

TNCJ

Pre-AIM

Youth Leaders/ Workers Workshop

Presenter: Eld. David Grissom

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Workshop Objectives

- ▶ **Discipleship over entertainment** – Moving from shallow activities to deep spiritual formation.
- ▶ **Relationships over programs** – Prioritizing genuine connections with students.
- ▶ **Long-term faith over short-term excitement** – Measuring success by lifelong spiritual growth.
- ▶ **Community building over individual events** – Creating a sense of belonging and accountability.

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Did You Know?

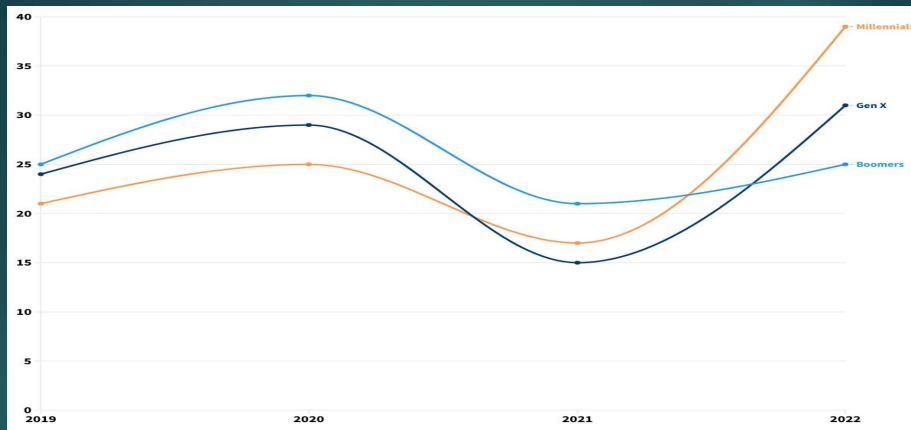
- ▶ 39% of Millennials report attending church on a weekly basis, according to Barna's recent State of the Church report. This is a significant increase over years prior and places them at a much higher rate of attendance than Generation X and even the Boomer generation, which had previously been more faithfully in attendance than their younger counterparts.

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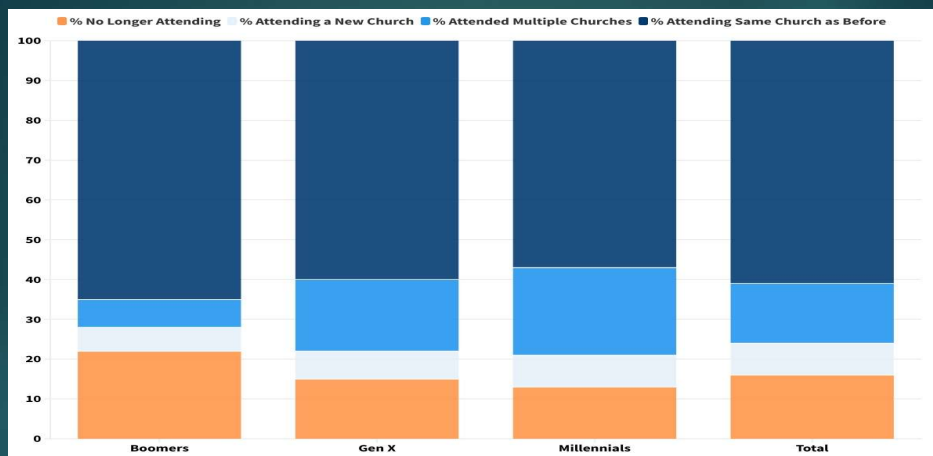
- ▶ **Young Men and Male Teenagers** will serve the church and God's kingdom when they become actively engaged in God's work. They are motivated to offer more of their time and talents in tangible service ministry for building God's kingdom much more than that of charismatic worship activities.

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- ▶ **39%** of Millennials report attending church weekly, up from **21%** in 2019 ([Barna](#))
- ▶ Non-white Millennials drive the increase in church attendance. **45%** of non-white Millennials are attending church weekly, compared to **35%** of white Millennials. ([Barna](#))

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Boomers had the highest dropoff rate, with 22% self-reporting as no longer attending church services either in-person or online. In comparison, 13% of Millennials who attended regularly pre-pandemic have abandoned church services now. As noted earlier, Millennials make up the biggest surge in returns to the church.

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Youth Ministry In a Social Media World

Smartphones Before 14yrs

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1440743916991982>

Smartphones Before 13yrs

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1230126882450449>

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Intermission

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Youth Ministry In a Social Media World

Identity and Comparison

- ▶ Many teens pay close attention to likes, comments, and followers. They may quietly compare their looks, talents, or lives with what they see on screen. For some, this comparison culture subtly suggests lies, such as “You are not enough” or “You only matter if people notice you.”
- ▶ Instead of resting in Christ and what the Bible says about them, they may chase approval from strangers. This is an open door for youth ministry to remind them that in God’s eyes, they are already known and loved.

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Youth Ministry In a Social Media World

Emotions and Mental Health

- ▶ Constant access to media can feed anxiety, pressure, and fear of missing out. Many young people feel that they must always respond, stay updated, and keep up. Some also come across harmful content, bullying, or confusing messages about identity and belief.
- ▶ Not every teen experiences this in the same way, but many do. Church leaders can help them slow down, breathe, and see their life through the lens of faith instead of just through a screen.

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The Potential Harms of Social Media Use Among Children and Adolescents

A longitudinal cohort study of U.S. adolescents aged 12–15 (n=6,595) that adjusted for baseline mental health status found that adolescents who spent more than 3 hours per day on social media faced double the risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes including symptoms of depression and anxiety

As of 2021, 8th and 10th graders now spend an average of 3.5 hours per day on social media.

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Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2023

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Some Teenagers View of Potential Benefits of Social Media

- ▶ 58% Feels like social media helps them feel more accepted
- ▶ 67%-Like they have people who can support them through tough times
- ▶ 78%-Like they have a place to show their creative side (71%), and more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives (80%). In addition, research suggests that social media-based and other digitally-based mental health interventions may

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Activities

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Three Ways to Help Young People Engage in the Church

In a recent Pew study, 70 percent of American teens said faith is very or somewhat important in their lives. Interestingly enough, in a Lifeway Research poll, when asked about their participation level within their faith community, only 44 percent attend their church once monthly, and just 37 percent of those who do attend church “are committed to the purpose and work of the church.” <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/u-s-teens-take-after-their-parents-religiously-attend-services-together-and-enjoy-family-rituals/>

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Three Ways to Help Young People Engage in the Church

1. HAVE A CLEAR WHY (Habakkuk 2:1-3)

Young people of today are distinctly cause-driven, and research shows that the majority of Gen Z students will take action for a cause they believe in. Your church must have a clear “why,” or purpose (traditionally called a “vision”), if you want them to be engaged. Our faith is the greatest cause – Jesus’ good news! Youth leaders must have a clear “why” that is consistently communicated, this provides an easy pathway for teens and young people to engage in various ways.

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Three Ways to Help Young People Engage in the Church

2. PRIORITIZE THE INVITATION (Ephesians 2:10)

Youth must know that they are invited to be involved in the cause. Oftentimes, young people in church see the cause, know about it, and want to be a part of it. But if they aren't intentionally **invited** by people who are leading the cause, then they will automatically believe it's for "them" and not "us."

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Three Ways to Help Young People Engage in the Church

3. CELEBRATE OFTEN (Ecclesiastes 11:9)

Take time to celebrate and recognize the fact that God uses young people in the rescue mission. You cannot celebrate enough when a young person responds to the invitation to serve in the church.

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More Ways to Engage Youth in the Church

1. BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

Decades of data have proven that entertainment, radical youth spaces, and “paying the professional” to grow our youth—in themselves—have not been the solution to engaging youth for a lifetime in our churches. What has proven trustworthy and effective is doing what Jesus did... “seeing, stopping, and spending time with” people.

2. ACTIVATE THEIR HANDS AND FEET

When our hands and feet are moving and helping, our brains and faith often follow. Youth rarely like sitting around *talking about* and *discussing* what a difference they could make in the world—but they do like *making* a difference. Most youth know that real love requires real action. Love does, and youth are ready to “get doing.”

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More Ways to Engage Youth in the Church

3. INVITE THEM TO THE LEADERSHIP TABLE

Youth have so much more to offer the larger church body than occasional Youth Sundays, fundraiser dinners, and serving as “volunteers” for Children’s Ministry and Vacation Bible School. The insight and perspective youth have is so unique and valuable to the rest of us. Putting youth in appropriate leadership positions will grow their faith, demonstrate how much we actually value them, and benefit the congregation as a whole. Showing youth how much we believe and trust in them *now* will pay dividends for a *lifetime* of faith and Kingdom service.

4. ADDRESS REAL ISSUES AUTHENTICALLY

Life is messy. And youth trying to navigate messy life gets even messier. Too often, that’s not something the rest of us want to deal with. After all, that’s why we have youth pastors, right? Wrong. Youth will go further, faster as they watch real people of faith deal with the hard issues of life and faith with honesty and integrity.

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The Spiritual Youth Leader

- ▶ Be Wise and Discerning
- ▶ Be led by God on what to do
- ▶ Have a purpose for activities
- ▶ Stay Humble
- ▶ Seek out Kids in the corners
- ▶ Be given unto prayer and consecration