



LEAD THE GENERATION

VITALS FOR YOUTH

DIAGNOSTIC & ALIGNMENT WORKBOOK

*A practical tool for youth pastors and ministry coaches
to evaluate ministry health and align every program
around the five biblical Vitals.*

About This Workbook

Vitals for Youth: Diagnostic & Alignment Workbook is a practical tool designed to help youth leaders evaluate the health of their ministry and intentionally align every program, event, and decision around the five biblical Vitals rooted in Acts 2. By defining clear wins and engaging in thoughtful assessment, this workbook helps ministries move from activity-driven programming to faithful, formational alignment with discipleship as the goal of healthy youth ministry.

The focus is not on measuring outcomes but on stewarding environments in which God produces lasting fruit.

Core Values of This Diagnostic Tool

- Leaders are not responsible for outcomes.
- Leaders are responsible for environments, structures, and consistency.
- Leaders are called to steward spiritual formation strategies according to the 5 Vitals found in Acts 2.
- God produces fruit in our students' lives.

HOW TO USE IT Review the Purpose Statements on the next page before you begin. Reference the five Vitals throughout every step of this workbook — they are the biblical framework and foundation for building or restructuring a youth ministry.

Purpose Statements

Review the following Purpose Statements for each of the five Vitals. These statements are the biblical framework and foundation for building or restructuring a youth ministry around the Vitals. Reference these Vitals and Purpose Statements as needed as you work through each step in this workbook.

Each Vital answers *why* we do what we do — and ultimately why we don't do what we don't do.

Biblical Truth

We provide consistent and clear Scripture engagement so students are formed by truth.

Spiritual Transformation

We create intentional space for the Holy Spirit to work in students' lives.

Healthy Community

We structure environments where students are known and cared for in a healthy spiritual community.

Missional Living

We train and equip students to live out their faith beyond church walls through serving and evangelism.

Leadership Development

We intentionally develop students and adults to lead with character, calling, and competence.

The Five Vitals & Your Ministry

This workbook will walk you and your team through seven steps. Working through these steps is not about completing a worksheet and moving on — it's about faithfully stewarding the ministry God has entrusted to you in light of the gospel. In Acts 2, we see a picture of a church shaped by devotion to God's Word, the work of the Spirit, deep community, mission, and leadership multiplication: "and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42–47). Each step builds on the one before it.

1 Step 1: Inventory of Your Ministry

Identify every youth ministry and church-related program or event that shapes the rhythm and formation of your ministry year.

2 Step 2: Assigning Primary Vitals

Clarify which of the five Vitals each program or event is intentionally designed to build, bringing purpose and focus to everything you do.

3 Step 3: Defining Wins

Establish clear win statements that define faithfulness and guide consistent execution across your leadership team.

4 Step 4: Evaluating Current Programs

Assess each of your current programs' alignment, faithfulness, clarity, focus, and cost in light of its primary Vital and defined Win.

5 Step 5: Making Programming Decisions

Make prayerful, informed decisions to keep, sharpen, repurpose, merge, or end programs for the sake of long-term ministry health.

6 Step 6: Creating a Vitals Balance Map

Step back to evaluate whether your ministry is faithfully creating environments for all five Vitals over time.

7 Step 7: Aligning Your Annual Calendar

Intentionally align seasons, events, and rhythms so your calendar reinforces the Vitals and defined wins throughout the year.

PRO TIP Resist the urge to rush; taking time with each step allows clarity, unity, and conviction to grow, creating space for God to produce lasting fruit.

STEP 1

Inventory Your Current Ministry Programs and Events

Use **Worksheet One** (next page) to list what is currently happening in your ministry — not what you hope will happen. Take your time. Review past and current ministry calendars. The goal is to list every weekly program, every annual youth ministry event or activity, and every event or activity that falls under church life. These are events or activities that church students participate in, but are not necessarily fully led by the youth department.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	PROGRAM / EVENT	PRIMARY VITAL	SECONDARY VITAL(S)
WEEKLY	Youth Service	—	—
WEEKLY	Student Leader Discipleship	—	—
ANNUAL	Summer Camp	—	—
ANNUAL	Missions Trip	—	—
CHURCH-LIFE	Serve Day	—	—
CHURCH-LIFE	Vacation Bible School	—	—

Note: Use Worksheet One (next page) to complete Step 1 — an inventory list of all programs and events. Do not assign primary and secondary Vitals on this worksheet until you’ve completed all of Step One. Read the Step Two guidelines before returning to this worksheet to assign primary and secondary Vitals.

Youth Ministry Inventory

CATEGORY	PROGRAM / EVENT	PRIMARY VITAL	SECONDARY VITAL(S)
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
WEEKLY			
ANNUAL			
ANNUAL			
ANNUAL			
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ANNUAL			
ANNUAL			
ANNUAL			
ANNUAL			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			
CHURCH-LIFE			

STEP 2

Assign a Primary and Secondary Vital

Every program or event should exist to intentionally build one primary Vital. Many programs will also support secondary Vitals, but clarity comes from focusing on one Vital per program.

RULES FOR THIS STEP

1 Choose one Primary Vital per program or event.

Each item on your worksheet must have a single, clearly defined primary Vital.

2 You may list up to two Secondary Vitals.

Secondary Vitals reflect meaningful supporting impact, not vague “bonus benefits.”

3 Selecting all five Vitals for any program or event is not permitted.

If a program is assigned to every Vital, it is not intentionally designed around any Vital.

4 Take your time and apply thoughtful discernment.

The value of this process is directly tied to the honesty and care you give it.

5 It is acceptable to temporarily leave a program unassigned.

If you cannot clearly connect a program to a specific Vital, leave the Primary Vital blank. That may be an early indicator that the program lacks purpose or needs to be sharpened.

6 If you're torn between two Vitals, pause and return later.

Leave the Primary Vital blank, list both options in the Secondary column, and revisit once you've worked through the rest of the worksheet.

7 Do not move to Step Three with any blanks in the Primary Vital column.

Before continuing, every program must have a final Primary Vital assigned, even if that means repurposing or ending the program later in the process.

Note: You will use Worksheet One (previous page) to assign primary and secondary Vitals to each Program / Event you've already listed.

Define a Win for Each Program

Programs without a defined win will eventually become unhealthy, drifting toward easily measured outcomes such as attendance or engagement. Everyone wants to be on a winning team, and in sports, the scoreboard always makes it clear who won. But in ministry, we are often confused or uncertain about what the scoreboard actually measures.

Without clarity, leaders can work hard and still feel unsure whether they are winning or losing — which is why this step invites us to change the scoreboard. By redefining success, we shift the focus from outcomes we cannot control to formational faithfulness: measuring the intentional systems and structures leaders consistently provide, rather than external results that only God can produce.

Definition of a Win: A win is a leader-controlled action, structure, or system that is consistently provided and faithfully executed for the ministry, regardless of our students' response.

A WIN IS

- Objective
- Repeatable
- A lead measure vs. a lag measure
- Fully within the leader's control
- Based on faithfulness as opposed to results

A WIN IS NOT

- Attendance growth
- Student behavior change
- Salvation stats
- Emotional response
- Retention percentage

Those are fruit, not wins. They are lag measures that result from lead measures. We pray for fruitfulness and fully expect God to move, but our focus must remain on faithfully executing wins that form students over time. The Holy Spirit is the one who produces the fruit. We are responsible for faithfulness.

Example Win Statements for Each Vital

Biblical Truth

- "We teach Scripture every week."
- "We clearly present the gospel at least once per month."
- "We provide guided Bible discussion in every small group."

Spiritual Transformation

- "We create intentional space for prayer every gathering."
- "We invite students to respond to God weekly."
- "We train leaders to lead prayer, not rush past it."

Healthy Community

- "Every student is placed in a small group."
- "Every group has a trained adult leader."
- "We create relational connection time at every gathering."

Missional Living

- "We regularly teach and model faith-sharing."
- "We provide ongoing service and outreach opportunities."
- "We pray for lost friends by name consistently."

Leadership Development

- "We identify and train student leaders."
- "We meet monthly with student leaders."
- "We provide a clear leadership pathway."

Three Questions to Define a Ministry Win

Before calling anything a win, ask these questions:

- 1 Can we do this every time, regardless of response?**
- 2 Is this 100% under our control?**
- 3 Would this still be a win if no visible results happened?**

If we cannot answer “yes” to each of these questions, our win is not correctly defined.

RULES FOR THIS STEP

- 1 Every program and event listed in Worksheet One must have a clearly defined win.**
Any program without a defined win will default to an assumed win determined by whoever is leading it.
- 2 Undefined wins create inconsistency.**
For example, one small group leader may define a win as deep biblical discussion and prayer, while another may define a win as hanging out and building relationships. Neither is wrong, but without clarity, the ministry can become fragmented and leaders can become discouraged over time.
- 3 A win statement exists to unify the leadership team’s direction.**
The goal is not a uniform personality or style, but a shared purpose and a shared definition of faithfulness.
- 4 Developing clear win statements takes time — don’t rush the process.**
Avoid simply copying and pasting the example wins given. Each win statement should reflect your ministry context, your leaders, and the specific Vital the program is designed to build.
- 5 Involve your leaders in the process.**
Engage key adult and student leaders as you develop win statements. Teach them what a healthy, leader-controlled win sounds like, and invite their feedback as win statements are refined.
- 6 Agreement produces alignment.**
When leaders agree on what a win is, execution becomes healthier and more consistent. A unified definition of a win keeps leaders engaged and encourages them to remain faithful, even when they are not currently seeing fruit in students’ lives.

Healthy Win Statements Fit This Framework

1 Wins Must Be Leader-Controlled.

A win must describe what leaders will faithfully provide or execute — not how students respond.

2 Wins Must Be Observable and Repeatable.

If a leader cannot clearly tell whether a win was executed immediately after a program or event, the win is not yet defined clearly enough.

3 Wins Should Be Simple Enough to Remember.

If a leader can't remember the win without rereading it, it's probably too complex.

“A win is something a leader can do every time — regardless of how students respond.”

Keep these three tests close at hand as you write every win statement in this workbook: leader-controlled, observable & repeatable, and simple enough to remember without rereading it.

Defining Ministry Wins

PROGRAM / EVENT	PRIMARY VITAL	WIN STATEMENT
Weekly Youth Service	Biblical Truth	We teach scripture every week.
Small Groups	Healthy Community	We create a loving, family-like environment in our small groups.
Mission Trips	Missional Living	Students are trained to share their faith prior to taking the trip.
Summer Camp	Spiritual Transformation	Camp will provide opportunity for students to encounter God.
Church Serve Day	Missional Living	We will provide serving opportunities in partnership with our church.
Leader Training Meeting	Leadership Development	We will provide training sessions and resources to sharpen our leaders.

Define the Win

[illegible]

STEP 4

Evaluate Your Program or Event Effectiveness

In this step, we assess the effectiveness of each program or event based on its ability to faithfully and consistently execute the defined win tied to its primary Vital. The goal is not to measure outcomes or visible results, but to evaluate whether the program is doing what it is intentionally designed to do at a formative level.

RULES FOR THIS STEP**1 Evaluate Design and Faithfulness, Not Outcomes**

Effectiveness is measured by how consistently the program executes its defined win, not by attendance, engagement, or visible fruit.

2 Evaluate the Program, Not the People

This step is not an evaluation of leaders, volunteers, or students. It is an evaluation of whether the program itself is designed and structured to accomplish its stated purpose.

3 Evaluate According to the Primary Vital Only

Do not assess a program based on secondary Vitals or unintended benefits. Each program should be evaluated solely on how well it accomplishes its primary Vital.

Six Categories, One Question Each

Use Worksheet Three (next) to rate each program or event from 0–3 on each of the six questions below.

0 RARELY / NEVER	1 INCONSISTENT	2 MOSTLY CONSISTENT	3 EVERY TIME, BY DESIGN
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1 Alignment:

How clearly and intentionally is this program designed to build its stated primary Vital?
Is the Vital obvious in the structure, flow, and leadership expectations of the program?

2 Faithfulness:

How consistently is the defined win executed as designed, regardless of student response?
Is this happening because of intentional design, or only when the right leader is present?

3 Cost:

Does the current investment of time, energy, and resources align with the formative value this program provides toward its primary Vital?
Is the cost justified by faithfulness to the win, not by visible results?

4 Clarity:

Do the leaders responsible for this program clearly understand the primary Vital and win — and could they articulate it without referencing this worksheet?
If not, the program may be undercommunicated or overassumed.

5 Focus:

Is this program regularly pulled off course by competing expectations or secondary goals that dilute its primary Vital?
If everything is important, nothing is intentional.

6 Replaceability:

If this program were removed, would there be a clear gap in building its primary Vital — or is the same win already being accomplished elsewhere?
This helps identify redundancy, over-programming, and opportunities to merge or simplify.

Vitals / Defined Win Scorecard

PROGRAM / EVENT	ALIGNMENT	FAITHFULNESS	COST	CLARITY	FOCUS	REPLACEABILITY	TOTAL
Youth Service	3	2	3	2	1	2	13
Missions Trip	3	3	3	3	2	2	16
Student Leadership	1	2	3	2	3	1	12

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How to Interpret Your Final Score

The final score is not a verdict; it is a diagnostic tool that helps leaders make wise, prayerful decisions with clarity.

15–18 STRONG & HEALTHY	KEEP — This program is well-aligned, faithfully executed, clearly understood, and justified by its cost. Protect this program · ensure leaders are trained to sustain it · consider whether it could mentor weaker areas.
11–14 HEALTHY, NEEDS SHARPENING	SHARPEN or REPURPOSE — The program has clear value but lacks consistency, clarity, or focus. Refine the win · simplify the structure · improve leader communication or training · clarify the primary Vital.
7–10 MISALIGNED OR INEFFICIENT	REPURPOSE, MERGE, or END — The program requires significant energy but is not clearly or consistently building its intended Vital. Ask whether this program should serve a different Vital · look for redundancy · consider merging.
0–6 UNHEALTHY OR UNSUSTAINABLE	END (or Prepare to End) — The program lacks a clear purpose, faithful execution, or justifiable cost. Do not rush, but do not ignore · begin conversations with senior leadership · steward leaders and energy toward healthier structures.

Important Clarification

A high score does not guarantee fruit. A low score does not mean leaders have failed. This tool measures faithful design and execution, not outcomes. Healthy ministry is not built by guessing what works; it is built by faithfully stewarding what forms.

Recommended Next Steps After Scoring

- 1 Circle the top 3 highest-scoring programs.**
- 2 Highlight the bottom 3 lowest-scoring programs.**
- 3 Compare those results with your Vitals Balance Map (Step 6).**
- 4 Use the Decision-Making Framework (Step 5) to determine next steps.**

STEP 5 OF 7

STEP 5

Decision-Making Framework

Health is not found in adding more programs; health is found in pruning with clarity. Jesus teaches in John 15 that fruitful branches are the result of abiding and intentional pruning, not increased activity. In this step, we make prayerful decisions to keep, sharpen, repurpose, merge, or end programs, trusting that faithfulness to what God has assigned is what allows Him to produce the fruit.

ASSIGN EACH PROGRAM ONE OF THESE FIVE DESIGNATIONS**KEEP**

High alignment + high faithfulness

SHARPEN

Right vital, inconsistent execution

REPURPOSE

Faithful program aimed at the wrong vital

MERGE

Duplicate programs producing the same win

END

High cost + low faithfulness + unclear vital

Rules for This Step

1 Decisions Flow From Alignment, Not Emotion

Each decision must be based on alignment to the primary Vital and faithfulness to the defined win — not on personal preference, nostalgia, or short-term pressure.

2 Choosing “End” Is a Directional Conclusion, Not Always an Immediate Action

In many church contexts, identifying a program to end does not mean it must be canceled immediately. It may mean preparing for a future transition, redesign, or replacement.

3 Healthy Alignment Requires Pastoral Partnership

Youth pastors should involve their Lead Pastor early and often. Share the framework before sharing specific program recommendations. When pastors understand the why, decisions are interpreted as shepherding rather than reactive.

4 Frame Program Changes as Stewardship, Not Elimination

Frame decisions around stewardship of time, leaders, and energy — not cutting programs. Try: “I’m not trying to cancel programs. I’m trying to make sure every program we steward is clearly forming and discipling students.”

5 Respect the Pace and Authority of the Church

Some decisions will require prayer, patience, and phased implementation. Faithfulness includes walking in submission to your Lead Pastor and their wisdom.

6 Use the Language of Vitals and Wins in Leadership Conversations

Consistently reference the primary Vital the program is meant to build, and the defined win for that program — this keeps conversations objective and mission-focused.

7 Alignment Conversations Are Ongoing, Not One-Time

Healthy change happens over time through repeated conversations, shared language, agreed-upon primary Vitals and wins, and growing trust between youth pastors and senior leadership.

Decision-Making Framework Table

Use the “Timeline” column to designate your preferred timeline for making changes. Place a checkmark in the Conversation column if the decision requires Lead Pastor approval or buy-in.

PROGRAM / EVENT	DECISION	TIMELINE	CONVERSATION?
Youth Service	KEEP	—	—
Student Leader Discipleship	SHARPEN	3 months	—
Summer Camp	KEEP	—	—
Missions Trip	REPURPOSE	6 months	Yes
Serve Day	MERGE	6 months	Yes
Vacation Bible School	END	6–12 months	Yes

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STEP 6

Vitals Balance Map

Are we faithfully creating environments (programs and events) for every Vital?

This step helps leaders step back and see the big picture of their ministry. After evaluating individual programs, the Vitals Balance Map reveals whether your overall ministry structure is faithfully creating environments for all five Vitals — or unintentionally overemphasizing some while neglecting others. The goal is not equal time or equal programming, but **intentional coverage**.

HOW TO INTERPRET THE MAP

1 A Vital Has Zero Primary Programs

This usually means the Vital is assumed rather than designed. When no program is intentionally designed to grow a Vital, leaders often hope it will emerge as a byproduct of something else — but this rarely happens consistently.

2 One Vital Dominates Everything

This often reveals that the strength or giftedness of the leader has become a blind spot. Every leader has “passion blindspots” — their passion for one or two Vitals blinds them to the underdevelopment of other necessary Vitals.

3 Assignments Feel Forced

If programs are being awkwardly assigned to a Vital just to “fill the chart,” that’s a signal the program may lack a clear purpose or the Vital may need a new, more intentional environment.

Vital Coverage Map

List the programs or events that are primarily designed to build each Vital. Include programs only where the Vital is the clear primary focus, not a secondary benefit.

VITALS	PROGRAMS / EVENTS
Biblical Truth	Small Groups Discipleship Program
Spiritual Transformation	One on One Discipleship Weekly Youth Service
Healthy Community	Small Groups
Missional Living	Serving at Church on Sundays Weekend Missions Trip
Leadership Development	Student Leadership Monthly Leader Training Sessions

Vitals Coverage Map

VITALS	PROGRAMS / EVENTS
Biblical Truth	
Spiritual Transformation	
Healthy Community	
Missional Living	
Leadership Development	

STEP 7

Annual Calendar Alignment

Is our annual calendar reinforcing what we say matters most?

This final step moves the Vitals from theory into practice by aligning your annual calendar with the five Vitals and their defined wins, so each Vital is clearly and consistently built over time.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS STEP

1 Start With Your Real Calendar

Bring your actual annual calendar into view (camps, retreats, sermon series, trips, church-wide events, seasonal rhythms). This is not about dreaming — it's about aligning what already exists.

2 Assign a Primary Vital to Every Major Event

Each major event or season must have one primary Vital. If an event cannot be clearly aligned to a Vital, that's a signal to reevaluate its purpose.

3 Define the Win for Each Event

For every event, define the win as a leader-controlled action that will be faithfully executed regardless of attendance, response, or outcome.

4 Look for Seasonal Patterns

Once the calendar is filled in, step back: are some Vitals heavily emphasized in certain seasons? Are others missing entirely? Are we assuming formation will happen in off-seasons?

5 Adjust With Wisdom, Not Panic

Do not overhaul everything at once. Sharpen the focus of existing events, repurpose events to better align with a Vital, and identify one or two strategic additions.

Rules for This Step

1 Every Major Event Must Serve a Clear Vital

If an event cannot be clearly connected to a Vital and a defined win, it should be reconsidered, reshaped, or eventually released.

2 Balance Happens Over Time, Not Every Month

Healthy alignment is measured across the year, not in individual weeks. Not every Vital must be emphasized in every season, but every Vital should be intentionally built somewhere on the calendar.

3 Wins Stay Leader-Controlled

Do not define wins around attendance, emotional response, or perceived success. Wins must describe what leaders will faithfully provide or execute.

4 Church-Wide Events Must Be Interpreted, Not Assumed

Church-wide events rarely produce spiritual formation automatically. Youth leaders must intentionally interpret these moments through the lens of the Vitals framework — preparing, guiding, and debriefing students.

5 Align in Partnership With Senior Leadership

When calendar changes affect long-standing traditions or church rhythms, involve your Lead Pastor early. Share the Vitals framework so alignment conversations are rooted in shared values.

Vitals Calendar

Document your annual calendar, including key programs, events, and seasonal rhythms. Identify the primary and secondary Vital each event is designed to build, and clarify the win that defines faithfulness for that moment.

SEASON	PROGRAM / EVENT	PRIMARY VITAL	SECONDARY VITAL	DEFINED WIN
Q1	Weekly Youth Service	Biblical Truth	Healthy Community	We are teaching God's word and creating a healthy family culture in small groups.
Q1	Sermon Series: Theology	Biblical Truth	—	We are presenting core theological truths.
Q2	Weekend Retreat	Spiritual Transformation	—	We are creating an environment for students to experience God.
Q3	Summer Camp	Spiritual Transformation	Healthy Community	Camp creates opportunities for students to build relationship and experience God.
Q4	Fall Serve Day	Missional Living	Healthy Community	Serve creates a missions opportunity for our students while serving together.

Vitals Calendar

SEASON	PROGRAM / EVENT	PRIMARY VITAL	SECONDARY VITAL	DEFINED WIN
Q1				
Q1				
Q1				
Q1				
Q1				
Q1				
Q2				
Q2				
Q2				
Q2				
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Q2				
Q3				
Q3				
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Q3				
Q3				
Q3				
Q4				
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Q4				
Q4				
Q4				
Q4				

Common Calendar Traps

- Assuming camps or retreats “cover everything.”
- Letting the loudest or most exciting events define the year.
- Overloading one season while neglecting others.
- Adding events without clarifying the win.

Final Calendar Reflection Questions for Leaders

- 1 Which Vital is most clearly reinforced across our year?**
- 2 Which Vital is least visible on our calendar?**
- 3 Where are we asking events to do more than they were designed to do?**
- 4 What is one small adjustment we can make this year to increase faithfulness?**

Final Leader Debrief Questions

- 1 What are we being faithful to, and what are we assuming?
- 2 Which Vital are we over-invested in?
- 3 Which Vital are we neglecting?
- 4 What program survives only because of tradition?
- 5 What's one program we need to sharpen immediately?
- 6 What's one thing God may be asking us to end?

***Our calling is not to manufacture results.
Our calling is to build faithful, intentional
discipleship-focused structures.
When leaders are faithful, God is free to bring
the fruit.***

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