



*Congregations help
every young person...*

**DEEPLY UNDERSTAND
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Helping youth to deeply understand their baptismal faith may seem obvious. The Gospel is the same today as it ever has been. In Baptism, young people are brought to the water and God's Word and given the forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal life. These gifts cannot be found in the world. By being united into Christ's death and resurrection in their baptismal faith, youth can walk confidently in God's promises. They are sealed and have a source of life they can return to in times of trouble. Every youth ministry can seek to send their teens out equipped with vital practices, skills, and knowledge given through the Holy Spirit. Their ability to share their baptismal faith is critical as Generation Z has more Nones (those who do not ascribe to any religious belief) than any other generation. Many youth ministries may find they are reaching teens and families who are hearing the Gospel for the first time.

Youth are facing questions and challenges from every corner of their world. They may struggle with sin, guilt, and self-justification over issues old and new. A deep understanding of baptismal faith is critical for youth in today's changing world. Youth will sin and fall short as every person does. Youth must understand they are forgiven sinners through Jesus' death and resurrection. While healthy youth ministry can include many components from community building to service, each and everything done should point youth back to this core truth. For youth in these times of new learning, expanding freedom, struggle and doubt, what can never be lost is the ultimate importance of Jesus' death and resurrection. It provides them a place of confidence, resting in God's baptismal promises which are theirs for a lifetime.

Healthy youth ministry instills in youth the desire to understand and study the Scripture. Scripture is not just another source of information, but the source of God's living Word to us. Technology provides many with instant access to information, ads, and data from the moment they wake up until they go to sleep. Youth need a lens through which to process and understand

all the information given to them. Parents and youth leaders should set an example of this in their own lives, setting apart time in God's Word regularly. Amongst all the voices and information, parents and the church can train young people to listen to Jesus' voice above all the chatter. Whether read individually, within families, or as a church, these words provide the promises, forgiveness and grace that Christians need above all else.

The demands on a teen's time are countless, and their calendars change minute to minute. Prioritizing their time is a difficult task for both young people and their families. Youth ministry should encourage young people to make the time they need for regular worship, Scripture reading, prayer, and receiving the Lord's Supper faithfully. These equip youth to faithfully live in busy and confusing times and provide personal and communal connection to God's Word and grace. While worship attendance isn't the only factor, this is certainly a reminder that regular worship and receiving the Word and Sacrament is critical. Unlike sports, academics, jobs or social engagement, a youth's faith life is of eternal importance.

While the church can be moving towards this practice from the moment of Baptism until death, the teen years are critical to the retention of young people in the church and faith. Youth ministry can cover an array of topics, but five key teachings for teens are suggested around identity, community, humble confidence, vocation and service and mission. The Youth Ministry Teaching End Goals (see page 6) are designed to move youth from Confirmation towards a deeper understanding on these topics. They are not comprehensive, nor do they seek to limit what youth should learn in youth ministry. They are a solid starting point for setting a deep foundation for youth to apply God's Word to the ever-increasing complex baptized life.

