

How can I help young people understand their purpose?

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My son wants to be a professional soccer player. When he's done with that, he wants to be an engineer. Or maybe an architect. Some days, it's both. Like many pre-teens, his career dreams are still emerging. Yet moving through three (or more) careers is a common experience for adults. I cringe whenever people ask him, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Like the average U.S. adult, he will likely hold twelve or more jobs after high school. So whether he's a professional athlete, banker, social worker, or groundskeeper, my prayer is that whatever he and the other young people in our church do, they would "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

Identify community needs and assets

At your next gathering of young people, create a list of the needs they see in the community as well as the assets the community holds (including their own strengths). Work together to create a plan that empowers young people to meet those needs and maximize the impact of those assets. This could be short-term (like a park clean-up day) or long-term (like consistent volunteering to tutor children). Let young people drive the decisions and invite adults to offer encouragement, accompaniment, and support.

Adults and Teenagers Serving Together

Find ways that adults and teenagers can serve together. With adequate adult support, teenagers can bring fresh energy into event planning, new ideas for sermon prep, and insightful questioning into the budgeting process. They may even see opportunities to make a difference in your community that adults might have missed.

Host a vocation night

Invite community leaders, career counselors, and congregants representing different professions to host booths at an annual vocation night. Identify leaders who can help create resumes, provide service opportunities, and even hire on the spot. Set aside time for adults to give presentations about how they have made a difference within and outside of their careers. Include those in different sectors (e.g., non-profit, for-profit, stay-at-home parents). A vocation fair can also be a great opportunity to partner with other churches and schools in the area.

Young people's purpose may include school and a career, but it's much broader. The call to follow Jesus requires our whole lives! When young people make a difference today, they have higher self-esteem, increased awareness of others, and most importantly, a greater understanding of how their entire life might become a giant thank-you note to God.

Check Out
This Resource
→

[How to Help Teenagers
Find Gods Purpose](#)



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