

## Six Things to Consider When Implementing Young Adult Ministry – Jason Bowman

- Always ask questions of young adults. Find those in your context and ask them what works for them and their friends. We spent the first 6 months of our young adult ministry discussing church for young adults with those we had, everything from philosophy to personal tastes there are ample questions that can get the young adults already in your church or in your life fired up about creating a relevant church for them. This seems like a "no-brainer" but all too often ministers think the best ideas come from their brain while sitting at their desk. Someone told me one time, "the moment a young adult ascertains that you just want them to be a part of your ministry, forget it." By asking them it will build ownership, creativity, and communicate the authenticity that young adults are looking for in their leaders.
- Determine the cultural context. This point has 2 elements: your city and your church. If your city is a college town then your ministry will look different than if it is not. Your church has a culture that is driven by your pastor. Your pastor must be on page and on board with what you are doing. We ended up creating a church w/in a church by launching a Sunday morning service specifically for young adults. The local leadership in our situation was excited by this and not threatened understanding we were reaching a different demographic. You will then have to work hard at bridging the gaps, something we were never the best at doing. Some pastors may be targeting young adults in their style on Sundays anyway and so creating a competitive atmosphere will never work. Regardless, I'd get on page with the pastor, and the vision of the church you are at and find a strategy that works for you.
- Big Events. I think the best defense is a good offense. If you want to reach young adults you need to go out and meet some and invite them in. Regardless of context or approach think social and think food. For the first year of our ministry we had a party the last Friday of every month. "Final Fridays" became our draw, we printed invites and made it as fun as possible and went and invited people in. Young Adults, especially college age, run in packs so get the cards in the right charismatic hands and you will find 20-30 visiting instead of just 2-3. Our events included: Luau, Karaoke, Bonfire, Costume and a "Hip Hop till you Don't Stop" party with a DJ and a Dance Off.
- Retreat. Our annual retreat was the pinnacle of the year and the moments that set the spiritual pace of our ministry. There are a ton of ideas out there on how to make a retreat amazing. We had food, no real schedule, 2 nights, 3 worship experiences, and a lot of fun! We had to underwrite almost the entire thing the first year and only about 50% the last few years, but it was worth every penny and all the effort. We hosted our in the beginning of February because we were in a college town and the beginning of fall semester is super busy on the campuses and the retreat centers cost way less in the off season!
- Resource yourself. I like books, but I'm finding people are better. Call someone who is doing young adult ministry there is a list of national leaders at [www.youngadults.ag.org](http://www.youngadults.ag.org) that are willing to take your call, or maybe you know someone who is doing it well.
- Do Something. Anywhere that Anyone is doing Anything to reach out to young adults it is working! It's not the unreachable generation, it's just the most unreached.

