

# *A Quick Start* GUIDE



## ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES

## A Quick Start Guide for Single Adult Ministries

Contributors: Andrea Hicks, Barbara Babcock, Gloria Davidson, Teri Haggerty, Diane Miller, Darlene Reimche, Lorene Soderstrom, and David Wilkens

Managing Editor: Cassie Martsching

Cover Design: Alan Eno

Layout: Christal Gregerson

Available from:

*AdventSource*

5040 Prescott Avenue

Lincoln, NE 68506

800.328.0525

[www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)

© 2004, updated 2012 North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists  
All rights reserved. This book may be used and reproduced without permission in local church printed matter. It may not, however, be used or reproduced in other books or publications without prior permission from the copyright holder. Reprinting the content as a whole for giveaway or resale is expressly prohibited.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN #: 978-1-57756-831-5

## Introduction

This Quick Start Guide for Adventist Single Adult Ministries (ASAM) will assist you in ministry to singles in your local church and community. The ideas presented here are designed to inspire, encourage, motivate and challenge you to build a ministry that will help single adults build friendships and enrich their personal and spiritual growth.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long history of ministry to single adults. From local church events to conference-sponsored seminars, weekend retreats to talent nights, the scope of ASAM is as broad as the vision and commitment of the leadership team. These endeavors should provide opportunities for encouragement and fellowship among single adults, whether they are never married, divorced or widowed. Your church's single adult ministry should provide a safe environment where singles can gather to develop community, find inspiration and support, discuss issues, study God's word, socialize and enhance their quality of life.

Your ASAM group may meet once a week or once a month. You may focus on social and recreational events or small groups and support ministries. Whichever avenue you take, it should be a reflection of the needs of the single adults in your church and community.

Meet with your pastor and possibly the family ministries leader to discuss the need for single adult ministry. You will want their perspective on the needs of single adults in your church, even if you do not agree with everything they say. You may find that they are simply uninformed about the issues single adults face. However, you may also discover that they have a significant interest in single adult ministry and are happy to support you in any way possible. Either way, you need to know where they stand so you can gain the support and perspective you need to launch this ministry.



## Duties of the ASAM Coordinator

The coordinator is selected by the nominating committee to lead this ministry. It is your job to create an ASAM committee and work with that group to create a vision for ASAM and implement a plan to reach that vision. Listed below are some of the coordinator's main responsibilities:

- Keep track of the single adults in the church. Invite them to become involved in ASAM. Collect their names and contact information for your own database.
- Maintain close contact with your pastor and/or church board regarding all events for singles, and take their counsel into consideration. Avoid problems that can stem from misinformation, ignorance or assumptions.
- Stay up-to-date with other church committees as well. Determine if the singles group can collaborate with other ministry events or initiatives.
- Ensure that every ASAM activity is sufficiently advertised.
- Promote participation in your own circle. Sometimes it may be appropriate to invite singles who may not be members of your church, as singles events can be an excellent evangelistic tool.
- Acknowledge that your group will be diverse in age and interests, so plan a variety of different kinds of events and gatherings that will include everyone.
- Above all else, it is most important that you remain faithful in personal devotions and Bible study. By continually maintaining your connection with Jesus, your passion for ministry will be sustained and strengthened.

### ASAM Website



#### Visit

[www.adventistsingleadultministries.org](http://www.adventistsingleadultministries.org)  
to find resources for your church's single adult ministry. This website features resources for ASAM Sabbath, upcoming ASAM events, how-to articles, a forum and more.

## Establish an ASAM Committee

### Choosing Committee Members

In some churches ASAM committee members are elected by the nominating committee. In other churches only the coordinator is elected, and he or she chooses the committee members. If your church does not already have an ASAM committee, work with your pastor to form a group of interested and proactive single adults. Select people who have a passion for single adult ministry and are creative, hard working, supportive and talented.

As much as possible, your leadership team should include an equal number of men and women. You need both perspectives when planning events. Also, not every person on the committee must be single. If a married person has a passion for ministering to single adults and has talents in organization or event planning, welcome them on the team. It helps to have administrative, creative and social/relational people on your team, as well as a few others for support and delegation purposes.

The right mix of people is crucial. The different personalities and skills of the committee members will fit together like a mosaic.

### **Get the Most From Committee Meetings**

How often you meet will depend on the activity level of your ministry. You should meet at least once every quarter, but if many events are in the works, you will want to meet more often.

Try to meet at your church, or consider a private room at a restaurant. While the ASAM committee is still new, avoid meetings at individuals' homes, as they tend to appear as social gatherings and can distract from the agenda. Email is perfect for updates, small discussions or fill-ins for those who missed a meeting, but there is no replacement for the camaraderie, focus and multi-faceted communication of a physical meeting for ministry planning.

It is often helpful to appoint leaders to oversee various aspects of ASAM, such as a recording secretary, treasurer, advertising manager, etc. Give each leader a job title in order to identify their area of responsibility. It also helps to give people written job descriptions. Dividing responsibilities will also ensure that one person will not get burned out, and each committee member can put their unique skills to use.

Your committee members are an important volunteer base. In addition to helping organize and host events, they can also circulate at events, making sure everyone feels welcome.

## **Event Planning**

### **Creating a Calendar of Events**

Work with your committee to plan events that will be appealing to the single adults in your church and community. This could include potlucks, small group Bible studies, game nights, seasonal get-togethers, sporting events, etc. Talk to your group about activities they would enjoy. As you brainstorm, pay attention to age groups as well as interest groups. To gather more concrete suggestions, you may want to distribute a survey, either on paper or through email.

One of your first events should be a mixer where people can get to know each other. For the rest of the year's events, the committee could review the activities suggested on the survey for ideas. Consider your projected budget, then determine how many larger, special events can be organized and funded before planning smaller gatherings. Also think about how often you can manage planning events. While some people would like an event every week, this is extremely hard on your leadership team. Work with your committee to determine whether you would like to mainly focus on larger events with a few small gatherings mixed in, or a series of smaller and more low-key activities. If some people want more activities, suggest that they organize them on their own. Maybe they can use church equipment and space if it is available and approved by the board, but they will have to come up with their own funds and coordinate the event themselves.

Plan activities that will appeal to a wide variety of ages and interests. Smaller, interest-specific groups may eventually stem from the social connections made at your sponsored events. The types of events you sponsor will usually determine the age range of the people who will attend. If you plan only potlucks, banquets or other sit-down activities, the majority of participants may be older. For a well-rounded program during the year, balance the calendar so it includes a variety of events such as dinners, bike rides, home parties, campouts, talent nights, game nights, weekend trips, treasure hunts, beach parties and vespers with light refreshments.

Most events should be planned just for adults and not include kids. If children are invited, this should be clear in your advertising. Picnics are good events for single parents to attend with their children, but Saturday night parties should be just for adults. In some cases, someone in your group may want to coordinate babysitting for single parents.

While planning your events for the year, keep these tips in mind:

- Remember that this is a ministry to single adults in all stages of life. Provide a range of activities that can appeal to multiple age groups.
- Plan interest-based activities. For example, a mini-golf outing is fun for all who like mini-golf, regardless of age or gender. These types of activities can transcend the barriers that age-based or gender-based ministry can sometimes inadvertently create.
- Plan events with the composition of your group in mind. Ask yourself: Would transportation need to be provided for offsite events? Will your group fit easily in your church's fellowship hall? Do group members seem to prefer low-key gatherings or action-oriented events?

### **Choosing a Venue**

If you are hosting a seminar or a large gathering, select a location appropriate for the size and theme of the event. Once an event's location is published, the number of people who show up is often directly related to the location. In other words, if you advertise a seminar to be held in a small meeting room that will hold 50 people, 50 people or fewer will probably attend. And if the event is planned for a large hall that holds 300, you can probably expect between 200 and 300 participants, depending on the size of your ASAM and how well you have publicized your event. So when you are planning an excellent workshop that could attract people from a 50-mile radius, select a meeting room that will hold enough people. Even if you don't have a maximum crowd, it still conveys the message that your ASAM group is active, established and takes its events seriously.

ASAM members' homes are ideal for events such as a small group Bible study, discussion groups and book clubs. The homes used for smaller gatherings should have adequate seating.

The church is a good choice for events since there is plenty of seating, available kitchen facilities, and often no charge for use. Schools, banks and community centers may also have community rooms available. Restaurants banquet rooms are available as meeting rooms, provided everyone orders food.

### **Present Upcoming Events to the Church Board**

Once you have decided upon the events for the upcoming year, present the calendar to the church board. Aside from being informative, this will build synergy between other ministries and also give opportunity for feedback. If an event fails to gain the board's enthusiasm, ask specifically for thoughts or suggestions. You must accept that an event may need to be changed or discarded if the church board does not support it. Establish early on that once you all agree on an event, everyone works to make it successful.

Board members can be great assets to your ministry. As you get to know them, you will also get a feel for their talents and interests. Some may be excited to play piano for an event, transport items, help purchase supplies, decorate meeting rooms, create flyers, etc. This collection of personalities and skills can be a supplement to your committee.

## Executing Your Event Plans

**It is important to keep records of your events**, whether on paper or on your computer. What's most important is that you record all pertinent information. It saves time and effort to refer back to previous events for specific notes.

**Keep your staff on schedule** by checking in regularly to be sure they are accomplishing their assignments in a timely manner. This is important so the program will be ready in plenty of time for the event date.

**Follow up on commitments** for meeting rooms, food preparation, advertising and brochures/programs. Allow enough time to fix anything that may need fixing. Double check that you have the key to the room, or check with the person who has the key early on the day of the event to ensure that you have access.

**Always inspect the room before your event** to see if it is clean. Make sure you know how to control the heat and air conditioning. Make sure you know what is included in your room rental, what is and is not allowed, and what clean-up is required.

**A home that is made available to your group is a special privilege.** Train participants from the beginning that clean-up is a group effort and everyone must help before departing the premises.

**A portable audio unit can be a wise investment.** People will enjoy your programs if they can comfortably hear what is happening. Acoustics are sometimes a problem, but you can compensate with a microphone. A microphone may not be included in the cost of the room, so having your own could save you the headache of searching for one on the day of an event. Delegate a responsible person to transport, set up and care for this ministry's technical equipment.

### The Importance of Delegating

- People want to be needed and will be much more likely to support the event if they help plan it.
- Super-humans simply do not exist. It is not possible to be the only person who can handle every job. Let others use their individual skills, talents and spiritual gifts.
- Burnout is the cause for more failed ministries than any other factor.

If you can't find anyone to help, seek advice from the church board. What can be done differently so people will want to help? Is it the timing of the event? Do people know what specific tasks need to be completed to prepare for this event? Are the tasks organized and easily understood? Is there a clear chain of command?



**Just prior to each major event, call a meeting of your committee** to verify that everything is ready. Look for loose ends and prioritize to get them accomplished. Go down your list and check off everything that is completed and ready. A meeting may not be necessary for smaller events where verifications by phone or email could work.

**Vendors often require contracts.** This could be for a meeting room, supplies or other consistent ministry needs. However, you are not authorized to sign a contract without the specific approval of the church treasurer. Sometimes a deposit is required, and your church board's approval is crucial. Especially while you are learning, run everything by your pastor or church board. You are not alone in ministry so please use your network and support system.

## Social Activities and Games

Singles will attend a social activity for many reasons: fellowship, friendship, boredom, the need to feel close to others, variety in their lives, getting out of the house, finding someone to date, etc. But most participants will not verbalize all their needs, so make sure to plan social activities that will help people get acquainted and form friendships.

When planning these activities, it is important to promote an atmosphere of casual friendship. Very competitive activities do not encourage people to get to know each other. Get-acquainted games enable them to talk to one another, work together on a project, intermingle and develop friendships. Some examples of get-acquainted games include:

- Mixer games that involve walking around the room, talking to as many people as necessary to finish the game.
- Putting people in small groups to find some common objects or ideas, or to figure out how to accomplish an assigned task.
- Games that call for movement and some male-female contact, but in a very non-threatening and non-sexual manner.
- Silly games should be used very sparingly. However, if your group is having trouble getting into the spirit of the event, you might find that a short, well-thought-out silly game can help loosen up participants.
- One game that works well is to count people off into twos and have them talk to each other for five minutes. Then pass out a paper with general questions, such as hobbies, special interests, occupation and family. People may sit back-to-back and answer questions about the other person to find out how well they listened.

Original ideas for social activities are available in various printed resource materials. For more information, see the list of resources on page 13. Research libraries and bookstores, as well as the Internet, for ideas you can adapt for your purposes.

Observe your group at these gatherings. See how they interact during these activities. You may find that certain types of games are more successful than others. Or, you may find that some people end up wanting more down time during events to enjoy refreshments and conversation. It all depends on the type of people in the group—and most of the time, you can't predict how an event will unfold. Just keep trying and stay connected

## Advertising

ASAM events must be well-advertised. Your church board may be aware of ASAM events, and you may post dates on the church calendar, but you still need to draw attention to these events if you want people to plan on coming. Your church may have a communication committee that can help with advertising, but you should be familiar with the best avenues of advertising for your ministry.

**The internet.** Create a profile for your group on social networking websites and keep the information updated. You can also ask the church's webmaster to create a page for your ministry on the church website and train you to add your own content. ASAM events should also be added to the general calendar on the church website.

**Email.** Maintain an email list for sending updates and invitations to events. You could also send an email newsletter if someone on your team has the time and skill to create one.

**Conference and union publications.** Some of your ASAM events may be of interest to singles from other churches in your conference or union. Advertising in a conference or union publication is an effective way to reach singles who are not on your mailing list. Ask your local church or conference to authorize an advertisement and possibly help with the cost. You could also speak with your conference communication director about including information about your event in the conference's designated page(s) in the union magazine. Your conference and union communication directors could also include information about the event in their own email newsletters or websites.

**Church bulletin.** Submit announcements or inserts to the church secretary for inclusion in the bulletin. This is a good way to reach everyone who is present in the church.

**Church announcements.** Request permission to share information about upcoming events during announcement time on Sabbath morning. Sometimes a verbal announcement can draw more attention to an event than a bulletin insert or written announcement. It also puts your face on the ministry, so people can know who to approach with inquiries for more information.

**Church bulletin board.** Place posters, announcements and photos from recent events on the church bulletin board. Show how much fun people are having at your get-togethers!

**Pass out flyers at meetings.** At each ASAM event, give attendees a handout that lists upcoming events.

**Direct mail.** Direct mail is a good way to keep in touch with non-attending members or people from the community you would like to invite to your events.

## Church Standards

As a coordinator of ASAM in your church, you should be careful to set standards that do not conflict with the Seventh-day Adventist Church's standards. You may find that some people will ask for activities you do not feel comfortable hosting as church-sponsored events. Always thank people for their ideas (and possibly try to adapt them to a more usable form), but stand firm, explaining that this isn't just any singles' group, but a ministry that reflects the values of the church.

What is considered acceptable, however, can vary from one area to the next. What is okay in one area may be frowned upon or misunderstood in another. It is safer for your committee to minister effectively by walking the middle of the road. Avoid fads and trends unless they are clearly acceptable by your church and conference standards. Consult your pastor if you have any questions.

Your reputation as an ASAM group must be above reproach, particularly since weekend events are co-ed. You must be careful at all times since gossip is too easily spread. Be firm about assigning rooms separately for men and women and never deviate from that standard. You must avoid "all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). If you plan weekend outings, whether in a hotel or at a camp, you must avoid any appearance of co-ed housing, no matter how innocent or chaperoned. Individuals can sin no matter where they are, and you cannot police everyone in their choices. But the fact that you don't allow such mixing in your overnight events will earn you a strong reputation. As a leader, you should strive to acquire a reputation for holding all events within denominational standards.

## Financing Single Adult Ministries

Most ministries require money in order to effectively operate. Perhaps your church is already giving the ASAM group some basic necessities, such as use of the church's equipment and space for events and meetings, but you will need more than that. Talk to your pastor, treasurer and/or finance committee to learn what it would take to create a new account for this ministry. Would it fit into the church budget that your church board votes each year? Would it need to start as a self-funding account? Depending on how your church is run, you will need to figure this out before you start planning events.

Remember to be conservative with the amount you request, and be specific on how this money will be used. Some of the areas you will need immediate help in funding are office supplies, disposable event supplies and nonperishable bulk refreshments.

### Donations for Start-up Costs

Do you know of any people who might be willing to donate seed money for a singles' group? Make sure they know that it can be donated through your church, meaning it will be tax-deductible.

While donations are helpful, a steady stream of funds is necessary to carry out a good program. You will most likely need to raise funds to support your ministry. Even if your church gives you a starting amount, you do not want to depend on receiving all of the money you will need from the church. As your group becomes more solidified, you may want to suggest a small, annual donation from your members to help support the costs of running the ministry. Of course, always make it optional and reasonable. You might be pleasantly surprised how many members of the group are happy to help with financial support.

### Planning a Fundraiser

A fundraiser is a great way to bring people together while raising money for your ministry. Find out who in your group likes to cook, who likes crafts, who has unique hobbies, etc. Could these talents be turned into fundraisers? Aside from bake sales and car washes, there are many ways to raise money for your ministry.

Check around your community. What kinds of activities are other groups using for fundraisers? Try searching online for church fundraising ideas. Some companies offer church-specific fundraising packages like selling frozen cookie dough or garden starter kits. Also, check with nationwide retailers. Some businesses can set you up with a fundraising package. Then all you need is participation!

### **Budget to Profit**

Though this may be a “nonprofit” initiative, it is essential that you do make a profit. Otherwise, you will eventually run out of funds for regular supplies and expenses such as printed material, advertising, utensils, food and deposits for venues. Even if you collect an annual fee and take up small offerings at events, these donations are usually necessary to help offset the hosts’ expenses or an event’s cost. You must plan for a somewhat consistent income. Larger events that have an admission charge can help raise funds for your ministry. Set your admission price to gain some profit, as you need to go beyond simply breaking even. And try to offer assistance to those who can’t afford certain events.

Remember that it is appropriate to ask for donations at any time. It’s okay to be open about the state of the budget, as that determines what activities can be done. It can be easy to forget the cost of occurring events, and sometimes the group members will need to be reminded. Assure them that free-will donations will go in the general fund to cover administrative expenses.

It is your responsibility as coordinator to use the income appropriately—your stewardship of this ministry’s funds will be reflected in its success.

### **Starting an Event Budget**

When preparing an event budget, start with an itemized list of any items needed, down to the smallest detail. The following list is a sample of some items to consider:

- Meeting space
- Speaker honorarium or fee
- Rental of necessary equipment
- Paper goods for refreshments or dinner
- Cost of meal if catered
- Advertising costs
- Printing and mailing costs
- Decorations
- Name badges
- Supplies for seminar or workshop

Make a conservative guess as to how many people you might expect. If you hope for 150, but usually end up with 75 in attendance, plan along with the pattern and go with 75. However, it’s best to plan for a few more people than expected, in case extra people show up. You don’t want to come up short on event supplies.



### **Spending**

Keep a close tab on the people you have given power to make purchases. From the start, be very clear that this ministry's staff members are not allowed to spend any money you have not authorized and included in your budget. Unless first cleared by you, do not let anyone submit extra expenses for reimbursement.

### **Reporting**

Immediately after each event, add up all the expenses and determine your profit. Type a report for your church board or finance committee, noting exactly what was taken in and what was spent. Additionally, you should review your original budget with your committee, analyzing if there were any unexpected costs or savings that can be factored into the next event's budget. If you did not make a profit, determine what happened and why. You will want to figure that out before you plan your next event.

## **Continuity of Participation and Leadership**

Remember that singles are a fluid, ever-changing group. You may wonder why you don't see the same people at every event. Your church's single adults are in different stages of life, and their needs change—sometimes rapidly. Your circumstances may change at some point and you may need to pass on the responsibility for this ministry.

Groom successors as you go about your ministry, and teach them to do likewise. Eventually it will be time to pass the torch. This is natural, and there is no shame in choosing to step down. It is honorable to plan your "retirement" and gradually step back and allow the new leader(s) to assume the responsibility. Ideally, you'll continue to serve as an advisor for a year or so. Unless you clearly see that the group is heading for trouble, hold your advice and opinions until asked. Assume you have trained them and groomed them appropriately, and that they want the best for ASAM.

## **Conclusion**

Single adult ministry is a calling from God, and this ministry will flourish if you are personally committed to the cause. This ministry will help you and everyone involved to grow in many different aspects of life. It will present spiritual, relational, emotional, and educational opportunities. When you work with God to reach the singles in your church and community, you will benefit from serving others and find yourself living a balanced life that includes fun, fellowship and personal growth.

## Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org) or call 800-328-0525.



### ***Adventist Single Adult Ministries Curriculum***

NAD ASAM (AdventSource)

This curriculum includes ten modules written by single adult ministry educators. Each module can be used as a training event for local single adult ministry personnel. Modules include single adults in the family system, single adults as parents, effective single adult ministries and more.

*Curriculum Catalog #351411*

*Participant Booklet Catalog #351415*



### ***The Five Love Languages—Singles Edition***

By Gary Chapman (Moody Publishers)

Whether you are young or old; widowed, divorced, separated or never married, these proven principles of communicating and receiving unconditional love can apply in all your relationships, including friends, coworkers, classmates or roommates.

*Catalog #351567*



### ***Single Creek DVD***

Directed by Chris Lang (Lifestreams Media, Inc.)

*Single Creek* is a documentary film about real single adults with real issues at all stages of life. *Single Creek* urges church leaders and married couples to consider new ways to connect with this growing demographic while challenging singles themselves to live full lives through their faith and talents.

*Catalog #351312*



### ***Serious About Love***

By Kay Kuzma (Pacific Press)

In the pages of this book, you'll learn how to evaluate our present—or future—relationships. Whether you're dating someone or just looking forward to meeting "the right one," this book will help you understand the serious side of love.

*Catalog #602463*

# Singles Coordinator Ministry Description

## Introduction

Since the time when Adam realized he was without a mate, thereby experiencing loneliness, many persons have found themselves in a similar state. A careful examination of Scripture reveals a deep concern for the “widows and fatherless,” individuals who, in their singleness, might be struggling. Not all singles in our society today are struggling—any more than married people struggle—but all these people have special family needs.

Paul visualized the church as an oasis where all gifts were valuable, a home where all could find fellowship and support. All who belong to Christ are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29). The fellowship of believers in Christ transcends sexual, racial, economic, marital, or social distinctions.

## Duties of the Singles Coordinator

The duties of the single adult ministries coordinator will include the following:

- 1. Form a Committee.** Find responsible people who will help plan and develop activities and programs. Keep in mind when choosing committee members that the adult singles need to own their ministry in order for it to be relevant to their needs. Other important aspects of your ministry will be to brainstorm, develop friendship in the committees, and delegate responsibilities in a way that involves as many individuals as possible in the program.
- 2. Bible Study.** A ministry to single adults must include Bible teaching which may take place in a large or small group situation, or maybe both. Small group Bible studies can meet during Sabbath School and be recognized as a Sabbath School class, or meet as a Home Bible Fellowship, or a midweek meeting at the church. Large group activities might take the form of a monthly Singles Fellowship where Bible study would not be the only item on the agenda.
- 3. Involve Singles in the Worship Service.** Look for ways to help the singles in the church to become part of the worship services and contribute to a spirit of commitment among the members of the church.
- 4. Plan Entry Events.** You will need to help the church plan entry events and build pathways that will attract new members, specifically single members, and nurture their growing faith. A divorce recovery seminar, a single parent workshop, and other seminar packages are available.
- 5. Attitudes.** Help the congregation and its leaders develop a non-judgmental, open, and accepting attitude. Focus on how to minister to singles in the situations in which they are found. The question is “What can be done now?” rather than, “What happened?” or “Why did you do what you did to get yourself into this?”







## Adventist Single Adult Ministries

This Quick Start Guide for Single Adult Ministries is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or an experienced volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series include:

- Family Ministries
- Men's Ministries
- Women's Ministries
- Children's Ministries

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)



**AdventSource**

ISBN: 978-1-57756-831-5

