

HEALTHY YOUTH LEADERS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Youth Ministry Starter Pack



Using This Guide & Partnering with BYM

How to use this document

How to use this document: This resource is designed for you to use in three ways – together as a team, on your own, and as a launchpad into further learning. Page 1 gives you a team discussion guide you can use in a leaders' meeting, at a retreat, or across a couple of shorter check-ins. Page 2 is for personal reflection, helping each leader sit with God and pay attention to their own life and leadership. Page 3 offers articles, books, and tools you can explore over time. Don't feel pressure to use everything at once pick one or two sections that fit your current season and start there.

How BYM can support and train you

Baptist Youth Ministries exists to help churches across NSW & ACT build healthy youth and young adult ministry, not just run events. If you'd like help working through this module with your team, a BYM team member can come and facilitate a training session, leaders' retreat segment, or tailored workshop in your context, or join you online. We can also walk with you through a Healthy Youth Ministry Assessment and follow up coaching to identify strengths, gaps, and next steps. To explore training or support, get in touch with the BYM team or visit the Website to connect with our team, check out events and explore more resources

Healthy Youth Leader

Team Reflection

This session explores four foundations of healthy leadership: self-awareness, rest and rhythms, secure identity, and relational honesty. It invites leaders to look beneath the surface of tasks and roles, pay attention to their emotional and spiritual health, and build patterns that sustain long-term ministry rather than burnout.

Self Awareness

- The video says many leaders operate on the surface, while underneath they may be anxious, angry, insecure, or discouraged without realising it. Where do you see this in yourself or the people you serve with?
- “Your emotions don’t disqualify you, they inform you.” How does that sentence land for you? What might change if you treated your emotions as information rather than something to ignore or be ashamed of?

Practice questions (if time allows):

1. What are some of your common reactions when things go wrong in ministry (shutting down, overcontrolling, blaming yourself, blaming others, etc.)?
2. How could tools like an emotions list, an emotion wheel, or a simple end-of-day reflection help you pay more attention to what’s happening under the surface?

Rest and rhythms: leading from rest, not exhaustion

- When you think about your current life and ministry, would you say you are mostly leading from rest or from exhaustion? How can you tell (body signs, emotions, behaviour)?
- What warning signs show you that you’re overextended (sleep, irritability, zoning out, over-commitment, health issues, spiritual dryness)?

Team rhythm questions:

- What rhythms do you already have as a team that help you stay healthy (praying together before youth, debriefing after, term planning, retreats, supervision, social time)?
- What is one realistic change to your team rhythms that would help you move towards healthier, more sustainable ministry this year?

Secure identity: who you are beyond your role

- The video says many leaders, especially in youth ministry, tie their worth to being needed or to their role. Where do you recognise that in yourself?
- “If your ministry role ended tomorrow, would you still know who you are?” How would you honestly answer that right now?

Identity questions:

- How much does your sense of value rise when you’re praised or “needed,” and fall when you’re criticised or feel invisible?
- What helps you remember that your core identity is “loved in Christ,” not “useful leader” or “successful youth pastor”? How can you build more of that into your normal week

Relational honesty: not leading alone

- The video says, “Isolation is the enemy of growth. We are never meant to lead alone.” Where are you tempted to hide, pretend, or pull back when you’re not okay?
- Do you have 1-3 trusted people who really know how you are doing (a mentor, supervisor, pastor, close friend)? If not, what are the barriers?

Culture questions:

- How safe does your team currently feel for people to say, “I’m not okay tonight”? What makes it safe or unsafe
- What could you, as a team, do to normalise vulnerability (leaders going first, regular check-ins, permission to say no, inviting feedback, etc.) issues.

Team action step

As a team, choose one area to focus on over the next 4-6 weeks:

- Build a simple self-awareness practice everyone commits to (e.g. one end of day reflection question; using an emotion wheel once a week).
- Establish or strengthen one rest and rhythm habit (e.g. before youth prayer, post youth debrief, a termly leaders’ retreat or social night with reflection).
- Take one identity step (e.g. a short Bible/identity reminder you revisit together, a rule like “we celebrate faithfulness, not just numbers”).
- Introduce one relational honesty practice (e.g. starting each team meet with “green/amber/red – how are you really?”).

Healthy Youth Leader

Personal Reflection

Use this to check in honestly on how you are doing as a follower of Jesus who also happens to lead in youth ministry. The questions are designed to help you notice what is happening beneath the surface in your emotions, rhythms, identity, and relationships, so that you can care for your own health with God and others, not just keep serving on empty

Self-awareness

- Am I paying attention to what's going on inside me emotionally, or mostly just pushing through and doing tasks?
- Lately, which emotions have been closest to the surface for me (e.g. joy, anxiety, anger, discouragement, numbness, hope)? Can I name one or two specifically?
- One situation in the last month where I reacted strongly was...
- Looking back, I think I was actually feeling...
- At the end of a typical day, what simple questions could I ask God and myself (e.g. Where did I feel close to God today? When did I feel reactive? What am I grateful for? What do I need to let go of?)?

Rest and Rhythms

- Right now, am I more likely leading from rest or exhaustion? How do I know (body, mind, spirit)?
- What are my personal warning signs that I'm overextended (e.g. short fuse, emotional flatness, over-eating, doom-scrolling, withdrawal from people, sleep changes)?
- Is there one small change I could make this month to honour rest (sleep, Sabbath pattern, exercise, joy giving hobby, saying "no" to something)?

Identity in Christ

- When I strip away my role, responsibilities, and titles, who am I? How would I describe myself using only God's words and promises, not all the things I "do"?
- When I succeed or when I fail in ministry, does my sense of value change? Why or why not?
- Where am I most tempted to compare myself to others (gifts, popularity, social media, platform, fruit, numbers)? How does that comparison affect my heart?

Relational Honesty

- Am I honest with myself about how I'm really doing emotionally, spiritually, and mentally?
- When I'm not okay, what's my usual response
 1. Isolate and withdraw
 2. Pretend everything is fine
 3. Reach out and ask for help
 4. Something else?
- Who are 1-3 people who could be part of my "circle of safety", people I can be real with and who will hold my story with grace and truth?
- What would it take for me to feel safe enough to be vulnerable with someone right now?

Prayer and Commitment

- Take a moment to bring your thoughts, feelings, successes, and failures honestly before God.
- Today I'm asking God to grow me in this one area of leadership health:
- Write a concrete action you will take in the next two weeks
- You may like to tell one trusted person what you've written and ask them to check in with you...

Healthy Youth Leadership

Resources

These resources can help you and your team keep growing a family oriented approach to youth ministry, where parents are supported and engaged as key disciplers of young people.

Articles

Leadership and the Johari Window, God's Faint Path. This article introduces the Johari Window as a simple four quadrant tool that helps leaders see what is known to themselves and others, and where their blind spots and hidden areas might be. It gives a clear, Christian friendly explanation of how feedback and honest self disclosure can grow self awareness, deepen trust in teams, and support more emotionally healthy leadership.

Books

The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World by Peter Scazzero

his book presses into the same themes as your module: knowing what's going on beneath the surface, leading from rest rather than exhaustion, and finding your identity in Christ rather than in your role. Scazzero gives practical frameworks and rhythms to help leaders attend to their emotional and spiritual health so that the way they lead their team and ministry flows from a grounded, honest walk with God, not from hurry, comparison, or burnout.

Support from BYM

BYM can encourage and support churches in building healthier leadership cultures for youth and young adults, not just stronger programs. Through assessments, training, and coaching conversations, BYM can help teams think through self awareness, rhythms, identity, and relational honesty as part of overall youth ministry health.

Leaders can visit the [BYM Resources Page](#) to access tools for discovering giftings and leadership styles, and expanded content on each of these four areas.



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