younglife

You were made for this.®

Career vs. Calling – reach them don't just teach them

Why do you teach?

Are you passionate about the subject you teach or are you motivated to reach out to students beyond your subject? Have you seen how the impact of a personal relationship with a student can change that student's outlook on school and life? Do you enjoy the times you get to talk to a student about life and how they are doing? Then you are called to reach students, not just teach them. Young Life provides one of the best opportunities for an educator to form a deeper relationship with their students and share their faith.

How can God use you in the classroom?

A non-educator Young Life leader finds time outside of their job to hang out with kids. Working 40+ hours a week limits the opportunities YL leaders have to spend with kids. An educator is unique in their opportunity to reach kids. Educators spend at least 40 minutes to 1.5 hours per day with each student. Each day you are "earning the right to be heard" and laying the foundation for a deeper relationship with a kid. This is the perfect opportunity to offer hope to kids who are looking for answers to life's bigger questions.

Why reach out to students in a different way?

Many educators feel limited when it comes to helping or mentoring their students. There is only so far they can go in the classroom setting and do not want to overstep their bounds. Often, we know a relationship with Jesus would help a student so much with the things they are dealing with in life. We spend time in class talking to them about making good choices and staying out of trouble, but we have to hold back when it comes to telling them about the One who can help them the most. Young Life is a way to share your faith with kids. You earn the right to be heard in the classroom and then you share your life and faith with them after hours using the tool of Young Life. Even one hour a week outside the classroom with one kid can make a huge difference in their life.

Michael Cone and the Retired Educator Consortium Revised October 2021

Time Management/Balance of Job & Ministry
For Educators in Mission

Educator hat vs. Young Life leader hat

There are times in every educator's career when they have to be stricter with their students than other times. I believe the same relationship is important in Young Life. Often students will become more comfortable with you when they have a relationship with you outside of the classroom. Setting boundaries with kids is especially important. Helping them to know what name to refer to you by, reminding them that conversations that happen outside of class may not be appropriate in class and reminding them they cannot take advantage of you as an educator because you are their YL leader is important. Simply put, set boundaries from the beginning and reinforce them as you go.

Classroom management - Earning the right to be heard in the classroom

The most memorable educators are often the ones who show an interest in the lives of their students. Sharing personal stories in class, asking the students how life is going and being understanding to a student's unique situation helps you "earn the right to be heard".

Setting aside time for specific activities

Educators who engage students outside of the classroom have fewer discipline problems in the classroom. Attending school & community events and connecting with your students while at these events creates a special bond. Students will respect and trust an educator who has spent time outside of the classroom supporting them in their various endeavors.

What name should the kids call you in school and at Young Life functions?

Going by Mr. or Mrs. in the classroom is important if that is the expectation of the administrators or is necessary for the kids to respect you. Many educators simply go by their last name or coach at YL functions. Some educators go by a nickname. (i.e. Mrs. Boman went by Bomoney & Mrs. Wimberly went by Wimbo). Some just go by their last name in the classroom and at Young Life events. Always identify yourself if you are calling a parent in the role you are functioning in. I'm "Pam Wimberly and Ahbed is in my 2nd period class." or "This is Pam Wimberly with Young Life."

Teaching in the school you lead vs. other schools

Some of the best leaders are "feeder school educators". Elementary educators who serve in the middle school with former students or middle school educators who serve at the high school with former students instead of leading with kids are their current school.

Attempting to lead Young Life in one school while teaching in another non-feeder school will often lead to conflicting schedules, torn allegiances and a burdensome commute. Generally, leading in a school district where you do not teach is difficult to sustain and should be discouraged.

Social media and direct contact with individual students

Use an official area or school Young Life social media account to promote events with students.

Communicate with students the same way you would if you are a student council sponsor. Keep the contact informative about YL activities. Investigate if your district has a waiver system to allow parents to give you permission to contact kids in connection of your activities within Young Life while acting as a YL leader.

Have kids sign up for text messaging systems like Remind to make the interaction more 'public'.

When kids need to talk one on one do so public places. Never take a kid to a private area where you cannot be viewed. Remember, when you are at school, you are an agent of the state. Do not compromise what is expected of you.

Connecting with kids and other staff members

Pray for your kids and have your friends pray for them also. But, do this with caution to privacy. Do not ever divulge confidential educator information for Young Life purposes. Keep in mind that information you have in the school registry should not be used for Young Life.

Get to know your students on a personal level. Find out what they participate in at school and out of school then ask them about those activities. Kids want to be known by someone who cares about them.

Be intentional with kids & staff. Once per day spend your passing period in a visible spot and engage with kids who pass by. Just before your planning period, before school or after school allow you the least rushed time.

Once per week spend a portion of your planning period connecting with kids, student leaders or other educators/staff who might be potential leaders or supporters of YL.

If you have a duty assignment, be intentional with kids. Same practices as in the classroom of getting to know kids on a personal level. Pray for kids with your eyes open.
Ask God to give you a positive interaction with a kid you may not know well.

Hang pictures of kids having fun at YL events in your classroom or in the hallway outside of your room. Kids love pictures of themselves. A great photo with a motivational quote makes remarkable art.

Volunteer with clubs or events that allow you interact positively with students without overwhelming your schedule.