

why volunteer youth leaders quit

Okay, I don't consider myself an expert at many things. But I *am* an expert at having my volunteer youth leaders quit! From lots of painful experience in this arena, let me tell you some of the common "crime-scene clues" that I've noticed. Maybe you can avoid committing some of them with your leaders.

■ They quit because they're tired of feeling like huge youth ministry failures.

Nobody signs up to attend "Failure 101" each week, and neither do your leaders. So connect them with specific teenagers and responsibilities that can give them regular, positive feedback. I often send some of my most affirming teenagers to new leaders to "take care of them." I don't want their insecurities and sense of awkwardness to chase them away.

■ They quit because they don't know what they're supposed to be doing.

We're pretty decent in the church world when it comes to motivation. But we're often rotten when it

comes to giving specific training. Please know I'm not suggesting those long, 12-week training courses most people quit by the third week. Just make sure you give clear marching orders to your leaders. Here's a vital one: "Show up 15 minutes early and stay 15 minutes late."

■ They quit because they feel more like servants than partners.

Your leaders should constantly get the vibe from you that they're honestly in the circle of your most valued relationships. This means that you occasionally pick up the phone and check on them as people—not just as leaders.

■ They quit because they find little fulfillment in merely moving chairs and playing policemen. Make sure your leaders have teenagers as their primary focus, not just tasks. Tasks and responsibilities are obviously part of every ministry, but make sure that's not all your leaders are doing.

■ They quit because we give orders more than we give encouragement.

Mark Twain said that you can keep a man going for a whole month with one good compliment. Likewise, your volunteers need to feel authentically and frequently appreciated by you. Don't wait for the yearly Appreciation Banquet. Instead, make "encouragement calls" on a rota-