

Youth Leadership Development

One of the goals of SAC is to involve the local Russian church in social outreach. This strengthens their church and gets their membership directly involved in ministry. On mission trips, SAC recruits church members who speak English to become our translators for our small groups. We also enlist volunteers from Transition Homes to serve with us in the small groups in the orphanage and other ministry sites.

These Russian church members and Transition Home volunteers are youth (generally ages 14-26) that have little or no experience in leading small groups. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity for them to be encouraged by having the chance to work along side of our team and gain leadership skills.

To do this, I want all of the team members to find ways to give small portions of the leadership responsibility to their translator and/or volunteer.

Story:

On one mission trip, one of our small group leaders who is a teacher by profession, would give parts of the Bible Study activity to one of the translators or the Transition home volunteers. It might be reading a verse and letting them discuss it directly (without going through the translator) or letting them use a Matrushka doll with a story of Christ on each nested piece to explain the Gospel in their own language. After getting opportunities to lead and be a part of this small group, the translator said, “Oh, I learned so much this week!”

This is what we want to accomplish. SAC wants to leave a legacy of leadership that they can apply to their own church after we leave. It’s a legacy that can last a lifetime in Christian service!

Suggestions to Consider:

1. Ahead of time and in coordination with your translator or volunteer, review the portion of the lesson or activity that you want them to lead.
2. Encourage them to be the leader of that portion and give them the confidence that they can do this.
3. Help them to prepare for this and cover everything they should do. This will give them confidence and set them up for success.
4. Stay in the room with them and stand or sit in the back so the focus of the small group is on the youth leader. Don’t use this as an opportunity for a break.
5. Keep your eyes on the youth leader as they will look at your face for facial indicators about how they are doing to gain confidence for them to continue. Ensure you exhibit that encouragement.
6. Depending on the confidence and experience of the translator or volunteer, give them the degree of responsibility that they are comfortable with, but still a little outside their comfort zone. We want to stretch their skills.