



FAITH BEYOND YOUTH GROUP

COMPASS

LEADER TRAINING GUIDE

FAITH BEYOND YOUTH GROUP

As a youth leader, you want to disciple young people. You want to instill a deep, lasting faith in them that extends far beyond youth group. To do that, you need a team of adults investing in the faith formation of your teens.

Of course, if you have a team, you've also got to train them—a task that can feel daunting on top of all the other responsibilities you juggle.

At the Fuller Youth Institute, we want to make training your volunteer team a little easier.

This guide is designed to help you model the Faith Beyond Youth Group Compass to your team so that they, in turn, can use it to instill lasting faith in the young people they serve. This guide is for you if you want to ...

- Train your leaders—even if you've never done so before.
- Build community among your team.
- Share the latest research with your leaders and help them apply it to young people in your context.

This guide will help you create one great training event for your leaders based on *Faith Beyond Youth Group*. If your goal is to read through the book together with your team, see [The Faith Beyond Youth Group Book Club Guide](#).

BEFORE YOU GATHER YOUR TEAM

The first step in creating your training is to **schedule the event 6-8 weeks in advance**, allowing your leaders time to get it on their calendars. Your ideal time to train your team might be:

- Sunday morning before or after church,
- Wednesday night (you might even want to consider hosting your leader's training instead of youth group), or
- Saturday afternoon.

To help publicize your training, visit FaithBeyondYouthGroup.com/insider for free social media graphics, as well as ready-to-use text you can copy and paste to a church bulletin, email, or website.

Plan to meet for at least 2.5–3 hours and provide childcare for those who are parents. (You might even invite some of your teenagers to serve as caregivers in order to form additional connections between students and your team's families.)

Decide where you're going to meet. It may be easiest to meet at your church or youth group gathering space. However, meeting in someone's home might create a more inviting space for leaders, which can help cultivate trust.

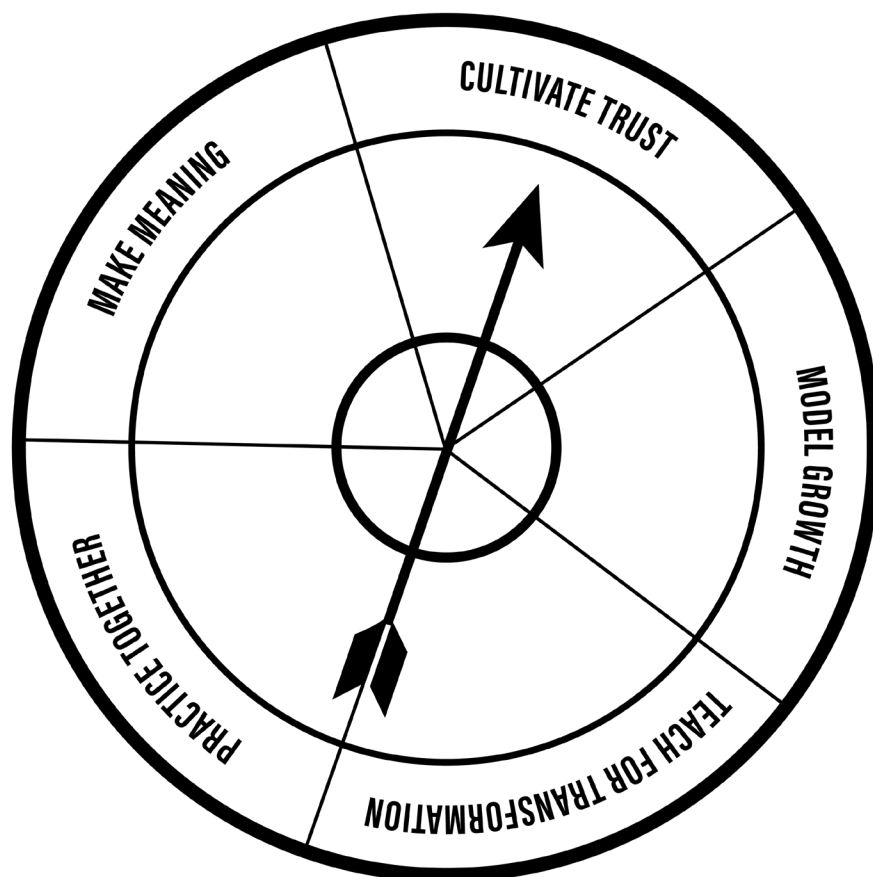
Consider what the seating arrangement communicates about your goals. While circles can invite sharing, rows might limit it. Round tables can create communities within communities that foster conversation and learning opportunities.

Plan food for your leaders—either snacks or a meal. If you serve a meal, provide something other than the food you typically serve when you're with teenagers. Be sure to offer a variety that accommodates everyone's dietary needs.

TRAINING YOUR TEAM WITH THE 5 FAITH BEYOND YOUTH GROUP COMPASS POINTS

The Faith Beyond Youth Group Compass is a research-based discipleship framework. Each of its five compass points launches you in a practical direction for teen discipleship that forms character. It's also a great tool with which to equip your volunteers.

During this event, you'll train your leaders on what the Faith Beyond Youth Group Compass is and how to use it by structuring your time together around each of the compass points. You'll **explain** what each compass point entails, **model** how to implement each point, and then **process** how each point can form faith that lasts beyond youth group in your young people. As your leaders see you utilize each compass point during your training, they'll be equipped with practical ideas to implement them in their own ministry with teenagers.



Cultivate Trust (20 minutes)

- **Explain** that *cultivating trust* means leveraging the relational strengths you already have with your students to help them develop character-forming identity, belonging, and purpose. Teens can build faith beyond youth group when they connect with adults in your ministry they can trust—leaders who show up consistently in their lives, lead with authenticity, and offer them empathy.
- **Model** *cultivating trust* by sharing a story about how an adult established trust with you when you were a teenager. Talk about the impact that the adult's ongoing presence has made in your life. Then ask a few other leaders to share stories of how adults cultivated trust with them when they were teenagers.

If your group doesn't know each other well, ask a couple of participants beforehand if they would come prepared to share about how an adult cultivated trust with them as teenagers. This will ensure that no one is caught off guard by your request—which could reduce trust.

- **Process** how your ministry might *cultivate trust* with your young people by discussing:
- How did consistency impact our teammates' younger selves in the stories we just heard?
 - What elements of consistency exist in our current ministry? How might we show teenagers even more consistency going forward?
 - How did the adults in our stories show empathy? What about authenticity?
 - In what practical ways can we show empathy to the young people in our care?
 - How can we share parts of our stories authentically and appropriately with young people?
 - Why is cultivating trust so important for character and faith formation?

Talking about how to share your stories authentically with young people can also provide an opening to talk about your church's policies for keeping kids safe.

Model Growth (30 minutes)

→ **Explain** that for faith and character formation, modeling means showing others who we are every day. Teenagers wonder, *Are you for real? Are you the same outside church as you are inside?* They're watching for what our everyday actions reveal. *Do we model growth?* When we live consistently, we let them know they can trust us with the parts of themselves they might be hesitant to bring to church—including their doubts, questions, mistakes, and hurts.

Often growth is modeled whenever we make a mistake and then take steps to both make it right and learn from it afterwards. Or when we express our own doubts and questions in an age-appropriate manner.

→ **Model** growth among your team by discussing some of the following questions. Invite your volunteers to consider how they've experienced growth in their own lives:

1. Tell us about a time when you recently made a mistake. How did you make things right afterward?
2. Choose one of the characteristics the Fuller Youth Institute studied in its Faith Beyond Youth Group research: compassion, perseverance, or forgiveness. How have you grown in this area in the last six months? How do you hope to grow in this characteristic in the next six months?
3. How have you grown—in any area of your life—in the last year?
4. What have you been learning recently?
5. If you could do one thing over again in your life, what would it be and why?
6. Who or what has most impacted the way you respond to failure?
7. What's one thing you wish every teenager understood about failure?
8. Think about something you're currently questioning or doubting in regard to your faith. Do you feel like you can safely express your questions or doubts at church? Among our leaders? What, if anything, do you think would need to change in order for this space to become safer for you to do so? How can we make our ministry safe for young people to express their faith-related questions and doubts?
9. How has your faith changed over the last four years (the amount of time a teenager spends in high school)?
10. Tell the story of your faith in seven words. Why did you choose those words?

Depending on the size of your group and the degree to which people know one another, consider choosing one question for everyone to reflect on, or allow people to choose for themselves which question they feel most comfortable answering. You might also allow people at least a minute to reflect (or even write down) their answer before inviting them to share it. If your group is large, consider asking people to share their answers in small groups. (In addition to being more welcoming, this will also save you time!)

→ **Process** how your ministry might *model growth* with young people by discussing:

- How easy or difficult was it for you to share examples of growth from your own life? Why do you think this was?
- Do you think it's easier or more difficult to share personal examples of growth with our teenagers? Why do you think this is?
- How might your willingness to model growth to young people form their character? Their faith?
- How might we model growth to teenagers during our youth group time and rhythms?
- How might we model growth to teenagers outside of our regular youth meetings and events?



10 TIPS TO HELP ENCOURAGE YOUR VOLUNTEERS TO ENGAGE AND CONNECT

Leading a discussion well can help your team feel confident as they cultivate trust, model growth, and share their personal stories. Here are ten tips for facilitating authentic sharing and good connection among your leaders.

1. Set the tone as people arrive for your training. Ahead of time, consider whether nametags might be helpful in this group to reduce awkwardness and increase name recognition. Greet people (by name, if possible) as they arrive. Introduce yourself to those you don't yet know. Help connect people with those they might not know or with those who share common interests.
2. Ask people to keep the stories shared during your gatherings "in the room," or confidential.
3. Occasionally, answer one of your own questions first in order to model the type and level of sharing you'd like to see from your leaders.
4. Don't be afraid of silence. If no one immediately answers your questions, silently count to ten. More often than not, someone (often a person you don't expect) will jump in. If no one does, reword your question to make sure people understand what you're asking.
5. If there's a known "talker" in your group who tends to dominate conversations, sit beside them. This will make it harder for you to make eye contact with them. Since eye contact can encourage speaking up, less eye contact often helps a person to respond less.

6. When someone shares, thank them for contributing to your conversation. Then build upon what they're saying. Ask whether others in the group agree or disagree with what's been shared. Summarize the wisdom people share to keep your discussion moving.

7. Invite people to respond to questions in different ways. Occasionally partner group members and invite them to share one-to-one. If your group is so large you're finding there isn't time for everyone to share, try breaking into smaller groups of three or four for some or all of the questions, and reserve some time for large-group interaction and reflection at key points. Rather than always inviting verbal responses, ask people to write out or draw their responses on sticky notes and then read each other's answers.

8. Take breaks when needed. You never know what feelings sharing might prompt. If you sense a topic or question is stirring up emotions for some, consider taking a break in order to help reset the room.

9. Don't forget to pray. Consider opening and closing with prayer, but also find ways to authentically pray during your meeting, perhaps in response to a particularly vulnerable moment of sharing.

10. As you cultivate trust among your leaders, you'll find that people will likely share more vulnerably with one another. Pay attention to what's being shared and follow up as needed afterward. Offer care and support to your leaders.

Teach for Transformation (40 minutes)

- **Explain** that teaching is a vital part of faith and character formation. Yet so often teaching can be a one-way transmission of information, which is seldom effective in learning or forming character. Some of the ways we can teach for transformation include following Jesus' example and building upon the work of others, telling stories, asking questions, and commissioning others with authority. We've already been using these strategies in this training as we've been exploring *cultivating trust and modeling growth*.
- **Model** *teaching for transformation* by spending a few minutes exploring who Gen Z is (chapter 2) as well as what character is (living out Jesus' goodness every day by loving God and our neighbors) and what it's not (behavioral modification and other ideas discussed in chapter 1.) Choose one or more of the *teach for transformation* practices to engage your team in these topics: Build upon the work of others, tell stories, ask questions, and commission others with authority.
- **Process** how your ministry might teach young people for transformation by discussing:
 - How does the definition of character as "living out Jesus' goodness every day by loving God and our neighbors" compare with the ways you've traditionally thought about character?
 - What's the relationship between character formation and faith formation? How might cultivating character lead to a faith that lasts beyond youth group?
 - Think about our training experience thus far today. How have you experienced teaching that goes beyond one-way information transmission? How might we teach for transformation when we gather with young people?

Make Meaning (35 minutes)

- **Explain** that reflecting on what happens in our lives is a critical aspect of understanding who we are and who we can be in Jesus. This is true for us—and for the teenagers we serve. Throughout their everyday experiences, teenagers wonder, *What happened? What does it mean? Where is God? What now?* Our job is to guide students through these cycles of action and reflection and *make meaning* by tapping into the power of naming experiences, evaluating our actions, and connecting to the larger biblical narrative before we go out and try again.
- **Model** *making meaning* with this activity that will help your volunteers integrate their faith with what they're currently experiencing in the world around them. In the days leading up to this training, pay attention to what people in your community are talking about. Choose a prominent issue, topic, or event people are talking about and explain what you've been hearing to your team. Then ask people to add to your summary.

Use these questions to help your team make meaning from what's happening in your community:

- Why do you think people are talking about this issue, topic, or event?
- How are (or aren't) the people involved in this issue, topic, or event demonstrating Christlike character? How does that make you feel?
- What does this issue, topic, or event mean for teenagers in our community?
- How might your faith help you understand or make sense of this issue, topic, or event?
- How does your faith compel you to respond to this issue, topic, or event?

If you have more than six people at your training, consider dividing into small groups for these discussions to ensure that everyone gets to talk. If you use small groups, ask a few experienced volunteers to serve as discussion leaders in advance. Give them a copy of the questions above so they know what you're asking of them.

→ **Process** how your ministry might *make meaning* with young people by discussing:

- How did (or didn't) our conversation today help you make meaning from this issue, topic, or event?
- On an average week, what kinds of issues, topics, or events do our young people need our help processing as they make meaning?
- How might we help our teenagers make meaning from those issues, topics, or events?

Practice Together (25 minutes)

- **Explain** that everyday life is the training ground for character formation. Young people are sent out to test the virtues they've learned about through modeling and teaching in your ministry. As we *practice together*, we walk with young people through a cycle of action and reflection, helping them try on service, leadership, hospitality, and holistic practices that move faith out of their heads and into their hands and feet. Through the struggles and victories of everyday life, young people develop character competence and eventually own their faith.
- **Model** *practicing together* by brainstorming practical ways you can implement each of the Faith Beyond Youth Group Compass points in the context of your particular ministry. (Chapters 4-8 of *Faith Beyond Youth Group* each contain a wealth of navigational tools meant to be practical examples for implementing each compass point. Consider summarizing these navigational tools as you lead this part of your training.) Then ask each leader to commit to one practice they will do as they serve teenagers in your ministry. Record their commitments so you can follow up with leaders to encourage them as they seek to implement that practice.

You could give your leaders the flexibility to choose one of the compass points they wish to focus on—or to strengthen a particular aspect of your ministry, you might find it more helpful for your whole team to focus on the same compass point.

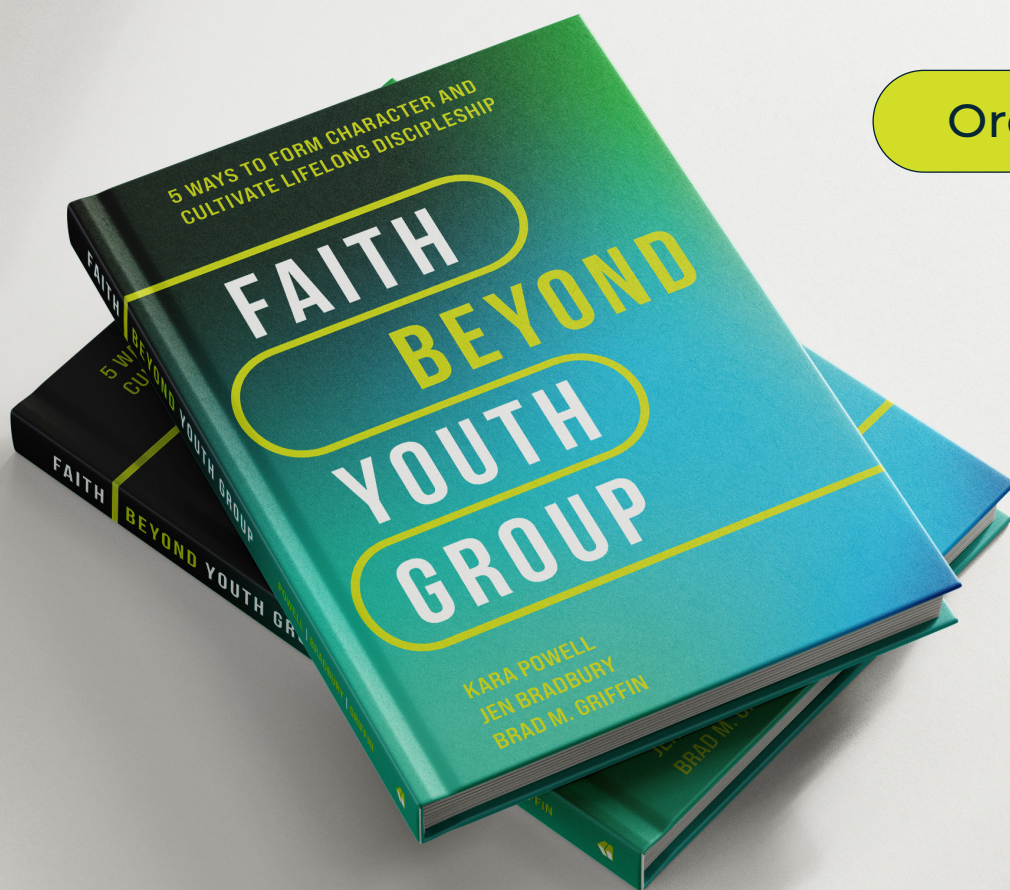
- **Process** how your ministry might *practice together* with young people by discussing:
- Throughout our training today, how did we practice action and reflection together?
 - How might we practice living out Christlike character together with the young people in our ministry? What regular opportunities do we have to practice together? What opportunities might we create for additional practice together?
 - How can we affirm the Christlike character we see in young people as we practice together?

CLOSING YOUR TRAINING EVENT

Wrap up your time together by ...

1. Thanking your team for coming. Let them know one specific thing you appreciated about your time together.
2. Communicating next steps, including how you will check in with your team about implementing the Faith Beyond Youth Group Compass. Consider scheduling a future time to gather to evaluate your ministry growth using the compass. There's an assessment for this in chapter 9 or you can [click to download this printable poster](#).
3. Praying together. Spend a few minutes praying for your leaders by name, along with any needs that have been mentioned in your time together. Then pray that God would use your ministry to form a faith that lasts beyond youth group in the young people in your ministry. Finally, pray for your church or faith community.

RESHAPE YOUR MINISTRY FOR REAL IMPACT— NOT JUST IN YOUR YOUTH ROOM, BUT EVERYWHERE STUDENTS GO



Order Now

Building on two decades of the Fuller Youth Institute's work and incorporating extensive new research and interviews, *Faith Beyond Youth Group* identifies the reasons it feels like you're working so hard but having so little impact, and offers five ways adult youth leaders can cultivate character for a lifetime of growing closer to Jesus rather than drifting away. With practical insight and tips, you'll find out how to cultivate trust, model growth, teach for transformation, practice together, and make meaning so that teenagers can become adults who hold fast to Jesus and boldly live out a robust faith in the world around them.

Teach your teens compassion from the inside out



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Based on research with over 350 ministry leaders, field-tested by youth groups around the country, and chock-full of tips from leaders like you, *Compassion from the Inside Out* is a 4-week high school ministry curriculum to equip your students for a lifelong journey of faith-filled compassion.