

Getting Started

Developing Ministries

The researchers are currently working with two churches to help them form brainstorming sessions with their young adults. Brainstorming sessions are a time when individuals can initially present ideas without evaluation. All possibilities are presented. It is a time to let ideas flow without criticism. Later in the meeting, viable options are pulled from the ideas. A plan of action is defined to help initiate the ideas. The researcher suggested that church leaders meet with the young adults in their churches and take time to build relationships with them. The importance of listening to the young adults was stressed. Pastors are being encouraged to approach the young adults as missionaries would approach people from their host culture.

Included in this excerpt are the questions asked in the brainstorming session held by the researcher as well as the responses to these questions. Also on the last page of this excerpt is a sample form for collecting information from Young Adults. It is recommended to have these available in the bulletin or at a hospitality desk for new young adults to fill out on Sundays.

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Excerpts from pages 24 & 29-33 and Appendixes C & D of Thesis
Edited by Joseph Barrale April 22, 2009

Questions for a Young Adult Brainstorming Session

1. What are some things that you specifically like about your church?
2. If you do not currently attend church: why not?
3. How many of you have friends that are not believers or Christ followers?
4. What are you hearing from your peers who do not go to church in terms of their understanding of the local church and their attitude towards Christians and/or Christianity?
5. Define some contexts in which you think you could have an opportunity to positively interact with non-believing peers.
6. How could the local church more effectively minister to non-believing young adults?
7. What questions of faith are you currently working on in your life?
8. What are your thoughts on Christian mentoring?
9. Define some key elements of an attractive, relevant, and useful small group?
10. What time slot in the week would work for a small group meeting?

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The Brainstorming

The young adults were asked to list items that they liked about their churches. Their list is as follows:

1. The sermons deal with relevant issues and are spoken in plain language.
2. The preaching is from Bible texts and not just “touchy feely” type sermons.
3. There are in-depth Bible study opportunities.
4. The music is contemporary.
5. There are opportunities to use their gifts in the context of the local church.
6. The leadership has vision and passion for Christ and people.
7. The pastor is genuine and human like them.
8. The church is involved in community outreach.
9. The church does not have multi-layers of committees.
10. The church affords the opportunity to build cross generational relationships.

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When asked why they or their peers do not attend church, they answered as follows:

1. There appears to be an insiders “lingo” or code.
2. They have found acceptance and caring somewhere else.
3. They already belong to another social organization.
4. Church is just another thing to “juggle” in their busy schedule.
5. They are turned off by legalism.
6. They are not comfortable with the dress code.
7. They have a fear of being judged because of their lifestyle.
8. They have experienced hypocrisy in churches in the past.
9. They do not see the need for church.

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The young adults were asked to list the things about the local church that made them uncomfortable or that they would like to see changed. Their comments include:

1. They wish the church was more servant-like and pro-active in the community.
2. The church is too focused on the externals such as buildings and image.
3. The church feels like a box we ask people to climb into.
4. There are too many religious traditions that do not make sense to them.
5. Those who know the basics of Christianity see unscriptural living in the church and are disappointed when unscriptural living is not addressed.
6. Being single is handled like something to be cured.
7. Single groups become places to find someone so one can become complete.
8. They do not find many spiritually mature people in the church.
9. Many in the church appear to be Christians because of what it can do for them.
10. They desire church to facilitate spiritual parenting.

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The young adults were asked to list some places or situations where non-believing friends could have a positive encounter with Christians. Their answers follow:

1. A neutral location where questions can be asked.
2. A place to dialogue about the big questions of life.
3. When they are being served by Christians in practical helpful ways without the hidden agenda of hoping to get them to church.
4. Christians go to local coffee shops and becoming one of the locals.
5. Christians join a local gym and develop friendships with others who are there.
6. Invite non-believers to common interest activities which are not religious or church focused.

They were asked to list possible topics of discussion or things that could be dealt with in a small group setting. The answers follow:

1. Bible hermeneutics and personal Bible study.
2. Bible culture and how it relates to understanding Scripture.
3. Looking into the original languages and word meanings of Bible texts.
4. Discovering the balance in giving and keeping.
5. Understanding homosexuality and how the church relates to it.
6. How to deal with guilt.
7. Understanding science versus faith.
8. Dealing with media and lust issues.
9. Looking into why there are so many denominations.
10. A study on the book of Genesis.
11. Understanding the theology of war.
12. Studying Paul's writings and some of the controversial passages.
13. A study of predestination, free will and sovereignty.
14. A biblical look at the Trinity.
15. Stem-cell research and the Christian faith.
16. A study on the Christian view of cloning.
17. A look at the "Prosperity Gospel".
18. Christian responsibility to the environment.
19. How to understand humanitarianism in light of Christianity.
20. The balance between accountability and grace.
21. A study of Angels and fallen angels.
22. Understanding the sin nature, salvation and how infants fit into it.
23. How Christianity relates to the front page of the New York Times.

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Young Adult Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

____ Female ____ Male

____ Single ____ Married ____ Separated ____ Divorced

____ Single Parent

Hobbies, Interests, Favorite

Activities _____

Age:

____ 18-22 ____ 23-30

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