



**BEST OF**

**TRY THIS ONE**

The most popular ideas from the #1 youth ministry resource

FOREWORD

**THOM SCHULTZ**

**group**  
magazine



## Group resources actually work!

**T**his Group resource helps you focus on “**The 1 Thing**®”—a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. “The 1 Thing” incorporates our **R.E.A.L.** approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it’s:

**Relational**

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

**Experiential**

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

**Applicable**

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God’s Word.

**Learner-based**

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

### Best of Try This One From Group Magazine

#### The Most Popular Ideas From the #1 Youth Ministry Resource

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# FOREWORD

**This stuff works.** The ideas in this book come from people like you—in the thick of youth ministry.

Here you'll find a motherlode of practical youth ministry ideas for Bible studies, outreach programs, devotions, games, crowdbreakers, discussion starters, and attention-grabbers. They were all developed in the field and sent to Group Magazine's highly popular "Try This One" department.

When I started Group in 1974, there was no World Wide Web—no electronic networking for youth workers or anyone else. But there was definitely a need to share good ideas among those "in the trenches." That was the dream for Group Magazine. And the section called "Try This One" quickly became a real favorite among readers who looked forward to the usefulness, fun, and authenticity of reader-submitted ideas. In those pre-www days, "Try This One" was a low-tech offline forum.

And "Try This One" continues to be a favorite in Group, which is the most-read youth ministry resource in the world. Some things just work and keep on working. God has certainly blessed many youth ministries through the shared ideas in "Try This One."

In this book, we've collected the best "Try This One" ideas that have been submitted in recent years. So dig in, enjoy, and use these ideas in your ministry. They work! And join the long tradition of sharing the best youth ministry ideas. Send your great ideas to Group Magazine at [editor@groupmag.com](mailto:editor@groupmag.com). Who knows—maybe your idea will make it into the magazine and the next edition of this book.



# INTRODUCTION

Every youth leader comes to that moment in ministry when he or she confronts the age-old question: *What are we gonna do for this?* That's why we decided over two decades ago to introduce "Try This One," proven ideas that you, the practitioner, have used in your student ministry.

The very first book published by Group was a collection of the best of "Try This One" from Group magazine. We haven't done another book like it for decades and felt like it was time. So, we opened up the "Try This One" vault and gathered the best ideas we could to create another book for you. As we started going through ideas, we were reminded again of the great things you're doing to build relationships with the teenagers.

This book is a collection of those ideas, provided in easy-to-follow sections that will allow you to browse through and plan for the future or pick up the book on the run and pull out an idea you can use today. We encourage you to make this book a daily ministry tool. Mark it up, write the date over each idea you use, rate each idea according to its impact in your group, and pass it on to your lay leaders.

For your convenience, the sections are divided as follows: Bible Studies, Crowdbreakers, Discussion Starters, Fund-Raisers, Games, Group Builders, Helpful Hints, and Outreach. Each idea summarizes everything you need for the activity, and the different sections make it easy to find exactly what you need.

We're always looking for fresh and effective ministry ideas, so send us your "Try This One" idea. If we use your idea, we'll pay you \$50. Just send your idea, daytime phone number, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Group's "Try This One," P. O. Box 481, Loveland, Colorado 80538-0481 or e-mail [editor@groupmag.com](mailto:editor@groupmag.com).

**Enjoy trying the best ideas out there!**

## 1. FACE-UP UNO



**Here's a great way to initiate a discussion about openly sharing our faith.**

Have your students form groups of six to eight people. Give each group a set of Uno cards, and have them play the game—but with all the cards in their hands facing up. Be sure that everyone in each group can see other players' cards. Play until one person in each group shouts "Uno!"

Then have groups discuss these questions:

- Why is playing Uno this way more difficult?
- How is playing Uno this way similar to the way that you share your faith? How is it different?
- What's one area of your relationship with Christ that you easily show others? What's one area that's difficult to show?
- If there were one thing about your faith that you could share with a friend who doesn't know Christ, what would it be?

**Chad Kimberley**  
Janesville, Wisconsin

## 2. AGE OF THE EARTH

**Use this discussion to help kids understand the relationship between faith and science.**

Before your meeting, read up on some of the various theological and scientific theories about the age of the earth, and talk to your senior pastor or a science-minded person from your church. Finally, gather a list of popular celebrities and their ages.

At your meeting, play a trivia game in which youth group members guess the ages of celebrities. For every year that a player goes over the correct age, he or she receives one point. For every year that a player guesses under the correct age, he or she receives a minus point. The object is to end up with a score of zero.

After the game, ask:

- What made it hard to guess people's ages? Explain.
- How old do you think the earth is?
- Is it harder to guess the earth's age than a person's age? Why or why not?
- What various beliefs do Christians hold about the age of the earth?
- Why do you think this is a controversial topic among Christians?

Share with your students the information and opinions you've gathered. Then ask:

- How are scientific beliefs and theological beliefs alike? How are they different?
- How does science challenge your faith?
- How can you strengthen your faith when you review scientific studies or opinions?

**Alfred Lu**  
Vancouver, British Columbia

## 3. INVISIBLE OBJECT LESSON



**Use Kool-Aid Invisible to help generate a discussion about not judging others.**

Before heading out on a weekend rally, I noticed friction between group members. For this annual trip, popular kids, new kids, bored kids, and all my other kids get mixed together and often pick on each other. I wanted to do something so the conflict wouldn't hurt the trip for my students, so I mixed up a pitcher of Kool-Aid Invisible and brought it to devotions before we left. (Kool-Aid Invisible is regular Kool-Aid drink mix made without the color. After you mix it and let it sit, it's completely clear.)

When I showed the pitcher to students, I asked them what they thought it was. When the kids answered "water," I poured everyone a cup and watched as they tasted their drinks and reacted with surprise. Then I had students keep guessing what the contents were until they figured out that they were drinking Invisible Kool-Aid. Then I asked the following:

- What decisions do you make when you see someone for the first time?
- How can those decisions hurt or help others? hurt or help ourselves?
- How do first impressions lead us to miss opportunities?
- How can we share our "flavor" of life with each other?

As a group, we decided to spend the rest of the weekend paying more attention to the "flavor" of life around us.

**Isaac Arten**  
Escanaba, Michigan

## 4. ANSWERING THE CALL

**Use a cell phone to spark discussion about answering God's call.**

You'll need to take a cell phone with you to your youth group meeting and arrange for a volunteer to call you. Be sure he or she continues to call back until you answer the phone.

As you are discussing your lesson, let the phone ring until it stops (most cell phones only ring a limited number of times). Tell everyone to ignore the ringing, saying that if the call is important, the person will call back. When the phone rings again, continue to teach. Let the phone continue to ring until someone asks you to please answer the phone. Then ask:

- Why should I answer the phone?

After kids answer, let the phone ring one more time. This time, answer the phone, hang up, and have kids discuss these questions:

- Has God ever called you to do something and you ignored him or refused to answer? Explain.
- How do we know how to answer God's call?
- What is God calling you to do with your life?
- Why is it important to be obedient to God?
- How can you be sure to answer God's call when you hear it?

**Kevin Davis**  
Winder, Georgia

## 5. TEMPTATION ISLAND



**Scooters and blindfolds help launch a discussion on how sin can leave us stranded on “Temptation Island.”**

Have your group form two teams, and give each team a scooter and a blindfold. Use chalk to set up start and finish lines about 30 feet apart. In between, use tape and hazard cones to make a winding obstacle course for each team.

Designate one navigator for each team. Everyone else on the team is a prisoner. Have the prisoners stand at the starting line, which is known as Temptation Island. Have the navigators stand with the scooters at the finish line, which represents Victory.

On “go,” the navigators must ride the scooters to Temptation Island. They each blindfold one prisoner, who then has to drive the scooter back through the obstacle course to the finish line while the navigator directs him or her with verbal commands. When they reach Victory, the navigator must go back with the blindfold and pick up another prisoner. The game continues until all prisoners are guided to Victory.

After the game, ask:

- How did it feel to have your navigator help you escape Temptation Island?
- In what ways is this game like real-life temptation?
- How does relying on each other make temptation easier to see?
- What are the best ways that someone could act as a navigator for you when you’re tempted to sin? Explain.

**Keith Reindl**  
Jackson, New Jersey

## 6. HEART MUSIC

**Music that speaks to teenagers can elicit powerful discussion and prayer.**

Set aside a regular time in your meetings when you’ll listen to a song together as a group. You can allow teenagers to suggest songs, or you can plan to play popular songs that deal with issues teenagers identify with. (Be sure to preview the songs before playing them for the group.) After you play the song, talk about its effectiveness and emotional appeal. Use these questions to start a discussion, but be sure to talk about the meaning of particular lyrics:

- What words in the song speak to you? Explain.
- Do you think the song had the same meaning for the writer that it has for you? Explain.
- How does this song reflect your faith?
- How does it strengthen it?
- How might this song conflict with your faith?

After discussion, have pairs write a short prayer, asking God to help them with the feelings elicited by the song or praising God for speaking to them through the lyrics. Invite pairs to offer their prayers aloud with the group. Encourage kids to use songs on their own time as a means to connect with God.

**Rebecca Kerr**  
Athens, Georgia