
How to Keep Our Churches from Dying: Engaging the Next Generation

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Key Thought

“A church void of the next generation, is a dying church”

Generations by Category

Gen Alpha: 2013 - TBD

- Ages 1-8

Gen Z: 1995 - 2012

- Ages 9-26

Millennials: 1980 - 1994

- Ages 27-40
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Honey Hole

Ages 5-30 with an
emphasis on 15-30



All Hands on Deck

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- Everyone must be committed to engaging the next generation
 - This is not solely the pastor's or youth department job
 - Seek to engage **parents and guardians**; however, if not successful, continue to engage the individual
 - The church must be willing to **financially support** engaging the next generation
 - Technology and media
 - The Building Fund
 - Ad Space
 - Engaging the next generation must be a #1 priority as much as growing membership, expanding the social media reach, etc.
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5 Points of Emphasis

1. Be Authentic
2. Sympathy Over Shame
3. Connect and Enhance
Interest & Gifts
4. Think Outside the Box:
Kill the Spirit of Always
5. Celebrate!



#1

Be Authentic

Be Authentic

- Seek to be **intentional**
 - What is your mission?
 - What is your vision?
 - How do you plan to get there?
- Be **real**
 - Don't try to be someone you are not in order to draw the next generation
 - You will be better received and respected if you stay true to yourself



Tip

Be intentional in every aspect of your church's push to engage with the next generation.

Remember: What work for others may not work for you. Know your people!



#2

Sympathy
Over Shame

Sympathy Over Shame

The danger of the pitfall

- Capturing the next generation, only to lose them

Sympathy - an affinity, association, or relationship between persons or things wherein whatever affects one similarly affects the other *Possess understanding

“Shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we are capable of change” - Brene Brown

Sympathy Over Shame

What does shame look like in the modern day church in regards to the next generation?

- Judgement based on dress attire (go beyond dress down Sunday)
- Judgement based on lifestyle (we all have fallen short)
- One-off trips with stringent requirements (attendance, etc.)
- Continual mentioning of someone's past failures (meet them where they are, and seek to take them further)



#3

**Connect &
Enhance
Interest and
Gifts**

Have a true interest in getting to know individuals beyond their presence or activities in the church

“By investing in others you honor those who invested in you” - Jo Miller

TIP

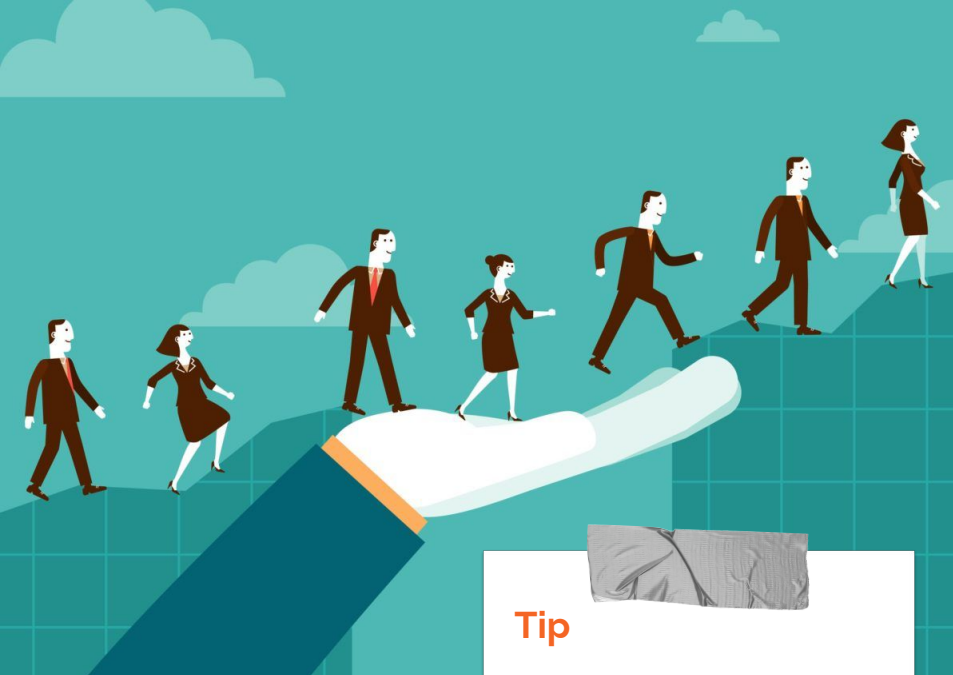


“FOR OUR OWN
SUCCESS TO BE REAL, IT
MUST CONTRIBUTE TO
THE SUCCESS OF
OTHERS.”

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

— Go Beyond the Walls

- Connecting with the next generation should not be restricted solely to church *step into their space
- Holistic approach to ministry (mind, body, soul)
 - Mental and emotional challenges
 - Educational challenges
 - Playgrounds, exercise activities, etc.
 - Christian education *on a realistic level



Tip

One of the most incredible acts of support and the real demonstration of investing in someone is seeking ways to enhance their gifts.

- Teamwork → Matchmaker
- Find their niche = Feed it!
- Utilize their gifts and talents
- Look beyond singing on the choir, ushering, collecting offering, etc. *

Use their gifts in house instead of outsourcing

Top five reasons church dropouts say they stopped attending church

Among young adults (ages 23-30) who attended a Protestant church regularly for at least a year in high school:



Notes: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.



4


**Think Outside the
Box: Kill the Spirit
of Always**

The most dangerous
phrase in the language
is "we've always done
it this way."

– Grace Hopper

Think Outside the Box: Kill the Spirit of “Always”

- Tradition can still be tradition even with minor and even major changes (ask)
- Be creative and broaden the use of technology
 - Snap, TikTok, Instagram, etc.
 - This does not mean you personally have to be active on said platforms
- Be PROACTIVE and not REACTIVE



THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX

Remember

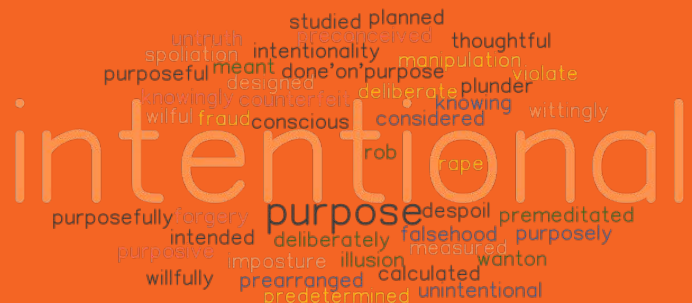
Don't be afraid to try something new. If it works great, if it don't work, try it again or try something new.

Be creative and tailor new initiatives toward the interest of the next generation

- Small groups*
- Small consistent outings instead of one big trip
- Engaging events that are not completely “church related”

5 Celebrate!





Tip

It is better to celebrate the next generation in the church than for them to receive outside the church from a negative source.

Be intentional about celebrating the success of the next generation outside of the following:

- Youth Day
- Report Cards
- Graduation
- College Acceptance



the Next Generation

The Church's future lies in our ability to capture, connect, engage, and invest in the next generation.

Q & A