



# ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

CHURCH PRACTICES SERIES

APRIL 2022



GTA Region



## WELCOME

Over the last few years serving as GTA Regional Director in the Western Ontario District, it became clear that there were some common challenges facing church leaders in the Greater Toronto Area.

As a result, we decided to develop The Church Practices Series to assist our leaders in addressing these challenges in their unique context.

In the following few pages, you will find links to interviews with both those who have an academic perspective on these challenges and those who have personally worked to address them. In addition, you will find links to resources and a curated summary of what we have seen in our research.

We hope that this package helps spark conversation as we work together to see our region impacted for God.

Joel Spiridigliozzi with Jonathan Gallo



GTA Region



## INTERVIEWS

**WATCH / LISTEN HERE:** <https://vimeo.com/703373883/7139437ff2>



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## UNDERSTANDING YOUNG ADULTS

When we think of Young Adults, some experts suggest there are two distinct groups: 18-25 and 25-32. As of 2016, there are over 1.2 million young adults between 18-and 30 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Of this group, there are over 200,000 attending Universities and Colleges.

Some of the best research on how to understand and serve Young Adults in Canada is provided by the following groups.

Barna Research & Solutions - <https://www.barna.com/nextgen/>

Feed Research – USA & Global – 2020 - <https://feed.bible/research/>

Fuller Youth Institute - <https://fulleryouthinstitute.org/young-adult-ministry-now>

Hemorrhaging Faith Study (Canada) 2012 - <https://hemorrhagingfaith.com/>

Renegotiating Faith Study (Canada) 2018 - <https://p2c.com/renegotiating-faith/>



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Suggested Courses at Masters College & Seminary  
PR 1204 - Family, Church & Society  
GE3205 Culture, Media, and the Gospel



**mission canada**  
BECAUSE WE MUST

Mission Canada <https://paoc.org/canada>

SERVE Campus Network [www.servecampus.net](http://www.servecampus.net)

Red Frogs Support Network Canada <https://ca.redfrogs.com/>



# HOW DO CHURCH LEADERS ENGAGE YOUNG ADULTS?

Our guests and research suggest a few ways to intentionally see young adults engaged in the local church.

## STRENGTHEN THE HOME.

Research shows that when Jr & Sr High Youth 1) grow up in homes where families have regular spiritual experiences together (praying, reading the Bible), 2) eat dinner together regularly as a family, and 3) serve together at church, there is a greater chance of continuing as dedicated followers of Jesus into the adult years.

## FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP

Research shows that relationships are essential to this generation. As a result, many young adults are looking for mentors who will listen and help them transition into adulthood. In addition, some research indicates that the influence of a non-related Christian adult actively involved in a kid's life increases the chances of remaining in the church. Churches of any size and financial means can intentionally serve young adults. They can start by building a young adult small group with a passionate leader about listening, mentoring, and discipling.

## FACILITATE EXPERIENCES

Experiences such as retreats, camps, and mission trips that produce spiritual markers in the lives of youth as they transition to young adulthood cannot be underestimated. Where churches cannot host young adult services and camps, they can work together by hosting and supporting collective experiences with other churches.

## ALIGNMENT

Churches should consider aligning ministries from kids to adulthood to bring consistency from one age group to another. For example, if adults are encouraged to connect in groups, groups should be introduced in kids' ministry and youth. This brings consistency and familiarity from one age to another and helps retain engagement.

## INTENTIONAL TRANSITIONS

Transitions are significant from one age group to another. Transitioning from high school/youth ministry into the next ministry must be intentional. Youth leaders should be conscious of what group a graduate will be part of once they finish with



youth and who their next leader will be. If they travel for college, connecting them to another local church or college ministry can help this transition. Preparing youth for young adulthood is the key to successful transitions. Connecting youth to groups and mentors they can be associated with is key to supporting a good transition. Mission Canada offers a course for highschoolers transitioning to post-secondary institutions called Life Launch <https://www.mentorship.one/p/life-launch>

## **OWNERSHIP & INFLUENCE IS ESSENTIAL.**

Research suggests that the younger a person is given ownership of a ministry, the greater the chances of staying involved into the young adult years. In addition to this, it is essential to realize that young leaders attract young people. This means that young adults need to be engaged at the leadership level with regular input and influence of tangible decision-making elements of a local church. This also means that young adults should have a regular platform presence and influence of services that reflect their style and culture.

## **SERVICES THAT CONNECT**

In our post-Christian culture, we need to be aware of the add-ons we emphasize as a church community that might discourage investigation into the message of Jesus. In our services, we can be mindful of language and concepts that we use that might not be understood and need to be better explained.

## **SERVING TO REACH**

Unchurched young adults in the Greater Toronto Area have little context to Christianity and what happens Sunday morning in our churches. Instead, their perception of church and Christianity is built by film, friends, and social media. Therefore, relationship-based serving and hospitality are essential to emphasize in our churches. Serving makes the opportunity for relationships. The relationship provides the opportunity for the unreached to ask spiritual questions, for us to share our stories, and join together as we follow Jesus.

Mission Canada is active in our Colleges and Universities, building bridges of relationship with young adults through College Ministry and Red Frogs Outreach. Connect with a campus working as a partner church. Offer financial support, share resources such as church office space and portable equipment, open up your facility for local events, host dinners for college kids, send volunteers to serve on campus with the worker, and support the campus food bank.

*Have a story or experience that you would like to share? Section meetings are a perfect place to debrief. We would also love to hear from you and help pass on what you have learned.*

