

Introduction to the Growing Young Core Commitments

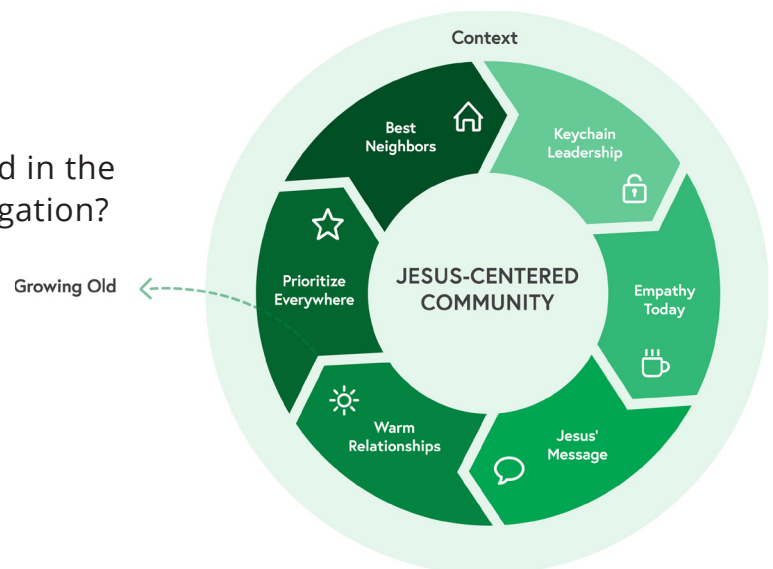
1

"The first job of a leader is to define reality."

— Max De Pree

1. In a few sentences, we could define the reality of our church's health, or ministry with young people as...

2. Which of the core commitments described in the video seem most prevalent in our congregation? Which seem missing?



3. How have young people added vitality to our lives personally, and to the life of our congregation?

Keychain Leadership

2

"Beyond simply launching a student leadership team, keychain leadership is a spirit and commitment demonstrated by both paid and volunteer leaders that permeates every area of the church."

— *Growing Young*

1. Think back to a time someone gave you "keys" of access, authority, or responsibility, in ministry or elsewhere. What was significant about that for you?
2. Reflecting on the types of key leadership discovered in the research (key-less leaders, key-hoarding leaders, keychain leaders), which best describes you? Which describes the leadership culture of our church? What observations have you made about the ways keys are given or held in our congregation?
3. What might it look like to give young people in high school more leadership in our church? What about college-aged young adults? Twentysomethings?
4. What's one area where each of us personally could share a key with a young person?

Empathy Today

3

"Adults need to sit on the curb of young people's lives and feel what they're feeling."

— Chap Clark

1. What labels do we hear used in our church when it comes to young people and young adults?
2. What factors create the most generational differences in our church?
3. How does our church empathize with young people well? What sometimes gets in the way of our church empathizing with teenagers and young adults?
4. What shifts might we need to make in order to be a more hospitable place for young people's journey toward identity, belonging, and purpose?

Young people's 3 big questions:

Who am I?

Where do I fit?

What difference do I make?

Taking Jesus' Message Seriously

4

"It's not Christianity that brings the good news, it's Jesus."

— *Growing Young*

1. How often do we talk about Jesus in our main and small group teaching? How often do we talk about Jesus in our prayer, our meetings, and among our leadership team?
2. Where, and in what ways, might we be *undertelling* the story of Jesus?
3. Do young people in our church feel it's a safe place to express their doubts and struggles? How can we offer our young people onramps for tough topics?
4. What short-term and long-term next steps can we take in this area?

Warm Community

5

"What if we imagine a web of support where each young person has five adults who connect with them in a special way?"

— *Growing Young*

1. How do young people describe our church?
2. How might we help people feel more at home in our worship, and in our church community?
3. Where do we see intergenerational relationships thriving in our church? What could foster more—and deeper—connection across generations?
4. What is our church holding on to that might be threatening warmth?

Prioritize Young People & Their Families Everywhere

6

"Everyone in our church rises when we focus on young people."

— *Growing Young*

1. What evidence do we see that our church makes prioritizing young people a reality...
 - ... in terms of our resources?
 - ... in terms of our budget?
 - ... in terms of our time?
2. Does our ministry to young people provide them with the structure, the support, and scaffolding to journey into adulthood with us?
3. How supported do parents and caregivers feel in our congregation? What might it look like to increase that support?
4. What practical ideas could we try in order to create better training and communication rhythms with parents?

Creating a Plan for Change

8

"Growing young isn't about changing youth ministry. It's about changing church culture."

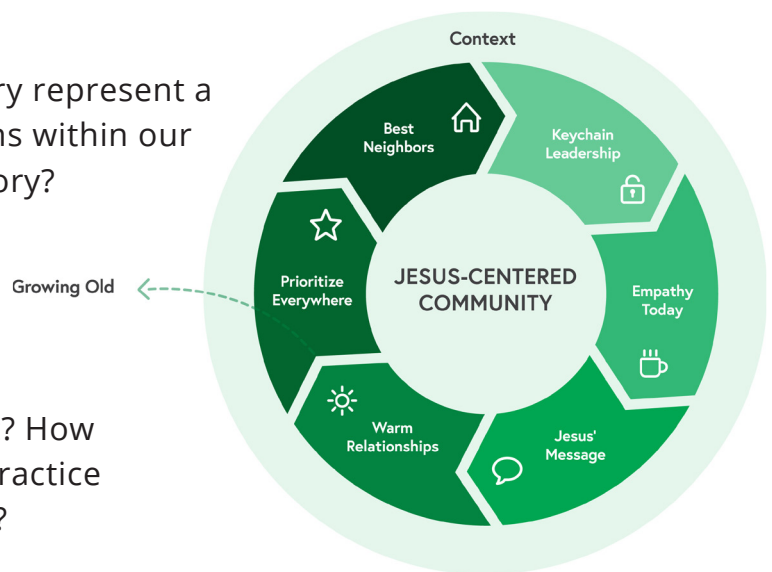
— *Growing Young*

1. Does our current vision for youth ministry represent a shared story? What groups or generations within our church could we invite to share in the story?

2. What is God currently doing in our midst? How might we think theologically about our practice based on where and how God is at work?

3. If we were to gather a team to help us lead Growing Young changes within our church, who could we invite to join?

4. Can we name some of the margins on which we could experiment with new ideas?



Multicultural Youth Ministry Panel Discussion

"Growing young isn't just about becoming a better pastor for our young people. It's about becoming a better minister of the gospel for everybody made in the image of God."

— Jennifer Guerra Aldana

COMPLEX MULTIDIVERSITY

1. What are the conversations around diversity happening in our community?
In our church?
2. Teesha gives the advice that churches "don't go it alone." Are there any other churches, organizations, or groups in our community that we might reach out to for support and partnership?

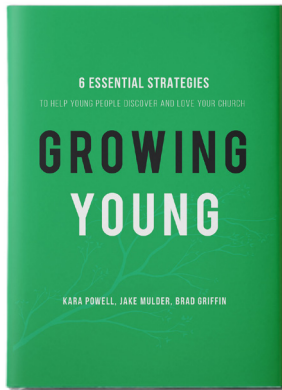
IMMIGRANT REALITIES

3. How might we bring groups and generations in our church to share origin/immigration stories? In what ways could we benefit from those conversations?
4. Irene speaks of asking better questions, rather than giving better answers. What questions should we be asking our young people?

HIERARCHICAL/DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

5. Marcos points out that asking people for questions and opinions can be disorienting. What small initial steps can we take that will help young people—and people of all generations—in our church feel empowered to speak their thoughts and questions?
6. Amid the ups and downs of ministry and working with young people, what gives us hope?

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