



*A Quick
Start*
GUIDE

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES

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About this Quick Start Guide

This *Quick Start Guide for Adventist Single Adult Ministries* has been prepared by singles that are active in different ministries to singles. During their singles ministry experience, these leaders have learned what works and what could be done better.

It is the hope and prayer of each person who contributed to this resource that the ideas and direction presented here will inspire, encourage, motivate, and challenge you to provide a ministry that will help your singles enjoy successful personal growth in their Christian lives.

At the end of this *Quick Start Guide* is a list of resource sources and helpful forms you can use. There are many ideas in print on how to start singles ministries, how to maintain them, and what to do. This is just a start.

An Introduction to Adventist Single Adult Ministries

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long history of ministry to the single adults in our church and community. In 1965 the International Philosda Club was organized to provide opportunity for Christian fellowship. Later, the name was changed to Adventist Singles Ministries and in October of 2003 the name Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) was adopted.

The primary focus of Adventist Single Adult Ministries is to introduce singles to Jesus and encourage them in their journey as His disciples. From local church gatherings to conference sponsored seminars, week-end campouts to talent nights the scope of ministries for singles is as broad as the vision and commitment of the leadership team. Adventist Single Adult Ministries is about learning, growing, sharing, supporting and loving.

Adventist Single Adult Ministries at the local church level can be organized as a small group or ministry depending on the goals of the leadership team. Your local group may meet once a week or once a month, you may focus on social and recreational events or small groups and support ministries. Your ministry should be a reflection of the needs of the single adults in your church and community.

This quick reference guide is just that, a quick guide. Use it as a jump start for your ministry. Use it to get things going. Here are answers to some basic questions about Adventist Single Adult Ministries.

WHAT IS ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES?

It is a fellowship that provides opportunity and encouragement to single adults, whether never married, divorced or widowed, for getting acquainted with other singles for the purpose of reflecting, discussing issues, studying God's Word, singing, praying, playing, interacting, resting, traveling, and enjoying God's great outdoors!

WHY HAVE ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY IN MY CHURCH?

To provide in a safe environment a fellowship where single adults can be inspired, encouraged, motivated, and challenged to use their gifts for Jesus Christ.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES?

Single Adult Ministries is a *calling* from God. You have to feel the calling to do *something* for singles. You may *see* a need, or you may *feel* a need. It begins with YOU! Singles Ministries is a service-minded opportunity to grow in every area of life—spiritual, relational, emotional, educational, and physical. When serving others, YOU will benefit from the involvement. In essence, fun, fellowship and personal growth come from interacting with others—this is the balance in life.

How do I start Adventist Single Adult Ministries in my Church?

The concept that "one size does not fit all" is particularly true with singles. You can not have one program or one type of outing and expect to attract all the single adults in your church and/or community. Make sure you have different ways that different singles can connect to your ministry.

There is a distinct difference between people involved in Single Adult Ministries and young adults who are single. Most young adults (age 18 – 35) do not see themselves as 'single'. They are just not married yet. This is an important distinction that needs to be made as you plan your ministry.

First, meet with your pastor and Family Ministries leader to discuss the local need. You need to get their perspective on the needs of single adults in the church and community even if you do not agree with what they say! You may discover that they have a great interest in what you are thinking about and are ready to support you in any way possible. Or, you may find that they are uninformed about the issues that single adults face. Either way you need to know what they think so you can gain support for your ministry.

After listening to your pastor it is time to connect with other singles. Here are some simple steps you can use to get started.

Identify the singles you know

Who are the people in your church that are single? Go through the church directory or membership list to start your list. Do you know non-Adventists or unchurched co-workers or neighbors who are single? Begin with your circle of influence! Compile a list of *who you know*. Ask your pastor and church members to add names to your list. Collect name, address, phone, fax and e-mail addresses. (See form in the Appendix.)

Identify the singles you think will help

Once you have your list of singles contact 10-12 names to ask if they would be interested in meeting to discuss singlehood. Plan a business meeting in a quiet environment, either at the church, or a private room at a restaurant. Don't ask them to jump into a *singles ministry*. It may be too big to swallow in one gulp. Many people, especially talented people, are very busy, and the thought of adding to their already overflowing plate may be too threatening. Just plan to *get together to discuss singlehood!*

Remember, singles go where singles are

The fellowship of the evening may blossom into an enjoyable experience and a concern for the needs of others could result in planning a second meeting and provide the option of inviting other singles to join you. Whether you develop *as a small group or a ministry* will depend on your motive, interest, experience, training, etc. With your core group, you will need to define where you want to start, and the direction you want to grow. This will take time. Remember, too, that God is working. Let Him lead!

If you *see a bigger picture*, and want to start an organized Adventist Single Adult Ministries in your church you will want to organize as a ministry of your local church. This involves the appointment of a *Single Adult Ministries Coordinator* and a *Single Adult Ministries Committee*. Here are some ideas for successful organization.

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES COORDINATOR AND COMMITTEE

Ask your pastor about the process for appointing a Single Adult Ministries Coordinator and Committee in your church. In some churches this position and the committee are both elected by the Nominating Committee. In other churches only the Coordinator is elected and some churches leave it to the ministry to select their own leadership team.

WHAT WILL THE SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES COORDINATOR DO?

The Coordinator is the leader of the ministry. It is his or her job to work with the Committee to create a vision for Single Adult Ministries in your church and surrounding community and implement the plan to reach that vision. Listed below are some tasks that need to be on the "to do" list of the Coordinator. The Coordinator needs to carefully assess the talents and interests of his or her Committee members. In some cases the Coordinator can delegate these tasks; other tasks should remain the sole responsibility of the Coordinator.

- Know who the single adults are in the church. Invite them to become involved in Single Adult Ministries. Obtain their names, addresses and e-mail addresses for your mailing list. Note any special interests, personal challenges or new ideas that each of the singles on your list have. Make sure to use the talents and God-given gifts of the singles on your list!
- Make Bible study and personal spiritual growth a priority. Organize small groups, home bible fellowship or mid-week fellowships where singles are invited to come and grow as disciples of Jesus.
- Work with your pastor or worship team to involve singles as part of the worship service.
- Make sure that strategies for reaching single adults are included as your church plans entry events that will attract new members. Events that specifically target singles could include a divorce recovery seminar or single parent workshop. Do something that meets the needs of people in your community.
- Maintain close contact with your pastor regarding all events for singles, and ask his or her counsel regarding activities planned. Avoid problems due to misinformation, neglect or improper behavior.
- Look for ways to help the congregation and its leaders develop a non-judgmental, open and accepting attitude. Focus on how to minister to singles in the situations in which they are found. The question is "What can be done now?" rather than "What happened?" or "Why did you do what you did to get yourself into this?"
- Be sure that every Single Adult Ministries activity is publicized in your church, either through the bulletin or by personal contact.
- Coordinate car pools as needed. Many are encouraged to attend functions if transportation is available.

Protect the privacy of the singles in your group. Please do not publish the names, addresses, phone numbers or emails on your list without written consent from each individual.

- Promote participation in your events as much as possible. Invite singles who are not members of your church. Singles events are an excellent evangelistic tool.
- Remember this is a ministry to the single people of all ages. Provide activities or events that will appeal to both age groups.
- Use whatever public relations methods may be available to you such as an article in the Union paper, a notice on a local radio station or message on public access cable. Send flyers to singles groups in other Seventh-day Adventist churches or areas.

It is of utmost importance that the Coordinator be faithful in his/her personal devotions and Bible study. By maintaining your connection with Jesus you will experience a love for all singles and your ministry will be most successful.

Do not try to do it alone!

If you are the one with the burden for Singles Adult Ministries, you may do most of the creative, mental and physical work. A word of caution: as a "lone ranger" you may burn out. Your ministry will flounder and cease to grow and/or die. Let others help you! Select three or four people (depending on the size of your church) who have the same goals for the ministry, who are creative, hard working, talented, have the freedom to do this, are supportive, willing to work within denominational standards, and fun to be with—this is your team! When selecting your team, note that vital, creative, interesting, fun people in your core leadership group will tend to attract the same kinds of people to your ministry. In most churches this core leadership group is called the Adventist Single Adult Ministries Committee.

What should I look for in Committee Members?

Your leadership must be balanced with men as well as women. Both genders have skills and talent, which compliment the other in leadership. You need the male and female perspective when planning events. You also want to make sure that people from different age groups are represented. To connect with older people you need to have someone that can let you know their needs. The same thing is true of younger singles. The right mix of people is crucial! It also helps to have people with administrative, clerical and public relations skills. Don't forget—you will need some "go-fers."

What will the Single Adult Ministries Committee do?

Single Adult Ministries Committee members play a major role in the success of your ministry. They are the front line volunteers, they support your events and they keep in touch with the singles in your churches.

A successful ministry enjoys a family spirit. To build up your family spirit in your Single Adult Ministries, it must begin with your Committee. The different personalities of your members will fit like a mosaic. Every member of the Committee must learn to respect others and seek to nurture each other. Ministry begins here! It is not a place for dating, flirting, etc. Keep emphasizing that we are "family for each other." There should be fun in your meeting, lots of laughter, but keep the group on the agenda.

There is an important step that should be taken by the group as you begin to establish your ministry team—you need to set ground rules and expectations for your team. Talking about issues right at the start is much easier than addressing them once problems arise and people are hurt, frustrated or angry. The expectations could be as simple as "starting on time" or "atten-

dance at every meeting". A ground rules could be "acceptance of other people's ideas when brainstorming".

Agreeing on some of the basics is very important—here is why. We all bring our own expectations, back ground and cultural experiences to the group. Without setting up expectations one person could become very frustrated by a group member who is always late while the person who is late may just see that as normal behavior. These "basic" expectations are far reaching. They extend from the uses of funds to the expectations of time (and money) expected from group members.

There is a lot that could be said about establishing expectations early but the most important thing is that your group shares common expectations from the beginning.

Here are some ideas that will help you get the most from your Committee. Whether it is potlucks and "dine-outs", small-group meetings for Bible study and fellowship, or seasonal get-togethers and other fun activities, one of the most important roles of each Committee Member is to find out what the singles in your church would like to do, and bring information and ideas to your meetings so your events can be geared to meet the needs of all your singles. If you only plan hikes because you like to hike then you are certainly limiting the scope of your ministry. Make sure to reach out to a broad segment of the singles in your church and community by planning events based on the needs of the entire group.

How often you meet will depend on your program. Your Committee should meet at least every quarter but your plan may include meeting once a week or every other week for dinner, discussions and planning.

You can meet in your church fellowship room or at a restaurant with a meeting room. Committee meetings should not be held in a home. It is too easy for these meetings to become social events rather than business and ministry planning sessions. One more thought on meetings. Today, e-mail is available for efficient communication. But be aware that it does NOT replace the warm, camaraderie of dining together to discuss ideas.

It is sometimes helpful to give people jobs with a written description descriptions. A job title helps to identify the area of responsibility and accountability. Specific jobs can be assigned, or assumed, as necessary.

Your Committee Members are an important volunteer base. In addition to serving as your staff to run events, some may be available to help with other functions, such as getting a mailing out. One of the important responsibilities of your Committee Members is to circulate at the event, be friendly with everyone, draw out the shy singles, and locate new helpers.

Your committee members could be responsible for maintaining a telephone "hotline" or email address that would give information on upcoming events.

Someone in your core group should be able to manage databases, create graphics and maybe even maintain your web site.

Financing the Single Adult Ministries

It takes money to run a ministry! It may be that you can get financial help from a local church. Your church will probably help you by allowing your ministry to use their equipment and space to have your events and meetings but you need more than that. Find out what it takes to submit a ministry budget to be included in the church budget that your church board votes each year. Be conservative with the amount you request and be specific on how this money will be used. Some of the areas you will need immediate help in funding are postage and office supplies, disposable supplies and possibly refreshments for events.

Donations

Do you have people, single or married friends with funds that you can ask for "seed" money? It can be donated through your church, and used for postage, supplies for events, advertising, etc. While donations are helpful, a steady stream of funds is necessary to carry out a good program.

- A word about non-profit status. Avoid the complications of launching a private ministry. In the long term Single Adult Ministries belongs to the church, not the individual.
- Every ministry needs funds to operate. If your church or conference does not provide operating funds, you may have to finance the ministry from your own funds, and few people can do this alone! By affiliating your ministry with your church all donations are tax deductible. Many singles want to donate to their ministry.
- Tithe - Let it be known that donations and offerings are acceptable—tithe is not! Tithe money is for the church and must be handled appropriately.

It is extremely important that accurate records of all income and expenses be kept for your ministry. Whenever finances are concerned accountability and disclosure are of utmost importance. This is particularly important because you are often asking for people to donate to your ministry. Do not wait until someone asks you for a financial report. Prepare a report for your committee to review at least once each quarter. It is a good idea to share that report with the pastor too!

As you become self-supporting, your singles may be willing to help cover the mailing costs. At events, someone can sign up names for your mailing list. Some ministries collect an annual fee to pay for the costs of mailings and other ministry maintenance costs. \$10 to \$20 per year may be sufficient to build your mailing list and send regular announcements to the singles in your church and community. You may want to clean-up your mailing list from time to time by removing the names of people who have not attended anything for an extended period of time.

Don't forget to submit announcements and notices to the church bulletin and bulletin boards on a timely basis. Know the deadlines for your church, conference and Union paper. If you are going to raise money you must raise awareness of what is happening!

Event Planning

Remember: Singles go where singles are. Whether it is potlucks and “dine-outs”, small-group meetings for Bible study and fellowship, or seasonal get-togethers you want to plan events that will reach out to the single adults in your church and community. You will want to pay attention to different age groups as well as interest groups. You may want to make up a short survey to hand out or send to the singles on your list asking them what they would like for your Committee to plan.

The Committee will select the events that you want to sponsor. As your ministry gets started you will find that it is the weekly get togethers that ties the singles in your group together. These weekly, bi-weekly or monthly activities do not need to be elaborate or require a great deal of planning. Once an event is successful, you can plan the same thing every month. Bowling, miniature golf, game night, dinner out, etc. If you want your ministry to remain active you need a full calendar of events where people get together. An important thing to note is that Sabbaths and Saturday nights may be the most important days – they can be awfully lonely times for singles.

Once you have a calendar planned use your Committee to help you promote special activities. Don't try to do it all yourself!

Plan a calendar

The Committee can decide the events for the next quarter, or year. Present the calendar to the church board to build up the synergy and get their input. If an event fails to gain the board's support, it may need to be changed or deleted. Establish early on that once the Committee agrees on an event, everyone works to make it successful.

Remember that you are working with volunteers. Good books are available to teach you the fine art of leading volunteers. As you get to know your Committee members, you will learn their talents and skills, as well as, whom you can depend on! Some will thrive by being asked to play the piano, gather wood for a fire, transport items, purchase supplies, decorate meeting rooms, create flyers, etc. This collection of talents and skills will help fill your needs to accomplish your events.

Venue

Select an appropriate location for your event, particularly a seminar or party. Whenever an event is planned and the location is published, the number of people who show up is directly related to the location of the event. In other words, if you advertise a seminar to be held in a small meeting room that will hold 50 people, 50 people or less will attend. But if the event is planned for a large hall that holds 300, you will probably get between 200-300 participants. So when you are planning an excellent workshop that could attract people from at least a 100-mile radius, select a meeting room that will hold several hundred. Even if you don't have a maximum crowd, it still says to your singles that your group is vital, active, and worthwhile.

Homes are good for Friday evening vespers, book reviews, etc. For larger meetings, select a room that has kitchen facilities for refreshments, etc.

Do not sign contracts using your personal information. Always have the contract between your local church and the vendor. Make sure that your church has insurance to cover whatever event you are planning.

Adventist churches are a good choice for events since most of your singles know where the church is and quite often the room can be obtained at no charge. Check on the facilities available at churches from other denominations. They may not charge very much once you tell them what you are doing. School auditoriums, banks, hospitals, and libraries may have community rooms available. Even nursing homes will sometimes let you use one of their rooms for a seminar (not a party). Restaurants with banquet rooms are available as meeting rooms, but they usually want the group to order food. Keep in mind that restaurants can be noisy and food can be messy and soil your papers so you need to determine the type of meeting you want to have before selecting the location.

Don't be afraid to sponsor events that may cost \$10 to \$30. You want a well-rounded group—if everything is very cheap or free, you will attract the ones who like those freebies! People will pay for a good program. Even single parents, who consistently say they can't afford to attend events that cost, will pay for something good when they really want it. Everybody has his or her own priorities. If you present an excellent program, and price it in accordance with the guidelines in the next section, you should attract the singles in professional occupations.

Plan for a balance—Low cost as well as more expensive. Some events should be just for the singles, and not include the kids. If children are invited, this should be clear in your advertising. There are many singles that would prefer not to have kids around all the time. Campouts and picnics are very good events to bring the children. Saturday night parties should be just for adults.

Someone in your group may want to coordinate babysitting options for single parents. Work with your church leaders to find helpers who would entertain children during an adult event.

Executing your Event Plan

Begin by organizing a 3-ring binder with dividers and labels, i.e., *Food, Budget, Jobs & Helpers, Correspondence, Negotiations, Programs, Future Events, etc.* Write everything down! This is your meeting binder. When you plan an event you'll want to organize another binder for that specific event. After the event you keep the binder in your file, or place all the contents in a file folder and reuse the binder. It saves time and effort to refer back to previous events for specific notes.

It is important to delegate as much as possible for many reasons. The first reason to delegate is that it is simply not possible for one person to handle every detail of most events. The second reason is just as important, people need to be needed. Let others use their skills, talents, and spiritual gifts. This team leadership style works well in Single Adult Ministries. When everyone is responsible for a part of the event it becomes "their event" and they come and bring a friend.

If no one wants to help, seek advice. What's wrong with the program? What can be done differently so people will want to help! Remember, the highest factor in ministry failure is burnout.

FOLLOW UP!

Keep your staff on schedule by following up regularly to be sure they are accomplishing their assignments so the program moves forward towards the event date.

Commitments for meeting rooms, food preparation, and printing of advertising and brochures require follow-up. Double check to be sure you have the key to the room, or check with the person who has the key early the day of the event to be sure you have access. Do follow-up in plenty of time to recover if something falls through.

Always inspect the meeting room before your event to see if it is clean. Know how to control the heat and air conditioning. Be sure you have a clear understanding with the manager of the room as to what is included, what you can and cannot do in the room, and how much clean up is required of you

A home that is made available to your group is a special privilege. One person should be responsible to be sure everything is cleaned up after the group session. Train your participants from the beginning that clean up is a group effort and that everyone helps before departing the premises.

A portable audio unit is a great investment. People will enjoy your programs if they can hear comfortably. Acoustics are sometimes a problem, but you can compensate with a microphone. Also, a microphone may not be included in the cost of the room. Delegate a responsible person to transport, set up, and care for the equipment your ministry has acquired. This may include easels, white boards, projectors, etc..

FINAL MEETING

Just prior to your event, call a meeting of your Committee to ensure that everything is ready. Look for loose ends and prioritize that they get accomplished, or drop it if you determine something is not important after all. Go down your list and check off everything that is completed and ready. It's good to be flexible in the event someone on the Committee has a great idea to add to the event. This is especially true if the person is willing to implement the idea and is simply asking for permission to include it. A last minute idea may not be so great if the idea just creates more work for you! Remember your plan, and work the plan. For smaller activities, a meeting may not be necessary if you can wrap it up by phone or e-mail. Use your judgment

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

Often a vendor wants to contract with you. This could be for the meeting room, supplies or other purchases. Be careful! If you are sponsored by a Seventh-day Adventist organization (church, conference, etc.), you are not authorized to sign a contract without the specific approval of your advisor or the treasurer of the church or conference. Remember that a contract does not have to be written in order to be valid. Sometimes a deposit is required, and your advisor's approval is crucial. Especially while you are learning, run everything by your advisor, and even years down the road, you'll be comfortable seeking his/her advice. You are not alone in ministry so use your network and support system.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES – GAMES, ETC.

Singles will attend a social activity for many reasons: fellowship and friendship, boredom, the need to feel close to others, variety in their lives, finding someone to date, or wanting to meet a marriage partner, etc. Many singles do not verbalize all their needs, but your social activities will meet some of them. Plan social activities that promote “family for each other” and keep in mind the words in the song, “I’m so Glad I’m a Part of the Family of God.”

When planning games or other social activities, it is important to promote this family concept. Very competitive activities do not encourage your singles to get to know each other. Games which require only individual participation will not be as successful. Get acquainted games enable people to talk to each other, work together on a project, intermingle and develop friendship skills. Some good examples are:

- Mixers which involve walking around the room, talking to as many people as necessary to finish the game.
- People in groups of 2-8 around a table to find some common objects, ideas, and projects.
- Games which require some touch between men and women, but in a very non-threatening and non-sexual manner.
- Silly games should be used very sparingly. However, if your group is too “stiff” you might find a short, judicious, silly game helps loosen up the group.
- One game that works well is to count off into twos and have them talk to each other for five minutes. Then pass out a paper with general questions, such as, hobby, special interests, occupation, family, etc. People may sit back-to-back and answer questions about the other person to find out how well they listened.

Original ideas for social activities are available in printed resource material. At the end of this *Quick Start Guide* is a resource list of books with more ideas than you will use in a lifetime. Research libraries and bookstores for ideas you can adapt for your purposes. Check the Internet—there are many great resources available.

Single Adult Ministries (SAM) is an excellent Christian resource! SAM is sponsored by Cook Communication and they publish material in many forms, electronic newsletters, books, magazines, etc. SAM sponsors seminars and workshops to train leaders, and holds an annual convention for singles’ ministry leaders. Some of the material may need to be adapted for Adventist so use these resources as you see fit. Call Cook Communications Ministries at 1-(888) 888-4SAM for general information or go to www.cook-ministries.com to see what they have to offer.

Another good resource is the Youth and Family Ministries Departmental library at the conference office. The department may subscribe to monthly or quarterly magazines or booklets that are full of ideas, both for theme parties and different types of games.

NOTE: *When selecting material or ideas, look for concepts, and then adapt the material or idea for your group. Keep in mind our church standards and the age range and gender mix of your participants to select appropriate material. (If you reject an idea because you find an objectionable word, such as, coffee*

or dance, you may miss more than you gain. Adapt as necessary, but look for win-win ideas. If in doubt, run it past your advisor and/or your Committee for input. There is wisdom in the counsel of Godly people.

The types of events you sponsor will determine the age-range of the singles that will attend. If you plan only potlucks, banquets, or other sit-down activities, the majority of the participants will probably be the "older crowd." For a well rounded program during the year, balance the program: dinners, bike rides, home parties, campouts, talent nights, game nights, weekend trips, treasure hunts, beach parties, vespers with light refreshments, etc.

Your Committee will brain storm ideas—list them all, and consider which ones are appropriate for your group. Consider the lifestyles of your singles. Are they "young and restless" or senior and semi-retired? Do they have to travel mountainous terrain or crowded freeways to reach your program? Are they scattered in different communities or does everyone live near the church? Geographic location needs to be considered when planning a ministry, and the events that follow. Be realistic in your dreams, plan for growth, and persevere to be successful.

Budget - Plan a Profit

It is essential when operating a "nonprofit" organization, that you do make a profit. Otherwise, you will soon run out of funds for supplies, postage, telephone, printed material, advertising, deposits for venues, etc.

Offerings or donations may be taken at small meetings, but avoid offerings at large events when you charge admission. Of course, offerings are appropriate during Sabbath School or the worship hour. The offering may be used to offset the hosts' expenses if any, or a small fee may be charged for a home meeting such as \$2 to \$3 for refreshment and snack expenses. It is appropriate to ask for donations at any time for your ministry. These donations must go in your "general" fund to cover administrative type expenses. Be a good steward with people's donations and use the funds prudently.

Your larger events are planned to raise funds for your ministry, not just to "break even." A good rule of thumb is to estimate the costs, then put the price at double the costs. If this seems a bit much for a particular event, adjust the price so it is reasonable for the value of the event. Also, for weekend events where lodging and meals are involved, people cannot afford the price if you double the costs! In this case, cover the cost and add a reasonable percentage for profit. Remember that it takes money to run the ministry.

When preparing a budget, make a list to itemize what you need to cover. The following is a sample of some items to consider:

- Meeting room
- Speaker honorarium or fee
- Rental of necessary equipment
- Paper goods for refreshments or dinner
- Cost of meal if catered
- Advertising costs
- Printing and mailing costs
- Mileage (see below)
- Decorations
- Name badges
- Supplies for seminar or workshop

Make a conservative guess as to how many people you might expect. If you hope for 150, but usually only have 75 people attending, it is unrealistic to expect 150 people. Plan for 75, but know how you can expand your food to accommodate more if you have a crowd showing up. In your budget, plan for only 75. Add your anticipated expenses, double them and set your price. (A more accurate estimate can be made when people RSVP, although not everyone heeds the RSVP notation!)

Don't be intimidated by criticism for charging too much. The secret is to always give full value for the money paid. Provide little extras that they didn't expect so the participants will feel it was worth it!

Catered dinners are special, but don't be chintzy—people would rather spend a little more and have a very nice meal. You will soon get a reputation for having great events and your attendance will increase.

SPENDING

Keep a close tab on the people you have given power to purchase anything or spend money in any way. Be sure you know you (and your ministry) are getting full value for the outlay, and money is not overspent. Be a wise steward of the money that is taken in. Be very clear at the beginning and remind your staff that they are not allowed to spend any money over that which you have authorized and included in your budget. Unless cleared by you first, do not let anyone submit extra expenses for reimbursement. This can break you! Better for someone to "eat" an unauthorized expense than for your ministry to go in the hole because a well-meaning person over spent. Practice "tough love."

Immediately after your event, total up all the expenses and determine your profit. Report to your Committee at the next meeting exactly what was taken in, and what was spent. If you did not make a profit, find out what happened and why. Make your corrections for the next event.

MILEAGE

An invisible expense to remember is mileage. It is not fair to expect the Committee members to run around preparing for the event, and not reimburse them for mileage. Make it a point to reimburse necessary and reasonable costs, including the costs you incur yourself. This prevents resentment to build which has been verbalized that, "I do all the work, and they have all the fun." If you or one of your Committee members does not want to be reimbursed for some expenses, and wants to donate their costs, reimbursement should be given anyway. The individual may choose to turn over that money as a donation. But plan for the expense of driving or other costs in your budget because it is right.

Advertising

Local Advertising

Probably the best, and most costly, way of advertising your local events is by mailing out a flyer to everyone on your mailing list. The cost of postage and printing is considerable, yet it is the most effective way of contacting people who would be most interested in your event. To save costs, plan far enough in advance so you can distribute flyers at all meetings, take them to churches to post on the bulletin boards, and ask the churches to put an announcement in the church bulletin or monthly newsletter.

The Internet

It is cost effective to communicate via the internet and e-mail, however, not everyone has e-mail therefore this should not be your sole communication tool. You can, however, set up your own website or you may wish to utilize the website already set up for Adventist Single Adult Ministries at www.adventistsingleadultministries.org.

Union and Conference-wide events

Advertising Union-wide in the Union paper (Recorder, Outlook, Tidings, etc.) is very effective to reach singles that are not on your active mailing list. Ask your local church or conference to authorize the ad and/or help with the cost. Your conference may have a printed or electronic newsletter where you can include your announcement. Check with the conference Communication Director to see what your options are for advertising through their office.

Make sure that all your events are listed in any mailings you already do to the singles in your Union or Conference. Having a list of "coming events" in your ASAM calendar or newsletter will remind people what they can plan on.

If event flyers are mailed it's a good idea to send out at least two mailings. One should be sent 2-3 months before the event, and the other (which could be a postcard) about a month before as a reminder.

Newsletters

If you have or know someone who has the skill and talent to produce a monthly or even quarterly newsletter, use this method to keep singles interested and informed on a regular basis. They will look for the newsletter and be much more likely to retain it for reference.

A newsletter can be nothing more than a Calendar of Events, or it may contain editorial material.

Keep in mind that publishing is a specialized skill. It is preferable to publish a really attractive newsletter or paper, but even a simple newsletter is better than nothing. The main purpose is to inform and to advertise your events. Attendance increases in direct proportion to the amount of publicity you can generate!

Church Standards

As a leader of the Adventist Single Adult Ministries in your church you should be careful to set standards in your program that do not conflict with the Seventh-day Adventist denominational standards. You will find some people will ask for activities which are marginal at best. Not only do you set standards for the type of program presented, but also set the standards for behavior of the group.

As a leader you will find that what is acceptable does vary from one area to the next. What is okay in one church or area may be frowned upon in another. For example, "contemporary Christian music" may be accepted by some, but abhorred by others. It is safer for your Committee to minister effectively by walking in the middle of the road. Avoid fads and current trends unless they are clearly acceptable by your church and conference standards. Here's where an advisor, or pastor, will keep you from getting into hot water, or sinking!

Here is a critical issue that all singles ministry groups today must address—avoid "all appearance of evil." Gossip is too easily spread, whether we like it or not! We must be careful at all times, as we represent singles ministry to the whole church at large. If you have weekend outings, whether in a hotel or at a camp, you must avoid co-ed type housing, no matter how innocent or chaperoned. We recognize that people can "sin" no matter where they are, and we cannot police singles in their choices, but the fact that you don't allow such mixing in your overnight events will earn you a strong reputation. As a leader, you should acquire the reputation for holding all events within very conservative Christian standards. Remember, you deserve the reputation you build for your group.

There is another standard which should be addressed. That is, to be sure our events, written publications, contacts with the public, etc., are all in line with the highest standard of professionalism and just plain etiquette. We represent the Seventh-day Adventist church in all that we do and to all who we meet. Let our dealings with the public be courteous, honest, intelligent, thoughtful and true.

Continuity of Leadership

Singles are a fluid, ever-changing group. At first, this fact can be very disturbing to you, the leader. You wonder why you don't see the same people at your events every time. Your singles are in different stages of healing or growth, and their needs change, sometimes rapidly. There is always the "dating" situation—singles leave the group when they are dating, then come back later. As a leader, you may also need to drop out for a while.

Prepare to give the ministry away! As you work, groom your successors and teach them to do likewise. The enthusiasm you feel at the beginning of your ministry will change as you mature, and you'll find that once you've *been there, done that* it's time to pass the torch. Avoid quitting abruptly (unless you're under doctor's orders). It is natural to "retire" and there is no shame in choosing to step down. The honorable thing to do is to plan your retirement and gradually step back and allow the new leader(s) to assume the responsibility. Ideally, you'll continue to serve as an "advisor" for a year or so. Unless you clearly see that the group is heading for trouble that you can avert for them, remember to hold your advice and opinions until asked! Assume you have trained them and groomed them, and that they want the best for the singles ministry.

Conclusion

You don't know what the future holds but you do know that God has a plan for you and for each of the single adults that will be touched by your ministry. You are part of the Master's plan!

Be of good courage. Jesus said He overcame the world—and He's our best (single) friend!

Resources for Single Adult Ministries Leaders

ADVENTIST ORGANIZATIONS ON-LINE

www.adventistsingleadultministries.org

The official website for North American Division Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM). Eventually, all local church and conference ASAM's will be linked to this page - make sure your information is here!

www.adventistfamilyministries.org

The official website for the North American Division Department of Family Ministries. Also available by calling 1-301-680-6462

www.saltyfish.net CONNECT

The official Adventist Young Adult Network

www.plusline.org

The Seventh-day Adventist "help desk". News, events, resources and much more. Also available by calling 1-800-732-7587

www.hesaidgo.net

Adventist Volunteer Ministries Network

www.y4him.org

Adventist Young Professionals Network

OTHER CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS ON-LINE

Sign up for email newsletters from the following organizations.

www.barna.org

The Barna Research Group is the premiere marketing research company in America dedicated to assisting God's people to do the work of the kingdom. Books, research reports and "The Barna Update," a regular e-mail bulletin from BRG that informs you about their latest studies. In it, they address the issues related to your ministry that concern you the most.

www.cookministries.com/books/sam_journal

SAM (Single Adult Ministries) Journal – free/online. This free, online magazine is written by singles ministry leaders, for singles ministry leaders. You can contact Cook Ministries at 1-(888) 888-4SAM

www.singlesmall.com/sam_menu.html

List of resources for Single Adult Ministries leaders.

www.christianitytoday.com/singles

Published by Christianity Today Magazine.



ag.org/singles

Website from Assemblies of God USA, provides many links and resources for SAM leaders. Includes articles, and many resources and links for blended families, grief recovery, and single parenting as well as Single Adult Ministries.

www.pastors.com

From Rick Warren of Saddleback Church. Many tools and resources for growing healthy churches and ministries. On this site you can subscribe to a free e-mail newsletter Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox.

BOOKS FOR SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES LEADERS

These books and many other ministry resources are available from AdventSource. Call 800-328-0525 or visit on-line at adventsource.org.

Barna, George. *Single Focus*, The Barna Research Group, Empowering Single Adults for Effective Leadership. Cook Ministry Resources, Colorado Springs, CO.

Jones, Jerry, ed. *The Idea Catalog for Single Adult Ministry*. Cook Ministry Resources, Colorado Springs, CO.

Petersen, Paul, ed. *Creative Week-ends. 23 _ Ready-To-Use events for Single Adult Ministry*. Cook Ministry Resources, Colorado Springs, CO.

SEMINARS/RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY LEADERS

The Foundations Program

This program from Cloud-Townsend Resources is based on four of their best-selling books—*Changes That Heal*, *Boundaries*, *Hiding From Love*, and *Safe People*.

The Foundations Program will teach you how to handle all types of spiritual and personal challenges while you learn to strengthen all your relationships. "Foundations" is comprised of four best-selling books that contain powerful Biblical principles. Each one of these books is a building block in a complete system of spiritual maturity and emotional growth. Used in succession, these books help participants uncover the issues that often keep them from a rich, full spiritual and personal life. You will discover new and effective ways to deal with hurtful people, change unwanted behaviors and reach God's potential for your life. Leaders guide, videos, etc. are available for group study. In addition to the books and workbooks, teaching videos and facilitator's guides are available for leading groups in this series. Order from Cloud-Townsend On-Line at www.drhenrycloud.com or by calling 800-676-4673.

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren.

Book, workbook, leaders guide and videos are available for group discussion and study. The small group package come with two teaching options—a video of Rick Warren teaching the material, and a transcript of the video so that your teacher or host may prepare and teach the lessons. The teaching video contains six videotaped sessions, including a "Leader Lifter" where the host is given coaching tips for the upcoming session, plus a 20-minute lesson taught by Rick Warren. Video-based curriculum equips new hosts to lead just as effectively as your seasoned and knowledgeable group experts. This resource is available at most Christian bookstores.

Welcome - New Life Ministries

Since 1985 *New Life Live!* (formerly called *The Minirth-Meier Clinic*) has been broadcast as a nationally-syndicated, interactive talk radio program which deals with mental health, emotional, relational and spiritual issues from a Biblical perspective. Through on-air counsel, a vast library of resources and their network of Christian therapists nationwide, *New Life Ministries* is equipped to be a fully-orbed resource for the treatment of mental and spiritual health issues. Workshops are available around the country for those struggling with sexual purity, based on the book series *Every Man's Battle*.



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