

2012 - year of DISCIPLESHIP





the resource for adventist youth leaders

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cover: *Jonatán Tejel*

Defragging Youth Ministry

Sometimes our hard drives need defragging. The more files you have, the more programs you download, the more your hard drive gets scrambled by confusing, scattered, random outputs that get sprayed over lots of space. Computer crashes, power outages, and stalled programs just add to the fragmentation. The more your hard drive has to work to retrieve the original information, the slower it becomes, the more blurred the pictures are, and the more resistant everything is.

The call to Revival and Reformation throughout the world church is a call to defrag; to rediscover its speed so its images can once again snap and pop up with clarity and conviction, particularly in our ministry for young adults.

In AD100, there were as few as 25,000 Christians within the Roman Empire; in AD 310, just before Constantine came on the scene, they had grown to 20,000,000. How did they grow from being a small movement to the most significant religious force of the Roman Empire in two centuries? They had no church buildings, Bibles, seminaries, commentaries, etc., as we know them. There were no institutions or professional form of leadership; no seeker-sensitive services, youth groups, worship bands, etc. In fact, they were an illegal religion; it was hard to join the church. They had none of the things we would ordinarily use to solve the problems of the church.

So, how did the early Christian church do it? In pursuit of the answer to that question, I have become convinced that the power that manifested itself in the story of that remarkable movement is available to us today as well. And the awakening of that dormant potential has something to do with a strange mixture of passionate love for God, prayer, and incarnational practice. The recovery of

radical discipleship is at the heart of this defragging. I have said before, and I will say it again, over the years the church has altered the Great Commission from 'making disciples' to making 'church members'; the Great Commission has become the Great Omission. Defragmentation is needed. Our vision to defrag is expressed in our re-Visioning document that calls for "the emergence of a Global Youth Movement, transitioning from mere membership to authentic discipleship."

That authentic discipleship, expressed in community, constitutes the very first description that we have come to know as the primitive church. That church freshly crafted by the hands of God through the outpouring of His Holy Spirit was a community devoted to the Word, to fellowship, and to prayer, where they were all together and had everything in common. There were no needy persons among them. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

What I find even more amazing is that the Lord was so pleased with that bunch of radical disciples, they were such an exquisite expression of what the Kingdom of God is like, that He took it upon Himself to do the evangelism and sent the people to them: "*the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved*" (Acts 2:47). And when persecution broke out and they were all scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, they preached the Word wherever they went (Acts 8:4).

It's time to dream, pray, and claim into existence a community of disciples that will be an expression of the heart of God. A community with no back doors. A community that will not disengage when scattered, but will remain true to its calling.

It is also time to do what my colleagues have done in this edition of the Accent Magazine; that is, to identify challenges and propose constructive solutions towards authentic discipleship within our community and offer practical tools to foster the same.

It's defrag time.



Gilbert Cangy is the Youth Director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He can be reached at CangyG@gc.adventist.org

An open letter from A. Allan Martin to leaders on developing the next generation

Dear Fellow Believers,

Over the tenure of our past leadership, I was repeatedly impressed by the strong and succinct conviction of Elder Jan Paulsen as to the importance of new generations. Last year, Paulsen articulated in the October edition of *Adventist World*, “We must give young adults meaningful roles within the church (p.10).” Paulsen also re-initiated the **Let’s Talk** series that he has been conducting around the world for over half a decade.

In the afterglow of the 59th General Conference Session, we commence upon the tenure of new leadership for our world church and for many of our divisions.

I have already heard wonderful and strong comments from leadership about the importance of young people and the need to retain our young adults. Even though I support these fine and admirable verbal gestures, I feel we fail new generations if we only offer another round of conversations and compelling articles.

So I share this open letter with you, leader -- whether you offer volunteer leadership in your local church or campus or serve as a ministry professional, educator or administrator. **LEADER, I IMPORE YOU TO MOVE BEYOND CONVERSATIONS ABOUT YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TO CONSPICUOUS AND CALCULATED ACTION.**

Although I admire the outspoken positions our leaders have taken on this issue I want to invite you and every leader in the Adventist Church to transcend talk with tangible action. Specifically I’m asking you to tithe. Tithe one or more of the following beginning today: Travel, time, Timothys, telecasts and talents.

Tithe your travel. Divert one of your travel appointments, and instead sponsor a young adult to be trained ministry leadership. Instead of taking on that 10th speaking appointment or attending another committee meeting, invest that trip’s budget into the leadership development of a young adult. In the North American Division, **IGNITION** is especially formulated to deepen the discipleship and leadership development of young adults.

Tithe your time. Offer a 10th of your time each week to mentoring a young adult. If you average a 40-hour workweek, then set aside four hours this week and each week to nurture, apprentice, and encourage a young adult. Begin to pour yourself into the next generation. If you are working a 60-hour workweek and are saying to yourself, “There is no way I can offer six hours each week to mentor a young adult,” it may be that you need to change your work habits.



A. Allan Martin is the pastor of Younger Generation Church [www.YGchurch.com], the vibrant young adult ministry of the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church in Texas [USA]. Dr. Martin continues as adjunct faculty for the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, specializing in discipleship and family ministry. He and his wife, Deirdre, tour nationally, speaking about relationships as well as equipping new generations in Christian lifestyle and leadership. Along with daughter Alexa, they reside in the DFW Metroplex.

Tithe your timothys. Empower a 10th of your young leadership to develop new generations. You may be in the situation where you have a large team of young ministry leaders [i.e., a campus ministry or student association for an Adventist college or university]. Ask your team to train, mentor, and nurture the young people who follow them in age. Set aside a tenth of the resources and efforts you give to minister to your campus or church and invest it in the next generation of leaders.


Tithe your telecasts. Dedicate a 10th of your broadcast time to intentionally disciple young adults. Knowing the integral role media plays in young lives, invest in nurturing their spiritual growth through music, television, film, drama, comedy, photography, literature, art or production. Overtly involve young adults in the production, creative, and technical aspects of the tithed endeavor.

For some of you, the pulpit is where you broadcast the Gospel. Afford at least a 10th of the worship in your church to involve young people. If you don't have any youth in your church, more radical tithing may be in order.

Tithe your talents. Begin today to let a young person take your place. The classic parable admonishes us to multiply our talents, not bury them in the sand. Although often referring to talents as money, I would offer here a hybrid application, noting that your skills, abilities, giftedness, and wisdom need to be invested in the next generation. Allow “up and coming” young adults to take roles you might have easily and competently taken. Give them the opportunity to take your place -- at least begin with a 10th of your place.

Dear colleague, I am personally appealing to you to instigate this “tithing” movement today. If you or someone else calls you a “Seventh-day Adventist leader,” this talk-transcending-tithing request is for you. Whether travel, time, Timothys, telecasts, or talents, I ask that you put your tithing into motion today.

Thank you for your kind consideration, and in advance I share my gratefulness for your immediate action. I believe that leaders best represent the Christ who relentlessly pursues new generations by transcending talk with tangible transformational relationships. May the God young adults seek be found in and through you. ●



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THE ABCs & Ds OF YOUNG ADULT RELATIONSHIPS:

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR DISCIPLING NEW GENERATIONS

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Abstract

Literature has consistently pointed to relationship building as the primary means of nurturing the spiritual growth of adolescents and emerging adults (Setan, 2008). Yet, according to recent observations, the relevant praxis of young adult ministry is all but absent from our current Protestant landscape (Wuthnow, 2007). This paper offers practical elements in fostering spiritually nurturing ministry relationships with those who are in post-secondary education through pre-parenthood.



Do our young adults feel like they can find the quality relationships they seek whenever walking through our doors?

Young adults, those who are in post-secondary education through pre-parenthood, seek quality relationships in all spheres of life (Setan, 2008; Wuthnow, 2007). In the realm of faith development and spiritual community, this search is both crucial and daunting for young adults and the church alike.

It was a sunny Friday afternoon in a crowded metropolitan restaurant and farmer's market. Gathered around a small wooden dining table sat a group of young adult friends from various places, enjoying a leisurely lunch. I [Kasper] will never forget what Adrian, a young college student from the city of Dallas, Texas, told me. He explained that there was no way he would have come back to the church he is now a member of unless they had taken the time to get to know him and interacted on a relational level. He could have cared less about what they believed at the time of his searching. What kept bringing him back every week was the fact that he could feel like they really wanted to connect with *him*.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the quest for meaningful, transformative, young adult relationships is a significant barometer for an aging denominational population (Center for Creative Ministry, 2006). Do our young adults feel like they can find the quality relationships they seek whenever walking through our doors?

During a recent interview with noted ministry researcher Roger Dudley, I [Allan] was struck by his comment:

“While there are many factors in retention, I really think that the congregational climate is perhaps the most important thing of all. To them [young people], Adventism is that congregation. . . If that congregation is a warm, accepting place, then Seventh-day Adventism must be a good thing. If that congregation is a place that is struggling, then they wonder what's the matter with Adventists” (Martin, 2009, p.19).

It is sad, but true: many of the young adults I [Kasper] know who have left Seventh-day Adventist church

fellowship have not done so out of disagreement with fundamental beliefs, but out of a lack of inclusion and unconditional acceptance within the social community of their local churches. In an insightful commentary on retaining church membership, Roger Dudley echoes these observations: “Research on why members leave... suggests that social and relational factors are much more significant than disagreement with denominational teachings.” He continues: “The reasons most frequently cited by persons who leave local church fellowship are found in the realm of relationships, the absence of a sense of belonging, and the lack of meaningful engagement in the local congregation and its mission” (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, 2007, p. 2).

INTENTIONALITY: PLACING ACTIONS WHERE INTENTIONS ARE.

It is time for those within the Seventh-day Adventist Church to

start placing their actions where their intentions are. It is time for young adult ministry to become more than a priority agenda item and become a priority action philosophy. Robert Wuthnow, professor of Sociology at Princeton University, endorsed, “My view is that congregations *can* survive, but only if religious leaders roll up their sleeves and pay considerably more attention to young adults than they have been” (Wuthnow, 2007, p. 230).

It should be asserted here that every adult member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is perceived by new generations as an authority figure or leader, to varying degrees and contexts, within the local congregation. And the need is significant enough to call on every Seventh-day Adventist Christian adult to foster environments of relational ministry with young adults, lest we succumb to the bystander effect that has crippled our faith community for far too long.

The idea of relationship building as a primary ministry model is not simply a result of recent research. This concept has been exercised since Christ’s perfect example of soul winning. Observing the current state of affairs within the increasingly secular context of current generations, what are the essential characteristics needed to make

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meaningful and positive differences in the lives of young adults? Here are four key observations, the ABC’s and D’s of young adult relationships.

AUTHENTICITY: THE ART OF BEING REAL

Young adults are desperately looking for relationships that are real, honest, and transparent (Martin, 1998; Stetzer, Stanley, & Hayes, 2009). In a recent survey of American young adults, researchers Kinnaman and Lyons found that 85% of non-Christian young adults and 47% of young adult church attendees perceive the church to be “hypocritical.” Seventy percent of non-Christians surveyed also believed the Christian faith is out of touch with reality (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). Unfortunately, the claim of hypocrisy is not a new attack against Christendom. What is significant about these experiential observations is their connection to the core values of young adults within the current generational cohort. Young adults today cry out for honesty and vulnerability in people they encounter. Continuing in their plea to fellow leaders in the faith, Kinnaman and Lyons advocate for a corrective perception where Christians are transparent about their flaws and act first, talk second (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). Opposed to the faux facade of “having it all together,” young adults are seeking out genuine interaction

with Adventists that are human, willing to admit they too are working through issues and challenges. In contrast to previous generations that valued individuality and privacy, young adults want significant adults to be more relationally involved in their lives. Leaders who are willing to be authentic offer young adults a priceless opportunity for rich relationships.

This is not to say that adults are to develop an awkward relational climate by divulging too much and creating a confessional-type codependency. Nor does cultivating authenticity suggest that every conversation be centered on self-disclosure. Be gradual and genuine. The simple steps of building trust validate one's reliability. The humility to admit mistakes, then pursue forgiveness goes a long way towards authenticating a young adult relationship.

Sincerity is one of the most vital facets to authentic relationships. An honest interest in a young adult, fueled by virtuous intention, builds relational bridges to new generations that have seen so little attention from parental and adult figures. Christ's authentic interest in the people He encountered stands out just as much in the 21st century as it did in the first.

Young adults want genuine, bona fide relationships. Don't pretend perfection; be human. Those who

are willing to be real, honest, and sincere offer young adults a cherished opportunity for rich relationships.

BELONGING: FEELING ACCEPTED AND INVOLVED

Young adults today seek in ever increasing ways to be valued as active contributors to the world around them. They don't want to just fit the mold prescribed them; they want to help shape it. In our interview conversation, Dudley noted a contributing factor to young adult attrition is the "lack of inclusiveness of youth involvement in congregational life and leadership" (Dudley, 2000). According to Dudley's research respondents, an ideal church is one where young adults are active in the life of the group (Martin, 1995). As we conversed, I [Allan] noted the qualities Dudley identified that make the church attractive to new generations:

"I think one of the things is [that] they found a place of belonging there; they felt like they were a part of a family; they felt like they were needed; they felt like the church depended on them; they felt acceptance there; they had friends there; it was a pleasant experience for them" (Martin, 2009).

It is our firm belief that leaders who are willing to minister collaboratively with young adults solidify their sense

of purpose and significance as part of their faith community. Former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Jan Paulsen also agrees,

"We [church leaders] need to hear and understand what they [young adults] are saying, for it comes across clearly and strongly from those who are under thirty in our church. The point they are making is this: Being included, being trusted, being considered responsible, for elders to be prepared to take some risk with inexperience, are sentiments and attitudes which senior leadership must be willing to show, or we [young adults] are gone! We are gone simply because we have no ownership responsibility in the life of this church" (Paulsen, 2006, p. 14).

There is a risk involved with allowing the participation of newer generations in your ministry. It means that you as a leader must be vulnerable to new approaches and methodologies. Often the skill sets young adults bring to the table take different forms than ones recognized by generations past. Was it that long ago that we played music on vinyl discs and composed papers on typewriters? Our dexterity to integrate young adult's unique contributions and value their talents not only impacts their sense of belonging, but also our relevance to their peers. Being needed and feeling

involved also bolsters their experience of security and meaning.

Young adults bring tremendous skills and talents along with mental dexterity to apply their knowledge with relevance. Adults who intentionally work synergistically alongside these new generations make a tremendous impact on their sense of belonging and purpose.

COMPASSION: DO SOMETHING NOW

In the days of increasing community awareness through social networking, compassion ministries have never been in better positions to connect with those outside the Christian faith. All sociological markers seem to endorse the high value of service and characteristic social activism of emerging adults (Setan, 2008; Smith & Snell,

Social action is high on the priority list of young adults, and their perception of an attractive church is one actively involved in helping people in need (Dudley, 2000). Funding missionary endeavors in far off lands is fine, but one-dimensional. Young adults are clearly interested in being a community of character that does more than outsource compassionate endeavors (Martin, 1995). Global is good, but young adults also gravitate towards ministries that meet local needs in their neighborhoods and communities. They're eager to align with causes and advocacy that transcend denominational and socio-political lines for the sake of making a good difference in the world.

From short-term local mission trips to protests against sweatshop labor, young adults are adamant about the human responsibility to enact the ideals of God's kingdom

It is the art of discovering and affirming young adult virtues that benchmark effective discipling.

2009; Wuthnow, 2007). The desire of current generations to be compassionate contributors to their society is being widely expressed in various forms. From environmental concerns to humanitarian causes and beyond, young adults are connecting with the needs surrounding them in ways unlike the generations preceding them.

Compassionate service has traditionally been the trademark of faith communities, both in global missions and charitable benevolence. Unfortunately, compassion is rapidly disappearing from the list of adjectives new generations place on the Christian religion. Recent surveys show that only one third of young adults outside the church perceive that Christians are a caring people (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007).

here on earth (Dudley & Walshe, 2009). And it is in this humanitarian context where they could conceivably find value in religious organizational structures. The church has real meaning for them to the degree it lives out Christ's call to help those in need. Leaders who are passionate about making a difference among the marginalized and rally their community to action will find young adults joining them in the fray.

DISCIPLESHIP: ON THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Among the generational needs of Authenticity, Belonging, and Compassion, the need for Discipleship is the value most uniquely met by the Great Commission. However, many struggle to provide effective models

of this method. Christian demographer George Barna suggested, “The chief barrier to effective discipleship is not that people do not have the ability to become spiritually mature, but they lack the passion, perspective, priorities, and perseverance to develop their spiritual lives” (Barna, 2001, p. 54).

This appears to be especially true during the young adulthood years that are marked with significant identity and relational transitions (Barna, 2006; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007; Smith & Snell, 2009). Barna further indicted, “This [discipleship barrier] is partially attributable to our focus on providing programs rather than relationships that support growth” (Barna, 2001, p. 55).

The modernistic structure of ministry departments, the fear of crossing the daunting “generation gap,” the human tendency to “flock together” with our own kind, and Western individualism are among many contributors to the relational isolationism that has been perpetuated for generations (Martin, 1998).

However, contrary to popular myth bolstered by the rebellion of Boomers and angst of Generation X, today’s young adults are different—they are looking to be discipled by adults and others (Martin, 1995;

Stetzer, Stanley, & Hayes, 2009). Tim Elmore describes young adults as not seeking a “sage on the stage,” but rather, they long for a “guide on the side” (Elmore, 2008).

It is the art of discovering and affirming young adult virtues that benchmark effective discipling. As Christ was able to transcend the initial characteristics of His twelve disciples and reveal the noble attributes He was shaping in them, so too He calls us to nurture young adult lives. When Christ’s followers ‘go and make disciples,’ they impact emerging generations and they also further the cause of the Gospel.

The process of discipleship is not an overnight endeavor. It requires significant investments that don’t promise certain and immediate dividends (Martin, Bailey, & LaMountain, 2009). However, there is no lack of evidence that such diligent discipling fosters life transformation.

Young adults are eager to be mentored by spiritually wise adults willing to pour their life experiences into new generations. Don’t dictate direction, rather explore possibilities and lend guidance. We urge you, as leaders in the faith: Mentor young adults in fulfillment of Christ’s call to make disciples and empower these new generations to expand His kingdom.

SIMPLY COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS

The Great Commission challenges Adventist adults to go beyond superficial relationships with new generations. Although small talk and social mixing have their vital roles in relational introduction, young adults crave deeper relationships that look beyond the exterior.

Reflecting on religion, relationships, and new generations, Dudley commented:

“It’s not some kind of behavioral code, some complex theoretical experience. I want them [young people] to see it as a relationship experience. I want them to see that it is first a relationship with God, who is a Friend, and a relationship with their fellow human beings, where they help and support each other. At the center of true religion is this question of relationship” (Martin, 2009, p. 20).

Being authentic... fostering belonging... expressing compassion... purposefully discipling – in some ways, young adult relationships are simple. Throughout the complex paths of ministry within our current generations, we must keep ever present the simple task Christ gave in the Great Commandment. Let us follow His call to fulfill the Great Commission in the lives of new generations in light of His soon coming. ●

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FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Mentorship a key role for Gordon College president

KEVIN KILEY

covers management and finance for Inside Higher Ed.



Michael Lindsay (seated center) and Ken Hallenbeck (seated right)

After several years of traversing the country and talking with some of the most influential executives in all fields about leadership development and what makes a good leader, and a lifetime of being mentored about how to be a good leader in his own right, it's time for Michael Lindsay to put all that knowledge into practice.

He is now six months into his presidency at Gordon College, a Christian liberal arts college in Massachusetts. Inaugurated in September at age 39, Lindsay is one of the youngest college presidents in the country.

Also putting Lindsay's leadership knowledge to the test is Ken Hallenbeck, a senior at Gordon, the student body president, and now Lindsay's staff assistant and mentee.

Lindsay has taken Hallenbeck under his wing, employing him in his office most nights between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., where the senior does office tasks and helps Lindsay think through university issues and his role as president. The goal, Lindsay said, is to give Hallenbeck an opportunity to see every aspect of a leadership role, from the intellectually stimulating to the routine tasks such as responding to e-mails.

THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

The mentor relationship is something Lindsay knows well. He was mentored throughout his career and he still regularly seeks advice from senior administrators at other institutions. The relationship between Hallenbeck, Lindsay, and Lindsay's own mentors illuminates two aspects of developing leaders and teaching leadership that are often overlooked: the informal network of connections that help individuals rise through the ranks and the personal habits and social skills that leaders must understand if they are to be successful.

"The hardest part of a presidency is dealing with what are truly divergent constituencies," Lindsay said in an interview with Hallenbeck present. "A president has to serve all these groups, and best way to learn how to handle those constituencies is to see how others do it."

Hallenbeck's role in Lindsay's office began this fall after Lindsay, then only a few weeks on the job, invited Hallenbeck to follow him around for a day and write about it to help other students get to know the new president and better understand a president's role.

"Then Jesus came to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.'"

Matthew 28:18-20
New International Reader's Version (NIRV)
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Lindsay said the idea for of bringing Hallenbeck into his office came from his own extensive research on leadership. Before becoming president, Lindsay was an assistant professor of sociology at Rice University, where he studied leadership and collected the largest set of interview data conducted with leaders across the country, including U.S. presidents, other senior government officials, Fortune 500 executives, artists, performers, and higher education leaders, which he is pulling together for a book.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

One of the programs he studied was the White House Fellows program, which places aspiring leaders as assistants to senior U.S. executive branch officials, such as cabinet secretaries. Lindsay called the program "the best leadership development program out there," specifically because it combines high-level thinking on major issues with the daily logistical work of management, such as scheduling. "It's instructive because both are required to do the job," he said.

"I told myself that if I ever had the chance to be in a senior leadership position, I would make sure to take on some measure of mentorship," he said.

Lindsay said his own career path and understanding of leadership was shaped by working closely with a university president when he was younger. For a few months between getting his bachelor's degree from Baylor University and graduate school, he worked as an assistant to Gary Cook, the president of Dallas Baptist University.

Cook and Lindsay met when Lindsay was teaching Sunday school to Cook's son. Cook said he was impressed with the level of interest Lindsay took in his son; if he missed a week of Sunday school, Lindsay would call. As a result, Cook took an interest in Lindsay, who at that point

was contemplating a career in higher education, and asked him to work in his office until Lindsay went off to seminary in the fall.

In Cook's office, Lindsay would read and brief the president on the news and mail, accompany the president to meetings, and, on one occasion, drive around Dallas photographing architecture Cook hoped to model for a new building. Lindsay said that job was probably more "grunt work" than what Hallenbeck does in his office, but it also exposed him to some of the more intimate and difficult moments of the presidency, such as when Cook had to deal with upset faculty members or fire an employee.

One unique aspect of the assignment was the structure of Cook's office, which the president modeled off that of Trammell Crow, a Dallas real-estate developer who had an office so large that it included his staff. While Cook's office was not quite so large, it was open to the assisting staff members, who could overhear most of what the president did.

Early on in the relationship, there were hints of what was to come. A few weeks into Lindsay's time in his office Cook said he told Lindsay that he would make a good college president one day. Even in his 20s, Cook said, Lindsay showed the curiosity, intelligence,

genuine interest in other people, and work ethic required of someone in university administration. And shortly after leaving Dallas Baptist for seminary, Lindsay sent Cook a thank you note, and in it he wrote, "You reminded me of the difference one person can make."

After leaving for seminary, Lindsay returned to Dallas to staff Cook during summer breaks and holidays. The two continue to talk regularly about both personal and professional matters, and Lindsay has regularly turned to Cook for career advice. Cook said he strongly recommended that Lindsay choose Princeton for seminary over the George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor, and that he fund his time at Oxford University through a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship.

He also helped connect Lindsay with George Gallup, for whom Lindsay worked as an assistant during his time at Princeton, eventually directing several national surveys for the Gallup Organization and co-authoring two books with Gallup.

Cook said his style of leadership, and his drive to mentor others, comes from his understanding of Christianity. "It really does come from my faith," Cook said. "It is what Jesus taught us to do. He said, '**Go and make disciples.**'" Cook said there are probably seven or eight

other individuals whom he has worked with and tried to influence in the way he is doing with Lindsay.

While many universities have been criticized for a lack of succession planning, Cook has made it a priority. He said there are a couple individuals at Dallas Baptist who could be ready to take the reins at a moment's notice, and some whom he is readying to take them eight or nine years down the road. "I've always tried looking at the institution and not just at me," he said. "If you're really concerned with making an institution strong, you don't just look for yourself. You need to know who can carry on."

Cook credits his own ascension to the presidency at Dallas Baptist to Abner McCall, the former president of Baylor University, whom Cook knew from his time as a student. McCall served as Cook's campaign manager when he was on the city council in Waco and recommended Cook for the presidency of Dallas Baptist.

Lindsay also said Bill Townsend, currently the vice president for advancement at Mississippi College, who met Lindsay when the president was a teenager, also had a sizeable influence in his life. Townsend's wife was Lindsay's youth minister, and Townsend took an interest in the boy.

While Townsend said he probably had more influence on Lindsay's spiritual and emotional development than on his professional track, he did advise Lindsay to establish himself as an academic before seeking an administrative role. Despite Lindsay's young age and the fact that he moved right from an assistant professorship to a presidency, Townsend said Lindsay had established himself as a thought leader in the field.

Unlike Cook, Townsend said he has not often sought out individuals to mentor, nor did he have individuals who formally mentored him. But he found something special in Lindsay, saying that the president "was hungry for just about every opportunity that would present itself." He noted that it is rare to find individuals who are open to being mentored and asking for help.

But he said Lindsay will make a good mentor because of his level of interest, his diverse life experiences, the connections he has with leaders, and his own experience being mentored. "When you look in the research, I think you'll find that people who were mentored themselves are more willing to mentor and make better mentors," Townsend said.

Lindsay said he picked Hallenbeck to mentor because the two established a rapport when they spent the day

together in the fall. Lindsay said he wasn't necessarily interested in picking the student body president, just someone with leadership potential. But he was impressed by Hallenbeck. "I could see that he was smart, resourceful, and able to calibrate his actions according to the setting," Lindsay said. "Those skills are difficult to interview for, but when you see them in someone you appreciate it."

The work Hallenbeck does in Lindsay's office varies. Some days Hallenbeck does traditional office assistant tasks such as filing or drafting reports and making phone calls. Other times he does more "intellectual labor," as he calls it, helping Lindsay think through issues. He will also accompany Lindsay on visits to meet with local officials or other campus leaders.

Hallenbeck said observing soft skills, such as noticing how Lindsay changes hats from one meeting to the next, is what he'll really take away from the experience. "At this point, I'm a senior about to graduate in May, and I can say with certainty that I am learning more out of the classroom than in it," Hallenbeck said. "The time spent, the time I've invested here two hours a night, I've learned more about how the professional world actually works and the work that professionals do. I've learned how to read a situation."

Hallenbeck is not sure about his own leadership path. He is a biochemistry student at Gordon and is planning to attend graduate school next year. He doesn't know what kind of leadership opportunities will present themselves in the future.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

Because Hallenbeck's position as student body president sometimes requires him to take different positions, the two have had to make adjustments to their relationship. There is a specific chair that Hallenbeck occupies in Lindsay's office when he is representing the student body, but the two noted that he can switch back and forth with ease. Lindsay said he does not share everything with Hallenbeck, but that the senior is exposed to sensitive material in the course of his job, and that he trusts Hallenbeck to be professional in dealing with it.

In general, Hallenbeck said, working with Lindsay has improved the dynamic between his and Lindsay's presidencies. Hallenbeck can provide broad student input to the decisions Lindsay is making, and the office role gives Hallenbeck a broad understanding of the institution and the president's decisions that he can relay back to students.

Lindsay said Hallenbeck's presence in his office has been helpful for him as well. For one, he gets an extra set

of hands to help him with the never-ending workload of the presidency. It also helps him, as a first-year president, to have some institutional memory around.

Lindsay said he's interested in continuing to mentor students on a small scale like the relationship he has with Hallenbeck, but will likely not continue to work solely with the student body president. He did say, however, that he likes having someone in his office who can view the institutions broadly.

Last week, Lindsay asked Hallenbeck whether he needed to attend Gordon Globes, a student film festival. "It's the kind of thing where, if he's not there, no one will miss him," Hallenbeck said. "But if he's there, people will notice and appreciate it."

"It's the kind of thing we can triage," the two said. ●

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BURST THE BYSTANDER EFFECT

MAKING A DISCIPLING DIFFERENCE WITH YOUNG ADULTS

A. ALLAN MARTIN, PHD, CFLE

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I first learned the term in my undergraduate social psychology class: *bystander effect*. For the sake of the exam, I just kept in mind that it is not a good idea to be drowning in a lake with a crowd looking on from shore; likely each person is thinking someone else is going to save you. *Wikipedia* (2007) does a better job of defining the effect as “a psychological phenomenon in which someone is less likely to intervene in an emergency situation when other people are present and able to help than when he or she is alone.” The article goes on to reference a variety of horrific incidences where homicides occurred while dozens of “bystanders” just let it happen.

My collegiate years are long gone, and now I give exams instead of taking them, but recently this “phenomenon” has come back to my mind. Preparing to teach a young adult ministry course here at the seminary, I found myself perplexed by how the bystander effect may be impacting you and me, allowing new generations to drown, disappearing from faith life as part of our church.

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DISENGAGING, DISENFRANCHISED, DISAPPEARING—DROWNING

In light of his landmark longitudinal study of Adventist adolescents, Roger Dudley (2000) of the Institute of Church Ministry noted, “It seems reasonable to believe that at least 40 to 50 percent of Seventh-day Adventist teenagers in North America are essentially leaving the church by their middle 20s. This figure may well be higher” (p. 35). “This is a hemorrhage of epic proportions,” warned Dudley as he suggested that “the decline in membership of many mainline Protestant churches has been shown to be largely traceable to the shortage of young adults in their congregations” (p. 22).

This young adult exodus is not exclusive to Adventism, as Christian demographer George Barna notes:

The most potent data regarding disengagement is that a majority of twentysomethings—61% of today’s young adults—had been churched at one time during their teen years but they are now spiritually disengaged (i.e., not actively attending church, reading the Bible, or praying). (Barna, 2006, para. 6)

David Kinnaman of the Barna Group elaborates:

The current state of ministry to twentysomethings is woefully inadequate to address the spiritual needs of millions of young adults. These individuals are making significant life choices and determining the patterns and preferences of their spiritual reality while churches wait, generally in vain, for them to return after college or when the kids come. (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2006, para. 8)

It is this disengagement that threatens the present and future of the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America. North American Division (NAD) President,

Don Schneider, said the following:

We must [also] concentrate on the young adults of our Church. . . . Young people need to become more fully integrated into the Church. . . . Is there some way of allowing young people to worship in a way that is meaningful while making it safe for them to do so? Young adults must be heard at leadership levels, and their feelings must be given validity” (North American Division, 2005, para. 6).

Compared to the median age of 36 and 37 in the United States and Canada respectively, Paul Richardson of the Center for Creative Ministry reported, “The median age for the Seventh-day Adventist community in North America, including the unbaptized children in church families, is 58. . . . Among native-born White and Black members the median age is even higher” (Center for Creative Ministry, 2006).

Richardson warns that these trends have serious implications:

There are more than 1,000 local churches in the North American Division that have no children or teens at all. . . . Fewer and fewer congregations have enough teens, young adults or even young couples to provide the critical mass necessary to conduct a youth group and other activities that have always been the life beat of Adventist churches. (para. 2)

The departure of young adults from the local faith community has not gone unnoticed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church General Conference (GC) President, Jan Paulsen, who has spent the past several years in broadcasted conversations with new generations (<http://letstalk.adventist.org>). Most poignantly, Paulsen noted at the 2006 Annual Council that “they [young adults] have perspectives, they have hopes, they have dreams,

and they have visions for the church which need to be considered seriously. If we don't, they will feel disenfranchised, as many of them already do."

It is disturbing. It would not be as perplexing if it could be said that we have promptly identified this trend and addressed it with all the immediacy it deserves to rescue and embrace new generations. It would be laudable to share that urgent interventions have been implemented and the attrition statistics have been reversed. However, that is not the case.

Over a decade ago in research on Generation X, I found comparable statistics of young adults disappearing from local faith life (Martin, 1995). Dudley's (2000) research reflects over three decades of scrutiny regarding the departure of new generations from the church. His book, *Why Teenagers Reject Religion*, was published in 1978.

Beyond the statistical analysis, I suspect both you and I can think of a young relative or a young friend who has parted ways with our church. I imagine we could exchange stories of peers or grown grandchildren who no longer participate in Adventism. We have known that young adults have been leaving our church for some time now. That is why the phenomenon is glaringly back in my mind. We have become bystanders.

Might it be that the bystander effect has immobilized us into thinking someone else will help (Wikipedia, 2007)? We have watched with the crowd from the shore as new generations disappear beneath the surface.

STRUGGLING TO STAY ABOVE WATER

As odd as it may seem to the metaphor, researchers and church leaders ask young adults why they are drowning: "Why are you leaving the church?"

Dudley (2000) found that young adult perceptions of the quality of relationship with religious authority figures played a significant role in their decision to disengage from church life. Leadership across Adventism concurred, stating that "the reasons most frequently cited by persons who leave local church fellowship are found in the realm of relationships, the absence of a sense of belonging, and the lack of meaningful engagement in the local congregation and its mission" (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee, 2007, para. 5).

Young adult and writer Kimberly Luste Maran (2000) noted the following:

Too often the negative words and actions of more mature church members push the younger set to feelings of anger, resentment, bitterness, and fear. . . . Satan will employ any methods, including the use of church members, to tear us away from our loving Father. (para. 23)

As part of Paulsen's Let's Talk broadcasts, 25-year-old Kadene offered this insight:

I think the best thing that church leaders can do for the youth of our church is get acquainted with them. Too often, church leaders sit on their high horses and judge our youth without having the slightest idea of what they are going through. (Let's Talk, 2007)

Paulsen (2006) made the following observation:

We [church leaders] need to hear and understand what they [young adults] are saying, for it comes across clearly and strongly from those who are under thirty in our church. The point they are making is this: Being included, being trusted, being considered responsible, for elders to be prepared to take some risk with inexperience, are sentiments and attitudes which senior leadership must be willing to show, or we are gone! We are gone simply because we have no ownership responsibility in the life of this church. (para. 14)

Research beyond Adventist cohorts offers some additional perspective. Robert Wuthnow (2007), professor of Sociology at Princeton University, noted various trends that are impacting young adults, contributing to the fading American religious landscape. “My view is that congregations can survive, but only if religious leaders roll up their sleeves and pay considerably more attention to young adults than they have been” (p. 230).

Noting a 70 percent attrition from church life among Baptist young adults, Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research (2007), said this:

Clearly the reasons young people leave are a reflection both of their past experience in church and the new opportunities they have as young adults. . . . To remain in church, a person must have experienced the value of the teaching and relationships at church and see the relevance for the next phase of life. (para. 19)

Why are young adults drowning? Although the responses may be as diverse and personal as each young adult, clearly the lack of mutually-valued relationships that engender trust and shared support has left both parties, young adults and Seventh-day Adventism, at risk of going under.

POINTING OUT HEROES

So what is the solution? The *Wikipedia* (2007) article on bystander effect made a fascinating recommendation:

To counter the bystander effect when you are the victim, a studied recommendation is to pick a specific person in the crowd to appeal to for help rather than appealing to the larger group generally. If you are the only person reacting to an emergency, point directly to a specific bystander and give them a specific task such as, “You. Call the police.” These steps place all responsibility on a specific person instead of allowing it to diffuse. (para. 5)

To burst through the bystander effect, I’d like to point out several potential heroes in the lives of young adults.

Parent.

During the important transitional years of young adulthood, parents play a vital role not only in the life of their children but also within their sphere of friends. Parents should make certain their home and presence engenders hospitality, safety, and wisdom.¹

Connie Vandeman Jeffery (2003) shared a simple formula of food, friendship, and follow up that made

her home a safe harbor for young adults. Adults without children can make the simple effort of building an authentic relationship with a single twentysomething. A friendship like this is as simple to start as a lunch invitation.

Pastor.

If the statistics are correct, the pastor’s positive influence and impact on the climate of churches is desperately needed. Setting the culture of young adult inclusion is heavily dependent on the pastor’s vision and leadership.

Bill Bossert (2007) described how his dying church recognized their fate and took heroic steps to turn the tide. With careful self analysis, practical research, and courageous yet inclusive change steps², the Shepherd’s House reversed the attrition tide, resulting in a 60 percent increase of young adults in their church (para. 27). Change did not come without challenges and discomfort, but in order to break through the bystander effect, pastors need to be heroic so as to inspire their congregations to be likewise.

Professor/Teacher. Educators have a profound influence in the lives of young adults. Beyond academic or professional prowess, professors and teachers are called upon to invest in young adult spiritual development as well.

Teaching at Spicer Memorial College, Falvo Fowler (2002) found that his simple initiative to start a Sabbath School with his students made a profound impact on what was once a “nominal” Adventist experience (para. 16).

Jimmy Phillips (2007) noted the “invisible majority” of coeds in the schools outside of our Adventist system. Committed faculty and staff in these institutions can have an influence on thousands of Adventist young adults who will benefit from their efforts to collaborate with local churches and institutions to establish student groups, faith fellowships, and discipleship communities.³ Adventist Christian Fellowship (<http://www.acflink.org>) is a great resource to support such an initiative. Faculty advisement and mentoring are key to battling the bystander effect rampant on secular campuses and in the churches adjacent to these colleges and universities.

President/Administrator.

Vision-casting leaders offer momentum towards constructive change. Exactly what form this leadership takes depends on the denomination. Within the Seventh-day Adventist church, organized by conferences, unions and divisions, the president of each administrative level is instrumental in casting the vision for change.

Mike Cauley (2007), president of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, challenged his constituency:

Do we care enough to learn the language of kids [young adults]? I’m as serious as a heart attack. We have a broken world. We have a society of Millennials [young adults] who are hungry for the gospel, and we aren’t cutting it. Now, I haven’t talked to the Conference Executive Committee about this, so don’t tell anybody. But I’m going to be asking them to begin to plant churches to reach kids under 25. I’m going to be asking them to help us figure out how to become churches in the biblical, New Testament sense . . . somehow we have got to bring those kids, not to a place of entertainment, but to be fully committed disciples. . . . We need to give them the Church. (para. 48)

Jan Paulsen (2006) further endorsed this idea:

In order to be effective in looking after the united church and keeping it strong in mission, it is critical that the men and women who are young today be invited to sit next to you and me; that they be invited to think

and plan with us, and that they are listened to as values are defined and the mission agenda examined. (para. 17)

It is not only the endorsement of high-level leaders, but also their conspicuous actions⁴ that will serve as a leadership catalyst to transform young adult attrition statistics into retention trends.

Peers.

There are stellar young adults who have not only remained in the church but are faith activists where they are (Maran, Karimabadi, & Bourne, 2006). They are among the most influential and powerful—not only in taking heroic action with drowning peers but also in rejuvenating Adventism, fostering a movement that will draw new generations.

Lynette Frantzen (2004) offered the reminder that Adventism began as a young movement:

Many of the Adventist pioneers first began their work when they were teenagers. Pioneers such as Ellen Harmon White, John Loughborough, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and John Harvey Kellogg were teenagers and young adults when they began making an impact in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They were young, vibrant, and on fire for God! (para. 2)

Cauley (2007) shared similar thoughts:

It was the same age group [young adult] that was passionate about the early Adventist movement. J. N. Andrews was 22 when he started on the publishing committee. 22! He was a kid. Ellen White was 17 when she had her first vision. She couldn't even have graduated from academy yet if she lived in our day. Uriah Smith was 21 when he joined the publishing work, and James White was 21 years old when he came upon the scene and began to preach the Advent doctrine. (para. 11)

We need a movement of that caliber right now. Those heroes from our Adventist heritage took valiant steps to save a drowning world. Today, young Adventists are just as essential in the embrace and encouragement of their peers. The church as a whole, and specifically parents, pastors, professors, and presidents, must build restorative relationships with young adults.⁵

ABC'S AND D OF HEROIC RELATIONSHIPS

Even when we realize the potential influence we can have in the faith of young adults, it can be difficult to pinpoint specific ways in which to help. The following relational building blocks are effective in reaching out to others, particularly to the younger generation:

Authenticity.

Young adults are desperately looking for relationships that are real, honest, and transparent (Martin, 1998). Kinnaman and Lyons (2006) found young adults both inside and outside of the church to perceive it to be “hypocritical” and “out of touch with reality.” They advocate a corrective perception in which “Christians are transparent about their flaws and act first, talk second” (p. 41). Opposed to the faux facade of “having it all together,” young adults are seeking out genuine interaction with heroes that are human, willing to admit that they too are working through issues and challenges. Young adults want significant adults to be more relationally involved in their lives (Martin, 1995). Leaders who are willing to be authentic offer young adults a priceless opportunity for rich relationships.

Belonging.

Dudley (2000) noted a contributing factor to young adult attrition being the “lack of inclusiveness for youth involvement in congregational life and

leadership” (p. 206). According to Dudley's research respondents, an ideal church is one where young adults are “active in the life of the group.” Young adults are of age and ability where involvement and participation are vital to a sense of inclusion and importance. Contextualization occurs naturally when intentional efforts are made to integrate young adult leadership in the church (Martin, 1995). Leaders who are willing to minister collaboratively with young adults solidify their sense of purpose and significance as part of their faith community.

Compassion.

Seventy percent of young adults perceive Christianity as “insensitive to others” (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2006). Social action is high on the priority list of young adults, and their perception of an attractive church is one actively involved in helping people in need (Dudley, 2000). Funding missionary endeavors in far off lands is fine but one-dimensional. Global is good, but young adults also gravitate towards ministries that meet local needs in their neighborhoods and communities. They are eager to align with causes and advocacy that transcend denominational and socio-political lines for the sake of making a good difference in the world. Leaders who are passionate about making a difference among the

marginalized and who rally their community to action will find young adults joining them in the fray.

Discipleship.

Bolstered by the rebellion of Boomers and the angst of Generation X, today's young adults are different—they are looking to be discipled by adults and others. Elmore (2008) describes young adults as not seeking a “sage on the stage,” but rather, a “guide on the side.” Mentoring relationships foster life legacy and attachment, for both the young adult and the mentor (Dudley, 2000; Martin, 1999). When Christ's followers “go and make disciples,” this impacts not only new generations but also the expansion of Christ's kingdom. Leaders who disciple young adults fulfill the Great Commission. Further, they equip young adults to reach out to others.

Being authentic, fostering belonging, expressing compassion, and intentionally discipling launches the leader from the sidelines into heroic relationships with young adults.

BYSTANDERS NO LONGER

If the principles of social psychology hold true, readers may come to the end of this article and feel relieved and pleased that the issue of young adults leaving the church is being addressed. “It is good that someone is finally doing something,” they may think.

Sentiments such as these are the tragic reality of the bystander effect. This phenomenon has already seen generations of young Adventists drown, while potential heroes have stood by and watched. If the church is to continue to grow and flourish, if it is to make a positive influence in the lives of young adults, it is imperative that Christians take ownership of the problem of young people becoming disengaged with church. We must no longer be bystanders.

We can begin by taking a step today to start an authentic relationship with a young adult.⁶ Some ways of reaching out include serving as a mentor, engaging in social activities such as lunch, listening carefully, opening our homes, and offering our hearts. There are as many action options as there are young adults. If we each start with one action with one young adult today, we will soon make a difference (Martin, 1998). ●

Notes

1. North American Division Family Ministries (<http://adventistfamilyministries.com>) offers an array of resources and support to parents in the discipling of new generations.
2. Bill Bossert outlined the steps his congregation took at <http://adventistreview.org/article.php?id=1300>, offering further specificity to their strategy.
3. Ron Pickell, North American Division Adventist Christian Fellowship Coordinator, offers some insights into what college students are looking for in a church at <http://www.adventistreview.org/article.php?id=1372>.
4. It is conspicuous actions of leadership that reveal their most important values. A couple of local conference presidents have already instated young adult ministry directors at the conference level. The Christian Leadership Center (<http://www.andrews.edu/clc>) recently endorsed the development of young leadership training, challenging presidents and all church officials to mentor new generations of leadership.
5. For over a decade, dream VISION ministries (<http://www.dreamVISIONministries.org>) has offered training and resourcing in building authentic relationships with new generations. I offer a theological model for young adult ministry (<http://www.adventistreview.org/2000-1556/story2.html>), challenging young adults to see their role as ministers to their peers.
6. North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Young Adult Ministry is committed to fostering the efforts of heroes, coaching their efforts to build authentic relationships with new generations. Find on the IGNITION blog (<http://ignitionblog.wordpress.com>), various local and division-wide young adult ministry initiatives. Contact amartin@GODencounters.org for further support, training, and networking.

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MY MacGYVER VIEW OF YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

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North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists



All you need to have an effective young adult ministry is an identification card, an extension cord, and silly putty.

ID CARD : EPHESIANS 3:14-21; ACTS 2:17, 18

OK, I will admit it, there are times that I am very guilty of coveting. When I go to a concert I confess to envying those who have an “all access pass.” I have this fantasy about being in the middle of all the action instead of being in the audience. Even if it was something as relatively unimportant as stocking the artists with bottled water or carrying away mike stands, I would still relish being identified with the performers. To be able to flash my ID pass and have security let me through with a hint of familiarity—to kid around with the stars, to have a part in the performance—OK, so it’s wishful thinking.

But in my view, it’s not a dream. Christ has given young adults an identity. No, it isn’t a badge or a little plastic sleeve on a string. It is something internal (Eph. 3:16), something metaphysical that gives us supernatural abilities to believe (Eph. 3:17), to love (Eph. 4:1-3), and to dream (Acts 2:17, 18).

In this world it’s no small task to believe. With all the broken promises, fallen role models, and superficial frauds/clones, it’s no wonder our generation is skeptical. But I believe that Jesus has empowered Christian young adults to exhibit faith, and faith really sticks out in our world. A belief in the midst

of unbelief is powerful. I feel God has called young adults to be true believers. Beyond knowledge, our belief is based on something far more existential, more at the core of us. So instead of looking at a badge for our identity, people can look into our eyes.

And in our eyes they will see love. Love that we don’t even understand. All right, so it sounds a little goofy, but authentic love is scarce these days. Sure, there’s lots of utilitarian love and sexual love and hedonistic love. But you’ll be hard pressed to find Christlike love among our peers. Christ has, however, given us an identity that is characterized by an ability to love. To love the unlovely. To love the enemy. To love the lonely. To love ourselves. It is a love that is both noun and verb. Young adults whose eyes exude love have hearts that act on it. People are drawn not only to our eyes but also to our actions.

In our actions we can reveal our dreams. I am convinced that Acts 2:17, 18 is talking about us. Christ has called our generation to dream the dreams and envision the visions that will bring about His return. Not only prophetic dreams; Christ is using our creative dreams, our holy ambitions, and our powerful visions to transform our world. A revolution is happening. Not like a political campaign, this movement is spiritual, and I get the keenest sense of this when I chat with young adults. God is molding our dreams, and I am taken back by how powerful and parallel these visions are. In local, regional, national, and global ways Jesus is using young adult dreams and visions to change our world and bring about the next.

EXTENSION CORD

EVANGELISM 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

I believe that young adult ministry is like an extension cord. Christ is the power that surges through us; every bit of our wiring is filled with His Spirit. Our ministry is to be a conduit by which others are empowered by His love. Paul says that Christians (I take that to mean all believers, not just pastor types) are new creatures who are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17-19). So to translate liberally, in the same way Christ plugged in to God and served as our extension cord to God Paul is saying we are extension cord ministers, connecting others to Christ. This is key. God is not opting to do this thing called ministry without us. He is doing it “through” us. And to me that makes lots of sense.

As good as some of our churches are, I feel very few young adults will step into a church without someone they know and trust going with them. As eloquent as some of our preachers are, I feel very few in our generation respond to a talking head as well as they relate to a personal relationship with you or me. As sound as our doctrines are, I feel very few of my seeking friends and associates are convinced about Adventist Christianity unless they see what my beliefs are doing to make my life attractively different. God’s approach makes a lot of sense. In the same way He used Christ to connect with you and me, He is calling us to connect with our peers, allowing His powerful love to surge through us.



So young adult ministry as I see it is based on the power of relationship. Creating relationships of integrity not only with believers but also with seekers is something that young adults do every day. It’s reality. The other reality is that sometimes Christian young adults opt to disconnect from the Power Source during the workweek so as not to be spiritually “live” in their secular circles. But my sense is that our ministry is based on the idea of empowering ourselves to be who we have been called to be—extension cords. To be connected 24/7. I, like my peers, am drawn to people and places where I feel connected, where I feel safe to be vulnerable, where I can sense there is a power bigger than myself. That was what was so magnetic about Jesus Christ. And Christ is what is so attractive in Christian young adults and the communities we create.

SILLY PUTTY COMMUNITY

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21

I like to think of the Christian community created by young adult ministers (that’s you and me) as being made of Silly Putty. Some may have thought of the church at one time being like a wooden Peg-Board that only certain-shaped pegs had rigid slots to fill. Only square-shaped pegs could fit in, only certain forms of ministry, only certain types of roles.



Not our church. Ours is one in which each believer is able to take their unique shape, stick themselves into our Silly Putty church, and find a perfect fit. Our Christian community is able to lift even those with comic-strip-like gifts right off the page and into our church. Silly Putty can do that. Paul talks about a variety of spiritual gifts, ministries, effects, but the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-7). In my mind, the Holy Spirit is the Silly Putty of our church that, even with the diversity of our gifts, is the unifying common denominator that embraces us all.

So we embrace our diversity and welcome every form and shape of spiritual ability. Why? Because we need it. Paul's metaphor of the body is so on target (1 Cor. 12:14-27). Who wants a body of all noses?

But further, we embrace each other because, like a body, we need each other. The living out of our Christianity is not an act of isolation; it is an act of communion, an act of relationship, an act of interdependence. It is community. Young adult ministry, in my view, is the admission on our part that we need each other and are willing by His Spirit to be the church. Our worship happens not only between

the opening and closing hymn, but in the midst of our lives. In our fragmented and divorced world I want to be part of a Silly Putty community that sticks together. I want to be where I fit in. I want to be where I am needed. I want to be where I can relate. I want to be lifted right off the page. Silly Putty can do that.

MACGYVER VIEW OF YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

I never watched faithfully, but in the midst of my channel surfing I was always amused by the show MacGyver. In a space of little less than an hour he could foil any criminal plot by rigging up a piece of chewing gum, a staple, and three Mentos. Between commercials it was fun to see him take what he had in hand and put it to use to save the day.

OK. So you have an ID card, an extension cord, and Silly Putty. What are you going to do with them? That's the synergy question of young adult ministry. This spiritual revolution is not about some big religious program or some great event. It is not about a dramatic change in some organized religious institution or the election of some visionary young adult to regional office. It is about you and me deciding to take what God has given us—an identity, a mission/ministry, and each other—and live it out 24 hours, seven days.

I am convinced that your role in young adult ministry is vital and just as important as anyone else's (1 Cor. 12:22-25). You know your own struggles to love yourself as Christ loves you. You know someone who doesn't know Christ who may see Him only through your eyes. You know a Christian sibling who is hurting and needs your support. And if I were a gambling man, I would be willing to bet that no pastor, no church program, no religious tract can address these issues better than you. So I would consider you indispensable to young adult ministry in this regard. God gives you the power; Christ gives you the call; the Holy Spirit gives you the support. Card, cord, and putty? Go ahead. Save the day.

Recommended Reading:

1. T. Hershey, *Young Adult Ministry* (Loveland, Colo.: Group Books, 1986).
2. H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).
3. M. Senter, *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry: And Its Radical Impact on the Church* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1992).



SESSION 1: DEVELOPING A DYNAMIC, DEEPENING, LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

To develop a dynamic, deepening, love relationship with God, I am:

- communing with God regularly through His word, prayer, and other Christian disciplines.
- participating with other believers in worshipping God on Sabbath and at other times.
- worshipping God daily as a living sacrifice by choosing His will over my own will.
- paying attention to what God is doing and praising Him for His love and faithfulness.



big idea

God created you for a unique, deepening, love relationship with Him.



connector

Look: Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:17

Memorize: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:1-2).



THE JOURNEY

exploration

God Seeks a Dynamic Relationship With You.

God is in love with you. Over and over again in the Bible, God reminds you that you're His child and that He desperately seeks an intimate, growing relationship with you. A dynamic relationship with God starts with knowing that God, for reasons we will never fully understand, loves you beyond your wildest imagination. As a response to God's love, we can connect with Him and allow Him to grow in and through us.

Beyond communicating to us through His love letter, the Bible, and through prayer, God also communicates through wise people, promptings of the Holy Spirit, and even through nature—where He shows us His power and care. In connecting with God, different people find different spiritual practices helpful. Some people find the arts or solitude particularly valuable, while others connect with God deeply through keeping a journal where they include their thoughts about God as they meditate on Scripture or reflect on their relationship with God in general. Some people's journals don't just contain words; they contain poems, drawings, even cut out pictures that mean something to them. Art, music—every kind of creativity can be a doorway for experiencing God. Solitude, particularly in nature (as Jesus frequently sought) is one of the best ways to connect with the Creator.

The ways we connect with God are often referred to as “Christian disciplines.” Christian disciplines are not a measure of your spirituality. It is simply any activity that helps you connect with God and that allows Him to work in and through you. They become the habits/practices that we put in place so that we can grow in the fruits of the Spirit. Disciplines will not earn God's love; you are already loved by Him. They are to help us grow towards the life God desires for us.

- What would be your advice if someone asked you to outline the top three factors for growing healthy relationships?
- Describe how it feels to stare into a sky full of stars, yet at the same time remember that the God of the universe cares intimately about you.
- What do you think are the top three factors that stop people from connecting with God?

We Connect With God Through The Bible.

One of the main ways God connects with His children is through His Word. In the Bible, God uses people to tell us the story of how much He deeply desires you and how He wants to spend eternity with you. Through various characters, teachings, visions, and even poems, God communicates values and practices that He knows will allow you to live life with significance now and will shape you for eternity.

In a world that bombards us with noise, consumerism, and all sorts of other worldviews, the Bible reminds us that we exist for God's glory, and that a relationship with Him is the most important thing. We are given clarity about what really matters.

Studying the Bible is not about just knowing more; it's about change in our lives. The Pharisees prayed and studied, however, they did so in a self-seeking way rather than looking for a connection with God. You can know that hydrogen and oxygen make water, but that makes no difference if you're dying of thirst. Knowledge is good, but only if it brings about change that leaves you with a stronger love for God and people. When you ask God to shape you through Scripture, you will increasingly find yourself learning lessons from Bible characters,

dwelling on promises, and seeing the world through new eyes.

- Who is your favourite Bible character? What does that character tell you about God and what lesson might you learn from that character?
- Can you think of a time when God brought a Bible verse to your mind at just the right time?
- What do you think it means to be “washed in His Word”?

We Connect With God Through Prayer.

Another primary way of connecting with God is through prayer. Prayer can, at first, come across as being a bit odd. It might seem a little strange to talk to someone we can't physically see—and even stranger to listen to them. However, in prayer we are not really telling God things He doesn't know, but rather inviting Him to be part of our lives, seeking His guidance, and entrusting situations into His control. We can pray in our minds throughout the day, inviting Him into our lives, but it is also important to have some more structured times of prayer during which we worship God, seek His leading, and renew our invitation to Him to work in and through us. There is also incredible power in praying for and with other people.

Ultimately, prayer is about coming humbly before God and inviting Him to lead. God really wants to hear your voice—after all, you're His child.

leader's note

And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? (Matthew 6:5, *The Message*).

from the pen of Ellen G. White

“Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. He gives the length and substance of their prayers, expressing their desires for temporal and spiritual blessings, and their gratitude for the same. How comprehensive this sample prayer! It covers the actual need of all. One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer. There may be instances where prayer is in a special manner indited by the Spirit of God, where supplication is made in the Spirit. The yearning soul becomes agonized and groans after God. The spirit wrestles as did Jacob and will not be at rest without special manifestations of the power of God. This is as God would have it.” (*Testimonies to the Church, Volume 2* 581.1)

TO THE LEADER: Please share practical ways of praying with your group. Below are six simple ways to change your life through prayer (taken from Barbara Bartocci's book, *Grace on the Go: 101 Quick Ways to Pray*).

GIVE AN ALARM-CLOCK ALLELUIA. When your alarm goes off in the morning, open your eyes and repeat this line from the Psalms: “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad.” Commit to living in gratitude for the day, and you'll soon notice how much happier your day is.

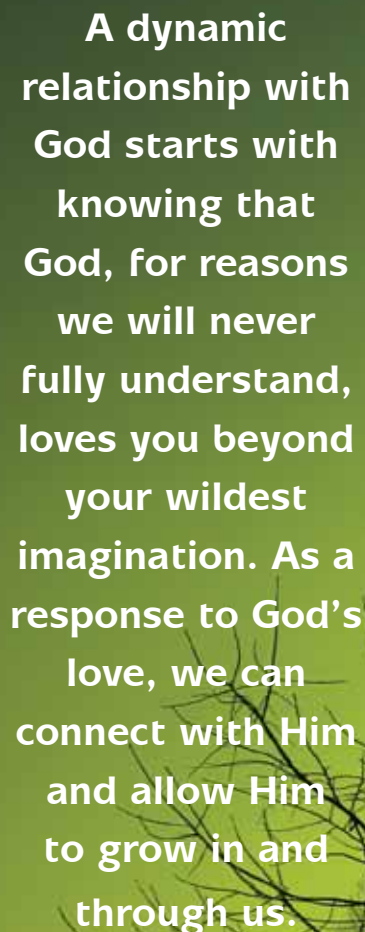
PRAY WITH YOUR SNOOZE BUTTON. My friend Annie has an alarm clock with a snooze-reminder that goes off ten minutes after the initial ring. When her alarm goes off, she sits up in bed without turning on the light and breathes slowly and deeply. “I pay attention to each breath, to my heartbeat, to the feel of my skin against the sheets. I don't plan my day. I merely sit prayerfully in the early morning quiet. It centers me.” When her snooze-reminder gives its ten-minute buzz, she turns on the light and goes about her usual morning business.

PRACTICE HOLY CURIOSITY. A September 2005 issue of *Harvard Business Review* said, “As a society we are biased toward answers. Answers settle matters and tell us it's safe to move forward. Questions are troublemakers, poking holes in ideas and plans.” But Albert Einstein said: “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. Never lose your holy curiosity.” What a wonderful combination of words! Holy curiosity—

our ability to wonder, to inquire, to welcome what is new, and to keep our minds open to truth when and where we find it—surely this is one of the most miraculous qualities that human beings possess. Maintain an open mind today. Ask questions. Acknowledge truth when you find it. Pray to be led by holy curiosity.

BE MORE ACCEPTING. Once, in the midst of a quarrel, my husband cried, "Why can't you accept me for who I am?" The anguish of that question immediately stopped me, for isn't that what all of us want? To be loved for who we are? But how can we accept another unless we first accept ourselves? For years, I held myself to an impossible standard of perfection, and if I had to be perfect, why, those I loved had to be, too. We can only love God and our neighbour to the extent that we love and accept ourselves. Today, whenever you look in a mirror, make eye contact with yourself, and say aloud, "I love myself. Not as I will be. Not as I could be. But as I am." Did you believe the words you said aloud? If not, ask the Holy Spirit to aid you in greater self-acceptance. Then add these words: "I accept others as they are."

PICK A PRAYER PARTNER. Every week, Twila and her friend Helen meet for thirty minutes of prayer. After asking for God's grace in the words they speak to one another, they share how they have used spiritual principles in their lives over the past week. Then they discuss any problems that are bothering them. Lastly, they hold hands and take turns praying aloud,



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first for those on their prayer lists, and then for each other. "In the beginning, it seemed awkward to pray out loud with someone," admits Twila, "but now I'm convinced there's a reason why it says in the Gospels, 'Where two or more are gathered in my name there I am in the midst of them.' Praying together is very affirming. We rarely skip our prayer time together." Invite God into your midst. Say a prayer with a friend.

PRACTICE NIGHTTIME TAPS.

Relax into sleep with TAPS prayers. Offer thanksgiving for the day's blessing. Show adoration for the Creator who has given us this incredibly rich universe. Petition for your needs and those of your loved ones. Express sorrow if you've hurt another in any way. Sleep well.

- Why do you think studies often show that many Christians do not pray?
- What ideas do you have for how you could make your prayer time more intentional?

Sabbath: Strengthening Your Connection

A particularly vital point of connection with God is the Sabbath. Sabbath reminds us to reflect on our priorities. It's not about having one day separate and then living the other six like any other person. It's about strengthening and re-energizing our connection with God and His eternal values. Our Sabbath experience can change the way we worship, the way we interact

with others, and strengthen our relationship with God.

Sabbath is designed for us to take a break from “time = money” consumerism traps. It reminds us that we are created for eternity and that life is not about the abundance of our things. Rather, life is about dynamically connecting with God and people. Sabbath gives us a break from the things that can clutter up the rest of our lives and provides a great opportunity to spend time worshipping, connecting, serving, growing, and sharing.

- Why do you think God invented the idea of Sabbath?
- Why do you think it's important to take a break from “time = money” consumerism?
- How can you make your Sabbath experience personal?

Your Connection Is Unique

The way you connect most deeply with God and just how God grows you will be unique to you. He made you that way. By looking at various characters in Scripture we see that people connect with God in different ways. Some people feel deeply connected to God through learning intellectually about Him. For others it is primarily through worship, serving, nature, relationships, or contemplation/reflection. All of these ways of connecting are important and part of a balanced, growing

relationship with God. However, you will more naturally connect through some of these ways than others. Remember that everyone is wired differently. Together we can learn from one another and stretch in our experience of connecting with God.

- Can you think of a time when you felt particularly close to God? What factors do you think shaped this closeness?
- What Christian disciplines have you tried and what made them work or not work?
- When are you best able to hear God communicating with you?

Connecting With God In Your Everyday Life

God wants to connect with you and live in the ordinary, everyday moments of life with you. Sometimes we think that a spiritual moment needs to be something unusual or out of the ordinary. However, your everyday, ordinary life is exactly what God would love to experience with you.

The apostle Paul talks about doing absolutely everything, even the everyday things, with God. He calls it being a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). It seems a strange combination of words; however, being a living sacrifice simply means that every part of our life is an offering to God.

The Message describes it like this: “So here’s what I want you to do, God

helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking around life – and place it before God as an offering.”

For Paul, your ordinary, everyday life is the very place to be an offering to God. We don’t often think of walking around and going to sleep as being spiritual activities, but Paul says our every thought, word, and action can be an act of worship to God.

Of course, this living sacrifice life isn’t something we attempt in our own power. Jesus is not sitting in the audience watching us perform. Jesus wants to do the ordinary, everyday things of life with us. He wants to work in and through us. We live life in partnership with Him. Being a living sacrifice is about focusing on Jesus’ presence with you as you go through the seemingly inconsequential moments of your day.

- How easy is it for God to get your attention in your ordinary day?
- Would you like to spend an ordinary day with Jesus in person?
- How aware are you of the possibility of meeting God during your day?

Making a Plan – Training in Godliness

Like any healthy relationship, growing in connection with God takes intentionality. We don’t become healthier and increase our muscle

tone by just sitting back and seeing what happens. If we want to get fit, we make a plan. It's the same with spiritual fitness. In growing in Christ we need to orient our lives around practices and habits that remind us of what matters and give God space to work in us.

Imagine you are at the starting line to watch the Olympic marathon. Just before it starts, an official spots you and explains that your country needs you to run. Regardless of how hard you tried, you would probably struggle, unless you're already a serious athlete. If you were given a year to prepare and you were serious about it, you would shape your life around habits and activities that trained your body. You would start running short distances and gradually increase them. You might eat differently and arrange your day differently so you could get to the gym. You might buy different shoes and find a coach. When the time came to run in the marathon, you would be able to do by training what trying alone does not allow. It's the same for training in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7b-8). Training means to arrange your life around certain exercises and experiences that will enable you to become over time what you are not yet able to be—even by trying hard.

In attempting to grow a dynamic relationship with God, many people try, fail, and think this life of connectedness with God is not for them, or even wonder if it exists at all. Discipleship is not a matter of trying harder, but rather engaging in a lifestyle of 'training in godliness.'

- Have you ever found yourself trying to connect with God and feeling like you're going nowhere? How would you explain the difference between training and trying?
- What do you think a plan for "growing in godliness" might look like in your life?

reflection

- What do you think your friends would say are the top three factors that drive you?
- What do you think are the top three things that get in the way of growing in your relationship with God?
- If in the future an archaeologist was to study your messages, credit card statements, and diary, what would they conclude your priorities are?
- What do you think it means to love God with all your heart?
- What factors might stop you from getting started on your "training in godliness" plan?
- If you cut back using the computer one hour a week, how could you use this time to be in the presence of God or others?
- Would your friends say that being around you is a bit like being around Jesus? What would have to change for this to be the case?

application

God Gives You The Choice.

Too often we can live life with no regard for God's perspective. Even sadder is that instead of looking to God for our meaning and fulfilment we chase the next thing that promises to fill the void. It might be a new body shape, car, or relationship – each promising a sense of fulfilment and none delivering. There is nothing inherently wrong with these things; they are just not designed to give us ultimate meaning and purpose.

The same God who made the world offers to remake your life and live the everyday moments in relationship with you. God did not make you to be a puppet, with strings for Him to pull—that would make you His toy. Rather He made you with purpose and the power to choose so that He could have a relationship with you. He does not force a relationship. God's desire is to be invited into your everyday situations and live life deeply with you.

Take some time now to direct your thoughts back to Him: ask for His help or His guidance, or simply share your heart with Him.

- What changes in your schedule can you make right now to make space to “train in godliness”? (Share with your accountability partner.)
- What ideas do you have to give yourselves reminders of God’s presence throughout the day?
- Identify a time this week where you can simply be still and focus on God’s love for you. Where and when will it be?
- What one Christian discipline will you train in this week? Where and how will it happen?

prayer time

- Remember to thank God for loving you so much.
- Pray about the thing that get in the way of your connection with God.
- Ask God to work in and through you in the ordinary, everyday moments.

debriefing

During this session we looked at the ways we develop this love relationship with God—primarily through Bible study, prayer, and worship, especially with others on Sabbath.

Bible study and prayer

Think about and discuss:

- Have your ideas and attitudes about the Bible and prayer changed during these sessions? If so, how?
- In what ways did you find your devotional life changing as you tried out some of the suggestions and activities? For instance, did you begin (or already have) a prayer journal? Was it only written, or did it contain art and doodles and other things? Do you like or dislike the idea? If you don’t, what would you prefer to do to make your relationship with God more visible and real to you?
- Which methods of prayer and Bible study were the most helpful to you and why? Which were not helpful, and why? Did you discover anything not mentioned in the session that you would like to share?
- Did you make a plan for training yourself in greater godliness? How is it working for you? What are some of the blessings you have found? What are the obstacles you face? Ask your group if they have ideas and solutions. You can all share both your blessings and your problems and ideas.

Worship and Sabbath

- Of course, what we do in the church building on Sabbath is only a small part of what worship really is. Every discipline and practice in this session is all about worship, from private devotions to prayer partners to corporate worship on Sabbath. In fact, our every thought, word, and action *is* worship one way or another. We might want to be careful and attentive to whom or what we’re worshipping!
- Have your attitudes toward worship changed during these sessions? If so, how?
- Did you find a prayer partner? What are the blessings and challenges of this relationship? (Of course, do not share any personal details of prayers with the whole group.)
- Are you developing a growing ability to remain aware of God’s presence and your connection to Him all day? Are you catching yourself sometimes worshipping something else entirely? What do you do when this happens?
- How does fun relate to worship? ●

A YOUTH WORKSHOP *on discipleship*

by Kimberley Tagert-Paul

A Love Unlike Any Other

They were married quite young; he almost 13, and she the older woman at 14. Shortly after their wedding, he entered the service of the U.S. Army, and later was awarded the title of the longest living veteran of the Revolutionary war. For Daniel and Susan Bakeman, the history they made was not in the timing of their marriage, but in its length. They are officially the longest married couple ever recorded, a marriage that lasted until her death. The length - an amazing ninety-one years and twelve days!

In India, an arranged marriage between Philipose Thomas and his blushing bride Sosamma lasted a period of eighty-eight years and two days. It wasn't love at first sight, partly because they were only 13 and 12 respectively. Philipose admits that he never drank or smoked, and that he worked alongside the laborers on his families land. He said they never argued, she said they did, a lot. Whatever their differences were, they managed to work them out and survive as the second longest recorded marriage in history.

Love. Perhaps the young people you teach are not fully acquainted with real love yet, at least the kind of love that can sustain a marriage for over 90 years. Hopefully, though, they have met the love of their life: Jesus!

Do you remember what it was like to fall in love with the Savior that gave His very life for you? Do you remember your enthusiasm to share that love with others? Do you still have that desire and zeal today, or has it cooled in the burden of just living.

Discipleship - God's Plan

Each participant in this workshop needs to have their own notebook to journal in during the presentations and discussions.

Mathew 28: 16 - 20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some

doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The great commission. That's what we call it today. Jesus simply called it His plan for His children. It was His plan to share the good news to every tribe, tongue, and nation. He wanted everyone to know that His Father was love. He wanted to correct the mistakes and misconceptions that man had made about God, and to set everyone free from the burden of sin. So He met with His disciples that day on the mount, knowing that He would soon be leaving them. He had final instructions to give. They were to remember what He had taught in both word and action and share it with others, teaching them in turn to become disciples themselves, thus fanning the rings of love until they encompassed the world.

MODULE 1

DEFINE

Discipleship. What is it? Who can be a disciple?

These are questions that are good to discuss. But before you get there, get your group up and moving.

Break into two groups and spend the next 30 minutes coming up with an impromptu skit about discipleship. Have one group act out what they think discipleship is. Have the second group act out what they think discipleship isn't. This should provide for some interesting discussion.

When gathered back together, have each person write out their own definition of what discipleship is. When these are shared, come up with a group definition in light of Mathew 28:16 - 20, and write it on a chalk board or poster.

Jesus spent quality time teaching His disciples everything He could about His Father and Their love for each person ever created. Now, Jesus called His disciples to go out and make more disciples.

Power Questions

Is everyone called to be a disciple? How do you become a disciple? If we are disciples, what is our responsibility toward God's plan for discipleship?

Defining Moment

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great theologian and martyr was once quoted as saying, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ," Why is this statement both simple and profound at the same time? What does it say about our privileged duty to make disciples for Christ?

Think back to when you first met Jesus. When did you fall in love with Him? What did you love the most about Jesus? If you could share only one thing about Him with others, what would it be? Remembering this first love is an important part of discipleship. Discipleship involves a relationship, in our case with Jesus. It isn't the passing on of traditions taught by man. It is a very real and growing relationship. It's not about making students, it's about making disciples. It's a call to live like Jesus did.

Power Question

In light of what has been discussed, what is your relationship with Jesus? Are you living as a disciple? Are you committed to sharing your faith - living it as well as speaking about it to others who need to become disciples of God?

SKIT FOR MODULE ONE

Setting:

A street corner with foot traffic passing by occasionally. Man 1 is standing on a box of some kind with a megaphone in hand. You can make a megaphone with a paper cone - just have him shout his lines as directed. Keep the setting simple, just a sturdy box with give the illusion as people pass by.

Cast:

Man 1 and Man2, at least one person to pass by the speaker. You can easily change this to Woman 1 and 2 if needed for your group.

Man 1: (*Standing on the box and shouting into the megaphone*) People. Listen up. Jesus loves you. He died for your sins. Repent. That's what you need to do. Jesus loves you. . .

Passerby: (*Walks past the man and scowls*) Weirdo.

Man 1: (*He shouts out to their retreating back.*) But, Jesus loves you. (*He looks a little discouraged. Then he sees man 2 and starts again.*) (*Shouting again.*) Sir, Jesus loves you.

Man 2: I know that. Come down a minute, would you.

Man 1: (*Still shouting.*) I can't. I have to tell the world about the love of Jesus.

Man 2: Would you please stop shouting. I want to talk to you.

Man 1: Well, O.K. But just for a minute. I have a job to do.

Man 2: I know. I love Jesus, too.

Man 1: You do? Well, (*stands*) why don't you get up here with me and we'll tell the world together.

Man 2: Sit down here, would you. (*He pulls the man back to a seated position.*) Jesus told us to share His love, but not like this.

Man 1: What do you mean. He said to make disciples of the world. We've got a big job to do.

Man 2: We can't reach the *whole* world. So we start where we are at. One person at a time. Like this morning, I held the door open for a woman struggling with two toddlers. She thanked me and I told her, "No problem. Have a good day and remember God loves you."

Man 1: What did she say?

Man 2: "Thanks. I'll remember that." Then, at work, one of my coworkers seemed sad, so I offered to pray for her. She said it made her feel better.

Man 1: So you think you can be a disciple without shouting out to the world about the wonderful love of Jesus?

Man 2: I don't need to shout at all. I simply do what Jesus did. I love them, and try to meet their needs. When they see that I'm different, they often ask why and I get to tell them gently about God's love.

Man 1: Wow. That would certainly be easier than standing on this box all day shouting out to the world.

Man 2: Not only easier, but people will like it a whole lot better, for sure.

(*They stand up and walk off talking quietly, and Man 1 leaves his megaphone on the box.*)

MODULE 2 DISCERN

Now that we have a working definition of what discipleship is, *and isn't*, we can move on to discernment. What is discernment? It is the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend. In our case, we need to grasp the definition of a disciple and translate it into our own lives.

First, let's take a look at whom Jesus chose as his disciples.

From the book of Mark, the first called was **Peter**. He was a fisherman. He was also called *Simon*, *Simon Peter*, or *Cephas* from the Aramaic for "rock." Peter comes from the Greek and means the same. Peter had a fiery personality. **Andrew** was Peter's brother and fishing partner. In the book of John, it is noted that Andrew was first a disciple of John the Baptist. **James** was the next called. James was also a fisherman and is noted as *the son of Zebedee*, a fisherman from Capernaum. **John** was James' brother and partner in the family fishing business. Jesus gives the two brothers the name *Boanerges*, which is a Greek form of the Aramaic "sons of thunder." We can tell a lot about their personalities from that.

Philip was from Bethsaida, another town on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. We can assume that he was also in the fishing business. **Bartholomew** was called next, and we don't know a lot about him. **Matthew** is called a tax collector. **Thomas** means "twin" in Aramaic. Later, he is called "doubting Thomas" because he doubted Jesus' resurrection until he touched Jesus' wounds himself. **James** was *the son of Alphaeus*. He is not to be confused with James the Great or James, the

brother of Jesus. **Simon** was called next. His name means "the "zealous," so he was often called the "Zealot. **Thaddeus** was the eleventh called. There's a bit of controversy when it comes to this 11th disciple. In Mark and Matthew, he's called Thaddeus. Luke, on the other hand, calls this man Jude, son of James. Then, Jesus called a man named **Judas Iscariot**. He, the treasurer of the group, is of course the one that betrayed Jesus in the end.

These are the men that Jesus called to be the first disciples. Some we know more about than others. The ones that we do know about, had personalities of fire and conviction, hard working men that weren't afraid of the elements, or the hard work to come.

Power Questions

Why do you think Jesus choose these particular men to become the first disciples? What about their personalities lends them to the work Jesus had in mind? What about their personalities and backgrounds make them seem unsuitable to the work of the gospel?

The men that Jesus called were not the brightest, the wealthiest, nor the most influential members in their communities. They were a diverse

group, and lacked formal education. What can we learn from Jesus' choice of these men?

Discerning Time

The famed author, C.S. Lewis once stated, "Until you have given up yourself to Him (Jesus) you will not have a real self." Let's think about this. When you fell in love with Jesus, you had to give yourself to Him in order for Him to become your personal Savior. But how surrendered do we need to be? Are there things about ourselves and desires that it is O.K. to hang on to, (parts of our past) if we are to serve Him completely?

Jesus tells us in Mark 8:34, "Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. "

Can we take up our cross daily and yet hang on to the baggage of our past? Your young people may not yet have a "past." That's not a bad thing. Somehow, though, they need to see the importance of giving themselves fully to Jesus to become His true disciples. One of the best ways for them to see that is viewing it modeled in your life.

Is this an instant process? Remember Peter in the garden, Remember what he did with his sword? Jesus called Peter and even told him that

he would build His church through him. Jesus knew all about the impetuosity of Peter and his fiery temper. He called him anyway. Does Jesus know all about you? You can count on that. And you have to love His sense of humor that He chooses us to bring His Word to the world.

Becoming a disciple is an instant calling. As soon as you know about Jesus, you should be sharing Him with others. But the process of becoming an effective disciple takes time.

Power Questions

As a group, discuss and record in your journals ways that you can become a disciplined, effective disciple, remembering that discipleship is a relationship. How many of these ideas are you already implementing in your life? What ways can you help each other to become closer to Jesus. Personally, what areas of your Christian experience, including emotions, relationships, and will, need to be brought under the Lordship of Jesus so that you can be a more effective disciple?

In order for youth to identify with the church in their future, we need to identify with them now. We want our

youth to grow in their relationship with the Lord so that when they are “in” the world, the church and their faith will have a significant place. How can we achieve this by being true disciples? How can we encourage them to disciple?

SKIT FOR MODULE 2

Setting:

A park bench Put a pot of flowers on the sides of the bench. Three members from a youth group are discussing the discipleship training.

Cast:

Andrea, Chase, and Marcus

Andrea: I’m so glad spring is here again. I love spring.

Chase: Me too.

Marcus: You love flowers? *(He looks at Chase with a silly look on his face.)*

Chase: Funny. No it’s not the flowers. Well, God made them and I love the colors, but it’s more than that. People are out and about, the world is just different.

Andrea: Oh. I get it. It’s easier to witness, isn’t it. When people are outside. . .

Chase: Yeah. You got it. People are in a more receptive mood after all the cold of winter and all.

Marcus: You really embrace all this discipleship stuff, don’t you.

Chase: *(He looks at Marcus)* Sure. It’s not an option. Not to me. God says when We come to Him, we are to become disciples.

(A stray ball comes rolling in from off stage, and Marcus picks it up and throws it back off stage. Someone yells, “Thanks.”)

Marcus: No problem. God bless you! *(He calls off stage.)*

Andrea: See. You just did it.

Marcus: Did what?

Chase: You just shared God with someone.

Marcus: How’s that?

Chase: Remember what you said? The start of discipline is sharing God’s love. It doesn’t have to be some grand elaborate gesture. It starts small and builds from there.

Andrea: Like a seed. Small. Growing. *(She smiles)*

Marcus: I like that. I always think I have to do something big and get worn out just by thinking about it.

Chase: Being a disciple means living like Jesus. To do that, you have to know who He was. It’s all in His Word. Everything we need.

Andrea: Guess we all have some reading to do.

Marcus: Yep. *(He stands up and stretches, then bends down to the pot of flowers and gives Chase a goofy look.)* But first, I’m going to stop and smell the flowers.

Chase: *(Stands and swats at Marcus)* Hey. . .

Laughing, they all move off the stage.

MODULE 3 DESIGN

We have defined discipleship, we have discerned how to disciple, now it’s time to take it even further, and see how to individually implement it in our lives. How do we disciple? When should we disciple? Where can we disciple?

Christian discipleship is much more than just being a believer. It is all about being Jesus’ follower. Believing is the first step. When Jesus called His disciples, they believed Him. But they had to get up and follow Him. We must do the same.

Power Questions

What are some ways that you can be strengthened as a disciple? Remember, a relationship is about growing. If you don't grow with the relationship, then the relationship usually dies. Nobody wants that to happen when they follow Christ. What happens if you don't read His Word daily? Do you feel hungry for His Word? Would it sound crazy to schedule quite time alone with God? Is your schedule busy? Then when will you fit in time with God if you don't plan for it?

Do you need fellowship with others to grow in Jesus? Look at what the Bible says in Hebrews 10:23-25. Why would this need to be said in the Bible. Do you think it could be because of our busy lives, that Jesus knew it would be easy to give up gathering together instead of worshiping on your own? Why does fellowship help us grow? Did Jesus attend church each Sabbath? Did He use excuses that there were too many hypocrites in the church? How can we apply Jesus' time with His disciples to our own lives?

Now that you are growing in your relationship with Jesus, how can you start becoming an effective disciple. Can you start with little things and make them part of your life? Then move on to bigger challenges? Sometimes we just need to step up to a challenge God is leading us to and trust that He will give us the strength and ability that He is calling us to. Often the results of such obedience are remarkable. It just takes one step - and then God will continue the work that He has begun in us.

DESIGNING TIME

Discipleship by its very nature tells us that we must participate in the ministry and share what we know with others. How do you do this? Are there appropriate places to acknowledge God? Does that imply that there are places it is right not to witness? Of course there are often rules in the workplace, but, living as an example is often much more effective than words. A kindness done is often the best recognition of God.

With the explosion of technology, new ways to witness and help others grow have become available at our fingertips. How can the new technologies aid your ability to disciple? How have you used technology to witness and disciple and what were the results? Are places like Facebook and My Space appropriate places to share your beliefs with others? Does technology give you a wider audience than face-to-face witnessing does? Are there challenges because of the expanded audience? What are they and how can you work within the challenges?

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Are there costs to serving Jesus as His disciple? Yes, there are.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood this when he said, "Salvation is free, . . . But discipleship will cost you your life.

Many people lose friends and family when they come to Jesus. They either don't understand or outright reject the truth and don't want to be reminded of it. Jesus understood this. Many of His followers turned away from Him at different times. Consider what the Bible says in Luke 14:25-27. Is this a warning from Him that following won't be easy?

Many Christians around the world suffer greatly for their choice to follow Jesus and become His disciple. In many countries, proselytizing is against the law. Does that stop Christians in those countries from sharing what they know?

No, it doesn't. In fact, they seem to be eager to share more. Are they deliberately seeking out danger? No. They love God and can't help sharing what they know. For those of us in countries where we can share freely, do we have the same zeal to do it?

Many Christians have to make sacrifices to follow Christ. Jesus' disciples understood this and yet, followed Him faithfully. Many did not have their own homes.

They trusted that God would provide for their needs. Did He? Will He for us? Is learning this lesson an important part of our faith and growth?

Yes, there is a cost to discipleship. But the rewards are not measured in monetary units. Heaven is a very real place, and any cost associated with being there will be well worth it. We need not fear the work of discipleship. We should be wise, but not afraid.

D.L. Moody, a great theologian once said, "No one can sum up all God is able to accomplish through one solitary life, wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to Him.

Power Question

In light of today's study, are you ready to continue to follow Christ as His disciple wherever He leads you?

SKIT FOR MODULE 3

Setting An office. Use two simple desks if possible, a couple laptops would help to create the illusion of a work space. Worker Two has a Bible on their desk.

Cast: *Several coworkers are present. You can use men or women according to your group needs. Some could be working without having a direct part in the dialogue.*

Worker One: (Walking past a coworker, with a bunch of papers that he/she drops.) Oops. I'm sorry. (They bend to start retrieving the papers.) I didn't mean to interrupt your work.

Worker Two: It's no problem. Really. Let me help you. (He/she helps pick up the papers and puts them in order.)

Worker One: Oh. I see you have a Bible with you. Do you read that? (Worker One looks surprised.)

Worker Two: I read a little bit on my lunchtime everyday. I don't have as much time in the mornings as I like to read. How about you? Do you ever read the Bible?

Worker One: I do. But I didn't think we could talk about it at work. I'm new here, but in my last job, religion and the workplace didn't go together.

Worker Two: Sorry, I have to disagree with you. Your faith goes with you wherever you go. It's how you express it that create a problem.

Worker One: I guess I don't understand.

Worker Two: You know that old saying, "Preach the gospel always. If necessary, use words. You can't stand on a soapbox and shout out your faith, but living it will say much more anyways.

Worker One: I guess I can see what your talking about. I just, well, I didn't know how to start.

Worker Two: That's not so hard, really. Just remember how you felt when you first fell in love with Jesus, when you first received His grace. That's where you start, at the beginning. If your are authentic with your faith, others will feel safe around you and want to invite you into their lives. Then you can share bits and pieces that are relevant to them. It's not rocket science.

Worker One: Thanks for sharing. You've given me a lot to think about. I never thought I could share my faith at work, safely. Now I see there are probably other places I can share, too.

Worker Two It get's easier. It's like an onion. You peel one layer at a time. Besides we are not alone. The

Holy Spirit helps us to share and build for God's kingdom. Want to get together for lunch, and we can talk more? Part of being able to share is being faithful to our employer, too.

Worker One (Laughs) You're right about that. Sure, we can do lunch and see how we can work together to share more with our coworkers.

Thanks for asking. (Worker One leaves, Worker Two goes back to work.)

END OF WORKSHOP

PROGRAM PLANNER

by Kimberley Tagert-Paul

Mentoring

Program Target: To begin a discussion that will allow youth to explore an area not often talked about - the need to be mentored as well as the need to be a mentor. Discussion will help them explore the possibilities of choosing a mentor that will guide them in the right ways, as well as learning how they can in turn use their talents and gifts to be a blessing as a mentor, especially to younger youth.

Scriptures to use: Jeremiah 29:11, Jeremiah 33:3. Proverbs 18:16

Introduction: There is a treasure hidden somewhere in our city. Your job today is to go out and find it. O.K. Go. Good luck.

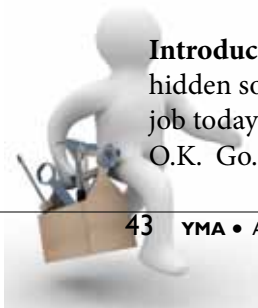
What are you waiting for? Shouldn't you get up right now and go out and get it? Is there something you need? What might help you in your search? A map? A compass? A plan? Can't you go out and quickly find it without those things? How long do you think it would take you? Oh - do you also need to know what you are searching for?

Can you imagine having to search the whole city for something - not knowing how to narrow your search or even what you are looking for? It would be impossible to do, wouldn't it? Some of you may feel that your life is just like that now - in-between adulthood and childhood - not really understanding where you

have come from or where you are going. But, there is help. And that's what today's program is about - mentoring.

To do: (Have a poster or board that you can write on and pens or chalk to do so.)

First, let's define Christian mentoring. Any one have an idea of what we are talking about? (Give time for discussion - writing down the definitions as given.) So let's sum up what we think Christian mentoring is. (A one-on-one relational experience in which one person empowers another person by giving of their time and talents as resources given by God.)



Now we know what a mentor is - do you think it is easier to *be* mentored or to *be a* mentor? Don't most people want someone to help them - but how many are willing to take the time to help? So you'll find it is important to find a good mentor in your life - but also to reach out with your knowledge and talents to mentor someone else.

There are things you will gain as a mentor and a mentoree: Can we make a list of these?

(Allow for discussion - have the two sections ready to write in on your board or poster.)

A mentor gains . . . (wisdom, the chance to disciple, networking, accountability.)

A mentored gains . . . (wisdom, someone to believe in them, accountability, networking, someone to help push you.) These are suggestions - the group will probably have more ideas.

To do: Divide the group into teams of 2 - 4. Give them paper and pen and instructions to . . .

1. Write a list of things that they are confident enough in that they could mentor someone else.
2. Write a list of areas that they would like a mentors help with.
3. People they can think of that might help them in finding the guidance they seek.

4. After discussion within the group, ideas that others see them confident in and able to mentor.

Next, ask them this question: If you just plow through life without a plan or direction - but keep steady to the plow - you'll probably get somewhere, but will it be where God wants you to go? (allow for discussion within the group - this should help them discuss that just getting through doesn't have to be their plan - that they can become more and that daring to reach out to a mentor can help them become not only productive but all God has planned for them.) Allow about 20 or more minutes for discussion within the small groups.

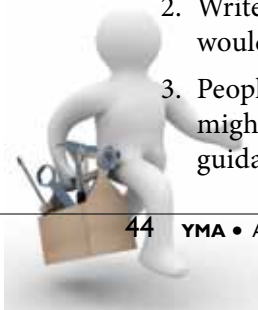
Gather the groups back together.

Finding a mentor and being a mentor can add dimensions to your life that will help you to become all that God has planned for you to be. Why settle for mediocre when God created you to be fantastic? Everyone needs at least three things: a dream, someone to believe in them, the determination to get to the victory line.

There are things you can do to make this relationship a success. First, start with prayer, both to find the

right person to help you and prayer together when that relationship forms. Second, ask questions, both of you. It is the duty of the mentor to lead and guide - not to give all the answers. Mentorees need to ask questions as well. In looking for a mentor - Look at their track record. Success speaks for itself. Allow your mentor/mentored relationship to develop naturally. Forcing it to try to achieve a goal seldom works. Don't overwhelm each other - observation is often the best way to learn. Ask question, think things through, but don't expect all the right answers to be forthcoming. It takes time to reach goals and desires. Let God lead you and you'll find that being a mentor and being mentored is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have.

Prep Time: Have a board to write on or two poster boards to write on - one for the definition, the other for ideas on mentors/mentorees. Be prepared to divide the group into smaller groups (preferably try to mix them up so that they are not with their closest friends) Have paper and pens available for each member of the group. Encourage them to take the papers home and look at them. It should encourage them to see what others see as their strengths. ●



BIBLE STUDY: junior youth

Contributor : Kimberley Tagert-Paul



BIBLE STUDY: How to design your future

LEADERS NOTES: *This is a self contained study. It would be good for individuals or in a group setting. It would be good to review Judges 6:36-40 and Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 53 to see how Gideon used a fleece to interpret God's will.*

ICE BREAKER: Which Way Should You Go?

You are about to enter uncharted territory. You are all alone. Everything about your mission depends on the decisions you are about to make. Are you ready?

You see trees before you. Lots of trees. So what will you take to survive through the forest that is before you? Food - of course you won't forget that. And water - no one would forget that. So what else do you need? A sleeping bag in case you get trapped and it gets cold. A large knife for cutting tough vines. Extra socks in case yours get wet. Your list is getting longer. Forgetting anything?

Oh - yeah! You finally remember. You need a compass.

A compass is a tool that helps someone navigate. A magnetic compass always point to true north. There are now more modern ways of determining direction that don't depend on the magnetic poles of our earth - but the good old fashioned compass is still a valuable tool.

Before the invention of the compass - sea travel was especially difficult. Most mariners stayed close to shore. They had to depend on things like landmarks and the night sky to navigate their way around. The compass allowed man to move about and explore. So what happened if it was a foggy night?

As a teen - that's just what you are doing; moving about and exploring your world. But - like ancient mariners, you, too, need a compass to help you navigate through your future.

Do you have one? If you have your Bible handy - then, yes you do! The Bible is God's compass - a gift to us to help us make the decisions that we are called on to make.

Dig-In

Adam and Eve were the first humans to have to make decisions. One of Adam's first decisions was to name the animals that God created. Can you imagine that scene . . .

"His name?" Adam laughed and the corners of his eyes wrinkled with pleasure. He watched the creature dance among the clover, leaping and bounding with life.

“His name shall be Lamb. He will be my favorite. I’ll keep him close to my heart, for he lives his joy - the joy I feel here. . .” Adam spread his arms wide, “. . . in the garden with you.”

God laughed and smiled His delight at his newborn son. He looked into his face, the image of his Father. What joy Adam brought to his Father’s heart. . .

What a time God and Adam must have had together that day. Adam making wise decisions and sharing them with his Father. Too bad that not many days later, he would make a decision that would change the world forever. Good decisions - Bad decisions. How do you know what to choose and how to plan as you navigate through these rough teen years and into the future God planned for you?

Hot Potato:

Words to Use to Make Stupid Decisions.

We’ve already come this far . . . Ever heard those words. Perhaps on a drive with your parents . . . perhaps when deciding on dating. Many people feel that they’ve already invested too much time, money, or emotions to turn back even though it is clear they are heading in the wrong direction. Ever feel that way? Don’t be afraid to turn back. TURN BACK! Continuing to go in the wrong direction isn’t going to get you any closer to the goal.

Everyone else seems to think this is right . . . Ever heard those words? You’ve probably used them yourself. Just because everyone else says it is right - doesn’t make it so. It’s a good way to be led way off track. Look at those that died at the Waco complex of the Branch Davidians. Everyone assumed that their leader, David Koresh, was right. 75 people died that fateful day in April 1993 including 21 children. Sometimes others may be right - but you need to use wisdom before making decisions based on someone else’s knowledge.

Oh, that . . . that’s easy! . . . It’s called overconfidence and it leads to many mistakes. Yes, it’s good to have confidence in your abilities. Confidence usually means that you have studied, practiced and learned that you can do what you are setting out to do. Confidence comes from hard work. But overconfidence can lead to careless mistakes and bad decisions. Don’t get caught up in this trap. You are too smart for that, right?

So How do you make the best decisions for you?

Talk It Over

Have you ever made a bad decision? What were the consequences of that decision? Did you need help in correcting the problems caused by your decision? How do you think God feels when we make poor decisions?

Or

Do you think using the fleece method is a good way to make decision? Explain your answer. Have you ever tried a “fleece” answer? Why or why not.

Apply It/Bible Text Discovery:

Jeremiah 29:11 Do you believe that God has a plan for your life? Do you believe that He created you with a purpose in mind? Do you sometimes feel that you have gone outside of that plan? Can you get back on track with God? God says in this verse that He has not only a plan for your life - but He also wants to give you a future and a hope. Maybe the first step in making decisions is to come to God and believe.

Jeremiah 33:3 Who is going to answer your questions and help make decisions for you? Does God promise that He will do this with you? Do you believe enough to allow God to show you the things you need to know? Let God prove to you that He will do this for you by trusting Him in all areas of your life. God can be trusted - you need to learn that for yourself.

Joshua 1:8 God's Word is the compass we need to help us navigate our way through life.

How can you meditate on it day and night? What do you think it this means? In what ways can you carry God's Word into your decision making? Do you trust the principles in God's Word to lead you into the right paths? How can you grow to believe that even more? Does meditating on God's Word include things like prayer?

Mark 11:24 and Isaiah 26:3 How can things like prayer, and finding God' peace help us make decisions for our lives? Do you believe that God will answer your prayers when you pray for wisdom? Does having a deep sense of peace about a decision help you feel that God is blessing that decision. Are there times that we cannot trust our emotions? Is having a sense of peace different from emotional feelings?

Matthew 25:23 In what ways can you grow in your decision making with God? Is it better to start with small steps and grow from there or to take big leaps? Why do you feel this way? The faithful servant had used wise strategy that was developed over time. How can you develop your strategies to succeed in life as the servant did? Is being faithful in the small stuff a step in the right direction to lead you to bigger and better things? The wise servant knew that he shouldn't quit when it came to the master's business as the unwise servant did. Is not quitting a good strategy for your life? If you quit, will you leave the victory to someone else?

Extra Gem

Ellen White understood how hard it was as a young person to make right choices and good decisions. She wrote the following in the Youth Instruction, Feb. 2, 1893. "We should be pervaded with a deep, abiding sense of the value, sanctity, and authority of the truth. The bright

beams of heaven's light are shining upon your pathway dear youth, and I pray that you may make the most of your opportunities. Receive and cherish every heaven-sent ray, and your path will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. "

Youth Instructor, February 2, 1893 par. 8)

Sharing Time

You can share the principles you have learned about decision making with your friends. Show them that the Bible is a good guide to help them make decisions. Remember that the Bible, prayer, and peace can be great guides.

This Week's Challenge

Look at Gideon's method of obtaining direction in Judges 6:36-40. Look at Chapter 53 of Patriarchs and Prophets to see what Ellen White shares about Gideon' choice. How can you apply this to your life this week?

Spiritual Warfare

Program Target: To help youth see the need to put on God's armor in their daily lives. To help them see that there is a spiritual battle raging around them that they may not see - but is none-the-less very real. To see that God has provided us with armor, just like a good Roman soldier to withstand the enemy.

Scriptures to use: Ephesians 6: 10 - 20

To Do: Have cardboard, scissors, tin foil, glue, leather scraps, and anything else you might have for the teens to construct the different pieces of armor.

Introduction: Invite a policeman to come in with his full uniform and explain each piece and its use. If you can't do this, start by having the group sing the old children's song: *I'm in the Lord's Army*. Sing it through several times and have them march around the room to wake them up!

Leader: Do you believe that you are a soldier in the Lord's army? Are we in peace time or battle? The world is at war - but as Christians, we know that we too are in a daily battle against the enemy. We know the outcome - and so does Satan, God wins, so what does he have to lose? He is pretty tricky at hiding the battle from our eyes. But just because we can't see it doesn't mean that it is not real. Today we are going to take a closer look at Ephesians 6 and see just what Paul was referring to when he spoke about spiritual battle and the armor that God provides.

To do; Divide the group into six teams and have

them construct with cardboard, foil, and the other materials, the weapon they are assigned. Ask them to discuss the meaning of the weapon both in Roman times, and as God meant it for us as Christian soldiers. Provide them with the following to open discussion - and also read it latter for the whole group.

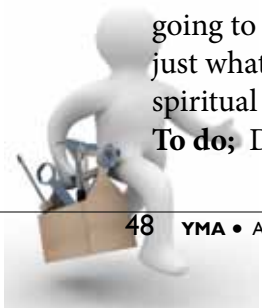
Belt of Truth

Roman soldiers had on a linen undergarment covered by a woolen tunic that went to about the knees. Over this they would place the breastplate, but just under it they put on a heavy belt. It was usually made of bronze with a leather buckle. It had one function - to be the foundation of the weapons of war: the dagger, and the sword. The belt was the foundation of war. Jesus wants to be our foundation in the fight against the enemy. He is Truth - and with His truth we can fight the lies of the devil.

(Open a discussion on Jesus as Truth while they are fashioning a belt.)

Breastplate of Righteousness

A typical breastplate could have been made with leather, or with interwoven brass rings. Still, others might have been made of a single piece of bronze. Soldiers often fought hand-to-hand, so being able to move freely was important. The breastplate was important to protect the vital organs. It was one of the most important parts of the uniform. Much like today's Kevlar vest worn by policemen, no soldier would have entered a battle without it. Jesus is our righteousness. If we trust in ourselves going into battle - we



are going to be in trouble. We need to focus on Jesus, the cross, and living in a daily relationship with Him.

(Open a discussion on Jesus as the breastplate while they are fashioning the breastplate.)

Shoes of Peace

Roman soldiers often wore sandals that were of thick leather soles studded with nails to make them stable and strong. A good stance was important when fighting, especially hand-to-hand. In the cold months they might stuff them with wool or fur but they were tightly laced around the legs to provide even more stability. Jesus came to earth to bring God's peace. His life and death brought us into a right relationship with the Father. This allows us to fight with boldness, confidence, and peace. Only in Christ do we have this stability in a world gone wrong.

(Open a discussion on Jesus as

the Shoes of Peace while they are fashioning the sandals.)

Shield of Faith

Several types of shields might be carried by Roman soldiers. The one Paul was referring to was probably the large rectangular one. It would have been about 4 feet tall by 2 feet wide. It might have been made by layers of wood covered in linen and leather. Brass or bronze would have covered the edges. They could be used by individuals, or held together to form a literal wall of protection. The shields used in this way would allow the soldiers to advance on a city and fight against arrows raining down on them from the wall. Used correctly, it was a powerful weapon. If dropped, it became useless. Jesus wants to be our protection against the arrows of the enemy. If we put our COMPLETE trust in Him, then He will be our shield and protection. We cannot rely on our own strength to fight the battle.

(Open a discussion on Jesus as the Shield of Faith while they are fashioning a shield.)

Helmet of Salvation

The Roman helmet could be made of different materials. Usually it was bronze because of the lighter weight. It could also be made of iron or leather. Cheek-pieces were added to protect the side of the face as was an extra piece on the back to protect the soldiers from arrows that came from above. This piece was so important that it was called the soldier's salvation. Jesus is our only source of salvation. We can find deliverance only in Him. If we depend on ourselves - then we will not be able to stand. Only through Christ can we find deliverance.

(Open a discussion on Jesus as the Helmet of Salvation while they are making a helmet.)

Sword of the Spirit

Roman soldiers carried two types of weapons. A short dagger and a longer sword. The shorter sword was good in



hand-to-hand combat. It was able to be used quickly and pierced easily. It was an invaluable weapon. Jesus is our Word - in His written Word. In Him, we see the living example of what God wants us to know about Him. God's Word is powerful against the enemy. Jesus used the Word to refute the enemy when He was tempted. We must read His Word daily and memorize it - so it will always be available when we need it.

To do:

Call the group back together and have one of the teens model the entire armor constructed by his friends. Have a member of each group read the description of each piece and add anything they discussed about it.

Conclusion:

Yes, we are at war daily. But we know that we do not have to fear. We **Do** have to be prepared. We need to buckle up. Thank God for His shield. Wear our helmet with pride - don't be afraid to share the gospel with others. Read His Word daily. How often? Daily. It is our offensive weapon. We should memorize scripture. And don't forget to pray. The commander of the army wants to hear from you and guide you as you walk through the minefield. Trust Him. He is able to bring you through.

End with Prayer.

Spiritual Gifts and Playing Ball

Program Target:

To help the youth realize that they have been give a gift by God, and that they need to share it to help others.

Scriptures to Use:

Eph. 4:11 - 16, Romans 12:3 - 8, I Cor. 12:7 - 11

To Prepare:

Make a copy of the Spiritual Gifts Inventory for each youth. Have pens/pencils for everyone. You will also need a checkerboard (preferably a heavy one), a bowling ball, a tennis racquet, some goggles, and an baseball mitt.

Introduction:

Today we are going to talk about spiritual gifts, but first we are going to have some fun.

To Do:

Playing Ball

We are going to go outside and play a game. Here is the equipment that we will be using: A Checkerboard, a bowling ball or ping-pong ball, a tennis racquet, goggles, baseball mitt. Can you guess what game we are going to play? (Give them time to respond.) Oh no - we are going to play baseball. (Take the group outside, quickly divide into teams, and let them play one inning with the equipment you have provided. It will be a challenge for them to figure out how to make things happen - and they will probably get bored very quickly.) This should take about 20 -25 minutes. You might want to change the rules for quicker play, like 1 out per side if it takes too long to complete an inning.

Gather the group back together.



Leader:

That was fun! We were able to do some of the normal things in baseball - but it sure was hard. Having the right equipment makes all the difference. We do better at anything when we have the right equipment. The same thing goes for the body of Christ. That's us. God gives each person a spiritual gift, that when used correctly helps the whole church. We don't have all the same gift, just like we can't all use the same equipment at the same time. What would we all do if we just had baseball bats? While we can get things done, if we use our gifts as they are meant to be used, the potential is so much greater. But, first we need to know what our spiritual gifts are. Everyone has at least one. And we all have the gift of Faith. Some just have it in larger measures. Some people have several gifts. There is no real test to find them - we need to feel the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we can look at things in our lives and have an idea of what God is telling us about our gift. So, we are going to take an inventory now and see if it will help you identify your spiritual gift. (Pass the paper out to each youth with a pen/pencil)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY:

- Read through and pick the one that best exemplifies you.
- There may be several that you relate to - circle them, but star the one that brings you the most passion.
- (Give the youth time to read through and make their choices. Then present the gift with their number that is included at the end of the survey.)

1. I love to share the gospel in a way that is easy to understand. I want God to be real to others. Helping others discover the truth in the Bible makes me excited. Breaking things down to help others understand is something I can do - and enjoy.
2. I enjoy sharing with others spiritual guidance. This is easy for me to do, and others often come to me for just that.
3. Give me a challenge. I can break it down and see what needs to be done. I love to help others apply the truth in their lives. I don't mind sharing my opinion, and am often asked for it where spiritual things are up for discussion.
4. I'm the take charger person in our group. It is easy for me to give directions and people usually like working with me. If I put my mind to something, it always gets done and is successful
5. I want to give God's message to others in a way they can understand. I love to share the gospel with others, and seek out opportunities to do so.
6. I enjoy meeting new people and it is easy for me to make them feel comfortable. I enjoy having others at my home, and enjoy studying God's Word with them.
7. If someone is struggling with their faith, I enjoy helping them find the answers they need. My heart makes me want to help those that are struggling and others often come to me for guidance.
8. I want to seek out God's will in every area of my life, help others to find God's will.
9. If I see a person in need, I have to help them. That is who I am. A guy with a sign - "Will work for food" finds me digging money out of my pocket. I care about others that are suffering and try to help.
10. You probably won't find me out front. I don't like being the center of attention. But I do enjoy helping- a lot. Things like working in the kitchen, or helping with repairs at church, those are the things I can do to serve God. I want to help make things a success, but I don't want to be the leader.
11. I want to learn as much about the Bible as I can. I practice my faith and want to share it with others. I read from God's Word everyday. It is that important to me. Others have asked me about difficult things and I enjoy the challenge of finding the answers in God's Word.
12. This is a gift given to all who believe, but perhaps some have it in an even greater measure. I can feel the Spirit in my life, see Him working in others. When trials come, my faith is a statement to others that builds up their faith. When others are discouraged, I can see beyond it to the good that I know God will bring.



(Answer key: Do not copy this on the inventory page.

- 1-Teaching
- 2-Pastoring
- 3-Wisdom
- 4-Leadership
- 5-Evangelism
- 6-Hospitality
- 7-Exhortation
- 8-Discernment
- 9-Mercy
- 10-Service
- 11-Knowledge
- 12-Faith

Were you surprised or did you already know what your gift was? Do you have more gifts than you realized? (Allow discussion)

Conclusion:

Are there other gifts that God gives to his people? (Allow for discussion) There are things like music, writing, craft work - working with your hands to do things like building, repairing, audio, computers. All of these gifts are needed, too, in the family of God. It helps each of us when we identify the gifts that God has given us. We can pray about these gifts - learning how to use them in the best way to glorify God and to help our fellow man. The church will run much more effectively if we use the gifts we are given. It helps to have a treasurer that understands and likes working with money. It helps to have a song leader that likes to sing. It would be hard to put a leader in a position where they were following. Success will be much greater if we work in the areas of our strength and passion. There aren't gifts that are better than another. God knows your distinct personality and gives the gifts He knows that you can use the best to glorify Him. We don't get to pick our gifts, they are just that. Gifts from God, and powered by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Let's take time to thank God for our gifts and learn to use them for His glory.



THE POWER OF ONE

- Honoring Jesus
- Revealing His Kingdom
- Transforming His World
- Equipping His People
- Fulfilling Destiny



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**We are a global movement of destiny,
united in purpose and mission. Our mission
is to lead young people into a saving
relationship with Jesus Christ and help
them embrace His call to discipleship.**

SKIT: Test Drive

Focus: To help young people see that the baptismal vows are just an extension of their love for Jesus. If they love Him - then following what He wants for them is just the next step in building a relationship with Him.

Central Bible Truth: Baptism is an outward showing of your growing relationship with Jesus.

Scripture: Mark 16:16, John 3:5, Ecclesiastes 5: 1-7

Program Target: Young people who may have not yet been baptized and a reminder to those who have.

Cast: Two characters. Sheldon - who is thinking about being baptized. Taylor, a (girl) friend.

Props: Two chairs set side by side like the front seat of a car.

Setting: An empty stage except for the two chairs.

Taylor: *(Sheldon is already on stage and pretending to drive a car. Taylor walks up to him and sits in the empty seat next to him.)* Hi Sheldon. What are you doing? *(She gives him a funny look.)*

Sheldon: I'm taking a test drive.

Taylor: A test drive? *(Looks around.)* A test drive of what, Sheldon?

Sheldon: My vows, or course.

Taylor: Your vows? Huh? Do you mean your vowels?

Sheldon: No silly. My vows. I'm thinking about being baptized.

Taylor: *(She hesitantly speaks.)* O.K. *(She looks around her.)* I don't think I get it.

Sheldon: *(He continues to pretend to drive and acts like he is thinking deeply.)* I'm trying to see if I can keep all those vows you make when you are baptized. So - I'm test driving them. *(He returns to pretending to drive.)*

Taylor: Sheldon, do you love Jesus?

Sheldon: *(He stops and looks at Taylor)* Of course, why do you ask?

Taylor: Did you have to test out His love before you believed in Him?

Sheldon: No - that's just silly. *(He continues to pretend to drive.)*

Taylor: Then why do you have to test your baptismal vows out before you agree to them? Do you believe they come from God's Word?

Sheldon: *(Pretends to put the car in park, and looks at Taylor)* Well, yes, I guess I do. Even the ones about our bodies and the things we put into them. I mean Mountain Dew isn't mentioned in the Bible, but anyone can see that it's not good for you. And our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. . . Hey, I get it now. I don't have to test drive them, I just have to believe them and want to do what Jesus says is right.

Taylor: And if you make a mistake afterwards. . .?

Sheldon: That's what asking for forgiveness is for, right? The more I grow, the easier it will be to do what is right.

Taylor: *(She sits back in the chair and smiles.)* I think you've got it.

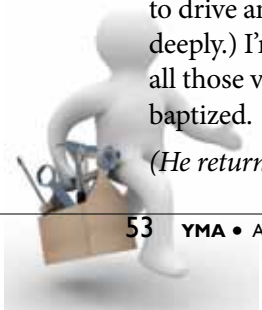
Sheldon: *(Sheldon pretends to take out the keys of the car and open the door. He stands.)* O.K., then. I'm off.

Taylor: Where to now? *(She looks skeptical.)*

Sheldon: To the pastor's house, of course. I need to schedule a baptism.

Taylor: *(Smiling.)* Wait a minute. That's one journey I'll be glad to accompany you on.

(They walk off the stage together, smiling.)



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