

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
From *YouthWorker Journal* and YouthWorker.com

School's Out? Now What?

Jobs are scarce, but you don't have to sit at home this summer.

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Posted: May 17, 2011

What Happened:

With school either out or nearly out, and with summer just around the corner, many kids are looking for jobs. Trouble is, there's not many to be found.

According to an analysis by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Boston's Northeastern University, just one in four U.S. teens will snag a job this summer—an all-time post-World War II low. In some areas of the country such as Chicago, the outlook is even more dismal: Unemployment among African-American youth may approach 90 percent, and experts fear the high jobless rate may lead to a rise in street violence.

“We cannot continue to ignore the correlation between youth violence and teen employment,” said Jack Wuest, executive director of the Alternative Schools Network, the organization that commissioned the study. “We know if our teens are in school or at a job they are not in the streets.”

Source: Reuters

While the national economy is slowly coming out of recession, the unemployment rate still hovers around 8.8 percent. Many new jobs are being snapped up by adults who've been unemployed or under-employed for some time. Some minimum wage gigs normally filled by teens are being taken by retirees returning to the workforce. It's always been hard to find a job as a teen, but this year looks like it'll be particularly trying.

While jobs may be scarce, teens have other options. You could create your own business, for instance, such as mowing lawns or babysitting. If you're just looking for some work experience that might help you down the road, you can look for an unpaid internship.

Of course, you always can volunteer. Worthy organizations almost always are looking for folks who have a desire to help and the time to do so.

While volunteering won't help fatten your piggy bank or help you buy a new car, it'll look fantastic on a college application or resume, and it may give you valuable work experience. Often, volunteering can be a step toward a full-time job.

“It's early exposure to work experiences that gives youth a leg up when seeking full-time employment later in life,” said A.J. Forkner, who works for WorkSource in Washington State's Snohomish County.

Source: Heraldnet.com

Most importantly, you know you'll be helping people or organizations in need. When you're off duty, you can feel like you really made a difference in people's lives—and sometimes that feeling can be worth more than a paycheck.

Talk About It:

Are you hoping to get a job this summer? Have you already found one? Have your friends? Are jobs hard to find?

Have you ever done volunteer work before? If so, what did you do? Did you enjoy it? Did you feel as if you made a difference?

What's your ideal summer job? Selling clothes? Working with kids? Many communities have clothes pantries for needy families. Many churches might need help with Vacation Bible Schools. Can you think of any organizations or ministries where you could do summer work for the benefit of others?

What the Bible Says:

“I know there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God” (Ecc. 3:12-13).

“I want you to stress these things, so those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. For these things are excellent and profitable for everyone” (Titus 3:8).

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need” (Rom. 12:10-13).

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free” (Eph. 6:7-8).