

## **Middle & High School Ministry**

### Gen Z Stats

- 35% feel isolated from others
- 33% feel completely alone
- 45% feel no one understands me
- 58% feel overall stressed and overwhelmed
- Top 3 Priorities (i.e. marks of adulthood)
  - Finish Education (66%)
  - Start Career (66%)
  - Become Financially Independent (65%)

*These are all pre-Covid numbers. Essentially, we just lived through an ordeal that specifically targets the weaknesses and hopes of this generation.*

**Take Away #1: We must be convinced that this generation needs the Gospel in their lives; that a life with Christ is the only way to find fulfillment in this life. In other words - WE NEED YOUTH EVANGELIZATION!**

**Silver Lining: Covid changes nothing for how we need to respond to Gen Z (there are few “new” problems).**

We know many Gen Z'ers are leaving the Church in droves.

- Only 42% of Gen Z identifies as Christian (17% as Catholic)
- 34% identify as “none” - highest in any generation.

For the Gen Z'ers who stay and are committed (i.e. do more than attend church regularly, but are engaged and invested in the mission, some 10%):

- 89% believe living in relationship with Jesus is the only way to find fulfillment in life (49% for habitual churchgoers)
- 90% relationship with Jesus brings me deep joy and satisfaction (48%)
- 88% say their Church is a place I feel I belong (43%)
- 85% say there is someone in their life who encourages them to grow spiritually (50%)

Given this, the questions we need to be asking are:

1. How do we introduce Gen Z to a lived relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. How do we help Gen Z belong?
3. How do we challenge Gen Z to grow spiritually?

**Takeaway #2: The answers to these questions are the principles of Jesus' mission -**

1. How do we introduce Gen Z to a lived relationship with Jesus Christ?
  - a. **Heart to Heart Ministry**
2. How do we help Gen Z belong?
  - a. **Person to Person Ministry**
3. How do we challenge Gen Z to grow spiritually?
  - a. **Communion to Commission - intentional discipleship through Call/Form/Send.**

**Takeaway #3: Now is the time to shift how we think about Youth Ministry.**

1. Prioritize helping teens *belong and feel known*
  - a. Middle School - large group community
  - b. High School - smaller groups with stable leaders
    - i. Establish Small Groups *this Fall* so that they are solidified if you need to move online in the late Fall/Winter
  - c. Emphasize names, hospitality, and community
  - d. Do not merely send recordings/videos home via email to complete (virtual formation)
  - e. How often to meet to feel known?
2. Focus on relationships and helping individuals grow
  - a. Priority 1: Core Team Adult Leaders
  - b. Priority 2: Parents
  - c. Priority 3: Teen leaders
3. Make every aspect of Youth Ministry about relationship
  - a. Service: talk about it
  - b. Retreats: have follow ups; get in small groups
    - i. Utilize same leaders for all these areas
  - c. Train leaders to do relational ministry
  - d. Leverage existing relationships (teachers, parents, sponsors)
4. Cut out aspects of work that keep you from relational ministry
  - a. Lean on programs that have good training for leaders
    - i. Life Teen, YDisciple, Alpha
  - b. Lean on programs that provide excellent content to free you up for relationships
  - c. Tracking retreats, service, etc.
    - i. Good intention (exposing teens to this), but not effective.
    - ii. Form leaders to help their small groups experience things
5. PRAY for creative solutions to any obstacles you might encounter
  - a. Not able to meet in church/school buildings
  - b. Not having enough leaders

- c. Not having buy-in from leadership

## Where Do I Go From Here? - Resources

### Understanding Generation Z

- *Belonging: Reconnecting America's Loneliest Generation* - Springtide Research
- *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* - David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock (Barna Research)

### Youth Evangelization & Discipleship

- *The Art of Forming Young Disciples* - Everett Fritz
- *Discipleship-Focused Youth Ministry* - Eric Gallagher & Jim Beckman
- <https://ericgallagher.me/>

### Training and Content Providers

- <https://ydisciple.com/>
  - Also on Formed.org
- <https://lifeteen.com/cym/>
- Called to Accompany - Archdiocese of Atlanta
  - Also on Formed.org
  - <https://www.atlyouth.org/called-to-accompany>