

A Different Way to Choose Leaders

by Carol Duerksen

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 The purpose of these two sessions is to discern leaders for your youth group. Invite everyone that you want to be a part of this process.
- 2 Pray about the sessions. Invite others to be in prayer for it prior to and during the sessions.
- 3 Paper and pencils
- 4 Newsprint and markers
- 5 Bibles

SESSION ONE

- 1 Welcome participants to the meeting and open with a prayer. Then explain that this meeting time is to discern who might be involved in leadership of your youth group. Explain that this will not be a popularity contest. It will not necessarily involve deciding that the persons with the “right answers” all of the time are to be the leaders. It may not be the persons who are especially outgoing. It **may** be a person who doesn’t have it all together. Bottom line, it should be a person or persons who are honest about their relationship with God, and are open to seeking God and growing with God.
- 2 Spend 10 minutes in silent prayer. You may wish to send participants to their own space during this time, or keep everyone in the room. Either way, everyone is to spend the 10 minutes seeking God, asking God to be a part of the process, asking God to bring to mind those who should be involved in leadership.
- 3 Hand out paper and pencils. Ask everyone to write down the names of persons they feel God might call to be a leader. Remind them that the main criteria are persons who they believe are honestly and actively seeking a growing relationship with God.
- 4 Collect the papers and make a list on the newsprint of the persons named. Remind students not to negate any of the persons named, and not to think “no way” if they see the name of someone they don’t agree with. Remind students to trust God and the discernment process.
- 5 Read Luke 1:26-38 with the participants.
- 6 Ask a girl to read the following poem dramatically:

Lord, I don't understand where
My yes will lead.
I only know I must say it.
The winter is cold,
The night is dark.
There is no Star of Bethlehem to guide me
On the Kansas prairies,
But the memory of Mary blazes
A trail through my heart,
And the ever-living
Christ child is born afresh.
She was about my age
When she said her Yes that changed the world.
How I long to say a yes that will also change my world.
In the fear, the frailty, the faults
Of myself and others,
A faithless no beckons me to speak,
But I refuse.
There is loveliness in a yes
That is frail and yet fearless
In the face of so much uncertainty.
I do not hope to be called blessed as Mary,
And yet in my willingness to pray
To the one light of love
In the endless abyss
I feel your blessing—
Warming my cold,
Bringing royalty to my rough places,
Becoming simple presence in complex mystery,
Making a young girl hopeful
Shaping out of this prayer a blessed peace.

—By Laurie Oswald Robinson

- 7 Tell students to write the whole list of names on a piece of paper to take home. Their instructions for the week are to pray over the list. If their name is on the list, they are to pray for God's leading in their life—whatever that may be.

SESSION TWO

- 1 Paper and pencils
- 2 Copies of the poem from the other session—one for each student

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Welcome students and ask them to take their shoes off. Gather in a circle, and say that the reason you asked them to remove their shoes is because they are on “holy ground” tonight as you discern leadership in the group.
- 2 Begin with 10 minutes of silent prayer again. Encourage participants to pray for God’s leading in today’s process.
- 3 Hand out paper and pencils again, and ask students to write down what they felt during the week. Did they feel God putting a name or names in their minds? Were they feeling called themselves? Did they honestly seek God during the past week?
- 4 Collect the papers and process what you find on the papers. Here you will need to discern what is happening. What do you feel God leading the group to do? Can leadership be shared by all of the persons named?
- 5 When you have discerned your leaders, invite those who have been called to read the poem together. Note: you may wish to change “Kansas prairies” to your own setting, and guys will want to change the second last line to “guy.”
- 6 Share a commissioning prayer for those who have been chosen.
- 7 Invite everyone to take the poem home and to know that it is their poem. Whether or not they are a part of the youth group leadership, they are all called to say “yes” to God in different ways.