

All Are Called: Young Adults

Erica Blevins Nye
Young Adult Disciple Formation Specialist

*Do not yearn for times that are
past, but recognize that you
have been given a foundation
of faithful service, even as you
build a foundation
for what is yet to be.*

Doctrine & Covenants 162:2b

ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

- Who are YAs?
- Worship
- Relationship: Connecting personally
- Sharing: Outreach
- Sharing: Congregational Mission

Today's discussion will cover:

- Who are YAs?
- Worship
- Relationship: Connecting personally
- Sharing: Outreach
- Sharing: Congregational Mission

Who are Young Adults?

- Approximately 18-35 years old
- Young people in "transition points" in life, "building" toward future - higher education, building toward careers; young families, building new marriages or raising children; new careers and military, establishing self in workforce; etc.

Where Are Our Young Adults?

- **Something's missing...**
- For those of up present, church is fulfilling.
 - Our friends are here.
 - But we look around and notice that something is missing. Young people.
 - **DISCUSS:** Are there YAs in your cong.? What does the age demographic look like?
- **We need YAs to carry on the church.**
 - When we are honest we begin to recognize - the church will not survive much longer if it continues as is.
 - We want to perpetuate the church, don't we?
 - Sure! So much of our lives has been invested in keeping it alive, and it has been meaningful to us -- we want it to GROW and to pass it on.
- **Why do we want the church to continue?**
 - But why do think it's important to pass on the church? What are we trying to achieve with the church?
 - B/C it is fun? B/C "we all need church"? A community? Worship? Church learnin'? Church is the right thing to do?
 - B/C we want to perpetuate Christ's message and ministry to others in the world? So what's our real goal? This One!
 - **DISCUSS**
- **Is bringing them into Sunday worship the best way?**
 - If we want to carry on the church b/c we want to continue Jesus' call to serve and love one another in community - how important is Sunday worship in doing this?
 - Maybe there are other ways we can BE the church, rather than simple GOING TO CHURCH that would be more effective to do serve as disciples - and minister to / with YAs.
 - YAs do not always feel benefited by this ministry of church. It is time to consider way to do that in new ways.
- **Let's BE THE CHURCH in their lives!**
 - (Share Christ, offer ministry, promote community)
- **Our Barriers**
 - **"Boundaries"**
 - Bunched everyone into impermeable categories: youth, young adult, older adult, churchd/unchurchd, etc. Crossing is a "big deal"
 - **Backwards Goals: A "Sunday Morning" Church**
 - Doing outside stuff is weird and/or not real ministry
 - Our "goals" for ministry all point to saving Sunday morning
 - We do home ministry, pastoral care, etc. for infrequent/non-attenders with the ultimate goal of joining worship
 - **No YAs around church to begin with!**
 - And if there were, they have a guff or seem like they don't want to be bugged.
 - **It's not my job!**
 - That's the work of priesthood
 - - or "Cool" people!
 - **DISCUSS:** What barriers or fears have kept you from deeply connecting with young adults?

The Goal: DISCIPLESHIP

- Sharing:
 - in relationship
 - in Discipleship & Kingdom building
- Jesus' Example
- "Relevance":
Connection to YA "building points"

DISCIPLESHIP

•**Our Goal Is Not:** To simply plan activities or attractive worship for young people

- We are not called to simply offer ministry FOR YAs
 - Not "How do we get them back in church?"
- We are not called to simply gain what YAs can bring to the church
 - "We sure need their energy!"
- But how we can **build relationship and become disciples of Jesus Christ** together.
 - All generations are called to build one another up in DISCIPLESHIP.

Building the Kingdom begins with becoming and forming disciples of Christ.

Jesus' Example

- Didn't plan activities to hope that people would come. Or pull everyone together to plan out what they wanted to do.
- He went to the source of the need and attended to people in direct, compassionate ways.
- With this as our model, how would we change our expectations of gathering, sending, witnessing?
- How would we adjust our priorities to build disciples rather than do church?

Principles of Discipleship

- Embody Justice and proclaim Peace.
- Allow the Spirit to fill you.
- Create diverse Communities.
- Share your witness and resources.
- Extend the hand of Reconciliation.
- Learn and Teach the sacred story.

•**Each Principle is important in the lives of most young adults – though they are not necessarily expressed in the terms of congregational life/organized religion as we tend to recognize them.**

RELEVANCE

Often YAs mention that they need congregational life to be "relevant". What does this mean?

•**Relevance: Faith community that speaks to the needs at the "becoming points" in young adults' lives.**

- One characteristic of YAs is that they are in the midst of some "transition" or "becoming" – higher education to prep for career, est. careers, raising young families, serving in military, exploring relationships, etc.
- How does the faith community meet them at these "becoming points" ?

How Does the Faith Community:

Connect personally

- How does this faith community make any difference to me as an individual? Or my family?
- Seeking authentic relationship.

Connect with mission

- How does this faith community make any difference to changing the world?
- How can this community help me serve the larger world?

Connect with Christ

- "I want to learn more"
 - How is the life, message, death of Jesus really meaningful to our everyday lives?
 - What does it mean to be a Christian? I want to be informed about my faith.
- I believe in God, but I can take or leave Jesus.
 - Why is "salvation" necessary if I already know I'm loved by God?
- Experience the Holy Spirit
 - Is there an effect of "spirituality" on my life?

Jesus lived this "relevance" out in his ministry

- Took ancient principles and taught to current issues and context

ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

- Young Adults need:
 - Worship
 - Personal Relationship
 - Opportunity to Serve
 - To Express Values
 - Personal Support

EMPOWERING YAs

First:

•Empowering YAs in CofChrist is NOT:

- NOT about institutional survival! It is not unloading responsibility for “carrying on the church”;

- I’m a church kid & I don’t want that resp.;

- YAs are busy building UP their own lives; taking on the survival of an institution is not appealing

•It IS:

- Making congregation life & CofChrist mission something that connects to young adults concerns in “building up” life.**

- YAs want/need the same things as everyone else – however those needs are often met in different ways as we are used to.**

- Worship: Connection to Holy/affirmation; Community experience; Rational education of discipleship; Challenge

- Personal Relationships: support today and long-term friendships

- Community: that offers stable, supportive foundation for individuals and budding families

- Opportunity to Serve: where we can “make a difference” in our comms. and larger world for our future.

- A Place to Express Values: that we believe will benefit the future and that define our own identity

- Connect to something “larger than selves” as we est. identity

- Personal support: as we pursue ed., relationships, careers, form families

- Acting on our belief that “All Are Called” to encounter Living Christ, follow as disciples, respond generously in community

- according to their gifts and the opportunities around them.

•RELATIONSHIP:

- The key to meeting all of these needs is authentic relationship.

Young Adult Lifestyle

- More mobile
- Less “free time”
- Suspect of religion and authority
- Less willing to be “brand loyal”
- Highly connected
- Sensitive to quality / competence
- Information saturated

Some general characteristics of young adults.

Remember: The lifestyles, needs, interests, and cultural influences of YAs are as varied as anyone else in the world!

Postmodernism

- Move from order to chaos
- Move from one truth to many truths
- Move from local to global
- Move from religion to spirituality

Overarching Postmodernism Influence

- Move from order ... chaos
- Move from one truth many truths
- Move from local ... global
- Move from religion spirituality

Changes in Faith Ideas

Stable leadership Less time, more fragmented
 Traditionally relative Culturally relative
 Hierarchical Relational
 Personal Presentation Professional presentation
 CEO / Manager Spiritual Guide / Fellow Journeyer?
 Concentrated Power Diffused Power
 Goals Driven Relationship Driven
 Values uniformity Values Diversity
 Leads by Talking Leads by Listening

Builders – '40s

Depression to Industrial
 World War II
 Change in women’s role
 Change in info sources
 The “swing” generation
 Institutional loyalty
 “Pull together” ideology
 Traditional theology

Boomers – '60s

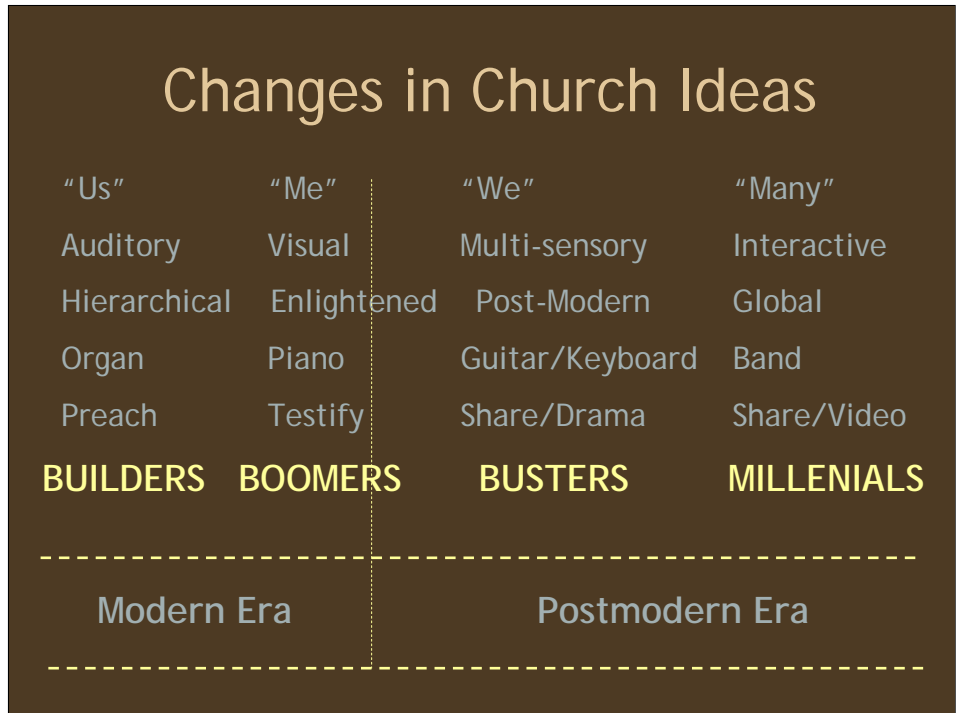
Industrial to middle-class
 Vietnam Conflict
 Change in women’s role
 Change in race relations
 The power of TV
 The “rock” generation
 The “me” generation
 The loss of authority
 Pentecostal theology

Busters – '80s

The affluent generation
 Middle East Conflicts
 Rural flight
 The role of the internet
 The “we” generation
 The need for authenticity
 Relational theology

Millennials – '00s

The “change” generation
 September 11
 Perceived obsolescence
 The “mosaic” generation
 Global internconnection
 The need for relationships
 The interactive mind
 Experiential theology



WORSHIP

- Worship as mission
- What YAs are looking for
- Models of worship & sacred space

Worship is part of mission!

- For many it is the person's first acquaintance with the congregation.
- How YAs experience the congregation welcoming and approach to worship is key.
- "What is this group's goal here? To go thru motions of 'church', to create a comfortable place to encounter the Spirit, to offer us all a support in family/community life?"

What style is your worship?

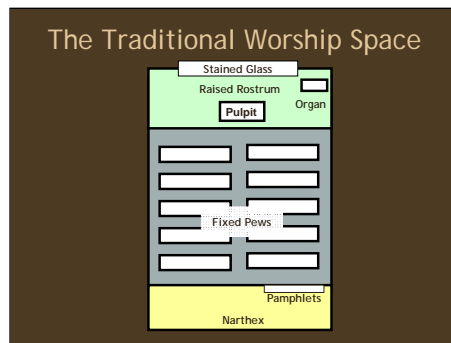
Can you answer WHY?

- Traditional?
- Non-traditional?
- Formal?
- Casual?
- What's your overall goal for this worship outcome and atmosphere?
- What are the unsaid "rules" about acceptable worship? What are the reasons for following or rejecting them?

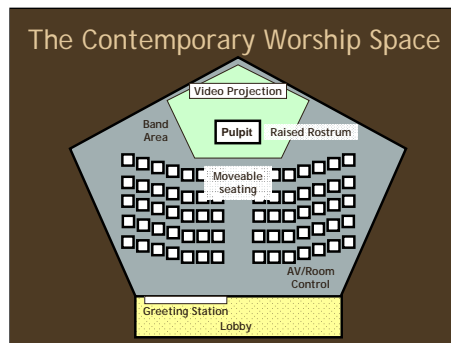
•What YAs are looking for in worship:

- Relationship!
- Quality / Professionalism
- Preparedness
- Intentionality
- Relevance
- A comfortable, natural environment
- Environment that is energizing – rather than draining
- The Elements of Worship
 - Praise
 - Thanksgiving
 - Confession/Worship
 - Proclamation
 - Challenge
- Same as everyone else!

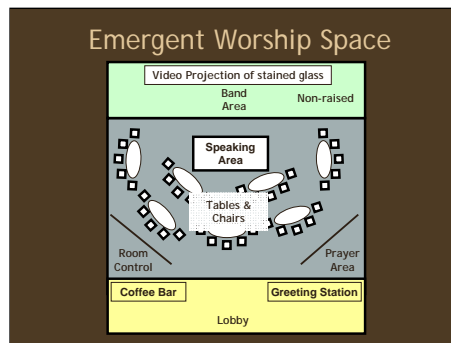
•Models of worship & sacred space



- Hierarchical space is emphasized
- Preacher removed from the people
- Organized and “fortress” feel



- Presentation space is emphasized with flexibility
- Less of a “hall,” and more of a “theater” feel.
- More flexible, though focus is still at front
- Preacher/teacher is closer, yet still removed from people



- Intimate space is emphasized
- Speaker closer to the people
- “Coffee house” feel
- Space is interactive
- Intentionally makes use of traditional/ancient Christian symbology and disciplines through modern tools

Emergent Church Model

- Interactive
- Experiential
- Sensory
- Casual / Informal
- Incorporates traditional spiritual disciplines
- Message is conversational and educational
- Active in community
- Centered on congregational strengths / gifts
- Simplicity

EMERGENT CHURCH MODEL:

“Emergent Church” is the latest wave of congregational life/worship that tends to meet the needs of the YA demographic.

- Current trend in congregational life model - not just a worship style
- No single “correct” model
- More mindset than a model
- Measures success missionally
 - Spirit and quality over numbers

General Characteristics:

- Interactive
- Experiential
- Sensory
- Casual / Informal
- Incorporates traditional spiritual disciplines
- Message is conversational and educational
- Active in community
- Built on strengths / gifts
- Simplicity

RELATIONSHIP:
Connecting Personally

Caring For YAs: The Basics

- Welcoming
- Start relationships
- One or two is okay
- No agendas. No judging. No guilt.
- Be Consistent
- Prayer: Every Day

Caring For YAs

•Welcoming

- Don't be shy – the more who greet the merrier!
- Genuine interest in the person and their needs and comfort – not with how they can contribute

•Start relationships

- Who do you know at church? Work? Family? Coffee shop?
 - Make conversation and friends in the community and your regular “haunts”
- Simply introduce yourself – and ask questions!
- Being a friend
 - Focus in asking questions
 - Focus on remembering dates, events
 - It's not about YOU!

•Mentoring

•One or two is okay

- You can only really love on a few this intentionally
- Doesn't have to be someone at church - but at work, other organization, or family member - or worker at your fav coffee shop -anything!

•Not agendas. No judging. No guilt.

- This is really ministry - simply embracing and caring for others
- Goal is not to “reel them in”
- Goal is not to modify their behavior
- Goal is not to “swoop in and save”

•Be Consistent

- Their lives are disconnected often - knowing you are faithful and reliable is a special oasis and appreciated!
- Be aware, though, that you aren't too forceful or overwhelming

•Pray for them EVERY DAY

- Don't have to tell them that you're doing this - but it's the most powerful thing you can do

Meeting Young Adults

- Where to meet young adults
- Pray about it first
- Getting To Know Them
 - Ask, Ask, Ask!
 - Listen, Listen, Listen!
 - Their priorities and interests
 - Their family
 - Their latest news and concerns

Meeting Young Adults

- Where to meet young adults
 - Anywhere!
 - Church. Work. Store.
 - Story of Michael at Starbucks
- Outside Church**
- How do you make relationships outside of your congregation?
- Where do you see or interact with YAs outside of church?
 - Do you talk with them? Listen with to them?
- Pray about it first
- Getting To Know Them
 - Ask, Ask, Ask!
 - Listen, Listen, Listen!
 - This is KEY! The relationship is not about you or the wisdom you have to pass on. It is about the young adult.
 - Their priorities and interests
 - Their family
 - Their latest news
 - You have to GET TO KNOW THEM to find out - often they don't just TELL everyone what they're into

•**Mentors are people who:**

- Sense a call to personal ministry with YAs
- Make a commitment to express that calling

•**Congregational ministers:**

- In this context, I view mentors as congregational ministers who have felt called to offer special spiritual and relational ministry with young adults.
- They are recognized and supported by their congregation in that role.
- Their service/mentoring is considered a ministry of the congregation - not a free-lance project.

•**Relational ministers:**

- They would largely focus on initiating and maintaining relationship with certain young adults or young couples.
- It is not so much a "program" that participants follow and complete. It is about intense, intentional support ministry, based on individual young adults' needs.
- This process could be formal or informal.

•**Mentoring ministry would:**

- Extend congregational ministry into young adults' lives who may not be able to connect alone
- Demonstrate CofChrist's commitment to young adult ministries
- Offer young people spiritual companionship, the opportunity for disciple formation, and personal support
- Foster intergenerational dialogue and trust-building
- Give young adults advocates in their congregation
- Equip older ministers to offer vital and vitalizing ministry in new ways

•**What Mentors Can Do:**

- Take initiative
- Offering Spiritual Support and Praying for and with your mentee
- Plan home visits and/or regular meetings with the mentee
- Extend personal ministries:**
 - Offer friendship
 - following and supporting the YA on their life journeys and concerns
 - commit to regular prayer with or for their mentee
 - Mentor should initiate meetings and often suggest time/place. Be patient and persistent – YAs are busy and hard to catch!
 - Mentoring is more listening and asking questions than offering advice or personal experience.
 - Mentorships are a safe place to "debrief" recent congregational participation.
 - "How did it go? How did you feel about it? What do you feel you need to improve?"
 - "Some people in the cong. are uncomfortable with your new methods/behavior? What can we choose to do to be sensitive to everyone, while still expressing your own ministry?"
- Extend congregational inclusion:**
 - Invite mentee to help in worship/preaching
 - Invite mentee to support mentor when they preach or offer special ministry
 - Pray for mentor in preparation
 - Travel with mentor in guest ministry, or join mentor at congregation activity
 - Advocate for mentee's ministerial needs
 - Advocate for ministries in congregation that would benefit young adults
 - Advocate for ministerial opportunities for the mentee

Mentoring

- What are mentors?
 - Sense a calling; make a commitment
 - Congregational Ministers
 - Relational Ministers
- Benefits and Intentions
- What mentors can do

•**Informal or Formalized Mentoring:**

•**Informal**

- Mentor initiates & maintains relationship
- Mentor self-monitors interaction with YA
- Mentor draws on education and ideas learned in educational sessions
- Support team of other mentors meet twice per year for sharing & ideas? (Maybe this is just hand-in-hand with an education day.)

•**Formal**

- Mentor & mentee agree to a specific mentoring relationship and goals
- Arrange meeting times together regularly (about one per month)
- Regular evaluations of the experience
- Mentor identified as a spiritual support person, rather than "teacher" unless requested by mentee
- Mentor draws on education and ideas learned in educational sessions
- Support team of other mentors meet twice per year for sharing & ideas? (Maybe this is just hand-in-hand with an education day.)

Get Involved with Young Adults

- Different Groups. Different Needs.
 - College Students and Military
 - Singles
 - Young Marrieds or New To Area
 - Young Families
- What are your strengths?

Getting Involved with Young Adults

- Different Groups. Different Needs.
 - College Students
 - Singles
 - Young Marrieds or New To Area
 - Young Families
- What are your strengths?
- Share your faith.
 - Don't impose it.
 - Don't push it.

College Students and Military

- Send Notes
- Food
- Laundry
- Transportation
- Gift certificates
- Community and Job Connections
- Don't forget students away at school

College Students

- **Send Notes:**
 - On holidays
 - Finals
 - Just because
- **Food:**
 - Finals snacks / meals
 - Gift certificates
 - Travel snacks for rides home
 - Lunch with group after church
- **Laundry**
 - Quarters
 - Offer your home for laundry
- **Transportation**
 - Offer rides (to/from church, etc.)
 - To airport / train station
 - Gas cards
- **Gift certificates for dinner, stores, dates, etc. for newlyweds**
 - Coffee
 - Food
 - Grocery Store / Target
 - Gas stations
- **Community and Job Connections**
 - Offer help finding local services
 - Help them find internships/links in community, etc.
 - Offer to write letters of recommend
- **Example: Journey House outreach program**

Singles and Young Professionals

- Call or email to say hello
- Invite out to coffee or lunch
- Gift Baskets
- Send little gifts for birthdays and holidays
- Invite to your home for meals
- Invite for holidays
- Don't try matchmaking

Singles

- Call or email to check in
- Invite out to coffee or lunch
- Invite to your home for meals
- Gift Baskets
 - Snacks
 - Recipe ideas
- Send little gifts for birthdays and holidays
 - Might not have nearby family to remember them
- Invite over for holidays
- Offer help with home
 - Gardening
 - Maintenance
- Don't try matchmaking
 - Unless you're asked!

Young Marrieds or New to Area

- House warming
- A local map marked with hot spots
- Offer help with home
- Community and Job Connections

Young Marrieds / New to Area

- Someone for a single person to sit with.
- House warming
- Local map marked with hot spots
 - Good doctors, restaurants, banks, accountants, grocery, etc.
- Offer help with home
 - Gardening
 - Maintenance
- Community and Job Connections
 - Offer help finding local services
 - Help them find internships/links in community, etc.
 - Offer to write letters of recommend

Young Families

- Gift Baskets
- Offer babysitting
- Attend kids' activities

Young Families

•Gift Baskets

- Diapers, wipes, etc.
- Parent's night out gift cards
- Quick meals
- Children's books or inexpensive toys
 - At church, too - to sit w/child

•Offer babysitting

- At home and at church
- Offer to watch children so they can attend weekend church events (retreats, conferences, etc.)

•Attend kids' activities

- School plays, sports, awards, etc.

•In Worship:

- Consider *ahead of time* what you have to offer visiting families and singles
- Quiet games, toys, etc. for children in the worship.
- Direct to nursery or church companion.
- Pastor is present - and personally greets.

More Tips and Ideas

- At Church
 - Be an advocate
 - Stand up for their interests at church
 - Support their events and activities
 - Listen for home or financial needs
 - Visiting YAs

More Tips and Ideas

- At Church
 - Be an **ADVOCATE** - in church and community
 - Get to know them enough to offer as a letters of recommend
 - Promote for them - their projects, interests at church **FOR** them
 - Welcoming Visiting YAs:
 - Introduce yourself - and help them find what they need
 - Introduce them to other YAs or young families and sit them together
 - Offer to take them with group after worship
- Stand up for their interests
 - Not in a way that implies an us-or-them situation
 - Be a voice when they're gone - if not a local member w/vote
- Support their events and activities
 - For YAs and their kids
 - In non-profit projects you can support?
 - Feeding homeless, food pantry, protests
 - Attend charity walks, runs, that they are doing
 - Sponsor them
 - Talents / projects: help host an art fair at church or in community; booth at festivals, etc.
- Listen for home or financial needs
 - You may have means that they don't

More Tips and Ideas

Home Visiting

- Know the YA well
- Do they know *why*?
- Take someone else
- Take a gift
- Monitor your time

More Tips and Ideas

- Tips for home visiting
 - You should know YA well by time you have visit
 - Make sure they know *why* you're dropping by.
 - Not for any agenda
 - Make sure they don't think you have surprise motives
 - Don't call it a priesthood visit - or make it one unless they seem comfy with that
 - Take someone else
 - Take a gift
 - Monitor your time
 - Tell up front how long you plan to stay.
 - 1 hr. is fine. - Don't wear out your welcome!

More Tips and Ideas

- Pray with them
 - ...if they're comfortable
- Give a Gift Basket or Jar!
- Most Important: Pray every day
- Share your faith.

More Tips and Ideas

- Pray together...if they're comfortable
 - Always ASK first
- Give a Gift Basket or Jar!
 - Lots of ideas online
 - <http://www.juliabettencourt.com/helps/gift.html>
- Most Important: Pray every day for the young adult
 - Don't have to tell them that you're doing this - but it's the most powerful thing you can do
- Listen!
 - Always remember - it's not about you! Ask questions and listen to the responses.
 - *Avoid responding to concerns and ideas with your own solutions or suggestions. Just LISTEN!*
 - Listen, listen, listen! And then Love!
- Share your faith.
 - Don't impose it.
 - Don't push it.
 - Listen / ask more than tell.

SHARING: Outreach Together

- Get To Know Your Neighbors
- Local Community Organizations
- Local Schools
- Connecting to YAs in their own environment

Reaching Out, Discovering Mission

•Get To Know Your YA Neighbors

- Help them out and ask for your help
- Organize a neighborhood event

•Local Community Organizations

- Develop a sustained relationship
- One time visit

•Local Schools

- Draw on your gifts
- Teach others

•Connecting with YAs in their own environment

- Helps get clearer vision of community needs
- Gives a “safe space” to build relationship
- Demonstrates your genuine concern for YAs personally – not as church saviors or “future”
- Makes your congregation part of a “local community”, rather than an enclosed community in and of itself.
- Brings out missional interests / gifts of YAs

Sharing in Congregational Life

- “Empowering” YAs implies a power imbalance

- Sharing:**

- We share in our discipleship of Christ and service together as community
- We share congregational leadership
- We share equally in discerning and living out the mission of the church

- Know the YA personally**

- What are the unique gifts and interests of this YA in particular?
- Sarah Allen @ MC gathering w/recycling; how do you work to learn what these are in the YAs in your congregation or comm.?
- Are we striving to draw on that, or to use them simply b/c they are a young person?
- Let us know why you would like them to serve

- Include in Discernment**

- Share openly with us your personal concerns for the church
- Ask YAs to participate in cong. activities for discerning the mission / vision of the congregation
- May take intentional personal connection with them, if they do not attend
- Allow them to drive part of the mission of the church

- Ask. Act. Then ask again**

- Ask the YAs you know what they would like to see in congregational life
 - Look for positive suggestions. Not only negative feedback.
- Try incorporating their suggestions. Let them know it is intentional.
- Then ask how they felt about it
- What are the next steps to take – together?

- Make expectations clear**

- When inviting a YA to participate in church, let them know what you have in mind.
- What’s the goal here? The intention?
- Don’t just dump responsibility
- Don’t “lay the whole burden” on them
 - Testimony of a YA that this happened to – like Justin. Or Me!
 - Express how you plan to support them

- Get out of the way**

- Once goals/intention have been made clear, let the YA express their own ministry
- Try to let go of judgments. Be open to new ideas!
- Make space for difference – be aware of the “rules”
 - My testimony of congregational criticisms

- Take With**

- Are you offering special ministry?
 - Home visits? Administration? Teaching? A Conference? Special worship? Outreach? Traveling?
 - Take a young adult with you to work together as a team.
- My testimonies of teamwork with ministers: Richard Hawks; Walt Morrison; Poul Wilson

- Be an advocate**

- Priesthood Mentoring**

- Mentoring is more listening and asking questions than offering advice or personal experience.
- Mentor should initiate meetings and often suggest time/place. Be patient and persistent – YAs are busy and hard to catch!
- Find a safe place to “debrief” recent congregational participation.
 - Ask: “How did it go? How did you feel about it? What do you feel you need to improve?”
 - “Some people in the cong. are uncomfortable with your new methods/behavior? What can we choose to do to be sensitive to everyone, while still expressing your own ministry?”

- Patience and Persistence**

- Sometimes YAs may not follow through. Or respond immediately.
- Don’t give up!
- Continue communicating, and asking questions.
- Demonstrate your commitment to relationship with them – despite their participation

What can I expect?

- You are the initiator
- Ethical Expectations
- Ongoing relationship
- Conversion and leadership?
- If they ask “Why?”
- Communication with everyone
- They WILL appreciate it!

•You are the initiator

•Ethical Expectations

- Many YAs do not fit the standard for “Christian” behavior. Yet they still long for community and spiritual growth.
- Do you find that your relationship with YAs is contingent upon their conformity to “acceptable church behavior”?
- What behavior does your cong. view as acceptable? Why?
- What is the congregation willing to “pay” in exchange for upholding these standards?
- Have this discussion with your congregation. Establish understanding.
- Some “ethical” issues you may encounter: Cohabitation; Alcohol; Appearance; YA relationship to cong.

•Ongoing relationship

•Conversion and leadership?

- Some YAs may at some point sense a call to baptism or to leadership roles.
- How will you respond if they do? How about if they do not?

•If they ask “Why?”

- Most YAs would wonder why you are investing your attention and time in them. Many are suspicious that people are only interested in them because it’s “nice to have young people around church.” They want to know that you are genuinely interested in them as a person.
- What is your reason? Do you know, yourself?
- Don’t hesitate to tell why.

•They WILL appreciate it!

- You may never hear “thank you.”
- Understand that your love, acceptance, and dependability may not be fully understood or appreciated at this point in their life. But it IS meaningful!
- This type of relationship is transformative for both of you.

•Communication with Everyone

- Be open about your intentions and concerns.
- Some in the congregation may not have the same perspective about openness to young adults. What is their expectation? YAs may feel the same way.

“Be courageous and visionary,
believing in the power of
just a few vibrant witnesses
to transform the world.”

Doctrine & Covenants 161:2c

Congregation Questions

- What about your congregation - would these ideas stretch them?
- What are your YA "success stories"?
 - Why were those experiences/formats meaningful for your community at that time?
- How is your congregation making a focused effort with YAs?
- What's your biggest hurdle to worship and other congregational life with YAs?

Whole Group Questions:

- What do you think the church will look like in 15-20-50 years? Will it exist?
 - How do you feel about that?
 - Question for those who are familiar with congregational life - or world church (international church at large) trends
 - AND for those with limited or no experience - what's your perspective?
 - No correct answer - I just want to know what you think.
 - I feel like it's my job to bring hope and a future to the church - but sometimes I just don't have any hope that this church will continue.
 - Honestly, sometimes I wonder if my job is "palliative care" to help the church die with grace and painlessly.
- What about your congregation – would these ideas stretch them?
- What are your YA "success stories"?
 - Why were those experiences/formats meaningful for your community at that time?
- How is your congregation making a focused effort with YAs?
- What's your biggest hurdle to worship and other congregational life with YAs?

What can I do?

- What young adults do you know?
- Prayer and Discernment

What YAs do you know?

- At church? At work? At store?
 - Can be anyone anywhere
 - Doesn't have to be someone already friends
 - Making a new friend is good.
 - Assuming that they are a "no-go" may imply they aren't worth your time or that you are projecting expectations on the relationship/outcome
 - Or in church - active/inactive
 - Male or female
 - Doesn't have to be a huge deal
 - Could just be who you make a point of chatting with after church, or inviting to sit with you
 - Or a college student who has moved away - that you could drop a note to w/no strings attached
- Discerning & Prayer
 - Pray about it personally
 - Do you feel a particular calling to offer personal ministry?
 - To connect with a particular YA?
 - POSSIBLE: Send participants to different areas in room - if possible
 - Write down the names that come to mind - and pray about it.
- CLASS DISCUSSION or PRAYER
 - What are the thoughts that come to mind when you consider extending special ministry to these people?
 - Excitement? Ideas popping up? Doubt? Nervousness?
 - Pray together for our concerns and for guidance

Some Examples....

- Tulsa Central Congregation
- East Lansing, MI Congregation and Journey House Campus Ministry
- Detroit Hope Mission
- Early Christian Church

Main Points:

- Ministry is not about “making church happen “
- Church is a place where we: come together to make a difference; come together to connect to God and each other; help others connect to God
- Our churches don't have to look the same – they can be tailored to meet needs: Our needs and the World's
- Focus on the strengths that God has given us. We don't have to be something we're not.
- Let go of goals and practices that aren't based on our strengths.
- We are free to use all sorts of models, ideas, spaces, missions – as long as we are reaching toward CofChrist mission.
- Are the modes we're using now effective in that mission?

Begin to explore the possibilities and look beyond our current hopes.

- I believe **THIS is the transformation that OUR generation can bring to the CofChrist!**
 - The world has changed in the last few decades – and our gifts as a church have changed.
 - Our mission has evolved as God has continued to guide us.
 - It is time that we took look at OTHER WAYS we can live out our church experience.

OUR generation who is challenged to:

- Create a Community of Christ
- Reinforce it's connection between the spiritual and world.
- Discern our unique calling / embrace unique gifts
- Don't be afraid to transform into where we are going.

Success Stories:

- **Tulsa Central Congregation** – Dog Park!
- **East Lansing, MI Congregation** and Journey House Campus Ministry
- **Detroit Hope Mission**
- **Early Christian Church**

Help for YA Groups & Transformational Bible Study

- “Starting A Young Adult Group”
 - Ed. Kelley Phipps
 - www.cofchrist.org/emergence/resources

Resources for YA Ministry

- Erica Blevins Nye: eblevins@cofchrist.org
- Community of Christ:
 - Young Adult Emergence Website:
 - www.EmergenceNow.org
 - Find YA groups; resources; contact info and more
 - Young Adult Emergence E-Newsletter
 - Subscribe at Emergence website
 - *Community of Christ YA Ministry Support* Google Group
 - www.groups.google.com/group/CofChristYoungAdults
 - Add your own ideas and suggestions; meet other YA leaders

Related Books & Bibliography

The Emerging Church

by Dan Kimball 2003 Youth Specialties/Zondervan

Adventures in Missing the Point

by McLaren & Compolo 2003 Youth Specialties/Zondervan

Stories of Emergence

ed. by Mike Yaconelli 2003 Youth Specialties/Zondervan

21 Bridges to the 21st Century

by Lyle Schaller

Barna Research Group

George Barna, Ventura, CA 93003 - www.barna.org

Faith of My Fathers

by Chris Seay

Doctrine & Covenants 162:2a-c

"As a prophetic people you are called, under the direction of the spiritual authorities and with the common consent of the people, to discern the divine will for your own time and in the places where you serve. You live in a world with new challenges, and that world will require new forms of ministry. The priesthood must especially respond to that challenge, and the church is admonished to prayerfully consider how calling and giftedness in the Community of Christ can best be expressed in a new time."

Doctrine & Covenants 161:5

Be respectful of tradition. Do not fail to listen attentively to the telling of the sacred story, for the story of scripture and of faith empowers and illuminates. But neither be captive to time-bound formulas and procedures. Remember that instruction given in former years is applicable in principle and must be measured against the needs of a growing church, in accordance with the prayerful direction of the spiritual authorities and the consent of the people.

•Where is the role of TRADITION meaningful as we seek to meet the needs of another generation?

•How does our unique message and culture meet the needs of emerging cultures?

•What role does our “faith tradition” have in connecting all generations with Christ?

•What belief traditions?

•What traditional practices?

•What’s the difference between these two?

•What traditions are important for *you*?

•What traditions can be released, adopted, or understood anew?

•D&C 161:5.

Be respectful of tradition. Do not fail to listen attentively to the telling of the sacred story, for the story of scripture and of faith empowers and illuminates. But neither be captive to time-bound formulas and procedures. Remember that instruction given in former years is applicable in principle and must be measured against the needs of a growing church, in accordance with the prayerful direction of the spiritual authorities and the consent of the people.

Doctrine & Covenants 163:11

Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world.

There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead.