



# Transitioning Youth Leaders into the Life of the Congregation After Camp Hope

You just finished a great summer of Camp Hope, but what happens now? Be prepared! Once youth are part of Camp Hope, they expect to continue to be a leader throughout the coming academic year. However, when youth serve in other areas of the church, they are disappointed. During Camp Hope, they are entrusted with a great responsibility. It is significant. It is impactful. It is meaningful. But when they move into other leadership roles in the congregation, they are looked on to be a “helper” rather than a “partner” in ministry. If you want to be successful in transitioning your youth into leadership positions at your church throughout the year, you have to be intentional. You must prepare your youth as well as the adults in your congregation.

## Preparing Your Youth

Preparing your youth for Camp Hope is not any different than preparing them for any other leadership role. Think about the process you used for Camp Hope and repeat this process.

1. **Recruit:** Invite them to be a leader. Better yet, have another adult invite them. Everyone likes to be personally invited. Think about the gifts that your youth have and fit their gifts with areas of leadership in your congregation. Have the worship leader invite them to lead music, read the prayers of the day or join the adult choir. Have the altar guild invite them onto their committee. Have the education leader invite them to teach Sunday School or give the Children’s Sermon. Have them run sound, video or even build the church website.
2. **Prepare:** It is vital that you give ongoing training for all of your leaders! Training helps everyone know what their role is and what is expected. Train your Sunday School leaders. Train your ushers and greeters. Don’t just talk about it. Practice it. Role-playing is a great way to learn. Just like choirs practice singing; greeters, ushers, readers, even giving a sermon should be practiced in order to be successful. Also, think about how you treat your youth in these training sessions. Are they separated out or integrated with other adult leaders? Specifically address their role as partners and not helpers. Raise up their gifts as leaders so other adults value them as part of the team.
3. **Mentoring:** If we want spiritual youth, we must have spiritual adults. Having an adult walk alongside of your youth is a great way to build community across the generations. This could also be thought of as an apprenticeship. Remember, bold leaders help others grow as leaders.
4. **Evaluation:** In order to grow as leaders, we must have honest feedback on what we are doing well and what we can improve upon. Have a regular time to give encouragement and guidance. This is not just a time for you to talk but to listen. Ask the youth how it’s going. Do they like where they’re serving? Do they feel like they’re making a difference? What changes would they suggest either in their role or in the ministry itself?
5. **Celebration:** Remember to thank your leaders for their time and commitment. Having a time when all your leaders can come together to celebrate is another great way to build community between generations! This can be done halfway through the year or before the summer break... or both!

## Preparing Your Adults

Preparing your adults is just as vital as preparing your youth. How your adults treat the youth is important. Some of this is done in your leadership training as outlined above. However, talking specifically to the adults one-on-one is vital. Let them know that this is not just about youth helping. This is about discipleship. Serving alongside of others not only helps the other individual grow in faith, it also helps us grow deeper in our own faith.

Many adults don’t want to mentor youth into leadership roles because they simply don’t know how. Gather your key adult leaders for training in this process.

