

# 5 Ways to Empower Students to Live

Less Like Hippos & More Like Honeybees



# HIPPOS < HONEYBEES?

Hippos and Honeybees have a lot to do with effective youth ministry...

Hippos are consumers, eating over 100lbs of vegetation each day. In addition, hippos never walk backwards. They are always pushing forward, looking for vegetation to consume. Modern ministry approaches often mirror this idea - treating young people as consumers, expecting little more than passive attendance and never stepping back to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.

By contrast, honeybees are creators. They work together, with each bee knowing their role and responsibility, to maintain the health of the hive and produce one of the world's most amazing substances. In a similar fashion, when we lean into the creative potential of our young people, and set up systems for them to discover and develop that potential, we'll see them empowered and unleashed for God's glory!

God has a mighty purpose for each young person He's placed in your sphere of influence. Often these students have no idea of the deep potential God placed within them, or how to tap into their God-given abilities. Here are 5 ways that you can empower your students to live "less like hippos and more like honeybees!"



# ONE: RECOGNIZE IT'S NOT THE JUNIOR HOLY SPIRIT

Empowering youth IN ministry is based on the reality that those who accept Christ are fully in-dwelted with the Holy Spirit. Even if we believe this theologically, it's not always lived out functionally. At times it can be easy to structure our ministries as if young people only have access to a "junior Holy Spirit", or as if they need to wait until some future point for God to truly work through them. It's essential to remind ourselves that God is fully present and fully at work in those young people who have accepted Christ as Lord & Savior. He is doing mighty things in and through them. They are empowered with incredible spiritual potential. It is our responsibility to structure our ministries in ways that help them grow in practical and ongoing ways so they can live less like hippos and more like honeybees!

## TWO: CELEBRATE A TEEN'S POTENTIAL

A vast majority of young people have never been told that they are leaders in any way in their home. To help a youth step into their God-given potential requires that we first open their eyes. Youth workers have the opportunity to move many young people from disbelief in their leadership potential toward grasping the possibility of value and worth inside them. Only then will the reality of how they are empowered by God make sense to them. Celebrating - proclaiming, reminding, reinforcing and pointing out the potential you see inside each young person - is a crucial step in helping them live less like hippos and more like honeybees.

## THREE: BUILD AN ACTIVE STRUCTURE

Youth workers are notorious for having passion & energy. They're less notorious for developing sustainable systems. Making the effort to merge your passion for students with a system that allows every young person to step into their giftings will reap incredible benefits. Consider ways that you can create opportunities for all youth to lean into the plans and potential that God has for them. How will this work for the outgoing as well as the timid? How about the pre-Christian, new Christian, and in-church-all-my-life young person in your group? Wherever they're at on their faith journey, implement structures that call each young person to actively engage their faith and take the next step in their walk with Christ. This will provide the framework for young people to live less like hippos and more like honeybees!

## FOUR: FOCUS ON THURSDAY MORNING

Many ministries excel at engaging the heart, mind and soul of young people during their regular meetings. Far fewer give students a tangible way to pursue Christ throughout the rest of the week. If a youth ministry meets on a Wednesday evening, do students know how to live for Christ when they wake up Thursday morning? Whatever day of the week you meet with students, it's crucial to consider the "Thursday mornings" - the times when students aren't gathered for ministry programming under your leadership. It's vital to unleash them to live for Christ 24/7. Whether a student attends every event the church provides or has sporadic attendance with occasional online connection, the goal is to help them move Christ out of an occasional life compartment and into the fullness of daily life. This is a critical way to help young people live less like hippos and more like honeybees.

# FIVE: MAXIMIZE ADULT TIME & PRESENCE

Adults like you and I love young people. You love seeing how a young person can find identity, worth and purpose through being part of your ministry. You're able to cut through the clutter of technology, generational divides, and the smell of an un-showered middle schooler to see God working in mighty ways. You invest in the next generation because you believe in them. Continue to be fully present with the young people God places in your sphere of influence. Within the proper boundaries, continue to sacrificially invest time and energy into those students. Your time and presence is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Help students to experience authentic love, overflowing from the love of Christ within you. Continue to make this investment even when you aren't seeing a return or reciprocation. This will jumpstart a young person's ability to live less like hippos and more like honeybees.

## MORE WAYS TO EMPOWER

You have the opportunity to point students to a deeper level of faith. Under your leadership, young people can discover their abilities - and be empowered in them to change the world. Christian Endeavor partners with local churches to implement empowerment ideas like the five found in this resource and many more! If you're ready to go all-in with creating honeybees in your ministry, check out CE's *"Hippos to Honeybees Starter Kit."*

**HIPPOS TO HONEYBEES STARTER KIT**

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