



Religious Education Congress,
Tom East
Ministry with Gen Z Youth – There’s an App for That!
Session 3-09

Ministry with Gen Z Youth – There’s an App for That!

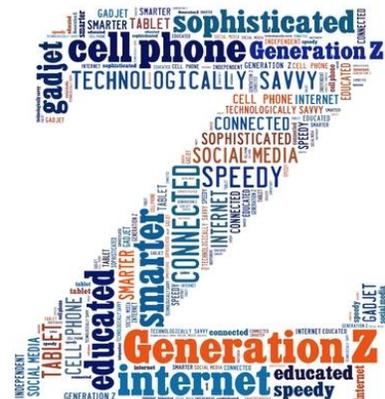


Presented by Tom East, Director, Center for Ministry Development,
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Here comes Generation Z, which includes youth born from about 1995 to 2010. These young people are tech integrated, social innovators and are looking for a customized way to belong and contribute. We can listen, learn from these young world changers and engage this generation of new disciples in helping to transform our parishes into centers of evangelization and service.

Members of Generation Z are...

- Synched with technology
- Expecting access
- Looking for in-person connections and transforming relationships
- Seeking to change the world
- Hungry for experiences of prayer, silence, mystery
- Needing to connect faith and science
- Exploring new ways to learn
- Highly educated
- Tolerant and diverse



More Religious and Spiritual

“Gen Zers’ participation in religion is up compared with previous generations. When asked about spirituality, 47 percent said they were religious, and an additional 31 percent said they were spiritual but not religious. Church attendance is also up during young adulthood, with 41 percent saying they attend weekly religious services, compared with 18 percent of millennials at the same ages, 21 percent of Generation X, and 26 percent of baby boomers.”

Joan Hope, Ph.D., Editor, “Get Your Campus Ready for Generation Z”, The Successful Registrar – Managing Records, Systems and Staff, September 2016, Volume 16, Issue 7.

Comparison with Millennials

Compiled from: Generation Z Goes to College, Corey Seemiller and Grace Meghan, Jossey-Bass, 2016

Millennial Generation	Generation Z
Socially and financially liberal	Socially liberal to moderate, financially moderate to conservative
More optimistic	More realistic
Service-oriented	Social-change-oriented
Confident (high sense of self-importance)	Confident (self-assured)
“Me” generation	“We” generation
Tech savvy	Tech integrated
Facebook to share	Instagram to share
Share	Follow
Prescheduled learning	On demand/just-in-time learning
Want to learn something? Google it	Want to learn something? YouTube it

Challenges in Ministry with Gen Z Youth

- The prevailing paradigm for Catholic youth ministry and religious education is programmatic in nature
- We dispense our truths in an antiquated manner
- We offer rational truth when youth are searching for experiential truth
- Youth are looking for credible communities that embody their truth

“When we build a community that is characterized by love, involvement becomes irresistible. This is especially relevant to youth because most teens are operating with an affiliative faith – the faith of belonging.”

Frank Mercadante

Opportunities to Connect

- Youth gifts with parish life
- Youth stress with prayer and healing
- Faith with science
- Youth’s hunger to learn with exploration of faith
- Young idealism with ongoing service and challenges
- Newly confirmed youth with active faith

Reasons why Youth Leave the Church

- No longer believe in God or religion
- Faith and science seem incompatible
- Change faith along with their parents
- Oppose the Church and organized religion
- Dislike the Church's rules and judgmental approach

CARA Study – 8.27.16

<https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/PapalVisit/Articles/Article/TabId/2727/ArtMID/20933/ArticleID/20512/Young-people-are-leaving-the-faith-Heres-why.aspx>

Trends in the 21st Century Catholic Church of the U.S.

1. Decline in participation in Sunday liturgy
2. People marrying later
3. Decline in number of marriages in the Church
 - a. 50% decline in past 20 years
 - b. 33% of post-Vatican II Catholics marry outside the Church
4. Increase in interfaith marriages
 - a. 40% among Post-Vatican II generation
 - b. 50% of all non-Latino marriages
5. Diminishing involvement of families and the younger generations with Catholic community, Catholic way of life
6. Decline in religious traditions and practices at home
7. Inability to keep people engaged in church life and catechesis after the celebration of a sacrament
8. Distinguishing between central and peripheral teachings (Cafeteria Catholics)
9. Catholicism as personal choice
10. Less religious literacy



Summary compiled by Joan Weber, Center for Ministry Development.

Hey Young Church – We're Listening

(blog post from January 4, 2017 – www.cmdnet.org)



In November, Papal Nuncio Christophe Pierre gave an address today at the USCCB that is a preview for the upcoming Synod on Youth and Vocation: **We are called to listen.**

"We have been describing young people and their relationship to the Church. If we are to help young people discern God's plan for their lives, we might ask: what are they looking for? They are looking to be heard. Earlier I mentioned the idea of accompaniment, which implies going to them and being with them. To this, we add listening to them. Listening is an important element of discernment. Pope Francis said:

'I think that in the pastoral ministry of the Church many beautiful things are being done, many beautiful things... But there is one thing that we must do more, even the priests, even the lay people, but above all the priests must do more: the apostolate of listening: to listen!' (Incontro del Santo Padre con i partecipanti a/ convegno per persone disabili, 11 giugno 2016)" <http://www.usccb.org/.../usccb-general-assembly-november-2016...>

Listening is the starting point for all ministry. What does it mean to really listen to young people? We need to pause in our quest of sharing with them all the things that they need to know and take some time to really hear their story. Where do they see God? How do they experience our parish? What is their experience of youth ministry? As you discern and plan for your ministry time with youth in this new year. Take some time to listen. Let the conversation go where it will. Here are some questions that could prime the pump.

- Listen to their questions and acknowledge that we also have questions and doubts.
- Ask questions and encourage youth share about their experience of God.
 - *Where do you see God?*
 - *Are there places that you especially experience God's presence?*
 - *Who are the people whom you see as being filled with faith?*
 - *Are there activities in which you feel close to God?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of their parish
 - *What is your experience of belonging to our parish?*
 - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
 - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about belonging to our parish?*
- Ask youth to share with you about their experience of youth ministry
 - *What is your experience of youth ministry?*
 - *If you were going to tell a friend about youth ministry in our parish, how would you describe it?*
 - *What do you enjoy? What helps you connect with God? What do you experience as helpful in your life?*
 - *What is challenging for you? What is hard for you about participating in youth ministry?*

Onramps for Ministry with Gen Z

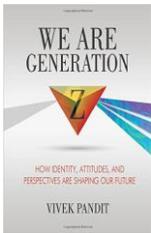
- Transforming Relationships
- Patterns of Discipleship
- Access to Experiences and Meaningful Roles in the Parish
- Awe, Wonder and Mystery
- Opportunities to Make a Difference and Change the World



Books



Generation Z Goes to College, Corey Seemiller and Grace Meghan, Jossey-Bass, 2016



We Are Generation Z, Vivek Pandit, Brown Book Publishing, 2015

Resources/Websites

Young People are Leaving the Faith – Here's Why

<https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/PapalVisit/Articles/Article/TabId/2727/ArtMID/20933/ArticleID/20512/Young-people-are-leaving-the-faith-Heres-why.aspx>

Move over Millennials – Here Comes Generation Z

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/fashion/move-over-millennials-here-comes-generation-z.html? r=0>

Generation Z - Slideshare

<http://www.slideshare.net/sparksandhoney/generation-z-final-june-17>

<http://genhq.com/igen-gen-z-generation-z-centennials-info/>

10 Things You Should know about Generation Z

<http://thomrainer.com/2016/05/ten-things-you-should-know-about-generation-z/>

Youth Specialties – Generation Z

<http://youthspecialties.com/blog/generation-z/>