

The MTA Philosophy of Ministry at the Micro Level

As we continue to move forward in our pursuit to be a national resource provider in facilitating Ministry Training Areas we are receiving an increasing number of phone calls and emails (which I greatly appreciate) with questions concerning how to implement MTA's into local church youth ministries. God is doing a mighty work in our churches as there seems to be an awakening to biblical ministry. We have seen a great influx of churches interested in partnering with us in MTA philosophy of ministry and nothing could be more exciting for me.

In this issue of YOUTHLINE I want to describe the "framework" needed to be effective in implementing Ministry Training Areas in your church. While each church has the freedom to structure their ministry as they wish, this framework will help us to be similar in our approaches. In order to see Ministry Training Areas develop in your youth ministry there are three things that must be accomplished.

ANALYZE the resources available to you. There are two very important components to every Ministry Training Area; students willing and able to try, and adults willing and able to mentor. The most important of the two components is having a key adult in each "area" you wish to implement. Without leaders, the youth pastor/leader will become quickly overloaded and fail to be effective. The other part of your analysis is to see how you can use the teens in your church (not just youth ministry). Determine what are the best MTAs for your church and whether there might be some other creative ideas you can implement that are unique to your situation.

SELECT AND PLACE key adults in MTA leadership roles. Let's take "drama" for example: If you have a key adult or adults who are capable of leading drama teams or monologues (one person dramas) you can begin to implement that MTA. As the youth pastor/leader, meet with that person and spell out what you would like to see happen. Ultimately, the goal is for that key adult to be mentoring teens in drama ministry. Work with them to develop a plan for using drama in the ministry of the church and then supporting them as the drama leader. The best place to start is with the adults. Find qualified capable leaders and empower them to begin providing the MTA that they are capable of

providing. Don't forget too that the youth pastor/leader can also lead an area or two provided they have the time to give to it. You may or may not have students interested in certain MTAs but you never know how they will respond until something is made available. It's crucial to start with your adult help and let the students filter into that. This may mean that you only focus on one or two MTAs to begin this process, and that is just fine.

CAST A VISION and communicate it to the church. Our churches need to be behind this goal in ministry or it becomes a real short trip. Communication needs to be ample with your board, congregation, and specifically the parents of your teens and the teens themselves. Don't assume that anyone will just want to participate or support this idea. Communicate extensively about what you see as the end result of conducting ministry this way. Present the details about how you plan to start, what areas you will begin with and how often meetings/training will take place. When you have educated the church family and promoted the MTAs you wish to begin and successfully conveyed why they are important, your church will support and in some cases push you in this new ministry philosophy. It will help your students to do the most important thing they can do in their developmental years: Serve in the local church. As I often say "*servicing students stay.*" If we are utilizing and training our students today we will not need to throw meaningless externals at them as they grow older, and our churches will grow stronger for the Glory of God!

One last thing; if you are interested or have young men that are interested in the preaching MTA, we now have a resource just for you. This month, IFCA youth ministry has published a resource that will help young men pursue expositional sermon preparation. It is entitled "BACK PACK, A Journey Toward Biblical Expositional." Using the acrostic "BACK PACK" this resource will help young men understand how to study God's Word and put together a message in a focused way.

There is a teacher's guide (for your mentoring adult) and student's guides. Each booklet is spiral bound and is five-dollars. Call Travis Huseby to obtain this resource (616) 608-2376.