

5 Suggestions to Attract Young People to Church

I have never met a church that didn't want to reach young people. Every church sees the value in younger people becoming an active part of the church. They know the future life of the church depends upon it.

The problem is often the church doesn't act like what they claim to value.

If a church is more interested in protecting traditions, for example, than it is in creating a future, then it will most likely fail to attract young people.

At least that's been my experience.

If a church is interested in attracting young people, it must think strategically about doing so. And let's be honest—we are all figuring out this subject. I'm totally open to learning from you. These are just some things I've observed.

Here are five suggestions for attracting young people to church:

1. Value them and their ideas. Young people will want to do things differently. They see things differently. We must give them a voice and an access to authority. This doesn't mean we have to change anything we believe or teach, but it does mean we have to listen to them and not dismiss what's on their hearts and minds. I've found I must make time in my schedule for the younger generation. I need to engage them regularly. They want to know me personally. When I do, it's huge to them—and I have more credibility to speak into their lives (and it fuels me personally).

2. Give them a place to serve. Find ways to let young people

assist others. It's a huge value for them. For the newer generation, it appears service may be the new front door. They will care more about serving than they will about "membership." They want to make a difference meeting real needs. I've discovered they like hands-on experiences. They usually aren't afraid to get their hands dirty.

3. Be genuine with them. Young people can spot phonies. Let them see you are real. Authentic and transparent have been admired cultural values all their lives—so they will accept nothing else. Be honest with them—about your shortcomings, your flaws and your fears. Let them learn from your mistakes and the things you did right.

4. Love them. Young people want to sense they are loved—even when they mess up. In my experience, young people want a safe place to be transparent and they want you to love them even when they do things—and believe things—of which you wouldn't approve. If you want an opportunity to speak into their lives, they have to know you genuinely care for them.

5. Guide them. Young people want direction and they want to learn from your experience. If you talk about the concept of mentoring—they are into it. If a more experienced person is willing to invest in them—they'll listen. This is a huge opportunity for the church in reaching a newer generation.

These are a few of my observations. Feel free to add your own.

There are so many things drawing our young people's attention these days. The opportunities before them are unlimited. Frankly, church is only one small option for most of them. We must be intentional and strategic if we want to reach them.

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