

Young Life Green Bay

Song Leading Tips



Make sure you have ONE SONG LEADER. The group needs a focal point to direct their attention. You may have a guy and a girl leading songs, but one person needs to be "on the point." It's okay to take turns, just make sure the crowd (and you) knows who's leading each song. I once saw a club with 4 people standing in a line all singing the song, but NO ONE WAS LEADING!

It is best if the song leader doesn't have to worry about playing an instrument. Mike Ashburn (National Director of Young Life Program) says a guitar player ought to swing his guitar around behind his back a couple of times during club so that there's nothing between the leader and the crowd.

One of the biggest problems we have today is leaders who are up front but are just singing with the group. A song leader should be so familiar with the words that they don't need to stare at the screen over their shoulders. The song leader directs the group, encourages them to sing, leads the crowd as to when to come in and keeps the flow of the club going.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. It's not so much the song you sing, but how you sing the song.

Song Leaders - Designate a few people on your leadership team to act as song leaders. Some people are naturally gifted, yet others can hone their skills by working on them week after week. This will work better than rotating song leaders each week. You may want to consider giving ownership of your club music to some senior campaigners. Have them lead songs for a while. Teach them and give them regular feedback.

Song Planner - Yes, you can plan out your music for an entire semester. If a song comes up later that you absolutely must do, you can always insert it. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- a. Match the music to the message.** (i.e. Sing songs of the Cross when you are speaking about the cross, Sing songs of brokenness when you speak about sin.)
- b. Build a repertoire.** Repeat songs regularly and establish some continuity and favorites. Use half of last week's songs for the next week's club.
- c. Put a motion song** or a song with claps in club each week.
- d. Always start club** with an upbeat winner.
- e. When you teach a new song** repeat it the next 2-3 weeks and sandwich it between two standards.

Build a team - If there's only one guitar player add another. If you have two guitar players, add a bass. Get someone to play percussion. Utilize campaigners who are mature and teach them the "Whys" of everything you do with music. Help them realize that it's an accompaniment of the kids in club not a performance. You want to unify the group and draw kids to Christ.

Use at least 35-40% content - If there wasn't a spoken message in club, would there be enough content in the music selected to present the Gospel? Kids remember the content songs more than any other songs. If we don't use content, we don't capitalize on music's power to bring people to Christ. What runs through your mind all day after you've gone to work or school? The song you last heard on the radio.

Incorporate new music – This means more than just utilizing current (on the Top 40 radio now) music. What are the songs that you need to add to your club's repertoire? Were there songs that you learned at camp that you could learn (especially content)? Sometimes we spin our wheels trying brand "new" songs that aren't that great, when we could use some others that would be "new to us."

Tech support - Change your guitar strings, buy an inexpensive tuner, check your cables and PA if you use them take some window cleaner to the overhead inside and out, buy a spare bulb to keep with you just in case, buy a carry-along filing case for your transparencies, get hanging folders and organize your songs A-Z, make paper copies to go behind your transparencies so you can read 'em (they'll last longer that way, too.), include the songwriter, year of copyright, and the publisher, check for misspellings and legibility, replace sloppy copies with new, make paper copies of the songs to put in front of you so you don't have to look over your shoulder at the words, Use a music stand, etc.

Make it Fun - Have a blast and remember that music isn't just a set up for the proclamation - it IS the proclamation!