

## **Working Successfully with Teen Helpers**

Having a young person assist you will bring some added responsibilities as well as benefits. Here are a few tips to make this a positive experience for you, the young person, and the children.

Begin praying for youth helper, that he or she will enjoy positive growth through this ministry opportunity.

Talk to your youth worker before VBS. Tell him or her several reasons why you are glad you'll be working together (e.g., "I've been told you're a very caring person," etc.)

Fond out the type of activities the youth enjoys and any experience he or she has had working with children.

Plan each session's tasks for the youth worker to do. Seek to avoid "dead time" when the youth worker feels unneeded.

Do not limit youth workers to "flunky" jobs, but be alert to assigning jobs the youth will view as being meaningful.

Emphasize the importance of learning each child's name and building friendships with each one. Encourage the youth to look for moments to sit next to a child and become their friends.

Give lots of praise and encouragement. Feelings of nervousness and uncertainty probably will not show under a teenager's façade of being "cool." However, the youth worker's confidence and satisfaction depend to a great extent on affirmation of things done well.

Take a few minutes at the end of the session to review how things went and to prepare the youth worker for the next session.

Remember that they are here to work for you. Give them jobs to do and check in with them often to make sure they are following through. Tell them specifically when you want them to arrive each day and if you need them to stay after VBS is over.