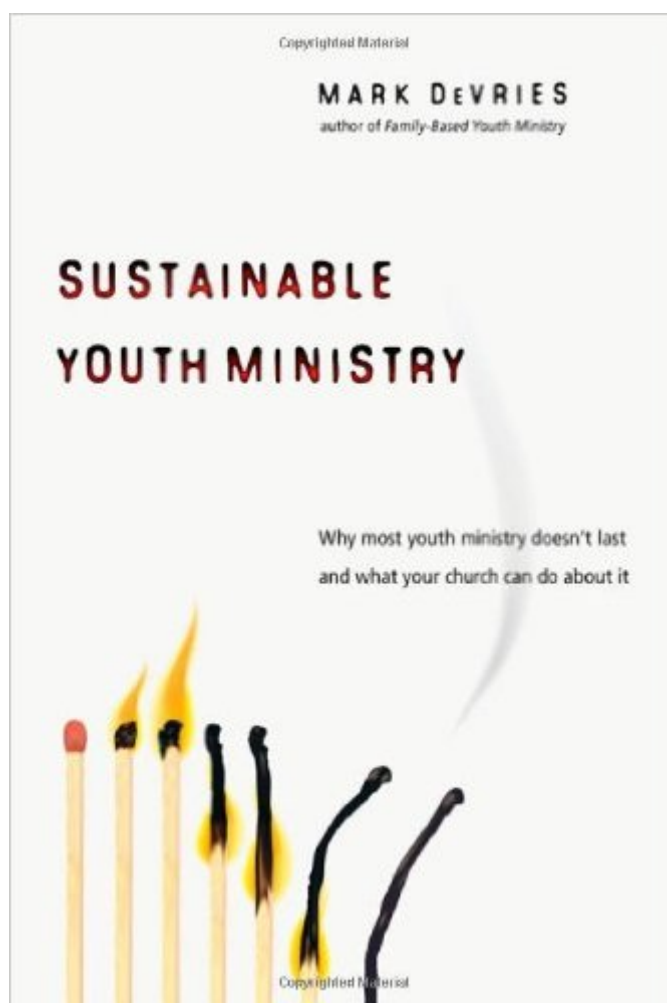


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# Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why Most Youth Ministry Doesn't Last And What Your Church Can Do About It



## Synopsis

You're looking for a youth pastor. Again. What goes wrong? Why do youth ministries crumble? And what is the cost to students, parents, volunteers and church staff? Is a sustainable youth ministry possible, even after a youth pastor leaves? Youth ministry expert Mark DeVries knows the answer is yes, because he helps build sustainable youth ministries through his coaching service called Youth Ministry Architects. So take heart: No matter what state the youth ministry at your church is in--in need of a leader and volunteers, full of battles and stress, large or small in number--it can be built to survive and to last for the long haul. Based on his own experience and on his many conversations and interviews with churches in crisis, DeVries pinpoints problems that cause division and burnout and dispels strongly held myths. He then provides the practical tools and structures pastors and church leaders need to lay a strong foundation for your ministry so that it isn't built on a person or the latest, greatest student ministry trend. His accessible guidance helps senior pastors and search committees create a realistic job description for a youth pastorprovides tips for making wise hiring decisions equips youth pastors to build a strong volunteer teamoffers creative solutions to help youth pastors set and keep boundariesgives a road map for navigating church politicsand more Building a sustainable youth ministry is not easy, and it's not quick. But with commitment to the process, hard work and DeVries's guidance, you can put together a healthy youth ministry--one that fits your church and lasts for the long haul. Youth ministry can last. Here's how.

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## Customer Reviews

I'm a paid youth minister in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, and I've been doing youth ministry of one kind or another for a couple years (including the infamous "camp counsellor" position). Lots of my friends are youth ministers, or are involved in ministry in one way or another, and our Diocesan coordinator gave us all a copy of this book. The following is a copy of a message I sent out to our friends after reading DeVries' book. "Dear Yute Minister Types,...I'm just writing to STRONGLY encourage you all to read Sustainable Youth Ministry by Mark Devries...if you haven't already. I'm about 2/3 of the way through it, and other than the knowledge that Jesus loves me even when I screw up, this might be the single most important thing I've ever read/heard in furthering my ability to minister to people. It's honest, to the point, empowering in a very practical way, and creates a vision of what a healthy youth program is/can be that is bigger than the one I've always had, I think. It's also called me out on one of my bigger shortcomings as a youth minister, which is my tendency to create myself as a "victim" of church politics, poor volunteer turnouts, etc., and using that as an excuse whenever I need to. Anyway, I can't recommend this book enough, and we should probably all buy copies for all of our clergy AND another one to make available to parents. AND I think it's a good thing for the Episcopal Diocese in AL to read anyway since generally our view of youth ministry is to vamp young, able-bodied and enthusiastic people of their energy for 18 months or so until they're all used up and quit, and then hire somebody else. Plus, the book has this really fun analogy about having to 'eat that frog' that is both entertaining and to the point.

There's a reason why Mark DeVries's Sustainable Youth Ministry is one of those rare books that has an average ranking of 5-stars: this is the best book on youth ministry as far as explaining the "architecture" or structure of how to set up youth ministry. I met Mark DeVries at a youth leaders' conference in 2009: his session was by far and away the most relevant to the kind of church I was the youth pastor of at the time, a more traditional, Episcopalian parish. For any of you who have been involved in youth ministry, as students, parents, or youth leaders, then you know that perhaps the #1 problem with youth ministry is a lack of longevity. Youth ministers and their programs come and go. When I was active as a youth minister, I read that the average length a youth minister stayed at a church was 27 months! This book shows churches and youth leaders how to structure your ministry so that it will last and have a lasting impact. Here's a great side by side comparison of Sustainable Youth Ministry vs traditional youth ministry:

Sustainable	Long-term focus on a single issue
Responsibility shared by the team	Regular Meetings
Regular time for strategic thinking	Expectations of a multiyear building process
Traditional	Episodic focus with key issues buried
Responsibility carried by the youth worker	Concerns raised reactively at random

meetingsIssue addressed between urgent demands of ministryExpectation of the quick fix DeVries confronts head on the false "gambling" view of finding a hot shot superstar who is going to fix the youth program. He then builds, brick by brick, a systems approach to youth ministry.

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