

Healthy Youth & Family Ministry Characteristics

God's salvation plan has always involved families. At the beginning of the Hebrew Canon in Genesis 17:7 God promised Abraham,

“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.”

As the church began in Acts 2:38-39, the promise was echoed,

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Our churches should reflect God's heart for the generations. God's will is that faith should be passed on to our children. While the name Youth & Family Ministry is fairly new to our family of churches, the concept is not. We have always desired our children to have deep, meaningful relationships with God. The shift is purposeful in recognizing the importance and influence of the family in the spiritual development of our children. The family has always been God's primary vessel. The church works alongside the family to assist in spiritual formation and discipleship.

Obviously each church is different. We have different needs and resources. We will have different schedules and methods, but we can look at common traits that should be in place for any healthy ministry. There are some tangible measurements to determine a church's effectiveness, such as the number of teenagers that are disciples. But there are many intangibles that are important as well. We have listed some critical characteristics herein:

- 1) Christian parents who are committed and involved in the spiritual lives of their teens.
- 2) A strong teamwork between the church leaders, the Youth and Family leaders, the parents, the teen workers, and the teens
- 3) Parents being regularly equipped by the church leadership through both discipling and training
- 4) Teens being disciple and matured in faith, character, knowledge, and use of God's Word.
- 5) The majority of the kingdom kids (those who have grown up in the church) being converted and staying faithful through their later teen years.
- 6) Teen disciples successfully transitioning into campus and/or single ministries where they continue as faithful and giving disciples
- 7) Teens of non-members and their families being influenced by teen disciples and their families, studying the Bible, and getting baptized.
- 8) Strong spiritual relationships with the other teens, campus students, and adults across the church.
- 9) A strong connection to other Youth and Family Ministries in sister churches, to the International Conference of Youth and Family Ministry, and to HOPE Youth Corps.
- 10) A dynamic, fun, and spiritual youth ministry!