

Geek Squad

YOU'VE GOT
THE TIME

A Journey of Biblical Faithfulness

By Jeremy Colliver

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Churches do a great job of encouraging and equipping youth who are gifted speakers, musicians, teachers, and leaders by providing them opportunities to grow through preaching, sharing their musical abilities through worship, teaching small groups, and serving on ministry teams or committees. One of the many reasons churches do such a good job of encouraging and equipping youth with these gifts is because these opportunities are in front of the church every week. Now you have a new opportunity that is in front of the church: a pile of New Testament MP3 discs. The congregation is energized about the opportunity to listen to the New Testament, but many members are also anxious because of their lack of familiarity with MP3 technology. An opportunity has been created for the church to encourage and equip another group of gifted youth: the Geek Squad.

The Geek Squad is a group of youth who are great at figuring out technology. The youth of your church as a whole are digital natives; they have grown up with digital technologies and generally are more comfortable with the technologies from which the MP3s will be played, but your Geek Squad will come from those youth who know the ins and outs of the technologies they use. The first names of youth that come to you will be those who use technological terms you have to google to understand. Your Geek Squad might also include youth who are always tinkering with things and taking them apart to see how they work. They might even be youth who are good with puzzle-type activities. Because teenagers who are technologically gifted aren't always the first to be recognized in your youth group, make sure you consider youth who are more quiet and reserved. Because some of these kids are on the shy side, you might want to provide a sign-up sheet for those who are interested but might not want to speak up.

Now that you've got a group of youth who are excited that their abilities are being used, what do you do with them? There is no perfect way to go about this process because each group and church will be different, but the ideas presented here should help you develop your Geek Squad.

1. **Listen to the MP3 disc.** This seems like a logical first step. It's not only practical but also spiritual. Practically, the group members will know how the disc is supposed to sound. Spiritually, the Holy Spirit will begin to transform the group members as they take time each day to listen to Scripture. *Hint:* Create excitement for group members to listen by telling them that they are getting to hear it first.
2. **Challenge them!** Who doesn't like a challenge? When you tell tech-minded people they can't do something, they will find a way to make it happen. Challenge each member of the group to take a copy of the New Testament MP3 disc home with them and find as many ways to play it as possible. They will also discover where the disc will *not* play. Ask the group to keep a list of machines that play the MP3 disc and those that don't along with notes on how they got the discs to play in each machine. *Hint:* Churches are known to be notoriously behind the times in technology so start with machines at the church. You will possibly find many machines there that you will have to troubleshoot.
3. **Create a list.** Set a date to meet again when group members can share their results and help one another with machines that gave them problems. Create a list of machines that play the disc and those that don't play. Write instructions for using the machines that work along with any troubleshooting tips. It might seem odd to include tips such as "make sure the power is on," but sometimes little things cause a machine not to work properly. The more detailed these steps are,

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- the better. Create a binder of information. *Hint:* If possible, place this information online so team members can access it at any time. If it is not possible to keep a copy online, make sure each Geek Squad member has a notebook.
4. **The tool kit.** Have Geek Squad members prepare a tool kit they can take with them when they help someone MP3. Make sure tool kits include a copy of the audio New Testament MP3 disc, their notebooks, a small flashlight, a screwdriver, a pen, and a journal. *Hint:* All these things should fit in a three-ring binder with the screwdriver and flashlight in the front pocket, the lists in tabs on the rings, and the journal and pen in the back pocket.
 5. **Role play.** Your group members might not feel comfortable meeting new people or working in a new setting. They might also feel pressure of being the expert for someone who is older. Role playing will help ease both of these feelings. Be as realistic as possible. Have them start with how they will introduce themselves, get the machine to play the disc, and discuss what they heard when they listened. You might also feel more comfortable knowing that your Geek Squad is prepared. *Hint:* Make sure Geek Squad members have everything with them at the role play that they would have when they go for their visits.
 6. **Partner up.** At some point during the promotion period of the emphasis, church members will be asked if they will participate in the initiative to listen to the New Testament for 40 days. When they sign up, ask them if they want a member of the Geek Squad to help them get started. Explain that each Geek Squad member will not only help them get started but will check with them to make sure everything is working properly. Geek Squad members can also listen to that day's Scripture with their adult partner and pray together. *Hint:* Some people won't sign up for help but will need help once they can't get their MP3 disc to play. Prepare in advance for some of your Geek Squad to be available to partner up with these people as well.
 7. **Send them out.** Finalize arrangements for the Geek Squad members to meet with their partner(s). The Geek Squad will be the hands of Christ as they make the New Testament available to those who need their help. *Hint:* Print a sheet for Geek Squad members with the name, address, phone number, and directions to each home where they are assigned. Print a sheet for Geek Squad members to give their partner with the Geek Squad member's name and contact information.
 8. **Check in.** Sometime the week after the first meeting, call Geek Squad members and their partners from the congregation to see how the meetings are going. Ask them how their time together went, what problems they might be having, and if you can do anything to help them. *Hint:* Don't be surprised to hear in the weeks that follow about the transformation that is occurring (though they might not call it that) from Geek Squad members and their partners.

You can't force relationships to happen, but you can provide the space for relationships to form and grow. Listen to the stories as relationships are deepened among the Geek Squad, but also listen to how cross-generational relationships are developing between teenagers and adults. Scripture has transformational power so make sure you listen over the next 40 days to what the Holy Spirit is doing.