

PHOTO-CELEBRATING, TECH-STYLE

As another school year winds down, youth ministries will see many young people coming and going. This is a perfect time to celebrate graduates, recognize kids who are staying, and assimilate new faces. Here are seven creative, tech-based ways to do that:

- **Through the Years**—Ask seniors to each give you four photos, ranging from birth to present-day. Then create a PowerPoint slide show to honor graduates and affirm parents. If you maintain good digital archives (a folder for each teenager) throughout the year, you can add ministry related photos featuring each young person.
- **Off the Wall**—Compile some of your favorite comments from your kids' Facebook pages. Then use a photo from their profiles, matched with the status they want to use. You can make a compilation at sites such as Vimeo—for example, go to vimeo.com/16419682. For a free PowerPoint template to make your own compilation, go to youthministry.com/webextras and click on May_June 2011 issue.
- **Fake Interviews**—This video idea works only once or twice every few years, but it's always a hit. We ask kids if they'll help describe an object without saying its name. Later, we edit in an interviewer asking questions that take answers out of context. To see this in action, search YouTube for "Weird Al
- **Your Story**—During every graduation celebration, we show a video of young people's faith stories. It's exciting and encouraging to hear accounts of how God is working in our kids' lives.
- **Directory Assistance**—Remembering names is an easy way to show you care. Get a jump-start on learning new names by taking kids' pictures and printing out a simple directory for leaders and volunteers. With Picasa (picasa.google.com), you can create a free photo directory, complete with captions.
- **Hot Seat**—Record young people answering as many questions about themselves as possible in one minute. This is a fun way to get to know new kids.
- **Prayer Cards**—Whether young people are leaving, staying, or joining, you can help assimilate them into the larger church body. The same week we take pictures for our youth group directory, we also pass out prayer cards and ask if kids would like an adult from church to pray for them. If someone fills out a prayer card, we create a second card containing his or her picture and specific requests. Then we give it to a church member who commits to remembering the young person in prayer. ■