

STARTING RIGHT

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Be clear on who this ministry is intended to reach. If this ministry is to have an **inside-out approach**, meaning you focus on young adults with a connection to your congregation and work outward, you need to know who those young adults are. Gather names and contact information for all members, attendees, visitors, and close relatives of members.

An **outside-in approach** means the church focuses on reaching out to young adults in the community who have no affiliation with your church. To identify them you must go where these young adults are to form relationships with them. Simply building a program

YOU MUST
GO WHERE
YOUNG ADULTS
ARE...

and inviting them to attend usually does not work.



KNOW YOUR MOTIVATION

If your church is seeking to increase attendance numbers or financial giving, you are setting yourself up for failure and disappointment.

Young adults can often be inconsistent in their attendance, and just because they attend a young adult ministry does not guarantee church attendance. Also, young adults may not have the financial means to support the

WHY START
A YOUNG
ADULT
MINISTRY?

ministry themselves, so the church must commit resources to the ministry. Starting a young adult ministry should not be about

furthering the church, but instead about the Church's call to serve and disciple others. If you are motivated by a love of young adults and an appreciation of their worth, then you are starting from a much better place.

THIS RESOURCE PROVIDED BY YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES

YPM is a division of the General Board of Discipleship. YPM exists to:

empower young people as world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ
nurture faith development
equip young leaders and those who work with them

DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

What is the point? You need to know what this ministry is all about and what difference you hope for this ministry to make in the lives it touches. Developing a clear mission statement is a helpful way to address this. Gather a group of supporters and work on drafting a single sentence that states clearly 1) who you are and 2) what you do. Answer the question of what this ministry is all about. It may also be helpful to draft a vision statement. This is an image of the future you seek to create. It puts into words what would happen if you carried out your mission to its fullest.

DRAW THE PLANS

Consider what kinds of resources will be needed to start and sustain the ministry. Talk to other young adult ministry leaders in your area about finances, policies, and leadership structure. Develop a ministry plan, preliminary budget, and a “how you can help” list to share with the congregation. Being organized and prepared will make it easier for you to gain supporters and have others in the church take this seriously.

THINK
LONG-TERM
SUSTAINABILITY

RALLY SUPPORT

Secure the endorsement from key church leaders before starting the ministry. Intentional ministry with young adults will require precious church resources: money, teachers, mentors, leaders, space, etc. Having the support of influential church members is essential. These leaders can serve as advocates and cheerleaders for the ministry. Inform the church body about this new ministry. Offer opportunities for people to support and be involved in young adult ministry.

BE ORGANIZED

Having a clear plan and strategy for the ministry will help avoid wandering without purpose or structure. Remain flexible and open to adjusting the plan as the need arises. Some key questions to ask are:

- How will decisions be made and who has the authority to make what decisions?
- What paid or volunteer staff there will be?
- Who is the contact person and who will this person report to?
- When and where will the group meet?
- How will this group connect to the larger church body?



According to the *Book of Discipline*, Young Adults are defined in the U.S. as between 18 and 30 years of age.

ALIGN WITH AND CONNECT TO THE CHURCH

It is tempting to place a leader in the ministry and charge this person to run the ministry autonomously from the rest of the church. In order to thrive and deeply impact the young adults and the rest of the church members, there must be opportunities to connect to the whole church through corporate worship, service, and mentoring (receiving mentors and being mentors). It is also important for the ministry to align with the core values and mission of the church, though the way in which these things are lived out through programming and organization can be different.

BE YOURSELF

Remain true to your identity as a faith community. Resist the temptation to try to replicate another successful ministry. Allow your ministry to reflect the personalities, gifts, talents, and passions of the young adults in your church or community.

FOCUS

There are many ministry program formats including: Bible study, relaxed gatherings, small groups, worship, service, big events, etc. Don't try to do everything. Instead, find what connects with the young adults in your church or community and focus there. The other things can serve as support programs to your central focus.

YOU CAN'T DO
EVERYTHING
WELL.

RELATIONSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

Lives are changed through authentic and healthy relationships. Programs should be a part of young adult ministry, but should not be the end goal. Programs should be designed in such a way that allow for authentic relationships to form both among the young adults themselves and between the young adults and others within the church. Programming should intentionally invite young adults into a relationship with God and develop this relationship through various means. The programs themselves are not as important as the relationships they foster and nurture.



For additional resources, please visit our Resource Hub at
<http://globalyoungpeople.org/hub>

RESOURCES

Although there are not a lot of resources written specifically for young adults, there are hundreds of resources to consider including books, curriculum, videos, and more. Who decides what resources you use? How will they be paid for?

In selecting resources, there are a few things to consider.

- Young adults are in different places and stages in life. A 19 year old college student is very different from a 25 year old professional who is married with two children.
- Incorporate sharing and discussion. Allow participants to be a part of the program and connect with one another through the resource.
- Many young adults do not have a lot of extra money. Keep the resource affordable or find ways to offer resources at no cost to young adults.

MINISTER WITH YOUNG ADULTS; NOT TO THEM

Involve young adults in the process from the very beginning instead of assuming you know what young adults need or will be attracted to. Ask them. Listen to them. Invite the young adults into leadership and offer ample opportunities for young adults to take ownership in the ministry.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRIES

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