



Thursday, March 03, 2011

Please excuse _____ from school on March 11, 2011. He/she will be attending a youth conference in Knoxville, TN with Oak Park Ministries. This event is a very positive venue for teen-agers. Nearly 20,000 teens will gather for this weekend event. I'm sure that each teen will return better because of this event. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (251) 599-8767.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Nobles", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Richie Nobles
Student pastor
Oak Park Ministries
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ABC's of Winterfest

Building Accountability—One of the most important lessons for youth is accountability. Your group's weekend at Winterfest provides an excellent opportunity to work on this worthy goal.

First, talk to your group about their behavior. Ask them what they feel is their responsibility to the people who will serve them in the hotel, restaurants and stores. Develop a behavior code for all to follow. We ask for accountable behavior in the following areas:

1. Be kind to everyone...on the streets and inside business establishments.
2. Be thoughtful; for example, leave a 15% tip in restaurants when you eat.
3. Be respectful of others' property. Don't litter or damage furniture, etc.
4. Be cooperative with city laws. Don't jay-walk. Use the marked crossings.
5. Be Christian in all your actions. Think about whom you are representing.
6. Be courteous. Every youth group is to be in their rooms and maintain quiet between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. This is simply hotel courtesy. Each group leader/church is responsible for property damage incurred by the members of their group.

Remember that Winterfest is a Church of God National Youth Conference. Each youth leader and group represents their own local church and our entire denomination. Help us make the best impression for Christ and our church. By building into this weekend a behavior code of ethics for your group, you are helping them become accountable to Christ, the church, the youth leader and one another.

Building New Beginnings—Winterfest is an excellent opportunity to develop new relationships. These new beginnings may have a positive effect on the rest of your life. Take time and make the effort to nurture new beginnings in these key areas:

1. **Youth group to local congregation.** Winterfest is a natural, high profile, first-class activity that can easily be used as a "look what our youth are doing now" communication to the local church family. Let the excitement of Winterfest build a bridge of shared ministry for your entire congregation.
2. **Youth leader to parents.** If you are taking teens on a long weekend journey to meet up with thousands of other youth, parents are going to want to know all about it. Take advantage of your own personal philosophy, and how it all fits together. It is also a good time to involve and recruit adult leaders to help out.
3. **Youth leader to teens.** Be very aware of the awesome opportunity to build new relationships to your teens as their leader on an event such as Winterfest. Let them know the entire trip is for them. Be visible and personally involved with your group. Throw in an extra "something special" just for your teens. Establish your authority and gain new respect by demonstrating punctuality, integrity, organization and communication through the event. Be a consistent, compassionate friend to those you are leading. Try relating new, positive experiences at Winterfest to the "normal" life back home and you'll see long lasting results in your relationship to your group.
4. **Teens to other teens.** Winterfest is designed to bring young people from many places, backgrounds, and situations together for new relationships to be developed. Encourage your teens to branch out and establish new friendships. Help them to nurture relationships with other teens and even entire groups.
5. **Teens to Christ.** Winterfest is a Christian event. The goal of our retreat is to help our youth find a closer walk with Jesus Christ. As their leader, look for every opportunity to pray, counsel, and model your own spirituality to your teens in an effort to firmly establish a new beginning with God.

Ideas on Keeping Your Group Together:

1. Have teens assigned to groups of at least two or four people.
2. It is our aim to have teens draw closer to God, their leader and each other. Therefore, we suggest that your youth group attend each session together and sit together as a group.
3. It will also be necessary for your leadership to be role models in the services as well as on the streets.