

# **CBC YOUTH MINISTRY MANUAL**



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## **THE BASICS OF YOUTH: SPIRITUAL**

At the end of the day, all who work with youth must remember that we are not just dealing with a unique demographic, not just planning and implementing programs and structures, not just forging relationships with teens...but we are dealing with spiritual beings and a very, deep spiritual level. I think we forget this sometimes and it makes sense. I mean, there's so much going on in the world of youth ministry that it's actually easy to forget what we're supposed to be doing in the first place. So when we talk about the spiritual aspect of youth ministry, there's a few things to note:

1. **The Gospel. The Good News of Salvation and the Good News of a Saved Life. The focal point of any youth *ministry* ought to begin with this crucial doctrine. It is the Gospel that can ultimately change a student and it is the Gospel that frees them from the slavery and insanity of sin in order to redeem their lives towards a purposeful journey towards growing in Christ.**
2. **Recently, there has been a warped worldview that has categorized our students: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. Christian Smith, sociologist from the University of Notre Dame, described it in these terms, that Moralistic Therapeutic Deism includes beliefs such as,**
  - **"A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth."**
  - **"God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions."**
  - **"The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one's self."**

- “God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.”
- “Good people go to heaven when they die.”

And in closer inspection, let’s be very clear, **Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is religion, but it isn’t Christianity.** It’s nowhere close to biblical Christianity. Christian Smith and his colleagues summarize their findings this way, “To the extent that the teens we interviewed did manage to articulate what they understood and believed religiously, it became clear that most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe, or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it. Either way, it is apparent that most religiously affiliated U.S. teens are not particularly interested in espousing and upholding the doctrines of their faith traditions, or that their communities of faith are failing in attempts to educate their youth, or both.”

It becomes increasingly clear that **the majority of American teenagers are not rejecting doctrines they have been taught, rather they’ve never been taught these doctrines at all.** What they are doing is absorbing from the larger culture the doctrines of a secular age, the doctrines that comes from

- Moralism, the belief that all God really wants is that we behave, that we be nice; we teach our students to avoid bad things for the sake of getting caught and do the right things because it is the “good” thing to do. There’s no larger view behind the actions, not motives of worship.
- Therapeutic, meaning that we understand our problems, primarily in therapeutic categories. We believe that there may be a problem with us, but it’s something that can be resolved by feeling better about ourselves or coming to a more satisfactory self-identity.
- And then Deism; let’s be very clear, Deism is a persistent heresy. It is the belief that there is some kind of God but not a God who is sovereign ruling over the universe, not a God who cares particularly about me, not a God who desires to have a personal relationship with me, but rather just a generalized deity who probably created the world and has some relationship to it, but only in the most distant and abstract sense.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.albertmohler.com/2017/06/16/briefing-06-16-17/>

**THE CHALLENGE:** Millennials are leaving the church. Nearly six in ten (59%) young people who grow up in Christian churches end up walking away, and the unchurched segment among Millennials has increased in the last decade from 44% to 52%, mirroring a larger cultural trend away from churchgoing in America. When asked what has helped their faith grow, “church” does not make even the top 10 factors.<sup>2</sup>

As we continue to move more and more into a post-Christian culture, youth ministry will be affected by this change. It’s inevitable. The good thing is that the truth of God’s Word has always, definitively, and consistently stood the test of time. No government, culture, history, or philosophy has ever stopped or slowed the Gospel from changing lives and this is our great hope. But as we move forward, we must be aware of a few things concerning our students:

1. The Gospel, Christian doctrine, and Scripture must never be assumed. While previous generations had the luxury of drawing from common Judeo-Christian assumptions, we can no longer afford to assume these youth have that foundation. As leaders we must always teach from the ground up and be willing to spend a good amount of time teaching the basics.
2. Because of the influx of knowledge surrounding these teenagers we must “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15) Our students have access to so much information at their fingertips. Wiki and Google can provide them with quick, surface understanding, but our role is to help them understand the “why” behind that knowledge.
3. Lastly, what we’ve always recognized as a key element in the spiritual growth of our students comes down to relationships. It is the countless hours you pour into each and everyone of these youth, their families, and their community that ends up making a world of difference. It is the subtle text messages asking them how they are doing, late night phone calls to see how you can pray for them, meals upon meals that you have with them...it’s all those little bridges to them that allow for deeper spiritual growth with these students. Relationships and investment means so much to our students. Whether high schooler or middle schooler, they want to know that someone actually does care about them and wants to see them grow spiritually.

## **8 needs of youth**

1. To believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose
2. To be appreciated and loved for who they are

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/the-priorities-challenges-and-trends-in-youth-ministry/>

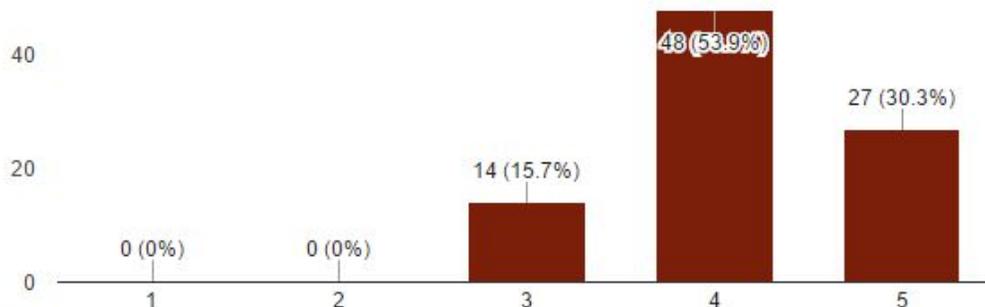
3. For someone to listen and hear what they are saying/feeling/thinking
4. A patient coach to help them develop a mature faith spiritually
5. Community and Relationship - A sense of belonging and deeper relationships
6. Consistency amidst a world and a life that constantly changes.
7. Challenged beyond where they are at currently
8. Change - experience a break in the routine that gets them out of their "comfort zone"

### SURVEY SAYS

Recently, we conducted a survey to have the youth and their peers to answer questions about church, faith, and youth ministry honestly. I wanted to provide a brief glimpse of their answers to help you frame youth ministry for you. All of the students in this surveyed checked that they currently attend church. Most of these students were high schoolers (80%) and we're thinking this was the case only because they had more access to social media. Perhaps we'll redo this survey at a later time and force all our youth to take it. We didn't ask gender but from a rough count it was about even male and female respondents.

We then asked how involved the student was in their church and the follow graph provides the answer. It wasn't too surprise to see the majority (84%) of the students answer above average on attendance and involvement.

How involved are you in church? (89 responses)



## **#1: THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A YOUTH IS...**

Something extremely interesting happened when we asked this question. Notice that the question has really nothing to do with church or their religious ties yet when asked, 99% of the middle schoolers answered this question in relationship to their association with church. Almost all of the middle school answers had to do with “community” or “being with fellow Christians.” An eighth grade girl answered, “being able to grow in your faith with God alongside friends and people to support you and give advice.” A middle school guy answered “I am being taken care of and can participate in a lot of things.”

The answers for the high schoolers were pretty similar. The majority of high schoolers commented that “community” and “fellowship” was the best thing about being a youth. They would say things like, “Being around kids just like you” and “Being able to relate with others relatively the same age as me.” There were some more practical students though. One high school guy said, “Not worrying about financial problems.” But again, the majority of students commented that the best thing about being a teenager is having community. If we’re coming from a Christian worldview, this makes absolute sense. Not only are we created by a perfectly harmonious godhead but as creatures made in his image, we carry within ourselves this innate sense of connection. Our soul longs to be connected with our creator as well with other people. Research tells us that one of the greatest needs for youth today is “being” and “feeling” connected.

As leaders, one of our roles is constantly be aware of the connectedness of our youth. When you enter a room and look out, do you notice the kids who are by themselves playing on the phone? Do you notice other kids who are the center of attention? Do you notice that some kids are always getting into trouble? For all we know that kid is trying to get some kind of attention that he normally doesn’t get at school or at home. Leaders, you may be the only source of connection that a youth has all week. You may be the only one who actually wants to talk to them and wants to learn about their day or what level they’re on. One good tactic as a leader is to help students connect to other students...heck, help them connect to other adults and members of your church. You may need to be the mediator and bridge but still connect them.

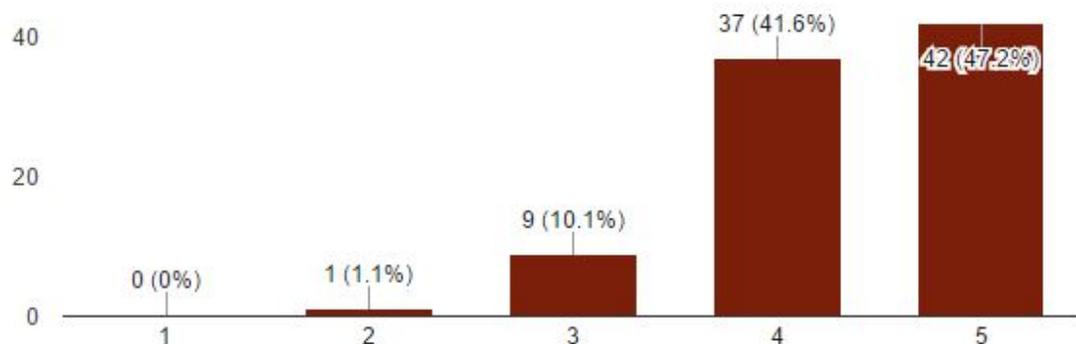
## **#2. I ENJOY ATTENDING CHURCH**

Are you a skeptic? Be honest now? How do you think the youth answered this question? Well, i’m sure you already looked at the graph before you read this text but the stats show that the majority actually enjoy attending church. 47% said they extremely like

going to church and a whopping 89% have a more than favorable disposition to attending church.

I am not going to spend too much time here but I will mention that while there are many times we as leaders feel like our students don't care about youth group or even enjoy coming, they actually do want to come and when they come they actually like it. Yes we take into account days where they are tired, drama happens during the week, our own emotions are projected onto students, but still if our students want to come, we need to be ready to receive them and ready to disciple. How devastating is it for a student to be pumped for youth group and their leaders are tired, moody, or even pessimistic? So be encouraged leaders! They want to come! And for all we know, they want to come because you're there too!

## #2. I enjoy attending church (89 responses)



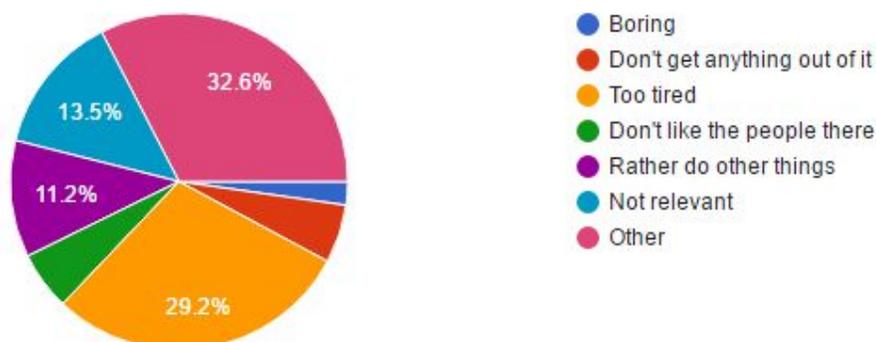
## #3. MY TOP REASON FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH IS...

What did you think was the top answer? In our youth group, we've noticed a massive drop off rate when it comes to junior and senior year in high school. At our worst moments, we chalked that up to they just don't want to come because they don't care. And while that is certainly a reason for some students who stop attending, this graph shows a bit more.

Only 2 of the 89 responses said that they don't go to church because it is "boring." Only 5 said that they "Don't get anything out of it." Another 5 people said that "Don't like the people there" all of which were high school boys (ironically they were all from the same church). 12 (13.5%) answered "not relevant" and all but one of the 12 were high schoolers. 10 students said that they would rather do other things. And unsurprisingly

one of the largest categories was “too tired.” Would you guess high school or middle school? If you said “middle school” i’m going to assume you just started working with youth. Just kidding. Surely as the demands of sports, performances, APs, college, and whatever starts to pile up by the end of freshman year, the life of a teenager is going to exponentially get more and more busy.

### #3. My top reason for not going to church is... (89 responses)



I’d like to pause and add something here. And this is more in line with addressing the whole “how do I get my students to come to church?” I think it’s a fair question and I understand why some many of us are asking it. Of course we want them to come to church right? For the longest time, we’ve believed that church was the “safest” space for our teens to get away from the world and follow our footsteps. Well research confirms that what this leads to is a sense of moralism that can no longer compete with the secular culture. If we’re honestly talking about strategy as to how to get kids to come to church we must do an honest assessment about what we really believe about Scripture and the nature of the human condition. What I mean by that is if we’re trying to compete with culture for attendance or copy culture to draw attendance, we will lose every single time. Do we need to adjust our strategy for bringing students in? Yes for sure. What we’re seeing is a whole new crop of students that don’t have the same moral foundation or even guilt as their previous generations to come to church. They’re growing up in an environment that is no longer neutral but hostile to Christianity and its ethics. Yet, the Church has the only thing that can actually satisfy their soul - the Gospel. And my plea dear leaders is that we must always have that as our foundation - our starting and ending point. Contextualize, strategize, energize, and whatever-ize you can do reach students but they will only “want” to go to church ultimately because their hearts are changed.

#### **#4 WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU'VE HAD BUT THE CHURCH NEVER ANSWERED?**

I wanted to include this question so that you as the leader know what is an interest for your students. This isn't to say you drop everything and start attacking this question now, but this is for you to be aware of where your students are at in their hearts and mind.

There were 5 large umbrella categories that the questions fell into: theology, doubt, evangelism, theodicy, and sexuality. Of the five, general theology ranked highest. Many of the theology questions were actually about creation and the book of Genesis. Surprisingly there were a couple of questions about women and ministry and what it means to be a "charismatic." Many of the high schoolers were really interested in evangelism. A few high schoolers asked "How do I bring my parents to Christ?" Another high schooler asked, "How do we get our youth to take church seriously?" This category of questions really struck a chord with me when looking through this survey. It again shows me that our students are not only coming to the youth group to be a part of something, but they are trying to find answers in order to share the Gospel. And most of the time, it's not even their friends they are looking out for but their family and their own youth. Leaders, we need to keep this in the back of our minds when we equip the students. Are we contextualizing our evangelism strategies to incorporate what seems to be a big felt need of our students? Lastly, a huge category of unanswered questions for students (mainly high schoolers) was over the topic of theodicy - the doctrine of suffering and evil. It is the classic question of "Why does God let bad things happen? Why is there evil and suffering in this world and why is there so much of it?" Our students are asking these questions because they live and breathe in a world that is talking about it. From war crimes overseas to racial discrimination, our students are now more than any other generation are more aware of not only local evil but universal evil. It is tweeted, streamed, and delivered in real time with real images. As a church, we must have an answer with a biblical worldview that addresses these issues.

#### **#5 WHAT IS A REASON WHY YOU'RE ATTENDING THE CHURCH YOU'RE AT?**

The majority of the responses is no surprise here - "it's where i've grown up." It was either because my parents brought me here, or other students simply said, "i've just been here all my life." While this is to be expected and fairly typical for youth who are limited on transportation, it doesn't mean that this is a bad thing. Why? Well, for one, they are still in your care and inside your youth group. So at the base level, whether they decided to come on their own terms or not, they are still within your authority

and teaching. Leaders, take every opportunity to disciple these students and connect with them.

A good handful of students went further than just “my parents” and thought for themselves on this question (most of them being high schoolers). While the middle schoolers answered more on the communal aspect (“my friends go there”), the high schoolers mentioned things such as “I enjoy the teaching and preaching.”

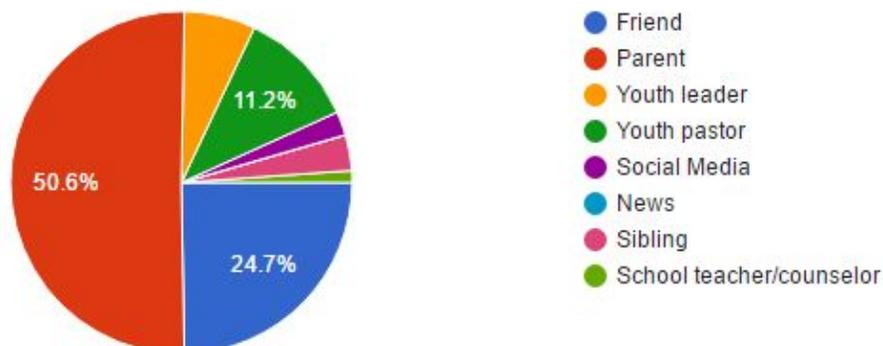
#### **#6 WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN IN YOUR YOUTH GROUP?**

Many of the high schoolers responses were again relational. Openness, community, and closer were some of the key words. One student mentioned, “Our group doesn't really feel like a place to open up except during expressions at retreat.” While another female student said, “I would like to see us go out more and live life together except on sundays.” Many of the middle schoolers mentioned things like serving and more activities. Few of the middle schoolers noticed outside visitors and said, “Be more welcoming to visitors and continue to check up on them.”

All in all, these youth who answered the survey looked outside of themselves and wanted the youth group itself to be stronger. So while you're shepherding these students, keep in mind that this is what our students are wishing for the youth group. Many times our students will want to see these things happen but they just don't know how to get this off the ground. Help them leaders.

#### **#7 WHO IS CONSIDERED MOST INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR LIFE?**

## #7. Who is considered most influential in your life? (89 responses)



It should be no surprise to any of us how the students answered this question. We have been saying since day one that the most important influence on a teenager's life is the parent. This should always humble us and always make sure that parent's ministry is a priority in our structure and discipleship. Let me remind you that it is your role to be a *supplement* to the family as a youth leader. You do not and will never replace the parents. What this should force us to do is to see how we can partner with the parents and supply the parents with discipleship material for their youth. We should see them as allies rather than competition.

## #8. WHAT ARE 3 QUALITIES THAT MAKE A REALLY GOOD YOUTH LEADER?

This question was a fun one to hear the answers to. I'm not sure what you would expect the students to answer but many of them said the same thing:

1. **Understanding/Listens:** The overwhelming majority of students (both male/female, middle school/high school) answered that to be a really good youth leader, they want someone who will take time to understand them and listen to them. They want someone to *hear* what they are saying rather than someone who will just lecture them. Now this doesn't mean that they don't want to be corrected or taught because they also want someone who is wise and will be assertive in teaching.
2. **Patience:** The students want a leader who is patient with them. A leader who will not give up on them and will not lose their temper around them.
3. **Responsible/Hard-Worker:** Youth want a leader who is seen to have good work ethics and can somewhat manage their own lives. They want to know that this

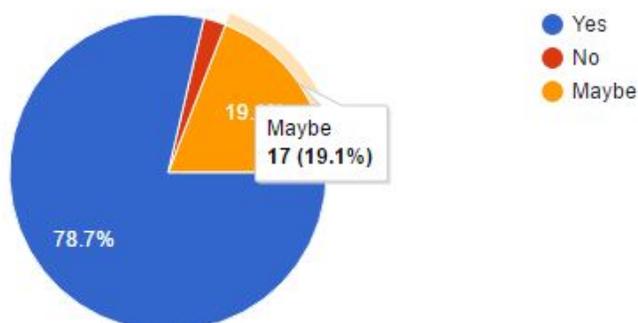
youth leader is dedicated to serving both within the church and outside of the church. Essentially, they want someone they can emulate.

### **#9. HOW WOULD YOU WANT A LEADER TO CALL YOU OUT IF THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT YOU?**

The unanimous response was “talk to me privately.” They would rather have a loving, personal conversation alone with the leader rather than being singled-out publically in front of everyone. And of course, this makes sense but leaders, we have a tendency to do this. And we do this when we talk about the student in front of other students or other leaders. This should never happen and it causes a great deal of grief to many people. But leaders, calling out is part of our responsibility...not because it’s fun or easy but because it’s necessary and it’s a sign of love. Let us love enough to even risk.

### **#10 DO YOU SEE YOURSELF ACTIVELY COMMITTING TO A CHURCH AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?**

#10. Do you see yourself actively committing to a church after high school?  
(89 responses)



Let this always be a sobering reminder that our work is not just in youth ministry but in a life-long process of discipleship. I’m assuming that a lot of the “maybes” is because these students do not have a good grasp of biblical church membership, commitment, and the gospel. Let us toil to disciple our students well.

**RESOURCES:** Here are some resources for you to keep up with the spiritual climate of youth ministry

- Barna Research: <https://www.barna.com/category/millennials-generations/>
- The World of Youth Ministry: <https://youthspecialties.com/blog/category/the-world-of-youth-ministry/>
- Youth Ministry After 9 Podcast: By Zac Workun and Chad Higgins : After 9 Youth Ministry Podcast | Answering Student Ministry's Most Honest Questions
- Gospel Coalition - Youth Ministry: <https://goo.gl/LqQ1p5>
- The Gospel Project: <https://www.gospelproject.com/students/>
- The Bible Project: <https://thebibleproject.com/>

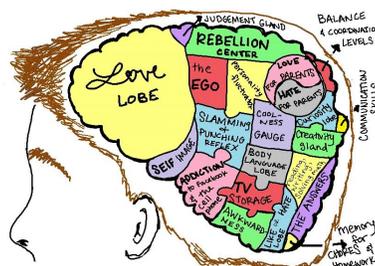
### THE BASICS OF YOUTH: DEVELOPMENT<sup>3</sup>

**rites of passage:** every culture had some rite of passage that marked the transition from childhood to adulthood. How does a child become an adult? How does a child become a teen? How does a teen become an adult? “Being responsible for oneself?”

Adolescence was originally considered an 18-month window of time, a bit of a culturally endorsed holding pattern in which “youth” were allowed an opportunity to wrestle with adolescent issues (29) At the time, these issues were called “storm and stress” Over the years, there were three adolescent tasks:

#### 3 Tasks of Adolescents:

1. Identity “who am i?”
2. Autonomy “how am i unique and what power do i have?”
3. affinity “where and to whom do i belong?”.



The shift that’s taken place over the last 100+ years isn't really in the definition of adolescence, however. It’s a shift in the duration of adolescence.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from Middle School Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide to Working with Early Adolescents by Mark Oestreicher

By the time the 1970s had rolled around, adolescence was considered to be 5 years old (six school years) - from the commonly understood starting age of 13 to the normal graduation from high school age of 18

High schools became more commonplace toward the end of the first half of the twentieth century, to the point that it was compulsory through 16 years old and often through 18 years old. By the time youth culture came into its own, in the 1950s, high schools were the norm. High schools, of course, became the furnace of the new youth culture and quickly aided in raising the age at which adolescents were expected to be fully functioning contributors to society. But the lower age expanded. At the turn of the twentieth century, when adolescents was first talked about, the age for the onset of puberty was 14.5 years old. This became de facto lower boundary for adolescence. But between 1900 and 1970, the average age for the onset of puberty dropped by about a year and a half, to 13 years old.

Since the 1970s, the expected age of integration into adult life has continued to grow older. There are economic, cultural, physiological and psychological reasons for this...now adolescence extends well into the mid-twenties now.

The average age of puberty has continued to drop. These days, girls begin developing breast buds and pubic hair as early as 9.5 or 10 years old, and they often experience menarche around age 11 or 12. For our purposes, it's fair to say that puberty now begins around age 11 (physiologically)

Now this "teenage" journey is defined in 3 phases: young teen, mid-teen, and older teen (or emerging adulthood)

### **What defines a "youth"?**

2 wrong assumptions

1. Assume that young teens are just little adults. Historically, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have treated young teens this way.
2. Assumption that young teens are really just oversized children. This, for many reasons, seems to be the default in lots of churches. We believe this often comes from a desire to protect young teens from rushing into adulthood and adult-like behaviors.

The difference between significant change you may have experienced as an adult (fear of the unknown and prospect of what could be) and the significant change young teens are slogging through is this: your feelings associated with change are mostly due to external factors. For young teens, the momentum of change is largely internal - physical, cognitive, emotional, relational, and spiritual changes are taking place in their bodies and minds.

### Normalizing their experience

We're convinced that one of the most important ministries you can have with young teens is to normalize their experience. Every young teen, at one time or another, feels abnormal. They feel as though they're physically developing in the wrong way. Don't trivialize their experience. Don't say "Don't you realize that you're not unique? All kids your age are going through what you're going through." Instead help them realize that their experience of change is normal - even good.

## **THE TEENAGE BRAIN**

For hundreds of years, the medical community assumed that the human brain was fully developed in childhood. While it still needed more experience and data, it was thought that the raw goods were considered "all there."

But new advances in technology changed that. In short, the primary discovery was that the brain isn't fully developed until the mid-twenties. There are 3 aspects:

### 1. Frontal lobe development

Real-time brain scans of teenagers have revealed that the frontal lobe (more formally called "the prefrontal cortex"), which is the part of the brain behind your forehead, is significantly underdeveloped in teenagers and isn't fully developed until the mid-twenties.

The frontal lobe is often called "the executive office" of the brain or the "decision-making center": Focus: teenagers have a hard time focusing on things and not being distracted by everything else in the room. Forethought: Teenagers find it difficult to predict consequences to real or potential behavioral choices. Impulse control: teenagers don't have a developed "governor" that helps

moderate their impulses. Organization: teenagers often do poorly at organizing tasks, time, relationships, and other things. Planning: without this, we live in the here-and-now. It's hard for teens to make decisions based on what's coming in the future and the need to plan for it. Judgment: it's challenging for teenagers to discern the best choice in a particular situation, as they often don't possess a fully developed ability to make good judgment calls. Empathy: teenagers struggle to see how their choices might impact others, as well as seeing something from another person's point of view. Insight: teenagers have difficulty speculating about other people's behaviors and motivations and often draw wrong conclusions. Emotional control: closely related to impulse control, teenagers will often act out a negative emotions instead of controlling the emotions.

## 2. Temporal Lobe Development:

Also underdeveloped in teenage brains are the temporal lobes, which are found behind the temples. The short story on the temporal lobes is that they're responsible for emotional interpretation. This means that teenagers have a physiological reason for not always understanding their own emotions and for being notoriously deficient at interpreting other peoples' emotions.

## 3. Myelinization and neuron winnowing

Neurons are the "wiring" of the brain. They're the microscopic conduits through which electrical pulses of information bits are transmitted throughout the brain. Bundles and pathways of neurons form into what are referred to as "neural pathways" - superhighways of thought.

The process of myelinization occur during young teen years. Myelin is a "sheathing" that coats the outside of a neuron, both protecting it, and even more so accelerating its performance. This sheathing process occurs during the teenage years. Somewhere upwards of 200x the speed

In the two years prior to puberty, the brain switches into a growth mode where it develops millions of additional neurons - way more than will be needed or even exist in the eventual adult brain. But at puberty the process reverses itself, and a multiyear winnowing process takes place. "Use it or lose it" process. In other words, the process by which the brain begins to reduce the number of neurons present in the brain is based on use. Those neurons and neural

pathways that are well used in early adolescent remain. Those that are underused are eliminated. This is HUGE for those who care about the development of young teens. In a sense, by mid-adolescence a teenage brain is “hard-wired” for the way it will function throughout the rest of life.

What is crucial is this: Process, What if and why are all critical. Discovery is the best learning mode (for spiritual and academic). So make room for the why and what if. Encourage discovery. Don't be threatened by questioned values and boundary-pushing. This is the best stuff of early-adolescent brain development.

Adolescent brain specialist on how to help teenagers develop their brain capacity: 3 things: lots of sleep, good diet and exercise, living with consequences of their choices.

Since we have scientific support for many adolescent behaviors, we should be patient and sympathetic. But we should also be that much more committed to helping young teens exercise these deficient, but not absent, life skills.

### **ABSTRACT THINKING**

The reality is that every young teen pops in and out of abstract thinking. Usually the younger ones tend to lean more concrete while the 8th graders are more likely to have some idea of abstract ideas.

The massively changing relational landscape of early adolescence is also directly tied to abstract thinking. As young teen begin to think in new ways, they start to become more self-aware. This-along with other factors-brings about a shift in how they form friendships and what's important to them in the friendships they do form.

Young teens are in the process of completely reinventing their worldview. They're questioning the very things they've “concluded” in their preteen years and the things they've inherited from parents, churches, and other input. It's an extremely fragile and potent time of spiritual opportunity, and it's directly tied to the cognitive changes that are happening during their young teen years.

**Identity Formation:** Our identities are being formed from Day One. All the messages we take in from family, friends, and the culture at large form our self-perception. So the shift that occurs during adolescence - thanks to our friend, abstract thinking 0 is that young teens suddenly acquire the ability to take charge of their own identity

formation. They make choices and see the implications of who they are and who they're becoming. They begin speculating about who they want to be, not only in regards to what careers they'd like to have someday, but also what kinds of people they want to be and they want others to identify them as being. In other words, adolescence provides the opportunity to choose who one becomes. This is why identity is such a major task in adolescence.

## **MATURITY**

1. Physical Maturity comes to fruition between ages 16-18. This is when the body's full potential is in place. Practice can make it better, but the potential is there.
2. Knowledge Maturity peaks at ages 18-20
3. But Wisdom Maturity peaks at age 25. (think car rental company policies)

## **THE BASICS OF YOUTH: CULTURE**

Looking at our kids (CBC kids) what gently pulls them away from the awe of God and the beauty of Jesus isn't so much atheism, drugs, and sex (although that's definitely there), it's the glow of the screen, social media that demands judgement, and distractions after distractions. What parents once feared as "sinful" things that would get their kids isn't the problem it's actually the very things parents are giving them - endless amount of distractions that force kids to choose between other gods and the real god. But when other gods are so many and so dominant and reinforced by parents and media students are severely under-matched.

### **The Millennials**

Today's teenagers are part of the Millennial generation (a term that Thom Rainer uses in his book *The Bridger Generation*). This generation (those born between 1980 to 2000) is the largest generation in the history of America, surpassing the Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964). At the time of this paper, a teenager would be considered those in 6th grade (born 2002-2003) through 12th grade (born 1996-1997). These Millennials have influenced everything from marketing to fashion and have been pivotal in the world of politics. There were about 46 million 18-29 year olds that were eligible to vote in the 2012 presidential election. This generation is projected to

make up about one-third of the electorate, making it one of the most influential and powerful generations in our history. A brief snapshot of the typical Millennial is recorded by 2 major research studies turned into books: *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* by Thom Rainer and *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters* by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons. Rainer shows five typical characteristics of the Millennials:

(1) The typical Millennial is not religious. In fact, according to their research they are the "least religious of any generation in modern American history," yet they still claim to be spiritual. Many of the Millennials have a difficult time defining their beliefs.

(2) The typical Millennial is educated. "Four out of five older Millennials received education beyond high school." Not only do they have a desire to impact the future with this education, but it seems like they are poised to be in the best position to do so. This generation is by far the most diverse generation in American history. They are intentional about "including those of varying backgrounds, particularly those of different races."

(3) The typical Millennial is working. However, Millennials are not workaholics. Balancing social life, family, and career is extremely important for this generation, and the Millennials are not willing to obtain success at any cost. "Nine out of ten Millennials believe it is their responsibility to make a difference in the world." Additionally, "six out of ten Millennials believe they will make some great contribution in their lifetime."

(4) The typical Millennial is not married. While this statements should not come as a surprise considering most of this generation is still fairly young, what needs to be noted is their concept of the family. A typical Millennial wants a connected family that is different than the broken-family norm of our culture. These Millennials hold to traditional attitudes about the family, even though the definition of family is in constant flux with this generation.

(5) Millennials communicate unlike any other generation. At the time of publication (2011), Rainer notes that "seven out of ten Millennials say the cellphone is vital in their lives." As of December 2013, the United States has 335.65 million cellular service subscribers, or a 104% penetration rate. In 2013 alone, these subscribers spent in excess of \$35 billion in capital expenditures. This further breaks down to 96 billion multimedia message services, 32 trillion megabytes of data usage, 1.9 trillion text messages, and 2.6 trillion minutes of wireless traffic. A Pew Internet and American Life Project study

over Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults provides interesting data on today's Millennials:

## **GENERATION Z (Class of 2020 and younger)**

### **5 Defining Characteristics of Gen Z<sup>4</sup>**

1. **Recession Marked: the most defining event in their lifetimes is the Great Recession (2007). YouGov study found that 26% of those between 18-39yrs were favorable to socialism, compared to only 15% over the age of 65 (39)**
  - a. **Hunger Games & Divergent: teens left alone to face a dystopian future.**
  - b. **49% say "America's best days are behind us"**
  - c. **Their coping mechanism have led to a strong sense of independence and an entrepreneurial spirit. Most popular career choice is social entrepreneurship (41)**
2. **Wi-Fi Enabled: Millennials as being "digital natives," due to their comfort and innate abilities with digital technology.**
  - a. **William Bernstein: 4 great communication revolution**  
1) Language itself, 2) writing 3)mechanization of writing 4) electronic encoding of information
  - b. **Teens spend about 9 hours a day absorbing media (42) Mom and Dad may care about the content of what they absorb but not the time spend on media itself. 92% of Gen Z report going online daily. 91% go to bed with devices. This generation spends more money online than any other generation. This makes them more independent and self-directed than generations before them.**
  - c. **New tasks of education is to help students evaluate information**
3. **Multiracial: 4th wave of immigration following the passage of immigration reform in 1965 (majority of immigrants coming from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.)**
  - a. **2006 there was a record number of births in the US, 49% of those born were Hispanic. (45)**
  - b. **There has been a 400% increase in black-white multiracial marriages i the last 30 yrs and 1000% increase in Asian-white marriage. When the 2020 census is conducted, it is estimated that more than ½ of all US children will be part of a minority race or ethnic group.**

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<sup>4</sup> Meet Generation Z by James White

#### 4. Sexually Fluid

- a. 2015 Supreme Court legalized gay marriage (a landmark United States Supreme Court case in which the Court held in a 5–4 decision that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution)
- b. Bruce Jenner - Caitlyn Jenner
- c. 73% in favor of same-sex marriage; 74% support equal rights for transgender people.
- d. For Gen. Z, the idea of “acceptance” is often interchangeable with the idea of “affirmation”
- e. But sexual fluidity did not emerge from the context of homosexual relationships, rather it was in a “shift in attitude, behavior, and laws on divorce, abortion, cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, gender roles, and now, decisively, same-sex marriage.” (44). It was a product of generations to shifting the line.
- f. In recent study in UK, nearly ½ of all young people don’t think they are exclusively heterosexual. “People should be allowed to follow their desires, moment by moment.” - because the greatest value for this generation is nothing less than individual freedom.

#### 5. Post-Christian

- a. It is the first post-Christian generation
- b. Most people in Gen Z still believe in the existence of God (78%) but less than half attend weekly religious services of any kind (41%) and only 8% would cite a religious leader as a role model.
- c. Barna: “the pattern is indisputable: the younger the generation, the more post-Christian it is.” (46)

**The Squishy Center:** A Term to Describe the Religious “Nones” - sandwiched between non-religious and religious.

**Forces that drove the rise of the nones**

1. **Secularization:** process of becoming more secular. Peter Berger: process by which “sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.”  
Church losing its influence as a shaper of life and thought in the wider social order.

2. Privatization: process by which a chasm is created between the public and the private sphere of life, and spiritual things are increasingly placed within the private arena.
3. Pluralization: process by which individuals are confronted with a staggering number of ideologies and faith options competing for their attention (41)
  - a. No longer a “sacred canopy” - Berger

## **OVERVIEW OF CBC YOUTH MINISTRY: STRUCTURES & PROGRAMS**

**OUR PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY:** Our youth philosophy of ministry is stated and clarified within the texts of the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures. They are ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mat 22:37-39 ESV) This forms the basis and foundation of our call, not only as the youth group, not only as the church, but as followers of Jesus Christ.

From this crucial truth our ministry is built out to accomplish Jesus’ mission for his disciples - to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mat 28:19-20 ESV)

From the authors of Scripture, through the early church Fathers to the Reformers to faithful men and women within Christendom, the authority, inerrancy, infallibility, and clarity of Scripture has been where the Church found its center. Our youth group

continues to maintain that the “Word of the Lord proves true” (Ps. 18:30) in every way for life, joy, and peace.

We evaluate all of programing, technique, strategies, and planning against the Word of God as our guide. Our initial approach is to humbly read and study the Scriptures for principles and guidance. With Scripture as our anchor we contextualize the truths found in Scripture to our very specific needs and people within CBC. We then seek to plan and program accordingly with an overarching theme or vision for the year. Lastly, our hopes is to execute faithfully where God has led to us. We will budget based on what programs and direction we believe the Lord has for us for that specific time.

**OUR LEADERSHIP:** Our leader and authority is none other than God and we ultimately follow Him. Our youth PASTOR is Justin Wong whose role is to cast vision, teach, and equip the youth, youth leaders, and parents. Partnering with Justin is the ADMIN team whose role is to assist in logistics and planning. Next we have ADULT LEADERS who play the role of discipler and youth mentor (ACCESS and CG). We also have college sponsors who are college students who are away but have a passion for serving the youth ministry at this church. Their role is to provide support and community while away.

**OUR PROGRAMS:** We offer several simple programs in order to equip and engage your student for the Gospel. Our most basic and welcoming program is ACCESS which is opened to all students and their friends. The next step is our COMMUNITY GROUPS which meets primarily on Sundays but interact throughout the week. CG’s are open to all youth but our members take more of an active role in guiding and leading the groups. We offer a weekly theology course on Fridays called CONCLAVE, which is open to all who thirsts for doctrinal training. Lastly, for those who are committed Christians and are members of our Church, our most intense form of discipleship comes within our structure of MEMBERSHIP. Our members are held to a much higher accountability of growth and discipleship.

## **MONTHLY CALENDAR**

First Sunday:

- Youth Praise (11:15-12:20 Chapel) All youth come together to play, worship, and sit under teaching. Parents encouraged to come and worship with your students.
- Parents Meeting (1:15-2:30 Chapel) We gather to discuss youth culture, calendar,

youth development, and we want to provide a space for parents to meet with and gather with other parents.

**Second-Fourth Sunday:**

- **Community Groups (11:15-12:20 Chapel)** More details within the packet.

**Last Sunday:**

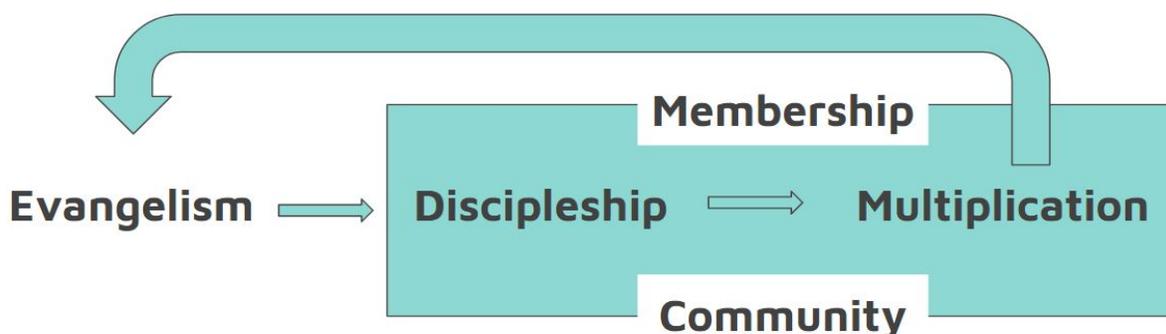
- **Membership Meetings (1:30-3:30 Chapel)** Required for all youth and adult leaders who are Christian and members of CBC. We gather once a month to play, pray, and set vision for the month. This meeting is crucial for the growth and health of the member in order to learn theology, counseling, and leadership.

**Fridays:**

- **Conclave (6:00-7:10pm Conference Room):** Weekly theological bible study that is open to all. Currently replaces the traditional Sunday school model.
- **ACCESS (7:30-9:30 Chapel):** Weekly all-youth gathering. Purpose is to build community, serve, play, and fellowship together.

**VISION & DIRECTION**

**“To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...”  
(Eph. 4:12)**



**Explanation:** The goal for our ministry is pictured above. As students are changed by the Gospel by purposeful evangelism they are then moved into the on-going process of discipleship. Discipleship for us comes from a myriad of sources (i.e. mentors, pastors, parents, programs, events, leader's, community, discipline, etc.) But I want all of us to make sure that the main reason why the church exists (why CBC exists) is so that we are constantly equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.

And so as we are being disciplined more into the image and likeness of Christ, we take part of multiplication. So again, our end goal isn't attendance or even just becoming stronger Christians, but to constantly make disciples. By the end of the day, our roles to multiply ourselves. In this format discipleship and multiplication takes place within the context of membership and community.

#### **LONG-TERM VISION:**

- Equip disciples to make disciples
- Send out disciples that are equipped to plant, revitalize, and transform.
  - Struggling youth groups
  - College campuses
- Provide excellent resources for all youth ministries around the world.

#### **CORE VALUES of CBC YOUTH MINISTRY**

The following are our core values in which everything flows out of. And it's not "just a system", but it's our understanding that this is what Jesus has called us to when he said, "Follow me". However, these core values are modified and adapted for teachers & counselors. The first part of the core value is how it specifically applies to your life. The second part of the core value gives practical suggestions on how to apply it your teaching and mentoring.

Again, these core values aren't something we just made up for you to fulfill...rather, this is what we've found in digging through scripture and this is what is expected from a genuine believer of Jesus Christ...not for Him to love you, but in order for us to live the fullest life and to align ourselves with the way God wired the universe.

**Depth: (Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Ro. 12:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:7; Eccl. 12:13-14; Ps. 84:2; Deut. 6:24-25)**

Our deepest prayer is that you might finally see what you're wrapped up in. Not

church. Not religion. Not us trying to be good, moral people...that is not what our end goal is. I continue to beg God that you might understand first and foremost the depravity of your soul (Ps. 36:1) – not just the fact that you continue to consciously sin against a holy and just God (Ezek. 36:22), but that you continue to chase things that will NEVER satisfy you (Jer. 2:13). That you and I continue to understand that left to our own plans we would ruin ourselves in vain pursuits (Eccl. 1:14). I plead with you that you see that you, of all people, desperately need a savior (1 Chron. 16:35) – not to fix you, but to save you from the wrath of God and your pride.

**Community: (Acts 2; Heb. 10:25; Rom. 14:13-19)**

Our understanding of community (esp. in relation to CBC) has to do with the fact that:

- (1) We're all sinners saved by grace (Eph. 2:8);
- (2) God has given us our talents and gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12); and
- (3) God has chosen to use the Church as his representative in the world (Eph. 3:10)

We have been teaching 3 levels of community:

1. **Universal Church (Matt 28:19, Acts 4:32):** All the believers who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior throughout the world and through all time. This is why we continually partner with other churches and ministries...so that we communicate that Christians aren't just middle/upper-class Chinese people. A very easy practical thing teachers can do is bring in stories from other believers from around the world or city. Our students need to see that there are believers outside our walls that are going through, have been through, and will go through this journey of following Jesus.
2. **Local Church (Acts 11:19; 1 Cor. 1:2, 10):** This is Chinese Baptist Church as a whole. The youth isn't a "special" group that God is only interested in. Rather, we exist as a Church with 3 primary language groups. We try to integrate the youth in all aspects of the church from leadership to joining functions with other fellowships. As teachers, we need to stop isolating the youth from the rest of the church. Try to get other members of the church involved in your classes. Promote the youth to other fellowships.

Actually, what I would do is find the CBC members in a youth's neighborhood and have them get involved in their life. I guess this is where we're the weakest...we tend to hide ourselves from the rest of the church and just do "youth" things. We're going to have to model this as well as push our students to do the same thing. Harder still is getting the rest of the church to buy in as well. But we know better...so let's be obedient.

3. **Internal Church (Acts 2:42, Eph 4:11):** This would be primarily the youth group itself. Our role as teachers is to equip and train these youth not just in theological foundations, but also inter-personal relationships. I think a huge assumption is that youth "should" know the basics of society...but I think that's where we can get off. For the most part, a lot of them haven't been taught how to communicate, disagree, and form relationships. As a teacher, patiently walk them through these things instead of assuming it. Sometimes we need to teach from above – we need to teach the "why" (because we're one body, because the Gospel...); other times we need to teach from below – teach the "how" (walk them through how to talk to other people). Help them to understand what true community looks like (Acts 2) and then actually try to get them to apply it (i.e. set up lunches; get them to call each other; if you know of a disagreement...get them to work it out soon). The internal church should bear several of distinct characteristics:

**Honesty & openness:** should be a place where people can safely share their lives and have others come alongside and minister to them. We should have a community that knows each other so deeply that we don't ever have to be fake. We should be willing to open ourselves up to others as well as receive others as they open up. We should never be a community that judges or even makes fun of people. That just shows we really don't understand the Gospel at all.

**Safe, loving discipline:** we don't just let sin go unchecked...that isn't true love. We love people enough so that when we see sin we go with grace, love, and patience to engage that person on it. And then we become a lifeline for that person and we walk with them through that issue and we keep them accountable.

**Engaged:** members in the church ought to know what's going on in each

other's life. They are able to mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who are glad. There is always a mutual care and concern for those in the body. (Romans 12:9-13)

**Truth (Psalm 119; 2 Tim. 1:8-14; 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:15; Luke 24:27; 2 Kings 22; Gal. 1:6-10)**

Our understanding of truth comes from a long history of Christendom. It flows from the Triune author of truth and was perfectly revealed by God the Father through the Logos (Jesus). It has been revealed to us in nature and in creation and explained fully through the pages of Scripture. The Reformers fought for it and the Conservatives of the SBC went to war on this issue of truth. We stand firm on the inerrant, infallible, power Word of God. We believe the Bible is God's revelation of himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. And because of that the entire Bible points to Jesus. The pages of Scripture reveal the promises of Jesus and the commands of Jesus.

We read the bible exegetically – where we allow Scripture to say what it says and we humbly submit ourselves under its authority. We understand that there are difficult passages that will ask us to sacrifice, commit, or even change our opinions...but we will, in faith, trust that God knows what He's talking about and we will do it. We also preach and teach the bible unapologetically; which means we teach the full council of Scripture and we don't shy away from anything. This is a battle that I am willing to die for...because once the Bible becomes only useful and not necessarily true, we have left what is historic Christianity. Objective truth must be found in the person of Christ and from the words that point and lead to him (John 18:37; 14:6). When we start questioning the validity of Scripture and thousands of years of orthodoxy, we have nothing left to stand on other than "personal revelation" and conjectures.

As teachers & counselors, this means several things – in order to teach what the bible talks about...we must know what it says. This is actually going to require us to study it for ourselves and do some serious thinking when we read it. And then we're going to have to allow the pages of Scripture to mold and shape us. Some of us are weak in this area just because we know the stories but we honestly have no clue what it's talking about. This will require you to suck up your pride and ask for help. I've learned that people have different ways of learning – video, audio, and reading. So please figure out which way you learn best and let us help you.

**Discipleship (Ps. 145:4; Deut. 6:20-25; Ruth 1:16-18; Prov. 23:19-28; Eccl. 12:9-14; Matt. 5:1-2; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2-14-26)**

The idea of discipleship for us flows out of the fact that we don't know everything. The word "disciple" simply means "one who engages in learning through instruction from another." We constantly try to have this thought in our minds – "If I were to leave this place, have I done everything I could to equip the next generation for life and godliness?" We believe that we have a responsibility to continue to learn ourselves and then pass on this wisdom to the next generations.

We've come up with a 3 tier system of discipleship

1. **Mentor:** I always want someone to be teaching me and correcting me. I realize that I don't know everything and there are people out there who have done life a lot better than I have. There are those out there who have gone through the ups and downs of life and I want to be taught. This is hard because it requires me to actively submit my life under their leadership. But this mentor is someone who I can seek advice from and someone who I can model my life and disciple after.
2. **Lifeline:** This person is someone who I can be completely honest with. They know my strengths, weaknesses, past, present, and hopes for the future. They give me advice when I'm lost and encouragement when I'm struggling. This peer is someone who I can grow alongside with.
3. **Mentee:** This is someone who I can pass on my life to. My responsibility to them is to teach them everything there is to know about life and godliness. I teach them how to study the bible, basic theology, what God says about \_\_\_\_\_, as well as how to function as a godly person in society and in the home.

**What Discipleship is NOT:**

It is NOT a short-term project: what we understand from scripture is that discipleship takes a lifetime to develop and we don't drop them because we've finished our assignment. We are committed to this person for the rest of their lives and vow to equip and train them for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12).

It is NOT easy: the frustration with discipleship is that we're dealing with people. It takes a lot of time trying to get to really know another person. Not only that...we're dealing with sinful people. You're going to be counseling the heart of the person, not just the symptoms of it. So take your time and realize that YOU cannot ultimately change them and that's why you need to constantly need the power of the Holy Spirit to

do it for you through you.

It is NOT a buddy system: one thing I want to warn you about is that discipleship is not just hanging out...I mean, that is a part (small part) but it must move beyond that. And your ultimate goal is to lead them to Christ (his salvation, his way of doing life, and his truth). You're going to need to correct them at times, come alongside of them and teach them patiently, and encourage them when they fall.

**Missions** (Genesis 12; Ephesians 3:7-13; 2 Cor. 11-21; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 17; Deut. 26:16-19)

Maybe your story is different than mine, but when I heard the term "missions" I immediately had an image of a people group living in the middle of the jungle where there's no running water and everyone eats bugs. I'm not sure where I got that image....maybe it was because of watch too much Lion King. But I mean, if you have attended youth group "missions" became synonymous with something you do in the summer once a year. "Missions" was building houses, vacation bible schools, inner-city camps, etc. And for most of us, missions became that once a year type of thing. One week of doing missions and...done.

Where we have gotten off:

Although I think you can say that building houses and whatever counts as a "mission" project, I think we've missed the main idea of why we go/do missions. So if you would let me lay some foundation, I'd like to help you restructure where we've veered off.

Gospel: When the Holy Spirit finally unveils our spiritual eyes (Acts 26:18), we finally see that we are broken, hopeless people that continue to chase temporary things rather than the eternal (Ro. 1:21ff), most beautiful, awesome God of the universe. And in a moment of panic and complete desperation we fling ourselves to the foot of the cross of Jesus and ask him to save us. And the crazy thing is at that moment he doesn't go, "Get away from me you nasty, dirty, rotten piece of garbage...go clean yourself up first and then come to me." Rather He takes us as we are and saves us (Luke 15:20ff). And what's crazy is that all the punishment that was meant for us has now been diverted and pour out onto the one and only perfect man – the Son of God, and Jesus absorbs the wrath of God and satisfies the punishment (2 Cor. 5:21). So that now we are no longer bound to chase useless things, we no longer live in fear and guilt and our lives are changed as we now follow Jesus who brings us the best possible life.

I mean, this changes everything for the believer does it not? The one who finally submits their life to this can't live the same any more. The way they spend their time, their money, what they pursue...it all changes. This is the foundation for understanding missions.

**Lifestyle vs. Event:** According to Acts 17, God has ordained the places and times in which you and I live. And if that is the case and we understand our role in the world is to reconcile it to the cross of Jesus, then missions isn't an event, it's a lifestyle that we take on. Alright...what in the world am I talking about? So now wherever we go and live, that's our mission field. So like your table at lunch, your 3rd period English class, your local Starbucks...those are places were God has placed you to be the light of the world. You see? The problem with making "missions" a one-time deal is that all it does is reinforce the idea that missions is just an event. I mean, you can go and check it off the list but have you really understood what Jesus was talking about living missionally? No! I think that's why we LOVE going on mission trips...because they make us feel good about ourselves. "Look at me...I helped some poor people. I feel great!" But we don't want to just "do" missions...we want to always be "on" missions.

**The Light of the World:** Both of these lead to us being the light of the world. Imagine if we finally took time to understand who we're supposed to be, finally just man-ed up quit making excuses for us not obeying the Holy Spirit....and we finally did it, imagine what our world might look like. If everyone just lived consistently you could see lives finally changed. And I'm not talking about immediate change (although that could happen), but little by little...we start inviting our friends to dinner and instead of talking about sports and the latest movie, we talk about how their life is really going. And we start building some deep relationships and it gets to a point where we ask them where they're at spiritually – what they're ultimately living for. Maybe we start selling some of our gadgets so that we can start adopting from orphanages. Or if we're not old enough, maybe we can find a job and give what we earn to someone who has a ministry in your area. Is this starting to make sense? It's just living out what we believe...being consistent. We get on the same level as people instead of looking down on them as if we're better (see #1 if you think you are). We start doing life with people and we stick it out too when it's hard. Why? Not because we have to or else Jesus won't like us...but because our hearts have been changed and so we show the love of Jesus to the world and in doing so, we grow into the fullness of the one we follow.

**Service: (Matt. 5:13-16; Isa 58; Eccl. 11:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:4; Eph. 3:10; 2 Cor. 8; Ps. 112:5; Deut. 10:12; Rom. 12:9-18)**

**Presuppositions: Our prayer is that you remember these things before we talk about service:**

- **You were saved (Rom. 8:24; 1 Cor. 15:2; Acts 2:47). Don't forget that we were once dead in our sins and chasing the unsatisfying things of this world until God, in his mercy, saved us through Jesus Christ. Remember that you and I had no part of this salvation...and while we deserved death and abandonment, we were given a new life by the wrath-absorbing death of Jesus Christ.**
- **You were adopted into a community of believers (Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-12; Acts 2:37-47; Acts 6:1-6; Romans 16:1-16). The moment you receive the gift of salvation, you are transferred into a family of believers. The next step for any Christian is to belong to a local body of believers (i.e. the local church).**
- **There are expectations that you should have for the church and there should be expectations that the church should have for you.**
  - **Preaching and teaching of the Word of God.**
  - **Membership and accountability**
  - **Equipping, training, and ministry to the saints**
  - **Cultivating the world with the Gospel**

**Where does "service" play in?**

**We teach here that God gives us our time, talents, money, abilities, and gifts for us (as a loan) to push back the darkness and for the building up of the body of Christ. We don't deserve any of this stuff but God in his grace has given each person what they can steward. We need to remember this... (esp. those who work)...Scripture reminds us "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Ps. 24). We will be held accountable for how we have used what God has given us.**

**Serve with your foundations in mind. The heart attitude of service flows from those three presuppositions that we previously mentioned. You serve because it is a response to the Gospel, commitment to the local church, and is an expectation.**

**Service does NOT terminate on the individual. What does that mean? We don't serve primarily to get something out of it for ourselves. Please help teach our students that we don't do things to get something out of it. We serve regardless of how difficult, if nobody else does it, or it's awkward...we serve because we're commanded to AND because when we trust and are faithful, God tends to bless that obedience.**

Teach the youth:

- **Tithing:** the purpose of tithing is to ultimately remind God's children who it is that provides for us. Help them learn how to sacrifice their money and release their grasp on it. Teach them how to use it wisely, to budget, but in the end use it for God's kingdom.
- **Sacrificial serving:** teach them how to serve with joy and without complaining. Teach them how to serve in the small and large areas. Help them serve even in the difficult times. Teach them how to serve as a leader and as a role player.

**Prayer: (Matt. 6:9-15; 2 Chron. 6:21; Num. 21:7; Jer. 29:7; Luke 18:1; Rom. 8:26; Jude 1:20; Heb. 12:2)**

Leaders, this is the crux of our faith and our ministry. Our whole foundation and purpose is built off of this one fact – that end the end, God is the one who moves in the hearts of His people. What we tell our youth is that “we can do an awesome job planning these events, we can teach our guts out, we can bring millions of students from all over the world...but if God doesn't move, then this is all worthless.” We have not forgotten that fact. We realize that we are limited creatures – unable to produce life changed based on what we do. It is why we constantly ask and beg God to be the agent of change. Prayer is not something we just do out of formality; rather it is part of our understanding and acknowledgement of who He is and who we are. Prayer reminds us that of our own weakness and our lack of control...and it forces us to our knees in humble submission. Prayer also reminds us that God can accomplish far more than we could ever imagine. We remember the truths told in Scripture and we believe God is still active today.

This is how we break down the core value of PRAYER:

**Sabbath** (Our Prayer of Removal & Rest): Sabbath reminds us of who is really sovereign in all things. When we can't “do” nor “perform”, we feel helpless and weak...and I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. It refocuses our lives back on the only One who can control. This is a time to unplug from things that controls us - whether work, idols, success, or whatever. This is a time for our souls to finally rest in God's hands and enjoy his goodness.

**Meditation** (Engaging in Prayer): Meditation is a time to quiet our souls and reflect on who we are, where we are really at, and to commune with God. Meditation comes from

detaching ourselves from all the busyness, noise, and distractions ..and really listen to what God is revealing to us. It's hard because it requires us to shut up and confront ourselves. But it's so necessary if we want to hear from God, be restored by God, and find his voice for our lives.

**Fasting** (Our Desperation in Prayer): Fasting is a time where we truly want God so much that we'll give up anything in order for him to respond. So we desperately release our control on the "essentials of life" in order to commit to hearing from God and asking him to respond. It is a sign that we trust the Lord so much, that we know that if we give up (food, email, cell phones, etc.) He will still provide. In essence...we're saying "we rather have you God than anything else" and we'll prove it by giving up everything.

**Tithing** (Our Prayer of Response): Tithing is a time where we give back in joy what God has blessed us with. We wisely learn how to steward our time, talents, and resources and give back to God and God's people. We trust that if we give God our best and our first portions...He'll be faithful and in the end, he'll give us himself. That's what we really need right? We trust that He'll always provide the material...but what our souls really need is God himself.

**Repentance** (Our Prayer of Brokenness): Repentance is a time to confess, admit, and repent. We see the brokenness of our sinful heart and the damage it leaves behind...and we hate it. But we don't wallow in self-pity...rather we remember the Gospel and we freely enjoy God's grace while responding faithfully in heartfelt repentance and confession. We continue to "hate" where we are at in our fallen nature and we push on towards holiness. Repentance is an action done to both God and others.

**Thanksgiving & Encouragement** (Our Prayer of Joy & Hope): Lastly, thanksgiving is a time for us to express our gratitude towards God for his many blessings, sustaining grace, and love. Also a time to express our gratitude to those in their community. Praise Him for the big and the small. For breath in our lungs to shelter and blankets. We praise Him for salvation and for the power of the Holy Spirit. We give Him thanks as we pray praises of songs because He gives...but more important, He is.

## **LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT & EXPECTATIONS**

### **ROLE OF THE ADULT LEADERS:**

1. Matthew 22:37
2. Live the Core Values

3. Love & Invest in our Youth
4. Expect to be present
5. Work as a team (communicate, forgive, initiate)
6. Be a student of students

### **COMMITMENT OF THE LEADER**

- I commit to and living out the 7 core values of CBC's Youth Ministry consistently and intentionally
- I commit to humbly serving for at least 1 year as a covenant member I commit to protecting the unity of CBC, the youth ministry, and its leadership.
- I commit to fulfilling my duties as a leader by: attending meetings, events, communicating, and actively serving CBC.
- I commit to being a godly witness to the youth at all times by my words, actions, and attitude.
- I commit to humbly submitting my rights and authority to CBC's leadership & community for accountability, growth, and discipline.
- There are no active sins in my life that would disqualify me from ministry at this moment

## **PARENTS MINISTRY**

### **Relationship Factors & Spiritual Impact On Children**

#### **Heart connections between parents & kids:**

- Children and teenagers tend to embrace the faith of parents who have heart connections with their offspring. Spiritual impact flows from one generation to the next: "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse" (Mal 4:6)
- Research conclusions
  - "Older children & teenagers who feel connected to their parents & siblings are less likely than their peers to suffer from emotional distress, experience suicidal thoughts and behaviors, exhibit violent behavior, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or use drugs. They perform better in school, enjoy deeper relationships, and are well adjusted." -Bruce H. Wilkinson, 30 Days to Experiencing Spiritual Breakthroughs
  - "The benefits of communications between parents and adolescents seem to depend on BOTH parental values and the closeness between parents and adolescents. Without a close bond, the message - no matter how

strong - stands less of a chance of being accurately perceived, accepted, and acted upon." - Lezin, et. al., Parent-Child Connectedness

- "Parents might be spouting biblical truths at their kids, but where's the relationship? Truth without relationship leads to rejection. We are losing our kids not because they don't hear the truth, but because the people speaking the truth haven't spent the time to build relationships with them." -Josh McDowell, "It's Almost Too Late," New Man Magazine, June 2003

### **Broken heart connections:**

- Children and teenagers not connected to the hearts of their parents begin a desperate attempt to meet their own emotional needs
  - Their emotional tank that should have been filled by parents is painful while empty and to make the pain stop they create plans for filling the tank themselves -- which while separated from parents and from God will be foolish
  - Clinical observation: "Teens left to themselves will gravitate toward the view that trusting themselves and pursuing pain relief is a workable plan for their lives, leading to drugs, dropping out of school, family conflict, etc.

### **Heart connections can weaken with age**

- Parents who are not vigilant may find that heart connections with their children weaken as those children grow
- Research conclusions: "Youth and parents, independent of one another, both reported less unity and closeness as the children moved in age from fifth to ninth grade. There was a discernible decline in parental harmony, communication, parental control, and expressions of love as children approached adolescence." -Strommen and Hardel, Passing On the Faith

### **Injuries to heart connections**

- Students that do not desire the opinions nor the presence of their parents push them away in order to protect themselves from hurt. They have been abandoned emotionally by parents preoccupied with career, income, self-fulfillment, failing marriages, new romances, adult recreation, community involvement, or even church busyness
- Unless something changes quickly, they will reject their faith, go off the deep end in terms of lifestyle, and spend their lives distant from parents
- Observations (Bruce Wilkinson, Experiencing Spiritual Breakthroughs)

- “Injured relationships account for the overwhelming majority of long-term parenting problems in Christian families.”
- “Injured relationships are the major, hidden force that drive our children away from (kingdom) living, and sometimes from the faith altogether.”
- “If your child has received a heart wound from you or their other parent (or both), they will intuitively put up dividing walls, remaining aloof regardless of what you say or do.”
- “...the most tenacious wounds are often the most deeply buried ones, the least expected, the most easily dismissed.”

### **Parenting with Kingdom Purpose: The Kingdom Parent<sup>5</sup>**

Questions: Am I a kingdom person? What does a kingdom person look like? What does he or she do differently from the non-Christian or even the nominal Christian?

#### **1. A kingdom parent has a vital relationship to the King.**

This seems like a no-brainer but nonetheless it serves as the foundation of everything else that is built upon. If you do not have a relationship with the King, every attempt to live a kingdom-focused life will be an excruciating and frustrating experience for both you and your children. Everyone – mom, son, dad, daughter, old, young, pretty, ugly...we all consistently fail at finding fulfillment in life. We have all turned our hearts to created things rather than chasing the one who created them and by doing so frustrate ourselves and the things we pursue. In the middle of our hopelessness and depravity, God became the only substitute for our sin (this gaping separation) and offered himself in our place to receive the judgment due you and I. Until we recognize that we truly need a savior and by faith accept Jesus as that savior we continue to walk blindly in this world and will continue to pursue things that never satisfy.

*Are you certain that you have received Christ as your personal Savior? Have you acknowledged and turned from your sin to follow him? Have you actually asked him to come into your life and be your King? If not, why not do so right now? What are some doubts or skepticism?*

#### **2. A kingdom parent is passionate about worshipping the King.**

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<sup>5</sup> Hemphill, Ken & Ross, Richard, Parenting with Kingdom Purpose. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005), 21-33.

“Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling” (Ps. 2:11). Our earthly worship is the prelude to eternal worship of the King. The psalmist looks forward to the day: “All the earth will worship You and sing praise to You; they will sing praise to Your name” (Ps. 66:4). The interesting about heaven is this – heaven is not a place for those who are afraid of hell, heaven is a place for those who love Jesus and looks forward to worshipping Him for eternity.

There are at least 4 ramifications to the matter of worship: 1) as a kingdom parent you are granted the privilege of leading your family in personal worship. If your children don’t learn to worship at home, they will often find worship on Sunday a boring intrusion into an otherwise exciting week. 2) You must lead the way in prioritizing corporate worship. As a kingdom family, we do not attend worship from a sense of guilt but from a sense of joy. 3) Worship involves more than reading Scripture and singing hymns, it also involves the giving of ourselves in service (Rom. 12:1). 4) When you worship the King, you value the king over everything else – success, finances, status, comfort, yes – even your children. You will have to realize that God loves your youth more than you ever will and that God knows what He is doing. Your goal is to bring them with you to the feet of the King so that they might worship him too.

*How are you actively engaging your youth at home with the idea of worship? How are you incorporating worship in your home? Do you serve together as a kingdom family?*

### **3. A kingdom parent is passionate about prayer.**

The sheer magnitude of understanding that we represent the King of kings brings us naturally to our knees. The Son declared that he could do nothing apart from the Father (John 5:19). If the Son could do nothing from his own initiative, what can we do without constant communion with the Father. We can plan and have everything going the way we want them to go, but if God doesn’t decide to move then it’s worthless. The primary purpose of prayer is simply the joy of spending time with our Father. Second, prayer is the fast-forward button that advances kingdom activity into our everyday experience (Mt. 6:10). The prayer of the kingdom family will always include kingdom issues (praying for the nations; praying for missionaries, pastors, and kingdom workers; praying for additional laborers; the body of Christ; salvation of non believers)

*Are you modeling for your youth a spirit of prayer or is it a chore? Do you teach your youth how to pray and what to pray for? Do you personally pray for your youth on a hourly/daily basis? Do you pray with your youth? Do you tell your youth that you are praying for them?*

#### **4. A kingdom parent encourages the best in others**

Do you remember the disciples that Jesus picked to carry out the kingdom? They were probably the top 12 of rejects according to worldly standards. Yet Jesus constantly encouraged them. He promised them that he would provide for their needs, and he entrusted his mission to them. When they failed, he not only disciplined them, but he restored them and gave them another chance. Your first and foremost opportunity to encourage the best in others begins at home. Your child needs to know that he or she is third in your life after your spouse & the king. Help them discover their gifts and make much of their strengths. Unfortunately, we are often quick to point out the faults. We need to excel on the side of underlining the strengths of our children. All children are different, but each is uniquely gifted. Don't join the world by trying to force your child to fit a particular mold. Let children be who God created them to be. Be their biggest cheerleader.

*Do you know what your youth enjoys? Do you celebrate their strengths more than you criticize their weaknesses? Do you know your youth's "love language" (Gary Chapman: 5 Love Languages) Do you guide your youth in making their own decisions? Do your youth know that you truly love them? How do you express that?*

#### **Kingdom Children | Closing Thoughts**

Kingdom-focused parents will desire that their children place kingdom priorities first. Do your children know that their spiritual development is the most important thing to you? Have you communicated this and modeled it? Do you want to? Kingdom focus allows us to teach our children to see their lives and resources in the larger context of God's kingdom activity on earth. Ask yourself two simple questions: "If I know that everything on earth will one day be annihilated and that the only things which have permanent meaning are those invested in the kingdom of God, how would I live the rest of today? How would I nurture my children?"

#### **The Gospel-Centered Parent<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> The Gospel-Centered Parent by Rose Marie Miller + Deborah Harrell + Jack Klumpenhower (3-7)

## **CREATION: GOD AND HUMANITY**

The Gospel is a wonderfully true story. The Bible tells us that this story began with God - the one Lord of all who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is infinitely powerful, glorious, good, and loving. He created the universe and everything in it to show and to share that glory.

God specially created men and women "in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). We were made to love as he loves, to practice holiness, wisdom, and truthfulness, and to help care for the rest of his world while we trust, worship, and enjoy our Creator. This gives us meaning and honor.

## **SIN: REBELLION AND DECAY**

But humanity rejected God and his goodness. It all started with the first family, Adam and Eve, who decided they knew better than God how to run their own lives. When they refused to love, obey, and trust God, their relationship with God and others was broken. The world was plunged into rebellion and decay. The Bible calls this sin, and all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23). Even if we think we're pretty good compared to some people, we're still naturally inclined to put ourselves first rather than loving God and others. Even if you don't notice this so much in yourself, we can all see it on display in our children. We've lost our good purpose in God's world, to our shame.

Sin is now part of who we are, not just what we do. Having turned from God, selfishness and lack of love are engrained in our hearts. We are also unsatisfied, trying to find meaning and honor in poor substitutes that only pull us further from the true Lover of our souls. We end up putting our reputations, comforts, accomplishments, or even our children at the center of our lives. The Bible calls this idol worship, and the sad result is not happiness or fulfillment. Instead we end up enslaved to the very things we thought would make us happy and fulfilled.

Sin also means we are guilty before God. God made us and our world with a hard and fast rule: sin brings death. Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death." We are all sinners (we don't love God and people with our whole hearts, souls, and minds), so we all deserve death and separation from God forever. However, the second half of that verse turns everything around. It says, "But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is where the good news - the gospel - kicks in.

## **JESUS: LOVING REDEMPTION**

From the time of the very first sin on earth, God showed grace. He promised that he would not abandon those who put their faith in him, but would send a Savior to defeat sin and rescue them from death. That Savior is Jesus, God the Son, who is also called Christ (meaning God's anointed, appointed one).

In love the Father sent the Son to be born as a human - one of us! So Jesus is both God and fully a man, but with one amazing difference: he has never sinned. His whole life, he loved God and people perfectly, making him the only person in the history of the world who never disobeyed God and did not deserve punishment and death.

There are many great things Jesus did, but the chief one is this: Jesus took the punishment for sin that we serve, in our place, and instead gives us credit for all his righteousness. Because he didn't have to die for his own sins (he had none!), he was able to suffer and die on the cross as our substitute. And as the holy and eternal god, he was a sacrifice of infinite value, able to save completely everyone who has faith in him (Hebrews 7:25). Nothing demonstrates God's glory and love more than this.

#### **VICTORY: THE WORLD RESTORED**

Jesus's resurrection proves that God accepts Jesus's sacrifice for his people and has given him victory over sin, death, and every evil. Jesus has returned to heaven to reign with the Father, and now his kingdom is expanding. We, his saved people, are freed to join in the work. We spread the good news about Jesus and show his compassion everywhere - beginning now, in his name and with his help, to bring healing to the world.

One day Jesus will come again to make all things new (Revelation 21:5). He will judge sin and cast out evil. He will end oppression. He will stop decay and death. The gospel isn't just about us being saved for our own sake; it's about Jesus bringing his whole creation back to glory. He will put right all that is wrong in the world and he will raise his people from the dead and bring us into glory with him, completing our rescue from sin and restoring us to God and each other in perfect relationships.

#### **FAITH: DEPENDING ON JESUS**

How do we become one of Jesus's people and share in all of this? It happens by faith. We accept the truth that Jesus is the Son of God our Savior, so we turn from all our worthless and selfish pursuits (the Bible calls this repentance) and we pursue him

instead. We also stop trusting ourselves and start trusting Jesus (the Bible calls this faith). For religious-minded people who may be trying to earn God's approval by being good, this means giving up any thought of being good enough to earn a place with Jesus.

That's right. Contrary to what many people think, being good doesn't save anyone from sin and death. We're saved by faith in Jesus - the only perfectly good person there is.

It's the Holy Spirit who opens our sin-wrecked hearts to believe this gospel and gives us faith, so everything about being saved is from God, not us (Ephesians 2:8-9). The blessings God gives when we're joined to Jesus by faith are astounding. They radically change how we live, even in our parenting. Consider four of the major blessings:

1. We are declared "not guilty" and perfectly right. Although we deserve punishment for sin, Jesus has already taken all that punishment. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Our condemnation and shame has fallen on him, too. In its place, we get credit for his righteous living. This is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Romans 3:22). So in the eyes of God the Judge we are both innocent and righteous forever, because we belong to the Innocent One.

Since we are declared not guilty, gospel-centered parenting means...

We let go of the pressure of trying to prove ourselves through good parenting and right kids. We're free simply to love our children because our worth comes from Jesus, not them.

We are humble, openly admitting our sins, deeply aware that we too are big sinners (just like our children) and are righteous only because of Jesus

2. We are made children of God. "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God" (Galatians 4:7). Our adoption by God gives us all the privileges any child has. Our Father loves us. He takes care of us. He listens to our prayers. He trains and disciplines us. He shares everything he has with us, and intends for us to be his forever.

Because we are God's children, gospel-centered parenting means...

We aren't consumed with building our family's reputation or image, but instead find joy in being part of God's family.

We are dependent and child-like parents, praying often as we trust our own heavenly

Father for every family need.

3. We become loving people. God doesn't just leave us miserable and sinful; he begins transforming us. The Holy Spirit empowers and trains us to love God and others from the heart - to be like Jesus. In this life we taste only the beginnings of this triumph over self-centeredness and sinful desires, and at times our progress may seem frustratingly slow, but the fight is on! We are being changed "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Because we are growing to be like Jesus, gospel-centered parenting means...

We are confident and patient with our children, even when they persist in disobeying. We keep teaching them God's ways and humbly showing them his love. We use the Spirit's tools with our children - prayer, the Word of God, and the gospel message - rather than our own wisdom or nagging.

4. We are given eternal life. Jesus's resurrection means we have new life too. Even though our lives in this world include suffering and death, we have the promise of resurrection and a future inheritance kept in heaven for us. We will have a share in Christ's restoration of all things. Best of all, "we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Since we have eternal life, gospel-centered parenting means...

We don't live for our children's success or worldly happiness, and we teach them not to live for it either. Our hope is in Jesus. We are not undone by suffering or family disappointments. We know these will not last.

This is the gospel story. It's all about Jesus but, as you can see, we become part of it through our faith in him. Faith and repentance are ongoing; the constant core of a gospel-centered parent's life. This can be challenging but it is also thrilling. It's a way of life that changes everything - because Jesus changes everything.

### **Favorite Resources for Parents**

#### **1. 5 Reasons Why Teenagers Need Theology by: Jaquelle Crowe**

- a. "As a Jesus-following teenager, I believe studying God's character is what teenagers need in order to face our terribly complicated world. It's what

will give us lasting hope to face our future with a firm commitment to God's truth." except from

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-reasons-why-teenagers-need-theology>

## **2. Parenting Teens by: Richard Ross & David Booth**

- a. Parenting Teens is a laminated pamphlet for parents developed to provide the information making it much more likely that teens will forever embrace the majesty and glory of Christ and join Him in many kingdom adventures. The authors seek to equip parents with valuable teaching that will result in teens who are spiritually alive through young adulthood and beyond. Parents will also find valuable insight into their own spiritual walk.

## **3. The Gospel-Centered Parent by: Miller + Harrell + Klumpenhower**

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

#### **Child Abuse Prevention**

Next Gen Training and Child Abuse Prevention Online Training. Our mission at Chinese Baptist Church is to connect ourselves with the Lord and his mission. We want to provide as many resources to our people and our community as possible in order that they may love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind. As an organization, we want to make sure that we honor the Lord in providing the very best to our people and those we serve. This training is more than just training; it is considered ministry for us. Why we serve is as important as how we serve.

There are 2 parts to our training:

#### **PART 1: CBC NEXT GEN TRAINING**

This portion of the training will be administered as a Powerpoint document. Please go through each slide carefully in order that you may understand and know the operations and guidelines of CBC's Next Gen ministries.

- Click on the following link: <https://goo.gl/vC3KwV> and read through each slide while taking notes.

- Once you are finished, please click on this: <https://goo.gl/t8XTA1>. Please download the document and take the test in a timely manner.
- Once you have finished the test, please email the test back to Jessie Strohmman ([jessies@cbchouston.org](mailto:jessies@cbchouston.org)) with the subject as "CBC Next Gen Training."

Once you have successfully completed this test, please move on to PART 2.

## **PART 2: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION & BACKGROUND CHECK**

CBC has partnered with Protect My Ministry to ensure that they are utilizing the very best resources to ensure the safety of the children in their organization.

By clicking the following link:

<https://www.ministryopportunities.org/ChineseBCHouston>, you will be directed to fill out a consent to run a background check. We do this for all volunteers who work with minors and there are no exceptions.

Once the background check approval process is complete, you will receive a link from our CBC admin with instructions and another link to Protect My Ministry child abuse prevention awareness video training. The Child Abuse Awareness video training is at no cost to you. When you have completed the video training, start the 25-question quiz by clicking the button at the end of the last video. If you have trouble accessing the video, try viewing on a different browser.

## **PART 3: FINAL STEPS**

When you have successfully completed PARTS 1 and 2, you will receive a final email confirming your participation and completion of our training and background checks. At that moment you are approved to serve with our children and youth department. Please see the supervising leader of that ministry for directions on how to serve.

Thank you again for your faithful service and your commitment to the Lord and his mission. We look forward to helping you along every step of the way. If there are any questions, please contact the CBC office at 713-461-0963 or <http://www.cbchouston.org/>

**CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**Understanding Church Membership:** As youth ministers build their ministry, membership must be one of the first items of discussion when it comes to application. Membership is so alluded to in the pages of scripture that it is a viable part of biblical theology. Dever writes, “It [ecclesiology] is the most visible part of Christian theology, and it is vitally connected with every other part. A distorted church usually coincides with a distorted gospel.” Church membership must be taught not only as a biblical command, but as a workable and effective method for the modern church and her youth. The need for membership arises if, and only if, one wants to take the commands of scripture seriously. As we will discuss in chapter 1, without membership, how does one submit to proper authority? How does one go about discipline in the church if there’s no such thing as membership? If a youth confesses faith in Jesus Christ are they able to just come and attend gatherings? Who is responsible for spiritual growth, the mortification of their sin? Membership provides this the only meaningful understanding for these questions.

Ministers must then ask the question, “How does the church understand meaningful membership to youth? Are churches consistent in their practices when it comes to “adult” members and “youth” members? This comes from revisiting biblical principles for membership, listening to the concerns of the “Next Christians” and the “Emerging Church,” and holding churches accountable for teaching and applying this truth in all their ministries. Youth ministries must revisit this biblical idea, and pastors must integrate the doctrine of ecclesiology into their curriculum. It is the conviction of the author that if and when a church decides to answer the question of membership that is grounded in scriptural truth and consistently hold all members accountable, it could possibly change the landscape of both youth ministry and the future of the church.

**What is “meaningful membership”?** “Meaningful membership” means four things:

1. The members of a church should be Christians. In Acts those who believed the gospel were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Paul letters to churches are letters to Christians (Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:2). While no church will be able to perfectly discern who is and is not a Christian, every church should open its membership only to those who credibly profess faith in Christ.
2. The members of a church should be regular attenders. Church membership helps churches oversee the lives of their members. If someone doesn’t regularly attend, the church has no way of knowing how the person is doing.
3. Members view the church as their primary context for fellowship and ministry. “I’m a member of First Presbyterian Church, but my real ministry is...” is an

unbiblical way to begin a sentence. The New Testament is full of “one anothers” that were written to the members of local churches. That’s not to say that Christians shouldn’t fulfill those commands among Christians in other churches as occasion arises. Still, the New Testament envisions Christians fulfilling those commands primarily among a concrete group to whom they are accountable (e.g. 1 Cor. 12).

4. The members of a church should have certain biblical privileges and responsibilities. The members of a local church should have the privilege of being admitted to the Lord’s Supper. They also have the responsibility to:
  - a. Pray for the church.
  - b. Be in transparent relationships with other church members in which they care for, encourage, rebuke, teach, and learn from each other (Eph. 4:15-16).
  - c. Submit to the church’s leadership and teaching (Heb. 13:17).
  - d. Promote unity in the body (Eph. 4:3).
  - e. Financially support the church’s ministry (Gal. 6:6). Use the spiritual gifts God has given them to build up the body however they can (1 Cor. 12:7).

## **BAPTISM**

**Baptismal Interview with Youth:** It is our belief that once a student has personally accepted the invitation to life and has committed themselves to Christ, the next biblical step is baptism. For us, the discipler should be the one who conducts the first baptismal interview.

### **Baptismal Interview Guidelines:**

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. ( Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4 )
2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance. ( Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36,37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8 )
3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (

Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38 )

4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance. ( Matthew 3:16; John 3:23 )
  - a. Find time (~30-45min) to speak to the candidate alone .
  - b. Talk to them about their salvation
    - i. Do they understand the Gospel correctly?
    - ii. You may want to clarify some points and take note of points where they don't agree. If there are crucial points where they don't agree with at that moment, teach them...but if they still don't want to accept that then and there, do not proceed to baptism.
  - c. Talk to them about the purpose of baptism
    - i. Symbolic of their profession of faith to the world
    - ii. Baptism is for those who have already accepted Christ
    - iii. Baptism is commanded for those who have accepted Christ.
  - d. Talk to them about membership
    - i. What does it mean to be a member of the church?
  
5. Finish with a path for them to grow
  
6. Help them formulate a testimony (whether salvation story or current journey) and type it and send it to [dianaw@cbchouston.org](mailto:dianaw@cbchouston.org)

#### **LETTER TO THE PARENTS: POST BAPTISM**

Dear Parents, allow me to say what an honor and privilege it is for our youth group to see your student make a huge step forward in their spiritual journey. We realize that we are just one of many churches and youth programs in the city and we are truly humbled by the fact that you and your family has allowed your student to be a part of ours. We thank you for entrusting your youth to the direction, vision, and leadership of this youth program.

Now that your youth have officially been baptized, we wanted to note some things for you and your family to do in order to really help grow your youth going forward.

**CHARACTER:** We believe that Christian baptism is a person's voluntary response to make a public declaration of faith to Jesus Christ. For us, baptism is confirming to the world what they know to be true in their heart. They have rejected the narrative of the

world and their own sinful, selfish tendency and have committed themselves to following after Christ.

1. We believe that as a Christian their sins are freely, fully, and forever forgiven yet this process that they are in, especially after baptism, is called “sanctification.” It is a process of becoming more and more like Christ as they choose to follow after him. They are not perfected yet and they will continue to stumble. Parents, do not be shocked at their failing and missteps even after baptism. Always remember that they are growing and maturing in their faith. They will need guidance, prayer, coaching, rebuking, and correction according to the Word of God.
2. **Confession and Repentance:** These are two hallmarks of the growing Christian. A heart changed by Christ will be quick to recognize their sins or ought to admit when they have their sins pointed out. You’ll have to gently and consistently help them with these two qualities as they grow. Give them space and safety to confess and repent when their sins are uncovered.
3. **Legalism and License:** We’ve noticed that students (or all of us for that matter) tend to lean towards these two extremes. On one side we come out on the side of conversion and we land on the side of rules and making sure we don’t mess up and we hold others to a strict standard.

Legalism is creating extra-biblical commands on ourselves and others and condemning people for not living up to those standards. Legalism does not bring any freedom or joy because it falls back to a works-based righteousness that Jesus came to destroy and prove its bankruptcy. Yes, give your youth wise means to live holy lives but always account for grace and forgiveness.

License is the opposite end. When people believe that because they are saved now they are free to do whatever they want to do. So they wrongly believe that now because they have a “free pass” to heaven, Jesus simply has to “deal with” their sins while they do whatever it is that pleases them. The fault in this logic is that a heart that truly believes this doesn’t understand the Gospel. We don’t chase sinful things while using Jesus as our gateway to attain those things. That’s just using Jesus. Don’t assume that just because of baptism, your students will make godly and wise choices. They’ll still need discipleship and your active involvement.

Parents, your youth will lean towards these poles often. It is your responsibility to tether them to a balanced view of the Cross and the Gospel. A rule we like to use is this “whatever stirs your heart and affections for Jesus...run towards that. Anything that robs your of your affection for Jesus...run away from that.”

**COMMITMENT:** Parents, your student has officially committed to a local church through their baptism. They have chosen Chinese Baptist Church as the foundation of a local church. And while they are a part of the universal church through salvation, CBC is their local body in which they work out their salvation in community. They are now officially members of this church. We believe that membership is sacred on so many levels. Unfortunately, our culture and even church culture downplays this understanding. But our youth ministry cannot mirror culture for we believe that your student’s growth and joy is dependent on how they understand commitment in terms of membership.

Through membership, we believe that now the church is committed to your student’s spiritual flourishing. We believe that the church ought to do whatever it takes to resource, equip, and provide for your student’s spiritual growth. Sometimes that means providing teaching and preaching, other times that means offering opportunities to serve and disciple. Still the church is ultimately committed to your students holiness. At times that means there will be formal and informal acts of discipline. Discipline for sin but also discipline for when your student is veering off the path that they committed to when they chose to follow Christ. We believe it is the church’s responsibility to loving pull them back to the Cross and at times that involves discipline. As you know, no discipline feels good at the moment, but our goal is to love your student enough to where we will exercise good, loving discipline for their sake. That is the church’s commitment to your youth.

While that is the commitment of the church towards your youth we also believe that your youth has commitments to the church. We believe your youth ought to commit to loving, serving, praying, honoring, and growing this local body to the best of their ability. This means, as a member, attending membership meetings, taking advantage of classes, workshops, seminars, and studies. This means committing to discipling those within the church and being disciplined. This means attending regularly and encouraging others to attend as well. Parents, help them fulfill their commitment as a member.

**COMMUNITY:** They are now a part of this community we call CBC. As we have been telling your youth from day one - there is no such thing as their ideal community. Everyone is broken and selfish. And we believe that biblical community is NOT based on shared interest and no drama. Biblical community is centered around one thing - the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus creates a community of people who are all trying to follow after him and in the process being shaped by him through love.

Help your students understand this new idea of community. That this type of community will take years if not decades to form and feel “natural.” Help them understand that biblical community goes far beyond just this youth group and that a community is multi-generational, multi-ethnic, and multi-background. Encourage them when they “feel left out.” Remind them of this new community that they are a part of now. As their parent, enter into these different aspects of community with them. Serve alongside with them. Step in as a leader and teacher for a season. Involve other Christians and members of the church into the lives of your youth for their sake and their joy.

## **CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Church discipline...scary, right? It shouldn't be though. A lot of the fear about church discipline comes from uncertainty. What exactly is church discipline? Am I being punished? And will I get excommunicated? All of these are important questions to ask and answer! Let's ask some of the fundamental questions about church discipline:

### **Who?**

The first question we have to tackle is this: who is subject to church discipline? We believe that church discipline is for the believer who calls him/herself a member of the church. As a church, we cannot put non-believers and non-members under church discipline, as they have not placed themselves under the authority of the local church.

This is not to say that we do not come alongside non-believers and non-members for the sake of growing, encouraging, and discipling them! We as a church should care deeply for not only our members and our established community, but equally so for the lost and those outside our community!

Now, to the member. We remind you that church membership has meaning. It's not just a status that you claim when it's convenient or as some sort of club membership where you're allowed to go to certain events and use certain facilities.

We've often heard phrases like "Only God can judge me" as a way of dismissing the "haters". However, Paul tells the church that judgement inside the church is necessary (1 Cor. 5:12). Being a member means submitting to the authority of the local church, serving, and yes, even accepting discipline. There are expectations of members, as well as responsibilities, both from the member and towards the member. This means that at times, you may be subject to church discipline. But don't be afraid of it!

## **Why?**

Let's go into why we do church discipline to clear up some misconceptions.

1. First and foremost, church discipline is NOT done to punish people. It's not the church's job to punish sins, that is God's power, and his alone.

The main reason we do church discipline is for the sake of the believer's spiritual health (James 5:20). Let's repeat that, because it's important. Church discipline is done for the sake of the believer's spiritual health and growth.

If a member of the church is engaging in known, repeated, and unrepentant sin, then for the sake of the believer, it is the responsibility of the church to step in and correct. That means the church, its members, and its leaders have to recognize this sin, which requires constant community, discipleship, and partnership.

Church discipline is never intended to drive people away or to remove them from the church! Instead, it's intended to improve people's relationship with God and help shepherd them in their spiritual lives. Church discipline should benefit the believer.

2. Secondly, we do church discipline to protect the church. The church is commanded to uphold truth; we cannot allow church members to promote false doctrine, divisiveness, or blasphemy. The Church and its people are called to pursue holiness (1 Pet. 1:15-16), how can the church stand idly by when its members go against biblical truth?

In addition, as members, we are representatives of the church, both local and universal. The way we live and the way we present ourselves to the world are representative of the Christian faith. Discipline is a way to denounce sinful

actions or lifestyles as unbiblical and ultimately, damaging to the believer. If the church stands idly by as its members engage in hypocritical, sinful lives and attitudes, the perception of God and His church is damaged (Rom. 2:19-20).

3. Finally, discipline is used to protect the body of believers against falling into the same sin of the member in church discipline. If the church allows unrepentant sin to run rampant in the congregation and to continue unchecked, we believe that it affects your brothers and sisters (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

Which sins necessitate church discipline? How can we be sure we're not being legalistic or too picky when it comes to administering church discipline? Here's a few of the sins that may require the offender to be put under church discipline:

Violation of God's moral commands (Gal. 5:19-21; Col 3:8)

Relational sins (Gal. 5:19-21; Col 3:8)

Divisiveness in the church (Rom 16:17-18)

False teaching (1 Tim 6:3-5)

Refusal to work or laziness (2 Thess. 3:6-15)

## **What?**

So we know why we do it, but what exactly IS church discipline?

Let's first establish this: church discipline is a process. The first and last step isn't excommunication!

However, it's important to say that in all of these stages, we must always do these things out of love (Gal. 6:1); we must always examine our hearts and our intentions. If at any point you recognize that you are doing this out of self-righteousness, out of hate, pride, or simply without love at the core, we ask that you seek counsel and remove yourself from the situation.

1. The first step is letting the offender know that they are in sin. Sometimes, members may be completely unaware of their sin or even that it is a sin!

This step should be done in private and in person (Mt. 18:15). Ideally, this should only be done by someone who has a good personal relationship with the offender. We must come alongside in love and gentleness to support and help,

not to judge and condemn.

2. If the offender continues in their sin without repentance, the next step is to bring more people into the fold (Mt. 18:16), not to shame them, but to better reach them and to better convey the seriousness of the sin in their life.
3. The last step is bringing the charge before the congregation of the church, leading to removal from church membership should this be ignored by the offender as well (Mt. 18:17). This does not mean asking the person to leave and never come back! As in all the previous steps of church discipline, even excommunication is intended to better help the person repent and eventually return to the fellowship of the church. Excommunication cannot mean that the church turns its back on the person, it simply means the church treats them as a non-believer, still worthy of grace and love and desperately in need of the redemptive power of the gospel.

What exactly does excommunication entail then? The church as a whole regards them as no longer a member and certain privileges are withheld, such as the ability to teach, lead, partake in communion, and some fellowship activities. In addition, the local church may feel the need to inform other churches of the offense, lest the person go into another church community, still mired in unrepentant sin. This is done not as a punishment or to exclude the person, but to protect the Church and its members.

Finally, what do we do when someone under church discipline repents? We rejoice and welcome the believer back, forgiving their sins (2 Cor. 2:7-8). Because our goal of church discipline, the spiritual health and wellbeing of the believer, has been reached, there are no additional steps of penance or punishment that need to be taken, simply bringing the believer back into the fold of the church in full.

As a final reminder, throughout the discipline process, we must remain in prayer, support the believer, and continually point them back to the saving power of the gospel.

## **LEADER'S TOOLBOX**

### **Leading a Small Group/Discipleship Group**

**WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GROUP?** A community group is our understanding of what inter-connected youth ministry ought to look like. It is based off the understanding that the Gospel creates community based solely on the fact that Jesus brings people together.

**WHAT IS THE GOAL?** The goal is to have all of our youth cared for. Community groups allows our members to care for and be cared on by each other and other members of the church. The goal of each community group is to make sure that each person in the group has a safe space to share about their lives, struggles, thoughts, doubts, and needs. The goal is to foster discipleship of believers into maturity and witness to non believers through word and example while they look at the beauty of community groups.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER(S)?** The role of the group leader is mainly to coach and to provide wisdom. We ideally want the members of cbc youth to lead and take charge of their own group. The group leader is to coach those members to lead well. Give encouragement, advice, and correction for them to succeed. Your role is not to take over the group and to lecture...so make sure you communicate that with your cbc members and also your community group. But from time to time (esp. In the beginning) you might need to help facilitate. In addition to coaching, provide wisdom and nurture for your group. Let them walk with you through your own life stages and help them see your spiritual journey as well.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE SPONSORS?** Your role is to provide the support for the group in addition to the group leaders. Work with your group leaders to make sure all of your students are cared for that week. In addition to praying for each member of your CG, get your college community to come alongside of you to love and support your CG. You can do that by asking them to pray for them, sponsoring them, group chatting and video calling them, serve with them when you're back on break, etc. You are the big brother/big sister to these youth in your CG.

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH MEMBER?** I'm defining youth member as those CBC youth who are Christian and have (or on the their way of becoming) baptized members of CBC. Their role is to take care of their own CG. They are to mentor those younger than them and be mentored by those older. They are to set the example for the rest of their group when it comes to honesty and vulnerability. They are to pray for their group and check in with all the members. But they are also to grow themselves.

**WEEK BY WEEK BREAKDOWN**

**FIRST WEEK:** First week of the month will always be youth praise. I would encourage everyone during this time to do informal checkup during youth praise to see how your group is doing. We'll try to cater our games and messages to speak to each group. Also the first week is where we'll set the stage for the month. Be attentive to the responsibilities of each CG is for the month.

**SECOND WEEK:** Sharing. Use this week to share about where people are at in your group. This is a time for everyone in your group to really open up about what is really going on in their lives. Guidelines for sharing:

"It's OK to not be OK" Foster a space where people can be brutally honest without feeling judged or condemned. Even if it's in a moment of anger or they say something totally wrong, let them speak and let them share their heart.

Respect each other. Sharing is hard because we're always worried about being judged. Set the rules for your CG early about listening to each other but also there are guidelines about respecting other people. Again, the Gospel becomes super important here.

Time management. You do not need to cover every single person in 1 week. Depends on how much a person shares save the rest for week 3 or week 4. The key for sharing weeks is that each person gets a chance to share. You may also want to consider splitting the groups up once in awhile to cover more ground in sharing.

Have time in your CG where you can affirm, pray, and encourage one another. Sharing and really getting deep will take times (maybe years) to get there. It won't happen immediately. The important thing to focus on is creating space for students and also reminding each student that they are indeed cared for (at the very least by the CG)

**THIRD WEEK:** Use this week to study and learn. My preference is that each CG goes over the message from Youth Praise for the month. I know this might be a hard task but at least everyone is on the same page. However, if you want to take another route, you're free to do so. Just make sure that you're studying something directly or indirectly from the Bible (ex: a passage or a topic relating to scripture). But again, I prefer that the Group Leaders equip the youth members to lead these studies. Teach them how to prep and lead the devotions/studies. For those who have been on World Changers, this is similar to the devotion leader for the crew.

**FOURTH WEEK:** This is the optional week. If there are still some students who didn't get a chance to share in week 2, then use this week to follow up. But if you want to do a two-part study, this would be your week as well. Or if your group decides, this could be a project or group building week. Be sure to balance team building and service though. You could also use this week to plan.

**FIFTH WEEK:** This is designated to be a CG building week. You can use this week to go eat, do something creative, whatever you think would help your CG. However, if you are taking your students off campus here are a few rules:

- Each parent of the students must be informed and give their consent
- Think about transportation and costs
- Think about time and obligations of both students, parents, and the church (i.e. do not have CG that extends into business meetings or membership meetings)

### **HELPFUL TIPS FOR LEADING SMALL GROUPS/COMMUNITY GROUPS<sup>7</sup>**

#### **You are an Ear, not a Mouth**

We tend to throw the words "counselor" and "ministry" around a lot in youth worker circles. For many, the perception of a youth worker is that they are there to "fix" students. We "counsel" them in how to live or help solve their problems. "Ministry" is about giving them information, knowledge and experience so that they can be good little boys and girls growing up into good men and women. Even youth workers who know better can fall into the trap of thinking, "I have what students need, so allow me to impart to them all that I know." Don't get me wrong, a part of youth ministry involves teaching and imparting, but as youth workers our PRIMARY task (after being the living example of Jesus) is to listen.

That's right – our ears are more important than our mouths. Let me say it again – **LISTENING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TALKING.**

My general rule of thumb in most any interaction with students is as follows: If I am talking more than the student, I am not doing my job well. This goes for counseling sessions, hanging out time, small group discussion, and sometimes even teaching. Here's the thing – if you talk, all you're doing is dispensing information. Sometimes it sticks, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes you come off as a wise person, other times

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<sup>7</sup> Youth Worker Training Manual (Houston Chinese Church; 2008)

you'll just appear to be a huge jerk (trust me, it happens). Listening accomplishes several things – you get to hear what's going on with your student friend, you earn trust by not being “just another person in authority with things to tell,” it helps you be more of a woman/man of God (“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. James 1:19). It also helps you avoid stupid mistakes due to misunderstandings or just filling in empty air because you're uncomfortable.

But you can't simply listen the way you've always done so in the past. Most of the times if we listen we only do so with part of our brain. Words, cues, clues, they all go in our ears and out the other. We're self-absorbed and often more concerned with our own agenda than with knowing the student in front of us.

Here's a summary of Active Listening Skills:

#### Attending

- A: Eye contact
- B: Posture
- C: Gesture

#### S.O.L.E.R.

##### Five steps to attentive listening

- Squarely face the person
- Open your posture
- Lean towards the sender
- Eye contact maintained
- Relax while attending

#### Paraphrasing

- What is it? Restating a message, but usually with fewer words. Where possible try and get more to the point.
- Purpose: To test your understanding of what you heard.  
To communicate that you are trying to understand what is being said. If you're successful, paraphrasing indicates that you are following the speaker's verbal explorations and that you're beginning to understand the basic message.
- When listening consider asking yourself: What is the speaker's basic thinking message; What is the person's basic feeling message

#### **You are an Earnest Facilitator**

One of the tasks you will inevitably perform at some point in time as a youth worker is facilitating a small group. The goal of small groups is to enable students to either gain information or process information in a group setting through dialogue and interaction. Since it is a task, here are some how-to tips.

- Listening is, as always, of primary importance
- Gently keep the on-topic. Chase rabbit trails when they're important but be ready to bring it back once the trail is lost or you begin to lose the group's attention.
- Encourage all students to participate. Be creative when bringing shy students into the conversation but get everyone talking.
- Ask open-ended questions. Avoid "yes" or "no" type questions. Always be prepared with follow-up questions to spark conversation, not just a "go around and everyone answer,"
- Small group discussion should be multi-directional. Instead of Leader-Student-Leader-Student, we should try to get the discussion to look more like Leader-Student1-Student2-Student4-Student1-Leader, etc.
- Read books on asking good questions and leading small groups. They're cheesy but they often have good advice.

## **BEFORE & AFTER COMMUNITY GROUPS**

### **BEFORE DG's:**

- **Pray:** be in prayer throughout the week for your students but also as you approach Sunday's DG time, be praying for God to be working in the conversations, lessons, and relationships you'll be encountering that day. Also, get your co-leaders to be praying for your group as well.
- **Physically ready:** Be ready physically to give all you have on Sunday. It's not only DGs but also service and afterwards as well. Get a good night's rest and an early start in order to have your own time with the Lord and relieve yourself from being too rushed, frazzled, and/or late.
- **Check the calendar.** Be sure that you know what the plan is for DGs that Sunday. Is it a sharing week? study week? fun week? youth praise? If someone is going to be out, make sure you communicate that.
- **Prepare:** Make sure you have all your material ready to go for DGs, printouts, snacks, games, and even illustrations. The more prepared you are the better you can navigate what happens that Sunday.

**AFTER DG's:**

- Pull some of your members (or co-leaders) aside and do a quick debrief with them. What needs to be noted for spiritual growth and what are the immediate needs. Coach some of the members as to what they should be thinking about and how they can help during the week and for the following week. Finally, spend time praying for the other members of your DGs.
- Update the directory. Please check and see if all the members in your DG is accurately in the google doc. Please make sure we have a list of all students in the directory. Also, fill out the needs tab if you find that there is something you need.
- Communicate with your college sponsors: let them know what's going on in the DG and how they can pray and get their college small group involved. Perhaps assign one student for them to focus on during the week. Have a plan on how to love on your students during the week. Who needs to be contacted when? How are you going to pray for each of them this week? Who needs what resource this week? Which parent do you need to contact and follow up with?

**ELEMENTS OF A QUIET TIME**

For some, a "quiet time" is what we hear of at camps. It's something apparently the "Christians" do in the morning...kind of like brushing your teeth. For some it sounds like a punishment - "go do your quiet time!" Either way, perhaps it was our fault for really not teaching it well. Not only that, I think we've packaged it too neatly and in one particular way...but let's see how we can change that.

**1. The Desire of the Heart:** The "who" of quiet time is much more important than the "how." Likewise, the "why" is more important than the "when." For the believer, once Christ becomes a reality, there is a flush of desire to know God and to experience Him. He replaces our desires with thoughts of Him and our hearts are turned towards Him. It's as if we've tasted the goodness of the Lord and we're not satisfied with anything else. He becomes our desire and our heart can't help but to know more of him, to learn about him, to walk with him, and to hear his voice. This is drastically different than "well...i guess i better go learn about God because i have to." No! this is like Psalms 42:1-2, "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" They are never satisfied with where they're at...rather, they'll do anything to receive more of Him. It is no longer a duty but a deep-seated joy. St. Augustine experienced this and writes, "How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had

once feared to lose . . ! You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy." (Confessions). This becomes the "who" and the "why." Everything else flows from this understanding.

**2. Element of Meditation:** There's a time when the believer meditates on a sliver of truth revealed to them by the Word of God. I say sliver because to digest huge chunks of systematic theology eventually turns into a gorging for the soul (if there were such things) and the person gets spiritual bloated or doctrinal indigestion. Allow yourself a sliver of truth to chew on in one sitting. Meditation is the idea of taking something say, "the Gospel" and clearing your mind and thinking through "the Gospel." So for me, I begin to unpack this idea of the Gospel. What does this mean? What is the context of it? How did biblical authors understand it? How did this affect men and women in Christendom? What does it look like for my life right now? What does it NOT mean? What does this mean for my youth? How does the Gospel affect how I disciple? And so on and so forth. It's not easy and it takes practice. The Psalmists understand this and write, "Psalm 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation." Psalm 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." You'll see them say that this "meditation" stays with them all day long. So when they're at the grocery store...they're thinking about the goodness of God's law.

**3. Elements of Study:** There must be a personal time of taking a hold of God's Word revealed in Scripture and actually studying it. Yes, i mean breaking out your English 101 notes and applying them to the Bible. There needs to be a good portion of your time in deep study of a certain passage and when you walk away from it you can go, "Ok...now I understand the main idea of what the author is saying. I know the context behind it. I know how the biblical principles apply to me & my community today. I'm comfortable enough to teach this to someone." This is hard though. Most people don't want to take the time to actually open their bibles and start asking obvious and hard questions like, "wait...what does this word mean? what in the world is going on in this passage? how does this relate to this part of the bible?" But this is part of actually desiring more of God. You want to study his word in order to find more of Him. The Psalmist would say it like this, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart, Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." (Psalm 119:33-35). Also, "In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." (Psalm 119:14-16). You see, the more you study...the more

you understand the character of God. The more you unravel the different layers of God's truth...and in the end this leads to your joy.

**4. Elements of Prayer:** This is a bit different than meditation. While meditation is thinking through God's truths, prayer is pleading & praising in light of God's truths. A lot of people go, "well i'm just not a good prayer-er" or "I don't know what to pray." Well a good start is that you take what you've studied and what you have meditated on and use that as a basis for prayer. So if you studied in Ephesians 2:1-10 the Gospel, and once you've thought it through...then use it as your theme of your prayers. For awhile now, I was taught by my mentor how to pray a bit more systematically (which you don't have to, but it helps me focus). What you do is that you pray in concentric circles. Which means...i start with myself and then i move a little larger and i pray for my closest relationships (family & significant other). Then i'll move a little larger and for me I pray for my youth leaders. Then i'll move out to pray for my youth and then the church. So the circles get larger and larger. But what i'll do is I have a "theme" to my prayers. So like if i were meditating on the Gospel that day...i'd start my prayer like this, "Lord God, I am humbled that you have saved a sinner like myself. I thank you for sending Jesus to absorb the wrath which was meant for me. Please never let me become proud and fool myself into thinking that I deserve anything...always remind me of your Gospel." and it'll move on to, "Dear Lord God...I thank you that you have chosen to save my family in their own respective ways. I pray that you continue to teach the simple Gospel to my father as he pastors your folk in understanding your good news..." So that's what I do. You don't have to follow that...but this is what helps me. You'll see this throughout the Psalms - Psalm 57:2 I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. Psalm 118:25 Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! This is the theme of the Psalms...the writers, being very real people with very real issues, crying out with honesty and hopefulness that the Lord of all will hear their prayers. We do the same.

So go Christian...place yourself under the discipline of having a "quiet time"...for the sake of your joy and for the vitality of your soul. Find out when is the best time for you to do these 3 elements. You might have to break them up during the day. And remember, this is very much like working out...you get sore at first, but with time and consistency, you'll actually start expecting the pain that comes with growth...and maybe even enjoy it.

## **POTHOLES OF TEACHING**

1. Losing Jesus | Colossians 1:15-20. Beware of teaching everything besides Jesus.

Salvation history begins and ends with Jesus. The Old Testament looks forward to Jesus. The New Testament testifies about Jesus. Now we wait for Jesus and live out the way of Jesus.

2. Moralizing | Psalms 14:1-3; Isaiah 64:6. We tend to moralize scripture and unconsciously turn it into a religious manual. We love take scripture and say “This is good – do this. This is bad – don’t do this”. Scripture loses its weight because it is turned into a manual of morality. And if anything, we wrongly teach to merely address the symptoms of sin rather than the heart of the problem. Actions are rarely what’s wrong with the person...it usually stems from the heart. Walk patiently with all people and in love address the issues of the heart together. At the end understand that there is no one righteous – not you, not me...only Jesus. (see #5)

3. Eisegesis | 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Proverbs 14:12. Beware of forcing your own opinions & ideas into Scripture and making it fit. Beware of taking a “moral lesson” and using Scripture to conform to your agenda. This is typically called “Eisegesis” (ahy-suh-jee-sis). We want to do the work of “Exegesis” meaning to “draw out”. Let the Scripture speak for themselves in its own context. Read the text for what it is and draw out the meaning that is in the text rather than manipulating it to say what you want it to say. You don’t have the full story without both the good and bad parts. Make sure you’re able to speak on both issues. (See #4)

4. Elevation | Matthew 23; John 5:39-40. A heart for Jesus without knowledge leads to false worship. You start to worship your own version of God. You really don’t know all of who He is...just parts. It’s like admiring the grass because it’s blue. On the flipside, a mind for Jesus without the heart leads to arrogant jerks. Jesus warns over and over again that a heart for him is accompanied by a mind that knows him and vice versa. Scripture, then, is never an end in itself but it should always lead you to Jesus. The Gospel is never about following rules. It is a heart that understands and loves to delight in the statutes of the Lord.

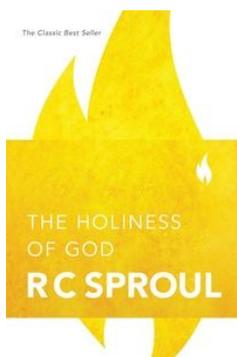
5. Ignoring the Gospel | 1 Timothy 1:15-16; Psalms 51:17. The Good News has to do with the fact that we are completely and thoroughly sinners. Left to our own devices we would be as wicked and deplorable as the next person. The Good News has to do with the fact that we cannot get our hearts right even if we wanted to nor could we fix ourselves...we just tend to fall into the same holes we create. The Good News has to do with the fact that our past is wicked and we (and our posterity) suffer the consequences now. The Good News is that Jesus has come in the flesh as God, placed the wrath of God due us onto himself as our substitute, that he lived a perfect life, was brutally murdered and rose again. The Good News is that we are completely helpless but Jesus saves. He died for my sin past, present and future and allows me to chase

ultimate joy. (See #1)

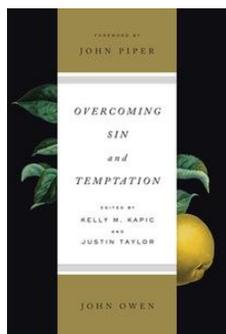
If we truly understand this, then this should be our foundation. At the end of the day this is what matters...so we don't argue about silly things, so don't lord our authority over others. Jesus never used his authority to beat up on people, rather he used all of his authority to shepherd his sheep, rebuke the swine, and shoot the wolves in love. As leaders we model after him – we understand that if it wasn't for the grace of God we would be outside of the kingdom. And so we lead them as redeemed sinners.

## YOUTH MINISTRY RECOMMENDED READING LIST

### THE HOLINESS OF GOD by RC SPROUL



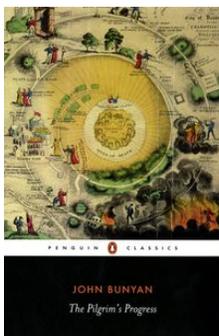
Now celebrating 25 years of publication, this classic can help you better understand the biblical picture of God's awesome holiness and why it is so foundational to God-centered, God-honoring theology and Christian living. In *The Holiness of God*, R.C. Sproul demonstrates that encountering God's holy presence is a terrifying experience. Dr. Sproul argues that this struggle is nonetheless necessary because it is the only way to cure our propensity to trust in ourselves and our own righteousness for salvation.



### OVERCOMING SIN AND TEMPTATION by JOHN OWEN

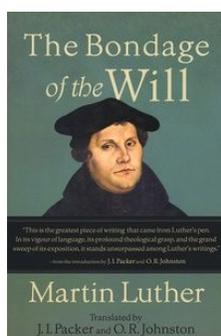
John Owen's writings, though challenging, are full of rich spiritual insights. In this unabridged volume, editors Justin Taylor and Kelly Kapic have made updates to the author's language, translated the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and footnoted difficult or unknown phrases, all without sacrificing any of Owen's original message. These three treatises on temptation, sin, and repentance are

theologically robust and insightful while also being accessible to modern readers. *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* will help a new generation benefit from the writings of this remarkable Puritan



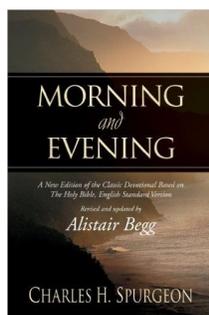
### PILGRIM'S PROGRESS by JOHN BUNYAN

A masterpiece of the English Puritan tradition, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is rich in its imaginative power and its vivid and heartfelt language. It recounts the story of Christian, who appears to the author in a dream, and his journey to Heaven through the trials and tribulations of life. He meets many like-minded pilgrims on his way, such as Faithful and Hopeful, but before they attain their goal they encounter the Giant Despair and the River of Death itself. Translated into more than one hundred languages, *The Pilgrim's Progress* continues to have an immeasurable influence on English literature.



### BONDAGE OF THE WILL by MARTIN LUTHER

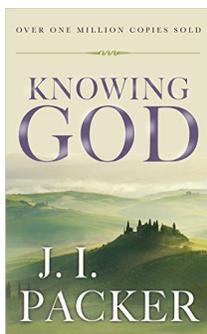
**The Bondage of the Will is fundamental to an understanding of the primary doctrines of the Reformation. In these pages, Luther gives extensive treatment to what he saw as the heart of the gospel. Free will was no academic question to Luther; the whole gospel of the grace of God, he believed, was bound up with it and stood or fell according to the way one decided it. Luther affirms our total inability to save ourselves and the sovereignty of divine grace in our salvation. He upholds the doctrine of justification by faith and defends predestination as determined by the foreknowledge of God.**



### MORNING AND EVENING by CHARLES SPURGEON

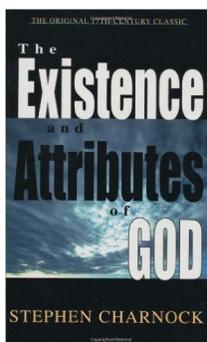
For over one hundred years, Christians have gotten up and gone to bed with Charles Spurgeon's devotional *Morning and Evening* as a companion. With a reading to begin and end each day throughout the year, you will come to appreciate Spurgeon's emphasis on the importance of abiding in Christ and meditating on God's Word. His wisdom and counsel provide a timeless guide through the trials and triumphs of the year. The richness of his biblical understanding offers

readers a look into the heart of one of England's foremost pastors and enduring Christian authors.



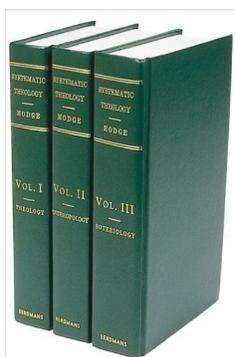
### **KNOWING GOD by J.I. PACKER**

One of the top 50 books that have shaped evangelicals (Christianity Today, 2006) Platinum Book Award, Evangelical Christian Publishing Association For over 40 years, J. I. Packer's classic has been an important tool to help Christians around the world discover the wonder, the glory and the joy of knowing God. In 2006, Christianity Today voted this title one of the top 50 books that have shaped evangelicals. This edition is updated with Americanized language and spelling and a new preface by the author. Stemming from Packer's profound theological knowledge, Knowing God brings together two important facets of the Christian faith— knowing about God and also knowing God through the context of a close relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Written in an engaging and practical tone, this thought-provoking work seeks to transform and enrich the Christian understanding of God.



### **THE EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD by STEPHEN CHARNOCK**

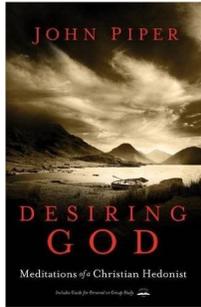
The Existence and Attributes of God has become a classic text on the doctrine of God, and examines in meticulous detail God's foreknowledge and sovereignty, and discusses the possibility of free will and natural law. No Reformed theologian prior to Charnock treated God's existence and attributes with such clarity and depth—in fact, his was one of the first works solely devoted to the subject to appear in the Reformed theological tradition, and has become a standard work on the subject. His positions have been echoed and refined by generations of theologians, and most recently have contributed to contemporary debates over free will, foreknowledge, and the openness of God.



### **SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY by CHARLES HODGE**

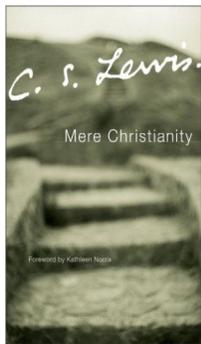
The magnum opus of one of America's most prominent theologians offers an in-depth exploration of theology, anthropology,

soteriology, and eschatology. This monumental work, now a standard for theological students, was written while Hodge served as a professor at Princeton, where he permanently influenced American Christianity as a teacher, preacher, and exegete. Includes a comprehensive index.



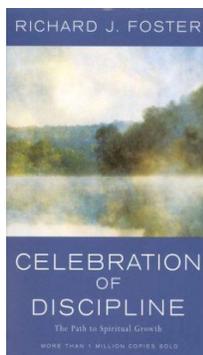
### **DESIRING GOD by JOHN PIPER**

Desiring God is a paradigm-shattering work that dramatically alters common perspectives on relating to God. Piper reveals that there really is no need to choose between duty and delight in the Christian life. In fact, for the follower of Jesus, delight is the duty as Christ is most magnified in His people when they are most satisfied in Him.



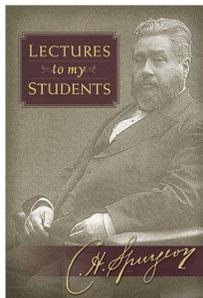
### **MERE CHRISTIANITY by C.S. LEWIS**

Mere Christianity is C.S. Lewis's forceful and accessible doctrine of Christian belief. Rejecting the boundaries that divide Christianity's many denominations, C.S. Lewis finds a common ground on which all those who have Christian faith can stand together, proving that "at the centre of each there is something, or a Someone, who against all divergences of belief, all differences of temperament, all memories of mutual persecution, speaks the same voice."



### **CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE by RICHARD FOSTER**

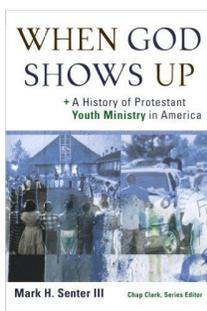
In the twenty years since its publication, Celebration of Discipline has helped over a million seekers discover a richer spiritual life infused with joy, peace, and a deeper understanding of God. For this special twentieth anniversary edition, Richard J. Foster has added an introduction, in which he shares the story of how this beloved and enduring spiritual guidebook came to be.



### LECTURES TO MY STUDENTS by CHARLES SPURGEON

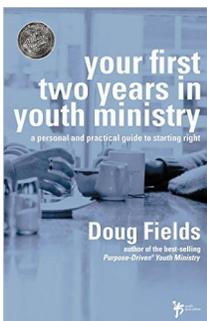
"My college lectures are colloquial, familiar, full of anecdote, and often humorous; they are purposely made so, to suit the occasion. At the end of the week I meet the students, and find them weary . . . and only in a condition to receive something which will attract and secure their attention, and fire their hearts." Though best remembered as the most popular preacher of the Victorian era, C. H. Spurgeon was also founder and president of the Pastor's College in London. He supervised the training of over 800 students, presided at an annual conference for ministers, and, on Friday afternoons, delivered regular lectures on every aspect of pulpit ministry. Featuring such gems as "The Minister's Fainting Fits"; "Posture, Action, Gesture, etc."; and "On the Choice of a Text," this unabridged edition of 28 of Spurgeon's classroom discourses on homiletics overflows with practical wisdom, discerning wit, and sage advice. Covering the call, open-air preaching, ordinary conversations, using illustrations, and conduct outside the church, Spurgeon's words are as rich and nourishing for pastors and students today as they were more than a century ago.

### RECOMMENDATIONS: MILLENNIALS & YOUTH MINISTRY



### WHEN GOD SHOWS UP by MARK SENTER III

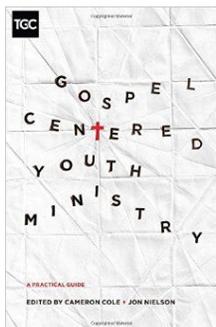
For more than two centuries, youth ministries have either strengthened teenagers after a special encounter with God or tried to retain them until such a moment when God shows up. Here veteran youth ministry expert Mark Senter provides the first substantial history of the phenomenon of American Protestant youth ministry. More than a history, this book highlights the evolution of adolescence and adolescent spirituality, outlines three distinct cycles in the history of youth ministry, describes the major shapers of youth ministry over the last century, and helps readers understand trends and changes in youth ministry and their connections to broader church life.



### YOUR FIRST TWO YEARS IN YOUTH MINISTRY by DOUG FIELDS

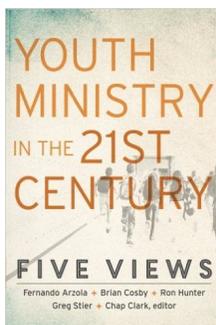
Your First Two Years of Youth Ministry is a must-have tool for new youth workers, volunteers, seminary professors and students, senior

pastors, elders, church boards—even veteran youth workers who’ve been ministering in unstructured environments and are now asking, “What did I miss? What can I still learn?” The first two years of youth ministry are never easy. But never fear. Doug fervently assures us: “Hang on. Hope’s coming!”



### GOSPEL CENTERED YOUTH MINISTRY by CAMERON COLE

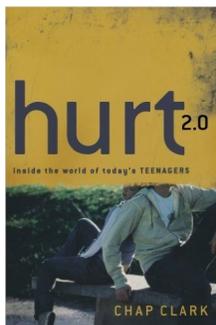
Youth ministry is an essential part of most evangelical churches. And yet, there is a surprising lack of resources written specifically for youth workers focused on viewing all aspects of youth ministry through a gospel-focused lens. Featuring contributions from a host of experienced youth workers from a wide variety of churches, this how-to manual offers guidance related to every facet of youth ministry, from planning short-term mission trips to working with parents. Theologically rooted yet eminently practical, this handbook will equip youth leaders to effectively shepherd the young people under their care—training them to live faithfully in their homes, churches, and schools.



### YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE 21st CENTURY by Chap Clark

Bestselling author Chap Clark is one of the leading voices in youth ministry today. In this multiview work, he brings together a diverse group of leaders to present major views on youth ministry. Chapters are written in essay/response fashion by Fernando Arzola, Greg Stier, Ron Hunter, Brian Cosby, and Chap Clark. As the contributors present their views and respond to each of the other views, they discuss their task and calling, giving readers the resources they need to develop their own approach to youth ministry. Offering a model of critical thinking and respectful dialogue, this volume provides a balanced, irenic approach to a topic with which every church wrestles.

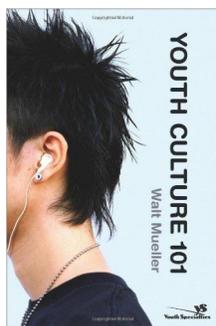
### HURT 2.0 by Chap Clark



Provided a vivid and insightful view into the world of today's teenagers. Now leading youth ministry expert Chap Clark substantially updates and revises his groundbreaking bestseller (over 55,000 copies sold). Hurt 2.0 features a new chapter on youth at

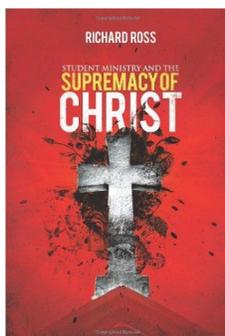
society's margins and new material on social networking and gaming. Each chapter has been thoroughly revised with new research, statistics, quotations, and documentation.

### YOUTH CULTURE 101 by WALT MUELLER



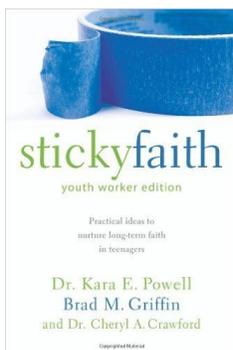
CPYU President Walt Mueller's critically acclaimed book, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture*, is widely recognized as one of the most thorough and comprehensive overviews of youth culture today. This Gold Medallion Book Award winner is used as a seminal text in colleges, universities, and seminaries around the world, but is especially noted for its honest and easy to read style. The book approaches youth culture from a distinctively Christian perspective

and contains chapters on a variety of topics including: music, media, sexuality, materialism, drugs and alcohol, and spirituality. A great resource for parents, educators, youth workers, and pastors.



### STUDENT MINISTRY AND THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST by RICHARD ROSS

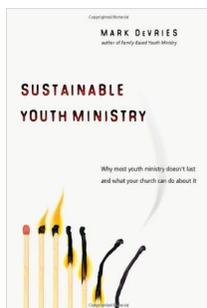
The goal of student ministry is students who spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His majesty in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples. Ross notes, "Student ministry that does not matter for a lifetime does not matter much."



### STICKY FAITH by KARA POWELL

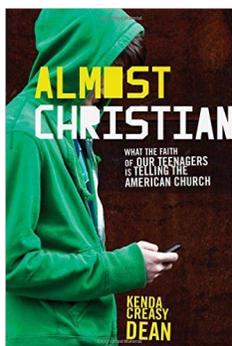
Most churches in America would give anything to develop a deep, growing faith in kids that "sticks" and continues to mature long-term. That interest is dwarfed only by parents' desire to develop a deep, growing faith in their own kids. Yet both national leaders with broad spheres of influence as well as local, grassroots practitioners are waking up to the reality that almost half of their graduating seniors will drift from God and the church after high

school. As leaders and as parents, we're not satisfied with that. We suspect you're not either.



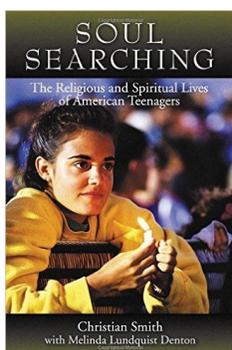
### SUSTAINABLE YOUTH MINISTRY by MARK DEVRIES

You're looking for a youth pastor. Again. What goes wrong? Why do youth ministries crumble? And what is the cost to students, parents, volunteers and church staff? Is a sustainable youth ministry possible, even after a youth pastor leaves? Youth ministry expert Mark DeVries knows the answer is yes, because he helps build sustainable youth ministries through his coaching service called Youth Ministry Architects. So take heart: No matter what state the youth ministry at your church is in--in need of a leader and volunteers, full of battles and stress, large or small in number--it can be built to survive and to last for the long haul. Based on his own experience and on his many conversations and interviews with churches in crisis, DeVries pinpoints problems that cause division and burnout and dispels strongly held myths. He then provides the practical tools and structures pastors and church leaders need to lay a strong foundation for your ministry so that it isn't built on a person or the latest, greatest student ministry trend. His accessible guidance



### ALMOST CHRISTIAN by KENDRA CREASY DEAN

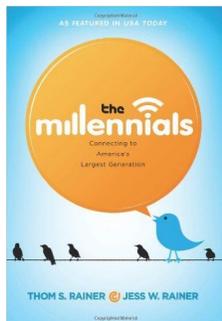
Based on the National Study of Youth and Religion--the same invaluable data as its predecessor, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*--Kenda Creasy Dean's compelling new book, *Almost Christian*, investigates why American teenagers are at once so positive about Christianity and at the same time so apathetic about genuine religious practice.



### SOUL SEARCHING by CHRISTIAN SMITH

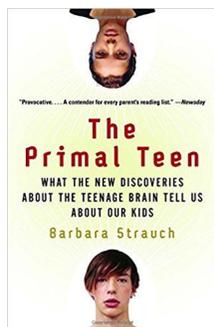
This book attempts to answer these and related questions as definitively as possible. It reports the findings of *The National Study of Youth and Religion*, the largest and most detailed such study ever undertaken. The NYSR conducted a nationwide telephone survey of teens and significant caregivers, as well as nearly 300 in-depth face-to-face interviews with a sample of the population that was

surveyed. The results show that religion and spirituality are indeed very significant in the lives of many American teenagers.



### THE MILLENNIALS by THOM RAINER

At more than 78 million strong, the Millennials—those born between 1980 and 2000—have surpassed the Boomers as the larger and more influential generation in America. Now, as its members begin to reach adulthood, where the traits of a generation really take shape, best-selling research author Thom Rainer (Simple Church) and his son Jess (a Millennial born in 1985) present the first major investigative work on Millennials from a Christian worldview perspective.

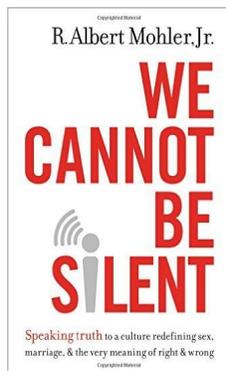


### The Primal Teen: What the New Discoveries about the Teenage Brain Tell Us about Our Kids by Barbara Strauch

A groundbreaking look at the teenage brain for anyone who has puzzled over the mysterious and often infuriating behavior of a teenager. Featuring interviews with scientists, teenagers, parents, and teachers, *The Primal Teen* explores common challenges—why teens go from articulate and mature one day to morose and unreachable the next, why they engage in risky behavior—and offers practical strategies to help manage these formative and often difficult years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: CULTURE

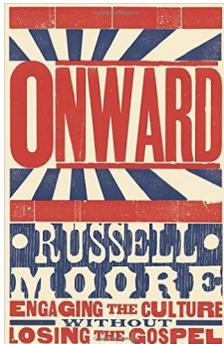
### WE CANNOT BE SILENT by ALBERT MOHLER



Dr. R. Albert Mohler examines how this transformation occurred, revealing the underlying cultural shifts behind this revolution: the acceptance of divorce culture, liberation of sex from reproduction, the prevalence of heterosexual cohabitation, the normalization of homosexuality, and the rise of the transgender movement. He then offers a deep look at how the Bible and Christian moral tradition

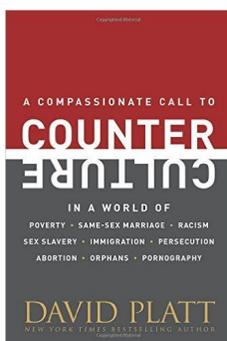
provide a comprehensive understanding upon which Christians can build their personal lives, their marriages, church ministry, and cultural engagement.

### ONWARD by RUSSELL MOORE



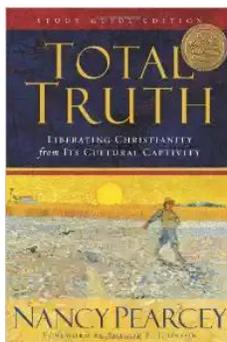
As the culture changes all around us, it is no longer possible to pretend that we are a Moral Majority. That may be bad news for America, but it can be good news for the church. What's needed now, in shifting times, is neither a doubling-down on the status quo nor a pullback into isolation. Instead, we need a church that speaks to social and political issues with a bigger vision in mind: that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Christianity seems increasingly strange, and even subversive, to our culture, we have the opportunity to reclaim the freakishness of the gospel, which is what gives it its power in the first place.

### COUNTERCULTURE by DAVID PLATT



In Counter Culture, New York Times bestselling author David Platt shows Christians how to actively take a stand on such issues as poverty, sex trafficking, marriage, abortion, racism, and religious liberty—and challenges us to become passionate, unwavering voices for Christ. Drawing on compelling personal accounts from around the world, Platt presents an unapologetic yet winsome call for Christians to

### TOTAL TRUTH by NANCY PEARCEY



In Total Truth, Nancy Pearcey offers a razor-sharp analysis of the public/private split, explaining how it hamstringing our efforts at both personal and cultural renewal. Ultimately it reflects a division in the concept of truth itself, which functions as a gatekeeper, ruling Christian principles out of bounds in the public arena.

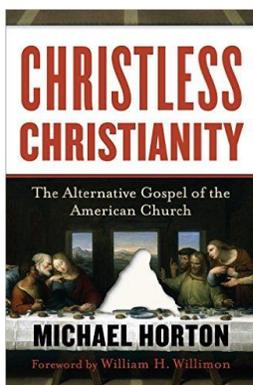
### CULTURE MAKING by ANDY CROUCH

2009 Christianity Today Book Award winner! Named one of Publishers Weekly's best books of 2008 (religion category) It is not enough to condemn culture. Nor is it sufficient merely to critique culture or to copy culture. Most of the time, we just consume culture. But the only way to change culture is to create culture. Andy Crouch unleashes a stirring manifesto calling Christians to be culture makers. For too long, Christians have had an insufficient view of culture and have waged misguided "culture wars." But we must reclaim the cultural mandate to be the creative cultivators that God designed us to be. Culture is what we make of the world, both in creating cultural artifacts as well as in making sense of the world around us. By making chairs and omelets, languages and laws, we participate in the good work of culture making. Crouch unpacks the complexities of how culture works and gives us tools for cultivating and creating culture.



### THE NEXT STORY by TIM CHALLIES

Providing the reader with a framework they can apply to any technology, Tim Challies explains how and why our society has become reliant on digital technology, what it means for our lives, and how it impacts the Christian faith.



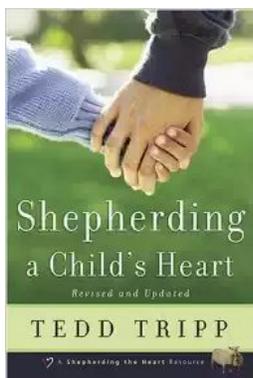
### CHRISTLESS CHRISTIANITY by MICHAEL HORTON

Invoking Martin Luther's treatise On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, Michael Horton fears that the church in America has also been willingly taken captive. The captors are American culture and ideals: consumerism, pragmatism, self-sufficiency, individualism, positive thinking, personal prosperity, and nationalism. Though these are antithetical to the gospel, we have often made them part and parcel with it.

### THE REASON FOR GOD by TIMOTHY KELLER

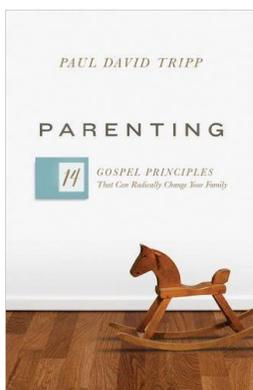
Timothy Keller, the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, addresses the frequent doubts that skeptics and non-believers bring to religion. Using literature, philosophy, anthropology, pop culture, and intellectual reasoning, Keller explains how the belief in a Christian God is, in fact, a sound and rational one. To true believers he offers a solid platform on which to stand against the backlash toward religion spawned by the Age of Skepticism. And to skeptics, atheists, and agnostics he provides a challenging argument for pursuing the reason for God.

### RESOURCES: PARENTING & COUNSELING



#### SHEPHERDING A CHILD'S HEART by TEDD TRIPP

Written for parents with children of any age, this insightful book provides perspectives and procedures for shepherding your child's heart into the paths of life. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* gives fresh biblical approaches to child rearing.

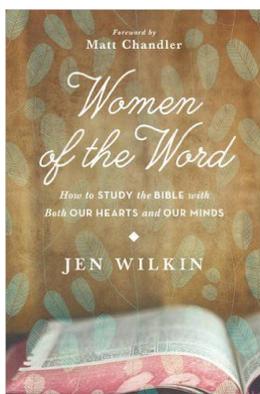


#### PARENTING by PAUL DAVID TRIPP

In this life-giving book, Paul Tripp offers parents much more than a to-do list. Instead, he presents us with a big-picture view of God's plan for us as parents. Outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel, he shows that we need more than the latest parenting strategy or list of techniques. Rather, we need the rescuing grace of God—grace that has the power to shape how we view everything we do as parents.

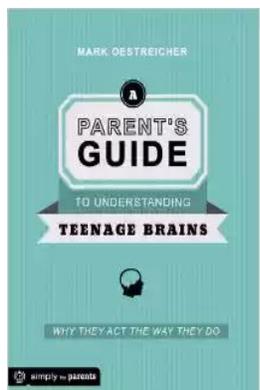
## MISSIONAL MOTHERHOOD by GLORIA FURMAN

In this book, Gloria Furman searches the Scriptures for the mission of God in motherhood. She opens our eyes to God's life-giving promises—promises intended to empower each and every woman as she makes disciples in her home, in her neighborhood, and around the world.



## WOMEN OF THE WORD by JEN WILKINS

But sometimes it's hard to know where to start. What's more, a lack of time, emotionally driven approaches, and past frustrations can erode our resolve to keep growing in our knowledge of Scripture. How can we, as Christian women, keep our focus and sustain our passion when reading the Bible? Offering a clear and concise plan to help women go deeper in their study of Scripture, this book will equip you to engage God's Word in a way that trains your mind and transforms your heart.



## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING TEENAGE BRAINS by MARK OESTREICHER

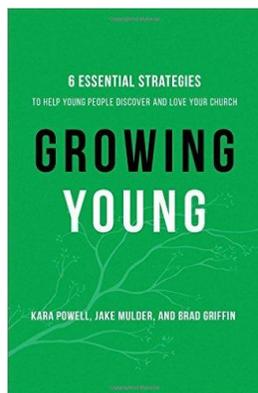
A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenage Brains is filled with helpful, practical insights from veteran youth worker Mark Oestreicher.

Without an understanding of teenage brain development, we might miss life's teachable moments or shut down our child's curiosity with easy answers that don't satisfy the search for truth happening below the surface.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR YOUNG TEEN by MARK OESTREICHER

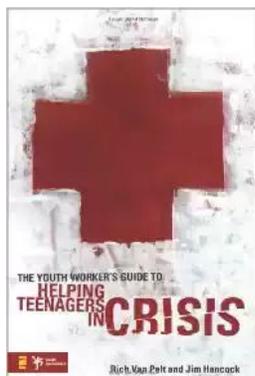
Between the ages of 11-14, adolescents experience one of the most significant periods of change they'll face during their lifetimes—physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally and spiritually. Mothers and fathers of young teens are presented with new challenges in understanding, communicating with and parenting their kids during this time in their lives. *Understanding Your Young Teen* offers insights on early adolescent development, new research and cultural changes, and practical applications for parenting and living with young teens.

#### **GROWING YOUNG by KARA POWELL**



Across the United States, churches are losing both members and vitality as increasing numbers of young people disengage. Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults. It profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29-year-olds and as a result are growing—spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically. Packed with both research and practical ideas, *Growing Young* shows pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole church.

#### **THE YOUTH WORKER'S GUIDE TO HELPING TEENAGERS IN CRISIS by RICH VAN PELT**



When youth work becomes crisis managers. Anyone who stays in youth ministry for a while will encounter significant crises. Family break-ups, substance abuse, sexual assault, eating disorders, cutting, suicide, gun violence— But without proper and immediate care, crises like these can cause years of emotional pain and spiritual scarring in students.

#### **RESOURCES: DIGITAL DATABASE**



Youth Specialties has been helping Christian churches of every denomination lead students to find and follow Jesus for more than 40 years. Each year we serve more than 100,000 youth

workers worldwide through our training seminars, conventions, resources, and online communities. Whether you're new to youth ministry or a veteran, we're here to help you.

<https://youthspecialties.com/>



In a nutshell, we're a team of people who create experiences with one goal in mind: to help people grow in relationship with Jesus and each other. We create an endless stream of ideas, lessons, events, and service opportunities for the ever-transforming world of church ministry. The bottom line: We love the church! And we're doing everything we can to equip ministry leaders and volunteers to do best what matters most—loving God and loving others.

<https://www.group.com/category/ministry-resources/youth-ministry.do>



It all started with an idea over a weekend at a youth conference - 10 hours later the store was up and running and Tweets were flying. Doug Fields & Josh Griffin co-founded this download-only youth ministry to help youth workers win!

<https://www.downloadyouthministry.com/>



Our desire is to be passionately helpful to you in student ministry by providing you with Bible studies, resources, camps, mission projects, and leadership tools. We exist to serve you in your mission of making disciples.

<http://www.lifeway.com/n/Ministries/Youth>



Ligonier Ministries is an international Christian discipleship organization founded by theologian Dr. R.C. Sproul in 1971 to equip Christians to articulate what they believe, why they believe it, how to live it, and how to

share it. Proclaiming God's holiness is central to Ligonier's purpose.

<http://www.ligonier.org/>



The Gospel Coalition, or TGC, is a network of "broadly Reformed" evangelical churches founded in 2005 by Christian pastor/theologians D. A. Carson and Tim Keller. The mission of TGC is to encourage and educate "current and next-generation" Christian leaders by advocating "gospel-centered principles and practices." The ministry seeks to extend its influence through its website, conferences, publications, and other projects and initiatives.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org>



Daily worldview analysis about the leading news headlines and cultural conversations from a Christian Worldview. Dr. Albert Mohler serves as the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

<http://www.albertmohler.com/the-briefing/>

## DISTINCTIVES TO CONSIDER



Discovering what kids need to succeed

615 First Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
1.800.888.7828  
www.search-institute.org

### The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
<b>1. Express Care</b> Show me that I matter to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be dependable</b>..... Be someone I can trust.</li> <li>• <b>Listen</b>..... Really pay attention when we are together.</li> <li>• <b>Believe in me</b> ..... Make me feel known and valued.</li> <li>• <b>Be warm</b>..... Show me you enjoy being with me.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage</b> ..... Praise me for my efforts and achievements.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Challenge Growth</b> Push me to keep getting better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expect my best</b> ..... Expect me to live up to my potential.</li> <li>• <b>Stretch</b> ..... Push me to go further.</li> <li>• <b>Hold me accountable</b> ... Insist I take responsibility for my actions.</li> <li>• <b>Reflect on failures</b> ..... Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Provide Support</b> Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Navigate</b>..... Guide me through hard situations and systems.</li> <li>• <b>Empower</b> ..... Build my confidence to take charge of my life.</li> <li>• <b>Advocate</b>..... Stand up for me when I need it.</li> <li>• <b>Set boundaries</b> ..... Put in place limits that keep me on track.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Share Power</b> Treat me with respect and give me a say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Respect me</b> ..... Take me seriously and treat me fairly.</li> <li>• <b>Include me</b> ..... Involve me in decisions that affect me.</li> <li>• <b>Collaborate</b> ..... Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.</li> <li>• <b>Let me lead</b> ..... Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Expand Possibilities</b> Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inspire</b> ..... Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.</li> <li>• <b>Broaden horizons</b> ..... Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.</li> <li>• <b>Connect</b>..... Introduce me to people who can help me grow.</li> </ul>	

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Ages 11-14
2. Shorter Attention Spans
3. Concrete Thinking (“What?”)
4. Start of puberty (menstrual cycle, acne, voice change, nocturnal emissions, pubic hair, breast buds)
5. 2 Big Transitions - entering and exiting middle school
  - a. Anxiety of entering bigger schools
  - b. Leaving close friends behind
  - c. Riding the bus
  - d. Getting lost in school
  - e. Worried about bullying
6. Give more responsibility
  - a. Choosing classes
  - b. Extracurricular
  - c. School parties, dances, societies, etc.
  - d. Social events without parents
  - e. Cell phones & Computers (with access to internet)
7. Much harder classes & more homework than Elementary school
8. Significant increase in pressure (peer, parent, or self)
  - a. Academics (STAAR)
  - b. Appearance (changing body with girls progressing quicker than boys)
  - c. Status (formation of social groups and categories)
  - d. Lifestyle (relationships, music, advice)
9. Spiritual
  - a. Build basis of faith
  - b. Relearn basic concepts from Elementary
  - c. Freedom to ask questions and doubt
  - d. Experience spiritual growth within community



**HIGH SCHOOL:**

1. Ages 14-18
2. Relationships are key (want to be heard and understood)
3. Abstract thinking (“Why? How?”)
4. Continuation of puberty (massive increase in hormones)
5. 2 Big Transitions - entering and exiting high school
  - a. Entering much bigger schools
  - b. Leaving parents
  - c. College applications, scholarships, finances, resume building
6. Given more responsibility
  - a. Finding a job
  - b. Taking care of younger siblings
  - c. Driving
  - d. Balancing extracurricular activities
  - e. Curfew
  - f. Spending more time with friends than with family
7. Academic Pressure
  - a. Pre-SATs, SATs, and ACTS
  - b. Advanced Placement and Dual Credit
  - c. Top 10% and class ranking
  - d. More homework, tests, and grades
  - e. Comparing against other classmates, church friends, and parent’s expectations
8. Social dynamics
  - a. Establishing identity (multiple - at school, church, online)
  - b. Communications
  - c. Dating, Hookups, Sexual “norms”, Masturbation, etc.
  - d. Friend groups (childhood friends, church friends, school friends, online friends, etc.)
  - e. Relationship with family changes (boundaries, communication, perception, and expectations)
9. Spiritual
  - a. Understand and be able to teach doctrinal truths
  - b. Freedom to doubt and hear from the skeptic

- c. Come to a personal decision on spiritual issues
- d. Sense a vision and purpose beyond themselves
- e. Coaching from multiple sources
- f. Loving correction from established relationships
- g. Experiential journey
- h. Opportunities to lead and coordinate
- i. Provide resources for growth

### **GROWTH PATHS FOR YOUTH**

**TRAJECTORY:** What this means is if you were to ask us what we would hope to see from our youth who have been with us since the beginning. When they graduate out of our youth program, what would we wish for them? How would we want them to grow?

We understand that this is our “hope” and sometimes reality will push back against this. We also know through our many decades of ministry that students come in and out, make great strides and have great setbacks. We account for these realities but we still must have goals and paths for our students to grow.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. **DEPTH (expose)**
  - a. To understand and accept the Gospel
  - b. To desire growth
  - c. Begin to build a disdain for sin.
  - d. Begin to ask questions about spiritual things
2. **COMMUNITY (belong)**
  - a. To join a biblical community
  - b. Attend regularly
  - c. Start to share openly with community
3. **DISCIPLESHIP (seek)**
  - a. Find a mentor
  - b. Communicate with mentor
  - c. Ask mentor questions
4. **TRUTH (learn)**
  - a. Learn how to study the bible
  - b. Read through the Gospels and the Law
  - c. Basic Christian Beliefs
5. **SERVICE (Involve)**

- a. Serve regularly at youth events
- b. Volunteer at church-wide events
- 6. MISSIONS (Steps)
  - a. Share the Gospel with friends and family
  - b. Pray for your sphere of influence
  - c. Attend youth missions
- 7. PRAYER (Practice)
  - a. Understand prayer
  - b. Set up daily prayer schedule
  - c. Understanding & Implementing: Tithing, Repentance, and Thanksgiving

## **HIGH SCHOOL:**

- 1. DEPTH (Passion)
  - a. To understand and accept the Gospel; contextualize the Gospel for self and others
  - b. To desire growth; plan strategies for growth
  - c. Begin to build a disdain for sin; more aware of sinful tendencies
  - d. Begin to ask questions about spiritual things; challenge self towards maturity
- 2. COMMUNITY (Integrate)
  - a. To join a biblical community
  - b. Attend regularly
  - c. Start to share openly with community; have at least 3 close peers who are your accountability partners
  - d. Lead and facilitate a small group
  - e. Build connections with other ministries
- 3. DISCIPLESHIP (Mentor)
  - a. Find multiple mentors
  - b. Find multiple mentees/disciples
  - c. Invest with a few mentor/mentees
- 4. TRUTH (Teach)
  - a. Learn how to study the bible; Able to teach bible studies
  - b. Read through the Gospels and the Law; Overview of the entire Bible
  - c. Basic understanding of Systematic Theology
  - d. Basic understanding of Worldviews
  - e. Basic understanding of Apologetics & Comparative Religion
- 5. SERVICE (Invest)
  - a. Serve regularly at youth events & community events

- b. Volunteer at church-wide events
  - c. Organize others to serve at community & church events
6. **MISSIONS (Lifestyle)**
- a. Share the Gospel with friends and family; share with all you come in contact with
  - b. Pray for your sphere of influence. Pray local and global
  - c. Attend youth missions; attend church-wide missions
7. **PRAYER (Persistence)**
- a. Understand prayer; Teach others how to pray
  - b. Set up daily prayer schedule
  - c. Understanding & Implementing: Tithing, Repentance, and Thanksgiving
  - d. Understanding & Implementing: Meditation, Fasting, and Sabbath.