



Coconut Mountain  
Communications

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## Youth Room Ownership

We've all seen them. The tree house dad built. Rarely, if ever, do you see a kid playing in it. Then you spot a tree fort that looks more like trash in a tree after a hurricane and guess what, kids are everywhere. The difference is *ownership*. When a kid makes something, it's theirs. They are free to do with it as they wish. If Dad makes it, it's his and the kids instinctively understand that dad's rules apply.



The same applies to a teen youth room, youth garage, youth center, whatever you might call the space set aside for your youth group to meet.

To instill *ownership* in the kids, make sure they have a hand in deciding how it will look and what will be in it. Let them decide on the colors. Make sure they help paint it. Have them involved in the pickup and delivery of donated furniture and its arrangement in the room. Put pictures of them on the walls. I even let the kids use one wall as the guest book. Everyone gets to sign it. Let it be messy. If it's too professional looking it would be the same as if Dad built the tree fort (a monument to himself).

Once you have your youth room you must protect the kids' right to it. Others within the church may try to commandeer the space for their ministries. Let the kids see you go to bat for them to protect their right to that space. It's not a storage area, choir practice room, or the men's group football game lounge. Only let moms decorate it if the kids approve of the plan first.



If a kid spills a drink on the couch or chips get crushed into the carpet, don't freak out. Make sure you have paper towels and a Shop-Vac on hand so they can clean up the spill as they see sufficient. Clean things enough to keep the surfaces free of germs, bugs, and rodents after the meeting time.

Instilling ownership of the youth room in the kids ensures that they feel comfortable and secure. They will continue attending regularly because it's their place to hang out. They will also talk freely, secure in the knowledge that *they* matter.