

TERRITORY OVERVIEW

It is characteristic of the youth culture, and typical of human and animal cultures generally, to have a place or turf. It is considered important to have a place for survival and development.

Teenagers need a place:

- Where there is a release from adult control and a sense of freedom.
- Where there can be a sense of pride and ownership.
- Where they can perform, "do their thing," and make and spend their money.
- Where they can meet and be with their friends.
- Where they can observe and make contact with others—especially those of the opposite sex.
- Where they can relax and "let off steam."
- Where they can get away from family.

Across the country, and perhaps around the world, junior and senior high school students complain of being bored and having no place to go or hang out. The world and the church are first of all adult-oriented and then child-oriented. To be an adolescent is, in a sense, to be a social misfit. They are almost, but not quite, what the world is made for. That is why they need a place—and why they find in that place, a certain kind of peace—no matter what the noise.

Favorite "places" currently seem to be:

- Malls and shopping areas.
- Corner stores and drive-ins.
- Certain homes or apartments.
- After hours at school and the school grounds.
- Urban street corners or parks.
- The beaches in southern climates.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION (FOR YOUTH)

1. Where does your crowd hang out, in contrast to other groups at school or in the neighborhood?
2. Why do you feel safer and more at peace in certain places and not others?
3. What would you like to change about the place where you meet with your friends?
4. Do you and your friends need a better place?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION (FOR PARENTS)

1. What needs of your son or daughter are being met by their friends and in the place they hang out?
2. With what about this situation are you uncomfortable?
3. Can you talk this over with your son or daughter from their perspective as well as from yours?
4. Do you wish for them another place?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION (FOR YOUTH WORKERS)

1. Where do you go to meet kids?
2. Can you truly be their friend and leader without being comfortable and accepted on their "turf"?
3. Do you understand this as relational work?
4. What would you miss without a knowledge of their "place"?

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