



A Resource from

The Office for Young Adult & Campus Ministries
at the Episcopal Church Center

Discerning for Young Adult Ministry

A Guide for Parishes and Dioceses

May 2010

Kicking off young adult ministry may seem like a daunting task, but it all starts with determining what you are called to do with the specific young adults already present in your specific context. The following tools were collected to help start that conversation as well as help establish a basic framework for young adult ministry. While these tools are by no means comprehensive, the hope is that they will provide a starting point for ministry to a very important population of the Episcopal Church.

A Brief Scriptural and Personal Reflection, p1

A Litany for Young Adult Ministry, p2

Discernment Questions, p3

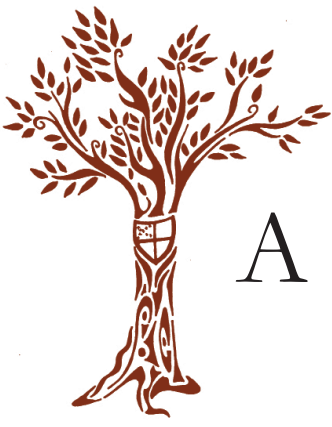
Exploring Your Context, p4

A Survey of Young Adults, p5



The Episcopal Church
welcomes you

www.episcopalchurch.org/youngadults



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Brief Reflection on Ministry with Young Adults

Receive: *Ephesians 4: 1-6, 11-16*

..lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Remember: *Your promise*

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?
(*Holy Baptism, BCP page 303, Confirmation, BCP page 416*)

Respond: What does this passage say about how we are to fulfill our calling (what God would have us do with our lives)?

How can this passage guide a conversation about young adults in the Church?

How are we to minister with and to young adults?

What gifts/talents (i.e. art, music, public speaking) do I have to offer?

How do I best utilize these gifts/talents?

What is God asking me to do in this ministry?

How will I follow God's request?



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Litany for Ministry with Young Adults

Leader Prayer is an acknowledgement of the presence of God in our lives as well as in the life of our ministry. We desire to cover young adults in prayer and realize that young adult ministry is the fulfillment of a call. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader While forming community, we do it with the knowledge that we come from different backgrounds, have different theologies and are shaped by different experiences. We join with each other to tend the Spirit and share the challenges and joys of ministry. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader In companioning we move from prayer and community to presence, revealing the beauty of young adults to all with whom we interact. We become intentional about accompanying young people in their walk with Christ. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader We gain understanding through prayer and interaction. Lead us in discerning how we are called to minister to and with young adults. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader Grounded in our faith, participation in the sacraments and desire for community, we begin fulfilling our promise to action. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader In looking back on our actions in the light of scripture and our Christian tradition, we will determine how the Spirit is moving or blocked through our ministry and actions. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**

Leader As we start the cycle again, listening for your Word, we ask for healing, guidance and renewal. *(silence)*

Leader Lord, in your mercy, equip us.
All **Christ, in your wisdom, guide us.**



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

Discernment Questions for Ministry with Young Adults

Defining Young Adult Ministry

- 1) Define young adult ministry.
- 2) Where does this definition come from?

Young Adult Ministry & The Parish

- 3) What is the parish's attitude toward young adult ministry?
- 4) How does the parish's mission/vision statement relate to young adult ministry?
- 5) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the parish?
- 6) How will these strengths and weaknesses affect young adult ministry?
- 7) What are the stewardship issues (time, talents, financial) for young adult ministry in your parish?

Young Adult Ministry & The Diocese

- 8) What is the diocese's attitude toward young adult ministry?
- 9) How does the diocese's vision/mission statement relate to young adult ministry?
- 10) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the diocese?
- 11) How will these strengths and weaknesses affect young adult ministry?
- 12) What is the relationship between parish young adult ministry and diocesan young adult ministry?
- 13) How important is this relationship?
- 14) What are the stewardship issues (time, talents, financial) for young adult ministry in your diocese?

Structures of Support and Evaluation

- 15) What will the "support system" be for young adult ministry?
- 16) How will you define success in young adult ministry?
- 17) How will you measure successful young adult ministry?
- 18) What is a realistic expectation of young adult ministry in the parish and diocese?
- 19) Who will be accountable for the "health" of young adult ministry?



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

Exploring Your Context for Ministry with Young Adults

1. Are there 20s/30s involved in the parish/diocese?
 - a. What kinds of backgrounds do they come from?
 - b. Do they speak a common language about church and faith?

2. What are the phases of life that can be identified in your young adult population?
(married, married with children, professionals, working class, single, etc.)

2. What Christian formation opportunities already exist in the parish/diocese?
(If there is a successful, established Bible study then there is less need to create one exclusively for young adults)

3. Are there 20s/30s in other nearby churches?

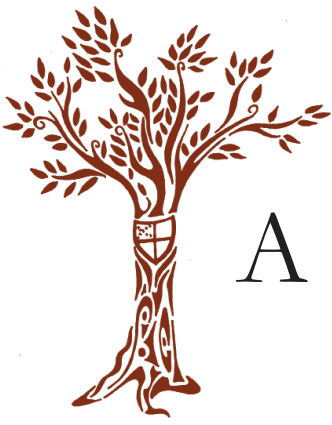
4. What social/societal issues are important to your church/diocese?
(If you live in Texas or California, the issue of immigration is an everyday experience.
Other examples: Columbine, CO and teen violence; NYC-terrorism; Gulf Coast-natural disasters; etc.)

5. What personnel resources are available in your parish/diocese?

Do you have some interesting, creative, educated people around who might be able to speak from experience on certain issues? (i.e. hospice worker, nutritionist, park ranger, criminal defense/prosecutor, actor/performer, etc).

6. What are the economics of your constituency? That is, what can your people afford?
(For example, in NYC young professionals tend to have very little expendable income.)

7. What are the local resources (i.e. parks, coffee/pastry shops, movie theaters, pubs) that are convenient to the church/diocese?



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Survey of 20s and 30s in our community

The following questions are meant to help determine what a young adult community might look like. It is hard to discern what should be done until we figure out what interests us, what we want from church, and how much time/energy we can spare.

How long have you been attending _____?

0-6 months 6-24 months 2-5 years 5+ years

What is your average commute time to the church?

5 min 10-20 min 20-30 min 30+ min

What initially brought you here?

- Location
- Heard about the activity/ministry of the church
- Friend/ Personal Invitation
- Other

Why did you stay?

- I developed relationships with other parishioners.
- I'm attracted to the ministries or programs offered at the church.
- I'm attracted to the worship offered at the church.

Other _____

Which service do you usually attend?*

8am 9am 11am 5pm Weekly noonday Eucharist

Would you say that your faith and spiritual life have been deepened here?

Yes No

If not, what has been missing?

What are you looking for in a church? (check all that apply)

- Good preaching that is relevant to my life
- Biblical instruction and teaching
- Mission and outreach (local, regional and global)
- Development of personal faith in Jesus Christ
- Focus on sacraments
- Somewhere I am challenged to grow and think
- Place to deepen my spiritual life
- Place where I feel welcome and “part of a family”
- Other _____

What ministries or programs have you attended in the past?

What about them worked?

What about them did not work or was frustrating?

Are you primarily interested in attending on Sunday mornings only?

Yes No

Is Sunday School a regular part of your church experience?

Yes No

Would you be interested in a weekday Bible study at the church?

Yes (in the morning before work) Yes (at lunch) No



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Survey
of 20s and 30s in our community

Is community outreach something you're interested in?

Yes Somewhat No

Are you interested in the possibility of mission work (local, national, international)?

Yes Somewhat No

Would you be interested in a monthly book club?

Yes Somewhat No

If you answered yes, what kinds of books would you prefer to read? (check all that apply)

Popular novels and non-fiction

(e.g. Lamb, The Preservationist, The Secret Life of Bees, God's Politics, American Gospel)

Light spiritual fare (e.g. Frederick Beuchner, Anne Lamott, Madeleine L'Engle)

Heavier theological/ethical material (e.g. Rowan Williams, Stanley Hauerwas, Desmond Tutu, Jurgen Moltmann)

Would you be willing to participate in some sort of Dinner Group, both hosting at your home and visiting other homes?
(This would perhaps be a monthly occurrence, varying from home to home, with likely numbers of around a dozen or less.)

Yes Maybe, from time to time No

Would you enjoy doing cultural activities like going to the theater, taking in a concert, or visiting a museum exhibition?

Yes Somewhat No

Would you be interested in engaging in facilitated discussions of contemporary issues from a Christian perspective?

(e.g. immigration, Middle East conflict, the environment)

Yes Somewhat No

If yes, do you have any suggestions for topics?

Would outdoor activities like hiking, camping, canoeing and cycling appeal to you?

Yes Somewhat No



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Survey of 20s and 30s in our community

How busy are you?

I am extremely busy, either with work, family, or other commitments.

I am busy but I have some free evenings and weekends.

I have most evenings and weekends free.

If we were to meet weekly what night would be best?

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

If we offered childcare, would you be more likely to attend evening happenings?

No Yes

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey! We look forward to moving forward in ministry with you.



Discerning for
Young Adult Ministry

A Survey
of 20s and 30s in our community