

## Multiply 04

### Small Church Models of Youth Ministry

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Successes of a Youth Ministry IS NOT about numbers at events... or about how many of your youth are connected by social media. It's creating impactful ministry that truly creates Disciples that WANT to be a part of the church after they've "age out" of youth ministry. I have observed, researched and read much about the subject, here is the best of what I've discovered.

How is this accomplished? Through **FAITH PATHS**

- Belong
- Behave
- Belief

#### **BELONG-People who come to Faith through relationships**

- Multi-church model: One youth worker, rotating site, pulled resources, youth attend their own churches on Sunday.
- All church mentoring, 5 adults for each young person 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through high school. Real connections, real communication, real involvement. Based upon the research in "**Growing Young**" By Powell, Mulder and Griffin.
- No "formalized" youth ministry for the first 3—6 months of new ministry launch or new youth worker. "Showing Up", one on one (in public of course) and "true connections" are the imperative foundation of youth ministry.

#### **BEHAVE-People who come to FAITH through Christian experience and practices**

- Prayer- Teaching young people to pray beyond "circle up and be in an attitude of prayer". It has to go beyond asking for things to happen or change. Look to resources like "**Praying in the Messiness of Life**" by Linda Douty to introduce your youth to new, different and meaningful ways to prayer.
- Inclusion- DUMP YOUTH SUNDAY! What impacts youth as they grow up in the church is being a part and included in the life of the church. Do not limit inclusion to special days and events. However, it needs to be inclusion WITH meaning and purpose. If a youth has a seat on the committee, they need to have voice and input. If youth are a part of an event it has to be beyond set up and clean up. Look to "**One Body**" by Sam Halverson for some suggestions of how to make this shift.

## **BELIEF-People who come to FAITH through reason**

- Young people need to know that belief and a relationship with God and therefore the church serves to make the world a better place. Young people need to know their efforts are making an effort. Are your young people actively involved in life as a Disciple outside of the church in an ongoing basis? Current research is about going beyond “events” (one week mission, annual service projects)... and have them “be” the church outside of the walls of the church. They know and work among their community seeking justice and knowing who Jesus was and how His life, His ministry, and His work impacted all levels of society.

Growing up in a church as part of their faith path can be an impactful part of a young person’s life. The key is that they don’t grow up with a group of young people solely as a part of an isolated youth group. This creates the inability to see their place and purpose in the life in the church or why to continue their faith path when their days of youth group are over. Finding and creating a model of youth ministry that intentionally includes all the elements- Belong, Behave and Belief of a Faith Path- will not only create successful youth ministry , but will impact young people as a life-long Disciple.