

Philosophy

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to understanding young people and training its youth for leadership and service to humanity.

The Pathfinder Club is a church-centered spiritual-recreational-activity program designed for young people 10 to 15 years of age. Pathfinding appeals to this age group because its program features activities that meet their needs and interests. Much of the Pathfinder Club program is built around physical action. This is because youth from 10 to 15 years of age are in a fast-growing physical stage of development. It is filled with action, adventure, challenge, group activities, and provides opportunities for the development of new attitudes and skills that produce personal growth, team or community spirit and a sense of loyalty and respect for God, His Creation, and His church.

While the Pathfinder Club exists primarily for youth, one of its basic purposes is to also bring together parents and church members through active involvement with the club and its members. Here the so-called generation gap disappears as young and old worship, work, and play together in a bond of common experience. Meaningful relationships are forged as leaders and counselors join with Pathfinders in sharing, building confidence, and working together.

The whole philosophy of Pathfinding is built on the premise that "children learn best by example, rather than precept." As they see leaders and parents model spiritual and social values, they too will aspire to develop high moral principles, loving and caring attitudes, and determination to excel in all their various pursuits.

Young people learn most effectively in a positive, happy, and secure atmosphere. The attitude of the club leaders is therefore a vital ingredient in guaranteeing the success and effectiveness of this ministry to youth. A failure to listen to and understand the needs of the young people will only erect barriers to real spiritual growth and development and may prove to be a contributing factor in making the church and its mission unattractive to the youth.

Objectives

This philosophy is an integral part of the club. The Pathfinder Club curriculum of six classes and nearly 350 Honors lies at the heart of the program. The following objectives can be achieved as the club leaders seek to fulfill these.

1. **Help the young people to understand that God and His church love them, care for them, and appreciate them.** As Pathfinders are accepted and affirmed they will begin to appreciate the love of God revealed through the church and its ministry, and feel a need to be more committed to and involved with its program.
2. **Encourage Pathfinders to discover their own God-given potential** and to use their gifts and abilities to fulfill God's expectations for them and the part they can play in the great plan of salvation.
3. **Inspire young people to give personal expression of their love for God** by uniting them together in various outreach activities.
4. **Make the number one priority of your club program the personal salvation of every Pathfinder.** The Pathfinder age is a time when many decisions are being made that will affect the youth's future relationships and his or her own personal development. The peak time for discovering and making a relationship with God seems to be around 12 years of age.
5. **Build into a Pathfinder's life a healthy appreciation and love for God's creation by enjoying outdoor activity** (campouts, nature walks, nature honors, etc.). Pathfinders will experience a sense of wonder and worship as they observe and explore the beauty, the majesty, and the creative power in nature. Fellowship with God will become more meaningful.
6. **Teach Pathfinders specific skills and hobbies that will make their lives more meaningful** and will occupy their time with profitable accomplishments. Young people experience satisfaction and delight as they use their hands to fashion useful articles from wood, plastic, steel, clay, felt and yarn and as they discover how things work and operate.
7. **Encourage the Pathfinder to keep physically fit.** This is one important way to safeguard against idleness and boredom. Teach children to care for their body and establish habits that will provide for

their future happiness and usefulness (cf. 2T 536, 537; Educ. 195).

8. **Give opportunity for the development of leadership** by encouraging club members to work together and share in leadership responsibility. This will teach them to learn the lessons of obedience, discipline, resourcefulness, patriotism and the processes of group dynamics.
9. **Seek to foster the harmonious development of the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual life** of the Pathfinder. The invigoration of mind and body, the fostering of an unselfish spirit, the attention to recreational and cultural activities, will provide stimulus for personal growth and act as an outlet for that restless energy, which is so often a destructive source of danger to the young person.