

# The Four Big Ideas of Ministry to Children, Young People and their Families

## 1. Make ministry to children and young people a priority

- Take seriously the biblical mandate to teach God's commands and testify to God's works to the next generation (Deuteronomy 4:9, Psalm 78)
- Church works best when all generations are pursuing Christ together. Adults grow in their faith more when children and young people are present
- The strongest reason that unchurched Kiwis would consider being part of a church is for the faith formation of their children
- A significant factor for adults choosing or moving to a church is the quality of its children's and youth programmes.
- Over 75% of Christians become so before they are 21 years old. Nearly half of Christians became so before the age of 13, 65% before the age of 18.

## 2. Understand how younger generations are wired

- Generation Z and Alpha are the most unchurched, biblically illiterate generations we have seen in the western world for a millennium. One in 3 Kiwi Gen Z'ers know nothing about the Christian Church.
- They have a different approach to learning, have far shorter attention spans and prefer a more interactive approach.
- Life is stressful for this generation. Despite all the toys Gen Z'ers are experiencing a greater incidences of mental health issues than previous generations of our time.
- These points have huge implications for how we do evangelism and discipleship with these generations, we can't just do what worked well 20+ years ago.

## 3. Know how to grow lifelong followers of Christ

- Prioritise discipleship over just gathering people and entertainment.
- Empower parents. The strongest predictor of life long vibrant faith in young people is faithful parents who take the time to deliberately disciple their children. This makes empowering parents in faith formation in the home the greatest priority of the church.
- Engage the whole congregation in discipling young people. The second strongest predictor of life long vibrant faith is that young people have meaningful connections with multiple generations in the church.
- Focus on other key factors of life-long faith: serving in mission, understanding God's big story, encountering Jesus, responding with compassion, engaging in a positive peer community, sharing peak experiences, having mentors and coaches and engaging in rites of passage.
- Take a long-term holistic approach to Christian education focusing on core beliefs, spiritual practices, our call into mission and ministry and into leadership.

## 4. Develop and keep high impact leaders

- Experience pays off. A key leader with at least five years' experience in youth ministry will be infinitely more effective than someone who is new to youth ministry.
- Do whatever it takes to keep their key children's and youth leaders for at least 5 years. They pay them well, support and encourage them.
- Grow your own leaders. The majority of churches who struggle with a leadership deficit have no process in place for developing new leaders. We need to be prayerfully encouraging more people into voluntary and vocational ministry, it starts with a simple affirmation and encouragement.

For more info please contact anyone in the PYM or PCFM team

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