

WHEN KIDS STOP COMING

*16 practical ways to
bring 'em back again!*

Twenty-two chairs formed an inviting seating arrangement. Everything looked great—except for one thing: Fourteen

people were missing.

Eight disappointed faces surveyed the emptiness.

"Where's Tami and Patty?"

"And what happened to Jack?"

"Todd said he'd be here, but he didn't show up—again."

"Ever since Tami started going out with Dean, we never see her anymore," said Lori, one of the faithful few.

Concerned as always, Greg added: "Jack's gone basketball crazy. He eats, sleeps and dreams basketball. I'm afraid he'll turn into a basketball

if he's not careful!"

"What about Patty?"

"Patty's always busy. We're just not good enough for her anymore. None of her friends come to youth group, she says."

"I think Todd isn't here because his parents don't really care what he does or where he goes."

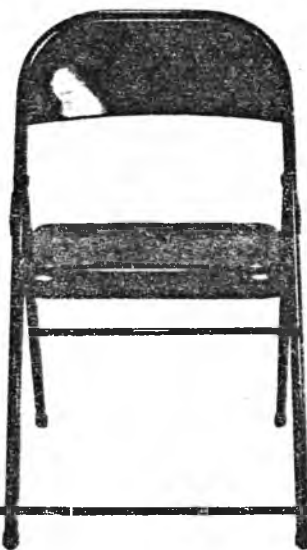
All eyes turned toward Andy, their at-wits-end leader.

"What do we do, Andy?"

"How can we get kids to start coming to youth group again?"

If this group's conversation rings true for you, you'll be happy to know there's hope. Practical ways do exist for getting kids back into the group.

Use these ideas. And create your own. With prayer, care and effort, you'll witness those empty chairs filled once again!



1

PHONE-A-FRIEND

Select one person each week to be called by various members of the group. Have someone call on Monday to offer an invitation. Then have someone call on Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. On Saturday, the caller should also ask if he or she needs a ride.

2

HOST A MEETING

Call and ask the person you want to attend if it would be okay to have the next meeting at his or her house!

3

MISSING-PERSON POSTCARD

Send a Polaroid postcard of your group with a message on the back saying, "Who's missing in this picture?"

4

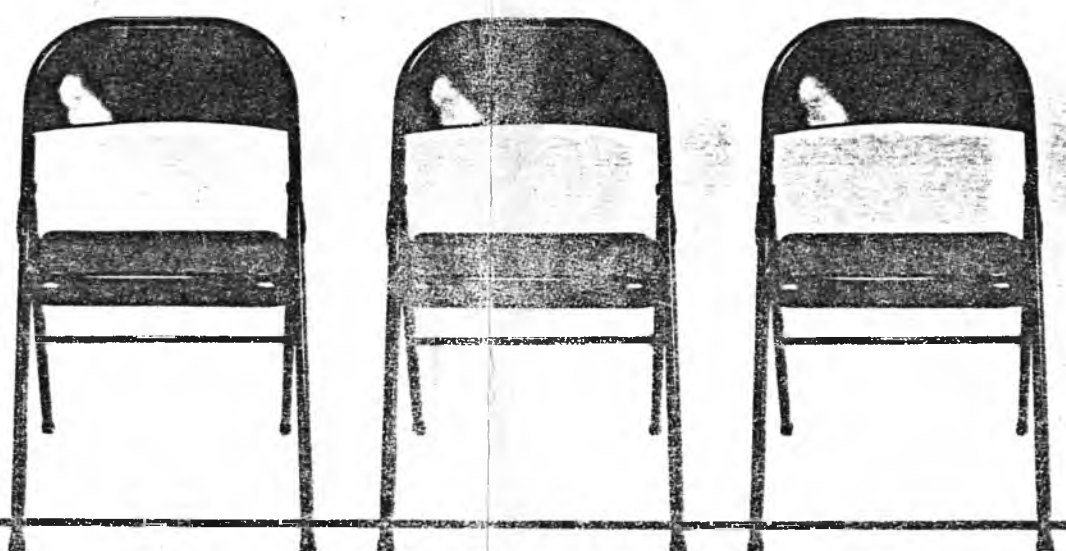
MYSTERY MESSAGES

Put secret messages in their school lockers each day for a week announcing the next youth group meeting.

5

CARE VISIT

Appoint someone from the group, or ask one of the adult advisors, to visit those who are inactive. Plan a heart-to-heart talk on why they don't



attend. You may find out some things that could make your meetings more appealing.

6

PROGRESSIVE POSTCARDS

Send the missing people a series of postcards—one each day for a week. Create a message that's continued from day to day. Let them know you hope they'll attend the next meeting and tell them what it will be about.

7

SEARCH PARTY

Sponsor a "missing persons" party and offer a prize to those who bring the most "wanted" people.

8

REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

Remember each person on his or her birthday—whether or not they attend every meeting. A card from the group with some personal notes inside may make a difference.

9

GO AND GET 'EM

Go where the missing people are—at work, at school, wherever. As a group, visit them, express an interest in them, attend their team games, school concerts and plays. If they can't come to you all the time, as a group, go to them!

10

"UGLY TRUTH" SURVEY

Conduct a survey among those who are inactive. Ask questions to help you know why they don't find group meetings interesting. Compile your results and make an effort to respond effectively to their concerns.

11

HOBBY NIGHT

Sponsor a Hobby Night. Invite the missing people to come and share what they like to do with their spare time. The more you know of others' interests, the better.

12

ADOPT-A-MEMBER

Have each active member adopt one inactive member and invite him or her home for dinner, and spend time together one-on-one establishing a good friendship. Follow-up outside the youth group is important.

13

SURPRISE VISIT AND SONG

After a youth group meeting get a bunch of people together and visit some people who were missing. Let them know how much you wish they'd be a part of your fellowship. Create a special song for each person to be sung before you leave.

14

KEY TO SUCCESS

Send or give a key to those who are missing. Tell them it will open a whole new world if they'd come to your next meeting. Remind them they're the key to its success.

15

GET-AWAY COMMUNITY BUILDING

Plan an overnight or two-day experience and invite certain inactive kids. The more time you spend together, the more you'll get to know each other. Time away—just with the group—helps build community and a sense of belonging.

16

"WISH YOU WERE HERE"

The next time your group has a retreat or goes on a trip, send the missing people a postcard with the message "Wish you were here—thinking of you." Such thoughtfulness shows caring. A phone call from the group with everyone taking turns saying hello is equally expressive of your genuine wish to have them with you. ☐

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