

BETHANY YOUTH NATION

PARENT GUIDE

2018-2019



Welcome to BYN!

On behalf of our entire youth ministry team, we want to welcome you to the Bethany Youth Nation! Whether your teen is already connected and you want to know more about BYN, or this is your first glance into what makes us tick, we're glad you're reading this handy resource! We are excited for the opportunity to serve you and your family. Enjoy the read and be sure to connect with us with any questions you may have.

It's our pleasure to serve you,
Martin, Dave and Daniel
#herewithyou

A Quick Snapshot of 'the Nation'

There are a lot of things we will cover in this guide that we want parents to know about the Bethany Youth Nation, but if you only have a few minutes, this list narrows it down to 10 key things that matters most in our youth ministry...

10—When/Where/How Much? For anything that might be going on with the Bethany Youth Nation, we do our best not only to communicate with the students, but with you as well. Make sure you are part of our blog and Facebook communities, our email list, and grab your copy of Bethany's Events Guide. A yearly calendar is available online at bethanycc.ca and at the end of this guide as well.

9—We are Not Here to Simply Entertain your Youth. Yes we will do some wild, crazy, and absolutely ridiculous things with them—but our primary goal is to provide multiple opportunities where they can connect with and be influenced by God. We value your children too much to just entertain them.

8—Parents are the Primary Influence in Student's Lives. As you know, we are *an* influence, not *the* influence. We're only directly involved in your sons'/daughters' lives for six years, and even then only for a couple hours each week; you're directly involved for a lifetime. You have the greater authority and responsibility. Thus, we want to assist you, bless you, encourage you, and share in the journey with you.

7 - Family over Youth Group. Your lives can get busy, and we don't want to steal your student away from your connecting time or distract them from what matters in the family at home. We want to join you in making this clear to your teen. Our simple calendar reflects this value.

6—The Power of Questions. We believe one of the best ways for students to integrate their faith into their lives and make it their own is giving them the space to ask questions. So it's no wonder that most of our lessons use the power of questions to allow students to reflect and develop their maturing faith. Kara Powell said, "Doubt is not toxic to faith; unexpressed doubt is." We want to give students the space to question and wrestle with issues of God and faith.

5—**We are Here to Serve.** We do not want to put up walls of self-defense and excuses. We want to communicate openly and honestly so the influence we have in your teen always remains a team effort. We also make mistakes and say and do things unintentionally that causes your student to disengage. Please share with us if this has happened. We will make every effort to rebuild any bridges that need repaired. Also, we want to be a resource for you. We can't promise that we'll have all the answers, but we will intently listen!

4—**Building into the lives of youth is a slow, relational process.** It takes years to build a strong faith. We are here to encourage students through the process of growth and provide them with support to lean on as they take more and more faith risks. The reality is this: the growth trajectory is different for every student. We don't want any youth left behind, ignored, or put off to the side. Our leaders are in this for the long haul, and care for each student in their group and connects with each of them wherever they are in their journey of faith. Understanding this helps us all avoid the hurried or 'quick fix' expectations.

3—**Serving is a key element in the Bethany Youth Nation strategy.** We would love to see your teen developing and using their skills to serve God and make this world a better place. Encourage your teenager to be involved in all our serving experiences. Pulling students away from their familiar routines and comfortable expectations will help burst their worldview and will help create space for the Spirit of Jesus to work in their lives. As most of our students have experienced serving together is very rewarding and builds great memories!

2—**Find the Best Leaders to Invest in Students.** Since our volunteer leaders have the direct connection with your student, it makes sense to find the best leaders possible to have the most positive influence in their lives. Our motto is "We are the directors; our small group leaders are the pastors". I'm proud to say that our leaders are committed to living out the way of Jesus and seeing your teen develop their faith and devotion to God.

1—**Activate the Power of God through Prayer.** Understand this; God is more interested in you and your children than all of us are. Through prayer we open ourselves to the strength He provides in Jesus Christ.

Our Outcomes

What we attempt to accomplish at BYN flows from the vision of Bethany – "To change the world starting here in Niagara. To change lives with Jesus. To be changed by Jesus." At BYN we've taken time to consider what we desire to see in the lives of students. And because of this we've been very intentional in the environments we've created so as to achieve those desired outcomes. Our Strategic Focus is to "Give students a place to belong, so they can believe and become all who God created them to be." We want students to:

Belong without Restriction

Believe without Reservation

Become without Regret

For students, their journey begins with belonging. We intentionally create a place for them to belong without restriction. There are many instances in life when we behave a certain way before we understand the full implications of how what we are doing will affect the rest of our life. Did you fully understand the social stigma of eating with your hands when you first picked up a spoon? Did you know how walking would change your life when you took your first steps? More than likely you were simply modeling the behaviour you watched and were encouraged in from those around you. So here at BYN we give students space to 'do as we do' in the context of belonging and relationship. Behavioural modification is not our desired outcome though.

We encourage students to take the next step in their spiritual journey by creating a place for them to believe without reservation. We believe that the scriptures present the best way to live life, and that the God who created the world and inspired those scriptures is to be embraced and is worthy of our full-life's devotion.

Our desire for students is to not only hold onto this understanding during their teen years, but to become the kind of adults who God created and desires them to be. Adults who will look back on a lifetime of decisions and memories and say they have no regrets.

To be more concise, our sign of success and health here at BYN is to see an increasing number of students who beyond their teen years:

- CONNECT daily with Christ
- JOURNEY closely with at least two others
- SERVE at least weekly, intentionally

Our People

Because we highly value students, we place great value on who we invite onto our leadership team and what training and resourcing we provide. As was said before, our leaders are the pastors to your teens. Their role is to be a spiritual role model and mentor for their few in their small group, to be a connecting point to our larger BYN and Bethany communities, to relationally connect with the students who they care for, and to serve families as needed. Our leaders commit to serving at least 3 hours per week – 2 hours for our program, 1/2 an hour planning their lesson and 1/2 an hour connecting with the students in their small group. We want you to know that your teen's small group leader is another resource for you. Connect with them if you want to know something about your teen or if you would like another person praying about a specific situation. Here are a few things our leaders have committed to do:

- Connect regularly with your student outside of small group.
- Send Postcards to students
- Do something fun with their entire small group outside of Tuesday nights or other BYN events.
- Come to the BYN Family Lunch Event on Sunday, Sept 30th to connect with parents!
- Connect with Parents to offer support
- Encourage Students with a GOYO Resource
- Hangout on a Student's Turf – whether it's a volleyball game, a dance recital, or a school play, the point is to show up somewhere that's meaningful to your student.

Our Programs

Here's an overview of the road to health we've adopted at BYN:

- Create safe and meaningful small group communities for students
- Surround them with godly leaders who invest in them and model Christ-living
- Make faith resources easily available to them
- Connect individuals and small group communities with serving opportunities
- Regular exposure to mission and serving experiences
- Support and Resource Parents

Here's just a sentence or two about each of our programs:

Small Groups – Small groups is our core program. Here students are clustered in communities of 6-14 similar age teens. These communities gather on a weekly basis during the school year, meet in the various classrooms at Bethany Church, and are led by two adult volunteers. Our groups follow the relational approach of teaching, and leaders use the power of questions, rather than lecture style communication.

TAG Teams – TAG Teams are project-specific small groups for Jr. Youth that run from September to January each ministry year. TAG is an acronym for 'talent and gifts.' The project specific groups this year include cooking with guys, drama, music, funstruction, automotive, woodworking, sports, baking, tech (lights and sound in the auditorium), serve big, sculpting and painting, crafts, and photography. Students sign up for the group of their choice on a first-come first-served basis. TAG concludes with a presentation night the last Tuesday in January for family and friends. Once TAG Teams conclude, students go into gender and grade specific small groups.



Grow-on-your-Own – Our hope is that students will begin to take more and more of the responsibility for their faith; that they will grow on their own! We provide free resources for students to take from The Hub each week.

Impact Events – Small group communities are encouraged to serve together at least two times each ministry year - this includes our 'Impact Night' on October 31st where we'll be collecting canned good for the Salvation Army Food Bank and our 'Day of Impact' on Saturday, April 27th where we'll spend the day serving our local community partners. Individual serving options are posted to our Instagram page as we become aware of them. We also strongly encourage our students to serve at their school. If your teen needs community hours for school, feel free to speak with us to see what opportunities are available.



Through our 'Niagara Youth Collective' initiative, we encourage our Bethany

students - and students across the Niagara Region to #occupythehalls through praying for their school, seek to serve on their campus, share what God has done in their lives, and to take Alpha to their schools and run the youth film series during the second semester.

The Landing – The Landing is our teen support group that happens in conjunction with Celebrate Recovery every Friday night. When students go through something difficult, it's nice to have extra support. At times because of the nature of what a student is going through, it's difficult to bring it up in their small group or with their family, so that's where The Landing comes in. Please speak with us about accessing this valuable resource.



Our Parents

Parenting teens is difficult and stretching and life-changing and wonderful all at the same time! Our desire is to come alongside you to support and we'll work to inspire and resource you well in your journey to raise the teens in your home. Here are five themes to focus on during these parenting years we think will help leverage your impact:

- Widen the Circle - Invite others to invest in your children so they have other key influencers helping to shape their life.
- Imagine the End - Focus your priorities on what matters most. Many things matter but only one thing matters the most - your child's relationship with Jesus.
- Fight for the Heart - Create a culture of unconditional love within your home to fuel the emotional and moral health of your children.
- Create a Rhythm - Create a sense of purpose around your everyday experiences. Being sure to increase the quantity of quality time you spend together.
- Make it Personal - Parents model spiritual growth. As you grow in your faith you are better able to lead your children.

90 Second Next Steps - Each week we'll post and archive short parenting videos to our Facebook page. Through these videos we'll encourage you to bring your best to your parenting, challenge you and give you a few insights along the way. All in 90 seconds or less.

ParentLife Live - During these interactive 3 week seminars led by Martin Nieuwets we'll delve a deeper into a relevant parenting topic and provide. We'll provide supervised activities for your younger children, so no need for babysitting!! Here's what we're covering this year:

[Future Now: Helping Your Teen Decide What To Do After High School: Nov. 14, 21 & 28](#)

"One of the most stressful challenges you and your teen will face will be discerning the future together. Career, spouse, financial, children - over the next 5 years, your graduate will likely make the most life defining decisions that will chart the course for the rest of their lives. Our

conversations need to be more than figuring out what school to go to or which program to enrol in and more about creating space for self-discovery and reflection. *Future Now* will help you think and talk differently about the future with your teen that will help them not only survive this critical transition but will launch them into their future. Much like a final exam, these are discussions you don't want to cram in the night before."

Topics include:

- Nine Common Myths about Finding God's Roadmap for your Teen
- Discerning God's Will
- Helping your Teen Take Ownership over Their Future
- Utilizing Personal Assessments to Help Clarify Direction
- How you can Foster Emotional Intelligence in your Teen
- Great Questions to Ask Before Choosing a School or a Program
- Advantages of an Intentional Gap Year Experience
- Widen the Circle: Intentional Career Mentoring
- Helping your Young Adult Create and Keep a Budget
- Handling Stress Constructively
- Conflict Resolution

Right Click: Parenting your Teen in a Media-Mad World: March 20 & 27 & April 3

"Feel like your teens are drowning in a sea of new questions, apps and devices? Want to talk about digital and social media more with your teens but aren't sure how? *Right Click* will help you think and talk differently about media and will help you develop relationships, not rules. Supervision, not surveillance. And best of all, a plan that works without making media - or you - the enemy."

Topics include:

- Why is my Teen always checking their phone?
- The New World of Gaming and App chat
- Not all Screen Time is the Same
- Conflict Resolution
- How Can I Help My Family Actually Be Together When We're in the Same room
- How Much Is Too Much? - Helping your Teen Self-Regulate and Create their Own Boundaries
- Media Discernment - Helping Your Teen Decide The Good From The Bad
- Handling the Tough Stuff: Inappropriate Sharing, Bullying and Porn

Parent Connections

Facebook Page

The Facebook Page is an open access point for parents to see updates and information about

what's happening at BYN. Treat it like a website. Go here to view the latest and archived 90 Second Next Steps videos, for updates of events, reminders of what's happening within the BYN community and to post your own encouragements, thoughts and interactions.

ParentLife YOUTH E-Newsletter

This is an email specifically to support you as parents and caregivers. It is sent to your email inbox monthly. In it you'll have access to things like: details of upcoming events, helpful tips on teen culture and parenting teens, and more. To sign up go to www.bethanycc.ca and click the 'Sign up for our E-Newsletter' link.

Text Reminders

Starting in September we will be texting announcements for events and news related to BYN. You can also text us back with any questions you might have. Follow the link below to sign up or text @bethanyyn to (613) 699-8153.

The 'Nitty-Gritty'

1. **Protection Plan:** Because we value the safety and belonging of every student, we have a plan to protect them from abuse.
 - Volunteers – all our leaders go through an extensive application, police screening and reference process and are also given orientation training before working with students. Police clearance checks are conducted every three years for returning leaders. At every event, leaders are identified with their name on a BYN lanyard. Each volunteer is in an accountable relationship for their own growth and spiritual nourishment.
 - Student Information Form – For off-site events, parents of students are required to complete a Student Information Form. This form contains the student's contact information as well as any health particulars that we need to be aware of and the necessary release consents. This is kept on file and brought with us to any outing that the student attends.
 - Small Group Guidelines – Our groups adhere to the two-leader per group policy. For any small group off-site trip, a permission form will go home for a parent or guardian to complete and return. Leaders are encouraged to connect with a parent if they are meeting with a student outside of group times.
 - Group Outings – For our BYN off-site trips and retreats our student to leader ratio is 7-1 for Jr. Youth and 10-1 for Sr. Youth. They will always be advertised well in advance and your student will need a signed permission form to attend.
 - Bullying – BYN is a place for all students to belong without restriction. Bullying is an unfortunate byproduct of our individualistic society and doesn't reflect the heart of God or the behaviour that Jesus taught. BYN staff and volunteers are very committed to ensuring that every student belongs. Please speak with your teen's small group leader or youth staff if there are any concerns you have.
 - Dispensing Medication – Only under special circumstances will our youth ministry staff or volunteers be permitted to dispense medication of any kind including herbal

supplements. Please discuss with youth staff if you qualify as a special circumstance. If your child requires medication during an off-site trip please prepare them to look after these themselves. If there is a change in medication being taken from what was initially communicated in the Student Information Form, please inform the youth staff so we can update our files.

2. Drop-off and Pick-up Details

- Drop-off at Bethany can be any time after 5:30 pm on Tuesdays. The Youth Lounge (foyer) will be open and leaders available to supervise. A microwave is available if students want to heat up their dinner and some canteen items are sold each week.
- Pick-up can be anytime between 8:30-9:00 pm on Tuesdays. Parents can either come into the foyer to collect your student or pre-arrange for them to meet you in the driveway area. Parents are welcome to stay for our large group worship nights that take place on the first Tuesday of each month.

3. **Cost:** There are events throughout the ministry year that cost money. The event cost is published well in advance (see below) and is dependent on the event cost to us. It is important to us that we make our events accessible to all students – and cost can certainly be a limiting factor. For some of our events we offer early-bird rates to help offset the cost. We offer scholarships that parents can apply for to help subsidize an event (see next bullet). Below is a projected outline of the total cost of having your students attend all the activities throughout the 2018-19 ministry year.

| Jr. Youth | | Sr. Youth | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Canada’s Wonderland | \$45.00 | Canada’s Wonderland | \$45.00 |
| Pac Man | \$5.00 | Pac Man | \$5.00 |
| Deep Freeze Retreat | \$100.00 | All-Nighter | \$12.00 |
| All-Nighter | \$12.00 | Pitch and Praise | \$110.00 |
| <u>Summer Kick off Bash</u> | <u>\$5.00</u> | <u>Summer Kick off Bash</u> | <u>\$5.00</u> |
| TOTAL | \$167.00 | TOTAL | \$177.00 |

4. **Scholarships:** Parents can request a scholarship subsidy to help offset the cost of the event or to pay for the event in a payment plan. As a policy we don’t cover more than half of the event cost. And since we are limited in the number of scholarships we provide, we look at these at a person by person rate. We typically grant scholarships for retreats only. It is recommended that when applying for scholarships, students apply during the early-bird time frame. You can download a scholarship form from bethanycc.ca/forms.

5. **Some Key Dates:** As outlined previously BYN meets every Tuesday night. Below are some key dates that you’ll want to mark on your calendar:

Sun. Sept. 9 – Jr. Youth Sunday School Begins (In both the 9:00 am and 10:45 am services in Rm. 118)

Tues. Sept. 11 – First BYN Night of the Year!!

Tues. Sept. 18 – TAG Teams and Sr. Youth Small Groups Begins
Sat. Sept 22 – Canada’s Wonderland
Sun. Sept 30 – BYN Family Lunch

Fri. Oct. 5 – Pac-Man
Wed. Oct. 31 – Trick or Eat Canned Food Collection Event

Wed. Nov. 14, 21 & 28 - ParentLife Live - ‘Future Now’ Interactive Parent Seminar

Tues. Dec. 4 – Last Night for BYN (Christmas Break Begins)
Sun. Dec. 16 – Last Jr. Youth Sunday School in 2018

Sun. Jan. 7 – Jr. Youth Sunday School Begins

Tues. Jan. 8 - BYN Begins – (Christmas Break over)
Fri-Sun Jan 18-20 – Deep Freeze Jr. Youth Retreat at Camp Crossroads

Tues. Feb. 12 – TAG Team Celebration Night
Tues. Feb. 19 – Jr. Youth Small Groups Begin
Fri. Feb. 15 – Youth All-Nighter

Tues. Mar 12 - No BYN – March Break Week
Tues. Mar 12/Wed. Mar 13 - March Break Drop-In Days
Wed. Mar 20, 27 & Apr 3 - ParentLife Live: ‘Right Click’ Interactive Parent Seminar

Sat. Apr 27 - Day of Impact

Fri-Mon. May 18-21 – Pitch and Praise

Tues. June 4 – Last Youth Night – Worship Night
Fri. June 7 – Summer Kickoff Party (Fri. June 14 is the rain date)
Sun. June 16 – Last day of Jr. Youth Sunday School and Grade 8 Grad Lunch
Tues. June 25 – BYN Summer Begins