk as a group and discuss the topic or issue.
- Report the thoughts from each group upon returning to the meeting.

Plus/Delta Strategy

Used to review a proposed idea or to review a completed project.

- List positive things (plus +) about project or idea.
- List things that need to be changed or improved (delta Δ) about project or idea.
- Discuss list of plus and delta ideas.



Characteristic #7

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES APPRECIATE, CELEBRATE AND SAY THANKS

As committee chair, work with the area director to ensure that committee members, donors, staff, and volunteer leaders are appreciated and thanked. This is a very important component of an effective committee, and one that generally needs more attention.

Committee Members

Although the committee members do not serve to receive recognition, it is important to thank them for their service. As committee chair, it is your responsibility to make sure that members who take a leadership role in committee projects are recognized and thanked. Acknowledgment and applause at a committee meeting for work on a Young Life project is a simple way to say thanks.

Donors

Ensure that the *Taking Donors Seriously*® (TDS) leadership team is providing the appropriate amount of appreciation to each donor. The *Taking Donors Seriously*® Handbook is available from the Young Life Service Center. To order, go to: resourcesandsupplies.younglife.org.

Staff and Volunteer Leaders

Being a Young Life staff person or volunteer leader can be a rewarding, but lonely, ministry.

An effective committee will develop a meaningful plan to thank and honor staff and volunteer leaders. As committee chair, make sure that processes are in place to support and thank staff and volunteer leaders. Consider identifying one or two committee members or a sub-committee whose responsibility is to develop a plan. Some basic areas of leader care are prayer, befriending, mentoring, spiritual support, TDS help, and office work.

TRIED AND TRUE #4

The Young Life Store (younglifestore.com) and Resources and Supplies (resourcesandsupplies.younglife.org) websites offer great personalized gifts including mugs, bookmarks, notebooks, notecards and even beautiful canvas-wrapped photo enlargements. Check out the Quarterly Thank You Program, which is a simple, automated process designed to help thank donors on a quarterly basis. Donors, retiring committee members and other volunteers deserve to be thanked regularly for their service with a thoughtful gift or note.

TRIED AND TRUE #5

Ways to Show Appreciation

- Adopt a leader.
- Send greeting cards.
- Babysit
- Provide dinner/eat out with leaders.
- Give a variety of gift certificates.
- Email words of encouragement.

TRIED AND TRUE #6

Leader Questionnaire

Each committee person can be responsible for caring for a leader. Use this information to help begin the relationship. Ask leaders for the following information:

- Favorite food/snack, soda flavor and pizza topping.
- Favorite ice cream, candy/candy bar, cookie.
- Favorite fast-food restaurant, nice restaurant.
- Hobbies, interests, sports.
- Prayer requests.

TRIED AND TRUE #7

Create a Parent Support Team

Some areas establish parent teams around each of their schools to support the leaders at that school.

Characteristic #8

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES EVALUATE THEMSELVES

Effective groups evaluate themselves in order to improve. The committee should evaluate itself in three ways:

- Review area goals.
- Review committee events/projects after they are completed.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the committee.

Area Goals

It is important that the committee chair periodically allocates time at committee meetings to review progress toward the accomplishment of area goals.

Project Review

After every event — whether it's a banquet, golf tournament, appreciation dinner or car wash — debrief as a group. Review what worked well and, more importantly, what improvements your committee would suggest for the next event. Document all comments, include them in your minutes and refer the compilation to the responsible individual or sub-committee for planning purposes.

The committee chair should ask the committee to evaluate

itself each year according to the effective committee characteristics. For example:

- Our committee members understand the biblical basis for the existence of Young Life committees.
- Our committee has a committee purpose statement and embraces it.
- Our committee members understand the 10 basic roles of an effective committee.
- Our committee members and staff have established goals and action plans.
- Our committee is structured/organized to accomplish the goals of the area ministry.
- Our committee has a systematic process to recruit, select, retain and retire members.
- Our committee members understand the line of authority in Young Life.
- Our committee members understand decision making at the area level.
- Our committee meetings are planned well.
- Our committee meetings are run well.



Consider using a simple chart such as this:

(+) What Worked	(-) Changes Suggested
Excellent location	Have kids serve food.
Great food	Need greeters outside facility.
Good speaker	Develop strategy to reduce no-show numbers.
Powerful testimonies	

- Our committee members appreciate, celebrate and say thanks to staff and volunteer leaders.
- Our committee evaluates area goals, committee projects, and committee functioning and mechanics.
- Our committee is effectively implementing *Taking Donors Seriously*® (TDS) principles.
- Our committee has remained focused on serving Christ.

Additional Support and Information

If you have questions or simply need additional information or support, help is just a phone call or a click away.

- Call or email your area or regional director.
- Visit the Staff Resources Site at staff.younglife.org for additional information updated throughout the year.

Note: *The Young Life staff person in your area can issue you a username and password to access*

this special content on the Staff Resources Site. (Issuance takes a day or less.)

- The Committee Link eNewsletter is produced four times a year and is full of helpful articles and resources for area committees. To ensure that committee members receive this eNewsletter, ask your local area or regional office to register them in Volunteers Manager. Committee members will automatically receive this eNewsletter when they are listed as volunteers on the Staff Resources Site.
- Contact one of our committee trainers by typing “go committee trainers” in the search box at staff.younglife.org.
- Look for and attend Young Life’s missionwide, regional and local committee and training conferences. Don’t hesitate to ask for help!

Your questions or issues and the resulting resolution can enrich the entire ministry.

Thank you for your service to Young Life through your area committee. Throughout the Bible, we see God assembling teams of servants to work out His salvation purposes. He sent 70 elders to Moses to “help carry the burden of the people” so that Moses “would not have to carry it alone” (Numbers 11:17). The early church, as it struggled to serve growing numbers of disciples, commissioned men “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3) so that the loving and redemptive Word of God could be shared with a waiting world.

For Young Life, the waiting world is every kid, everywhere, but we can’t enter their world without adult committee members like you.

