

## Gatherings

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The gatherings for young adult ministries can be vastly different. After looking at many different models of young adult ministries all over the country and even the world, I have seen that the type of gathering really isn't important, yet the important thing for young adults is that there are other young adults available for them to connect with.

Last semester we had a student from the local college ask me if he could do his Senior Thesis on our young adult community. He was an Anthropology major and he wanted to find out why people came week after week. He thought that people would say that it was the great technology, graphics or videos. Or maybe the lights that we use, or the facility we meet in or the teaching that they hear. Yet his findings were very different, he found that people came back week after week because their friends were there and they could connect with other young adults. So just "build it and they will come".

The following are some suggestions on gatherings that may inspire you to start something within your church. We always say, "Don't try to start something great, just start something."

- Sunday School Class
  - Some of our churches are doing a great job reaching young adults in our weekend worship services but for some reason there isn't an organized gathering for young adults. Consider starting some sort of Sunday School class specifically for young adults. The content of the class isn't that important, the important thing is that young adults want to journey with other young adults. Provide a class on a New Testament book of the Bible and focus the teaching on how they can apply the principles in their lives as young adults. The important thing with this generation is that there is plenty of time for interaction. Think about putting the group at round tables and let them discuss what they have just learned in the teaching (Either have someone teaching live or find a DVD driven teaching curriculum). Topical studies are great as well. Topics that are good in this environment are: Dating, relationships, work environment, Identity in Christ, Prayer, Finances, etc.....
  
- Weekly Bible Study
  - How bout a weekly Bible Study focused on Young Adults. This can be at the church in a class room, at the home of a young adult or at the home of a host couple at the church

who just loves young adults. A coffee shop or bakery is also a great place for a Bible Study to meet. These can be as informal as people bringing a Bible and asking questions or having a set curriculum for people to study. The Bible Study leaders can be other young adults, a Pastor at the church, or an older mentor couple who has a heart for young adults. For us in our ministry the latter has worked the best. Our young people love that their Small Group leaders are in their 50's. They have often been believers longer than the young adults have been Christians. It is a great dynamic and one that I hope you would consider opening your young adults up to.

- The night of the week is not that important. Sunday night is a great night, but people have usually been to church that morning and Sunday nights are usually set aside for preparation for the week or for homework. We have seen that Friday nights work well too, but typically are not a great night to reach out to non-believers. Whatever night you choose will have pros and cons, you are going to have to pick a night and go with it.
- Monthly / Quarterly Saturday morning Breakfast / Devotional
  - These can be a lot more informal and something that may develop friendships and relationships in a more organic way. Find a room in the church or pick a local restaurant and let all the young adults of your church know that you will be meeting there for breakfast on a Saturday morning and share a short devotional and allow the young adults to discuss how the principles of the devotional impact their lives. This can be done monthly or even quarterly. This is a great supplement to a group that is just starting and getting off the ground. Maybe start this a few months before you launch a new gathering, Sunday School class or small group.
- Men / Women focused gatherings on Friday nights
  - This would be a great way to get young adults started as they build a new community. Young Adults in their 20's and 30's are typically single (or else they would be in the marriage groups) and have a lot of opinions on the opposite sex. However they often miss the fact that they also need to

grow as Godly men and Women. Think about starting separate weekly gatherings on Friday nights (or another night) that focuses specifically on gender specific issues. You will really get the conversation going if you bring up what is expected of a Godly Man / Godly Woman. If you really want to start a dynamic conversation amongst the young adults of your church then mix them up after a few sessions and allow them to talk about what they have learned.

- Weekly or Monthly Worship / Prayer service
  - See if the sanctuary of the church would be available on a night that the church does not usually meet and see if you can have a worship service in the sanctuary. If there is another room in the church that would be great as well. It would be great if the young adults could have some say in the aesthetics of the room. This does not have to be a fancy gathering, just some people to lead in some worship music, someone to teach or facilitate the teaching / conversation and a time for the young adults to come before God in prayer. It is that simple. Some young adult ministries are very elaborate in the way that their community meets, and it works great for those ministries, but don't allow yourself to do what would reach your community.
  
- After church fellowship group
  - Maybe Young Adults already attend the weekend service but you want to get people together but don't know if a Sunday School class would be right for this group. Make a few announcements and tell the young adults that others are heading to a certain restaurant after the late service on Sunday for lunch. Pick a restaurant and keep it consistent. It can be weekly or you can say that the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month the young adults are going to Denny's after church. There is something about food that opens up the doors of fellowship.
  
- Once a month activity group
  - Pick 12 activities for the year and get some people to help you plan them. They don't have to be that often, just give people a few weeks notice and get them together for some fun. (See activities section for ideas)

The most important thing is for you to reach your church and your community. For us we have a lot of young adults at our weekly church services so we started with a Bible Study because the young adults didn't need another environment. Yet we grew to the point where our Bible Study has grown into a service environment. Find out what the young adults of your community are doing and minister there.