Youth Ministry and Parents:

Principles and Suggestions

Principles for youth ministers to live by:

Parents are not a “problem”; they are part of the solution.

Parents are your partners; they need you to be their partners.

Parents love their kids more than you do.

Teens are part of a family system; you can't change them without changing the system.

Parents need the Church’s ministry too.

Parents need re-assurance; want to know that they are good parents.

Not all families look and act like yours. There are many types of families. Learn to love and support them all.

What can the youth ministry do for parents?

Individually encourage parents. Get to know them.

Help parents find opportunities to grow in their own faith, both spiritually and intellectually.

Help parents find ways to support each other (prayer groups, support groups, discussion groups...).

Educate parents about youth culture, teen issues and development, ways to nurture faith in their teens and their homes.

Communicate directly with parents through e-mail and social media. Tell them about what is happening in youth ministry. Share information and articles about Christian parenting.
Help parents when there is a family crisis.

Connect families to family service opportunities.

Invite parents to help out with the ministry.

Pray for parents and teens.

The National Study on Youth and Religion, a highly recognized and credible sociological study on the spiritual and religious lives of today's teenagers, had this to say about parents of teenagers:

“Contrary to popular misguided and cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misconceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents... parents are most important in forming their children's spiritual and religious lives. The best social predictor, although not a guarantee, of what the religious and spiritual lives of youth will look like is what the religious and spiritual lives of their parents do look like.”