



THE ADVENTIST YOUTH SOCIETY

So, you want to be an Adventist Youth Society leader? Maybe you already are one and wish that your society were doing more in your church and community. No matter what the reason, this resource will help you to plan for a successful AYS year.

Let's get right to the heart of the matter. To be an AYS leader is a big responsibility. Your goal is to stimulate and motivate the minds of the youth, young adults, and adults to continue moving toward Christ. To develop a successful ministry, there are several issues you must think about:

- Why am I involved as the AYS leader?
- Am I willing to make a long term commitment to the AYS?
- Who are the members of my team (the council) that I will be working with?
- What is my vision and goal for this AYS ministry?

Here is a short word on long-term commitment: developing relationships with youth (and adults) takes time. Your church probably elects officers every year, so this position is appointed every year; however, you need to look ahead. Don't plan for just this year. Don't just do programs to get you through December. Plan for the long-term development of the youth in your church.

Know Your AYS History

It is important that you, as the AYS leader know some of the history of the society and understand its objectives and ideals.

Early in the history of Seventh-day Adventists, our church planned for the religious instruction of the youth in our church. The first lessons appeared in the *Youth's Instructor*, a journal first published in 1852 by James White. The first organized youth gathering was in 1879 when Harry Fenner (age 16) and Luther Warren (age 14) organized meetings in Hazelton, Michigan, to promote missionary work, raise money for missionary literature, and further the cause of temperance.

The work of the youth in our church spread across the country and around the world. In 1907, the General Conference approved the formation of the Youth Department and appointed a director. The Missionary Volunteer (MV) Society created a morning watch calendar and the MV reading course was adopted.

In 1978, the name was changed to Adventist Youth, but the goal remains the same: **To involve youth in our church and community in spreading the news of Jesus' return and guide them into service for Him.**

For more history see the Youth Ministry Handbook and Leadership Training Manual.

Why An AY Society?

The AY society is the center of happy activity and Christian fellowship for the young people of your church. The various groups in your church may lose contact with one another unless they are bound together by a society. The society meetings are a place to receive inspiration, fellowship, and strength. The AY society meeting is one of the most important appointments of the week for many youth, so be sure you plan meetings with purpose.

Purpose of AYS:

- To keep the challenge of the Aim, the Motto, and the Pledge before the society.
- To deepen the devotion life of each AY society member.
- To integrate vital AY society features and group activities into the thinking and life of the AY society.
- To keep the young people of the church in touch with the AY movement around the world.
- To give an opportunity for each member to obtain an experience in public address and teamwork: praying, studying, planning, and working together.
- To hold before the youth ideals and principles for Christian living.
- To help young people find a positive solution to their problems
- To study the most effective methods for doing different kinds of Christian service.
- To provide time when the members of the AY society may have an opportunity to tell "what they have done for the Saviour."
- To provide pleasant Christian fellowship for the young people of the church.

The AY society that consistently endeavors to attain these objectives will be a successful and will have a powerful influence in the church and in the world.



Ideals of the Adventist Youth

The ideals of the Adventist Youth are expressed in the Aim, Motto, Pledge, and Law as well as in the objective and purpose for the Adventist youth organization in the church. Early in the organization of Adventist Youth the objective “To save from sin and guide into service” was adopted.

To remind everyone of the ideals of AY you will want to make sure that the Aim, Motto, Pledge, and Law banners are prominently displayed at every meeting.

AY flags and banners are available from AdventSource 800-328-0525 or www.adventsource.org.

Responsibilities of The AY Society Leader

Now that you are familiar with the history and ideals of AY, you need to know the responsibilities of the AY leader. First, and most importantly, you need to know that this is not something you can do alone. The AY council* provides much of the support and follow-through that will make your society successful. Here is what the AY leader needs to know:

- Become thoroughly acquainted with local conference AY plans.
- Keep in touch with your conference youth department director.
- Stay in contact with other churches to see what is working for them.
- Plan for regular meetings of the council.
- Plan the agenda with input from associate leaders and secretary.
- Have specific plans to present to the council.
- Assign leadership functions to others as necessary for implementing plans and completing projects.
- Have a general knowledge of the duties of every officer in the society.
- Preside at the AY society meetings.
- Lead the officers’ prayer group.
- Be an ex officio member of all working groups, and as such, visit and participate in their activities as much as possible.
- Personally visit those who intermittently attend the AY meetings or arrange for another officer to visit.



- Keep in close touch with the AY society sponsor.
- Serve as a member of the church board.
- Maintain a cooperative and friendly contact with the pastor and elders of your church.
- Cooperate in every way possible at the end of your term to assist the incoming AYS leader.

*In some churches this is called the AY society executive committee.

