

Clergy Conversations: Ministry with Young Adults and Families

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

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General Information About Young Adults (ages 19-35)

- Period of many changes
- Different emphases for different ages within the group: a 19-year-old is different than a 30-year-old; college students, young married couples, young singles, etc.
- Largest generation: surpassing baby boomers
- Racially/ethnically diverse
- Many have large educational debt: average is over \$28,000
- Difficulty in finding jobs that pay enough to sustain their household
- Many young adults still live with parents because of debt, etc.
- Brain development not complete until age 25: decision-making is the last skill to develop
- Many do not claim a religion (NONES): great opportunity for the church
- College students doing online learning at home are exhausted
- Best time of day to reach young families is morning
- Best time of day to reach young adults is afternoon or evening

Technology is big with this age group

- 93% of young adults (18-29) use the internet
- 72% of online 18-29-year-olds use social networking.
- Young adults are NOT on Facebook. They are on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube
- Media & technology must be done well and with purpose
- Messaging needs to be brief and concise, no longer than a couple of minutes for a video

Context matters: Know your community and your young adults as you reach out to them!

Ideas for Ministry Using Technology

1. Create/use family-based curriculum that is sent out every week. The material is paired with weekend worship themes, so the kids' lessons match the pastor's sermon. (The email includes video, lesson material, and activity for parents to do with their kids).
2. Host a young parents' small group via Zoom for support and Bible Study
3. Zoom Sunday School with young families every Sunday morning
4. Instagram Live Prayer/worship session for youth/young people. Alternate song and prayer: Young adults who tune in can leave prayer requests in the comments
5. Netflix watch parties (great for college students): Select movie, everyone watches in their own home, share reactions through Social Media
6. Instagram Challenge. At the end of each round the student who completes the most challenges earns a gift card for whenever the world opens up again and they can use it. Most of the events require them to interact kindly with their families throughout the week. Movie nights, game nights, random acts of kindness, reading scripture as a family,

praying as a family, etc. They get extra points when they interact with worship and learning experiences through the week.

7. Daily devotional posted on Instagram (or prayer challenges)
8. Daily Activity for families that gets posted on Instagram and Facebook. A short story and craft/experiment/game that goes along with it.
9. Weekly video on Instagram and Facebook answering kids' questions that they have emailed in earlier in the week.
10. Zoom Lunch or Dessert sessions with young adults or young families: chat while eating!
11. Zoom Movie Session with young adults or young families: watch movie together

Ministry Ideas Using Low or No Technology

1. Celebration car parade – Invite young families to decorate cars to “parade” by a local nursing home. Should arrange/get permission in advance.
2. "Pen-Pal" Club: start written correspondence with other church members and get to know some other members better.
3. Pastor/teacher car parade into the neighborhoods where students live: can be used for a Preschool or Sunday School or other children’s group
4. Feeding families: providing a packed lunch or snack bag one or two days a week. Drop off at homes or have families pick them up at the church
5. Family Scavenger Hunt: families who register are sent challenges to complete throughout the evening. The winner receives a take-out order or a gift card for a meal
6. Serve at Home Day: students and/or families given a list of challenges and a bingo card containing social-distance friendly community service challenges that benefit their family and community. Complete the projects and fill up the card.
7. Provide Care Packages: “home survival kits” for college students
8. Drive-thru Bingo scavenger hunt: families drive through a designated neighborhood and look for different signs in people's yards that will match their Bingo card. Arrange in advance with home owners to place signs in their yards.
9. Weekly Devotionals: mail out once a week to young families, young adults, college students, etc.

Other Ideas from Participants

- Reach out to young adults and families in your church or community and ask what they need (food, snacks, encouragement, etc.) Know your context and respond accordingly.
- “Messy Church” via Zoom: send out crafts in advance; conduct the session while connected through Zoom
- Geo-caching
- Distribute 1-2 devotional videos about faith: encourage young adults to create
- Sending seeds to kids to grow plants in their yard
- Nature scavenger hunt in the backyard
- Send care packages and cards
- Phone calls to young adults and families: important to connect during this time
- Many parents struggling to help their children with schoolwork: educators in churches can assist parents; find ways to encourage parents as they carry this extra load

For more info:

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/how-to-attract-millennials-to-your-church>

Books:

- *Growing Young* by Powell, Mulder, and Griffin
- *The Millennials* by Rainer