Pro-Tips for Zoom Youth Group
(…and probably helpful on other platforms, too)

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Safety and Security for Minors
- Don't be afraid but be vigilant.
- **Be cautious about publishing your Meeting ID and Password publicly**. Share with your staff/volunteers and have your parents and youth reach out to them for these details.
  - Note that there is a toggle switch in advanced settings for "embed password in meeting link for one-click-join" that is enabled by default. This means that posting the link publically will give anybody direct access, even without the password.
  - Likewise, there is a toggle switch in advanced settings for "require a password for participants joining by phone" which is default set to off. I would suggest this be on so that people can't call in and be anonymous.
- Request students use their real name as their username.
- **Enable "co-hosts" in advanced settings, and empower leaders as moderators** who can review guests, mute, or remove.
- **Enable "waiting room" so guests can be vetted by moderators** before allowed into the actual call.
- If moderating alone, enable "chime" from within the call (dropdown menu near the "mute all" option) or in advanced settings under "play sound when participants join or leave". This way when somebody enters the call you are always aware.
- Note the toggle switch in advanced settings for "Allow removed participants to rejoin". This is off by default, so people removed from the call by a moderator are effectively banned.
- You may consider recording all your meetings and can set meetings to record automatically either to a local hard drive or to the cloud.
- **In Small Group settings, train your leaders to make sure they can identify everybody in their breakout room or on their call *before personal sharing begins*.**
- **Consider a policy for removal of participants who cannot be identified** by their video/audio/username. Better to offend a person who couldn't get their tech working, than risk an unwelcome guest in your group of minors.
- **Consider the reality that any minor's digital image can be screen-captured** by any other participant. How will you communicate a policy around this behavior?
- **Plan To Protect** has a COVID-19 response worth looking through.
- Consider enabling the advanced setting for "**recording disclaimer**", which can be customized to suit your needs, and used to inform parents if you are recording sessions.

Maintaining Focus
- **Pay attention to your background.** Pets, kids, lava lamps... what can be a distraction to those watching you?
- **Set screen share to "only the host"** within the call or meeting settings.
  - *Note that currently screen share is available to everybody within breakout rooms, and this cannot be disabled.* This can be distracting.
- **Consider disabling "Private Chat".**
- **Consider disabling "Annotation" and "Whiteboard"** in the meeting settings.

Family/User Experience
- **Siblings** with multiple devices would do well to be in different rooms to avoid loop feedback.
- **Families** with multiple kids will benefit from trying to get every kid on separate devices.

Small Groups
- **Enable the "Breakout Room" function** in advanced settings.
- There are two options for breakout room creation:
  - Once in the call, create as many break-out rooms as you desire for small groups and name them accordingly. You'll have to do this every meeting, so log in with enough time.
  - Alternatively, in advanced settings, you can click the box for **"Allow the host to assign participants to breakout rooms when scheduling"**. This option is helpful if you can pre-assign at least one small group leader or student per group that you are sure will be joining you. This will prevent you from having to re-create rooms each time, but you'll still have to assign new students to groups each meeting. I pre-assigned all my small group leaders. **This must be done through the web portal; here is a how-to; and here is a sample CSV file.**
- **Sort into small groups manually** (as opposed to automatically). You will have to do this every meeting with any participants who are not assigned to small groups at the time of scheduling, and only the primary host can do this.
- **To make sorting easier, request all participants BEGIN their username with a small group identifier (example 10F for grade 10 female; or 11M for grade 11 male)**. Zoom will group them all this way, and it makes your life sorting them into groups far easier!
- **Adding people to groups after they are formed is possible.** This is especially helpful for dropped connections, or students who join late.
  - The host can click the "Breakouts" button, and at the top of the list will be "unassigned". Hover your mouse to the right of the name, and click "move to"... then select the group they belong to.
  - Users, once assigned to a group, can switch themselves between the main meeting and their breakout, as long as breakout rooms are open.
- **Make your leaders aware of the "Ask for help" function** in their breakout room, which can call the host to join them. This can be helpful for unruly groups.
- **Note that currently screen share is available to everybody within breakout rooms, and this cannot be disabled. This can be distracting.**
- See below for some small group game ideas...

Accounts / Scheduling / Functionality
- **You'll want a paid account** to have much of the aforementioned settings available to you, and to remove the 30-min time limit.
- Schools and **non-profits** can apply for special discounts.
- **Ring Central** is a media package that includes Zoom. They have waived their fees for churches and non-profits for three months.
- **Groups above 100 should consider purchasing the "large group" add-on**, which increases your meeting capacity to 500 participants.
- **Scheduling a meeting as "recurring" means the Meeting ID and Password will always be the same** (*make sure your calendar invites are also recurring*).
- **User experience will be the best when they use the client on a windows or mac machine, or the app on their mobile device.**
  - An advanced settings toggle switch exists to allow users to join a meeting through zoom.us/join without downloading the client/app. However, functionality is limited for such users.
- **Gallery View** can be very helpful. On mobile devices, swipe from the speaker view.

Live Streaming
- **You can Livestream on YouTube**. For some other platforms, you may need to purchase the **"webinars" add-on** to your account package.
- There is also an **"allow live streaming meetings" toggle switch** in advanced settings.

Screen Sharing For Games & Atmosphere
- **Games that utilize a graphic interface for prompts are easiest to manage**, as opposed to prompts delivered verbally. Doing both in sync can be especially good.
- Consider sending out challenges in advance and have kids send in their results and highlighting the best at the actual meeting.
- **Visual countdown timers are very helpful**.
- **You'll want to make use of "mute all" and perhaps check the box that doesn't allow people to unmute themselves**. When people are laughing and talking, it's hard to hear directions from the person running the game.
- **When sharing games or video, use the "share" function, and make sure to click the boxes for "share computer sound" and "optimize for video".**
  - If for some reason sharing your computer audio won't work, consider if your headphones or a BlueTooth device connected.
  - **Make sure videos are downloaded directly to your hard drive** whenever possible, as opposed to streaming.
- **Position yourself for the best possible network connection**; strong wifi or plugged in via ethernet cable.
- Videos share best when downloaded to the hard drive of the sharing computer.
- **Background Music** can be shared by clicking "share", then selecting the "advanced tab", and sharing *only* computer audio.

- **CIY has created an excellent PDF full of Zoom games [here](#).**
- **Download Youth Ministry Games**
  - **Gold accounts at DYM are currently free.**
  - Many "on-screen" games including polling, trivia, majority rules, etc.
  - Go to **downloadyouthministry.com**
  - Potential great games to play via zoom
    - 12 in 12 Summer Edition (Memory Game)
    - Dad Texts: Real or Fake
    - Dumbledore or Proverbs
    - Find Me
    - Nailed it or Failed it: Cat Edition
    - Power Poser! (You will need to download the Sidekick app off of the website)
- **Kahoot & Jackbox Games are excellent options**, though users with a mobile device will struggle to both play and be in the meeting. These are best for users with dual screens, two devices, or multiple windows multiple apps open at once.
  - One leader has the "central" screen with the game playing. Share your screen with everyone else on zoom.
  - Have everyone else go to **jackbox.tv** or **Kahoot.it** with their mobile devices to join the game.
  - **Make sure to enable a family-friendly filter in Jackbox settings.**
  - *Jackbox Games is giving away Drawful2 for free [here](#).*
- **[Codename.plus](#)** is a free online version of the game.
- **Charades**
  - Leader sends a word via zoom chat privately to one of the students
  - Student has to act out the word
  - Everyone else tries to guess what the word is
  - Winner gets a point
- **One Word Stories**
  - Silly game to make up funny stories as a group
  - Pick an order of people in your call (example: Bob, Larry, Brent, etc.)
  - Each person says one word on their turn
  - The goal is to create a funny story one word at a time.
  - Example: Bob – "Once"; Larry – "Upon"; Brent – "A"; Bob – "Lime" Etc.
- **First Letter, Last Letter**
  - Pick a play order for participants.
  - Pick a category… "food" for example.
  - The first person names a food
  - The next person must name a food that begins with the same letter that the previous word ends with.
  - Example: Cucumber--rutabaga--artichoke--etc...
- **Two Truths & A Lie**
  - Every participant creates three statements about themselves--two true and one false.
  - The rest of the group must guess the lie.
  - Points are awarded for correct guesses, most points at the end wins.
- **Mafia**
  - Traditional rules can be found **[here](#)**.
- **Pictionary**

- - Use the whiteboard feature in Zoom.
    - A leader sends a word via chat privately to one of the students (private chat must be enabled).
    - Everyone else tries to guess what the word is.
    - Winner gets a point.
- **Pictionary Air**
    - A leader sends a word via chat privately to one of the students (private chat must be enabled).
    - A student has to draw the word either on paper or in the air.
    - Everyone else tries to guess what the word is.
    - Winner gets a point.
- **"I Spy" In Your Background**
    - The leader picks one of the participants on the call. Everyone "pins" that person's image (double click; can 'unpin' by right-click or upper left button)
    - One at a time, the others say "I spy with my little eye, something that is..." and pick something that is in the background of the selected screen.
    - The person whose screen was selected has to find the item in the background and either point to it or bring it to the camera.
- **[Box Of Lies](#)**
    - As seen on Jimmy Fallon.
    - People grab random objects from their homes and must describe them either truthfully or falsely.
    - Their opponent must guess if they are telling the truth or lying.
    - Award a point for every correct guess.
- **Bible Or Bars**
    - Come prepared with a list of Bible Verses that could be song lyrics and song lyrics that could be Bible verses.
    - Post one at a time, and have students choose which they think it is.
    - Award points for right answers; most points wins.
- **What's That Meme!**
    - The host shares a meme image without text.
    - Students make up their best text.
    - Students vote on the best/funniest ideas.
    - Points awarded for wins.

Prizes

- **Use notoriety (highlight/interview) as the prize as opposed to monetary.**
- **Award Prizes from retailers with E-mail-able gift cards or media subscriptions.**
    - Subscriptions
        - Spotify
        - Apple Music
        - Netflix
    - Delivery
        - Skip The Dishes
        - Uber Eats
        - Amazon
    - E-Credits
        - Xbox/Playstation/Nintendo
        - App Store
        - Google Play Store

Other Sharable Content

- **Screen Share Watch Parties**
  - Right Now Media
  - Worship videos on YouTube (Consider a paid account to avoid ads)
  - Favorite Memes (With obvious boundaries)
  - Favorite Funny Videos (With obvious boundaries)