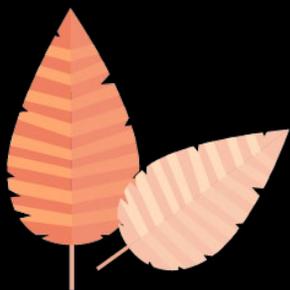


United & free

Alliance Churches World Wide



Four basics of youth work



Jesus and the children

- Mark 9:37 –“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me”
- “Meet the children as you would meet me... when you are welcoming the children you are welcoming God..”



Four basics of youth work (not the only ones..)

- Relationships
- The story
- Experiences
- Participation



Relationships

- Among leaders
 - Prayer
 - Sharing life
 - Don't be afraid to show weakness
- Build a "Circle of safety" – a safety zone. Where you don't have to spend energy on internal conflicts
- Expand the circle of safety to include the participants
- See every individual
- See what the group needs



Relationships

- Three keywords for good relationships
- **Belonging** – When we feel that we belong, we relax and open up to fellowship with God and each other.
- **Trust** – We can shape common rules together in the group
- **Safety** – No matter the conditions, young people should always feel safe. We as leaders are responsible for the culture we create!

”We commit ourselves to expose, resist and take action against all abuse of children, including violence, exploitation, slavery, trafficking, prostitution, gender and ethnic discrimination, commercial targeting and wilful neglect”



The greatest story!

- What do we have that is unique?? The story of Gods love through Jesus Christ
- It's our mission as leaders to live out and share the story of Jesus. How he sacrifices everything for me and loves me endlessly.
- Young people have the right to hear this story and to reflect on it's meaning and relevance to them
- We have a mission to tell– and at the same time give space for reflection so that each individual can take the message to heart.
- Why should we tell?
- Because it's the truth – and gives hope, meaning and gives you a place in a much bigger story.
- Authenticity beats relevance



The greatest story

- Young people are asking different questions today
- "Start with why!"
- The Bible is important – encourage reading/listening
- How can we tell the story?
 - In different ways!
 - It starts in your own life
 - Careful preparations
 - Use different types of expressions
- Give space for different leaders of different ages to share their stories– and invite the oldest generation in the church. Those who have walked with the Lord for many years
- Give space for the participants stories as well – Ask open questions!
- The biblical story of Gods love and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the defining hallmark of the church. We're meeting a generation who, in this digital and global age, are more connected than ever, and yet feel more disconnected than ever before. The church is carrying a story that gives meaning to a rootless generation. But how do we present it?



Experiences

- What can the church offer that is unique?
- Help set the stage– people express themselves differently; prayer, contemplation, music, dance etc.
- The experience of God is important in keeping ones faith
- Conclusions from a Swedish survey:
 - "Something that is mine"
 - "I had a personal encounter with Jesus"
 - "I was given the opportunity to make my own choice"
- The key is to challenge without forcing!
- The services are important – a diverse family, praising God together



Experiences in “the age of authenticity”

- See acts 2:45– let children and teenagers experience that there is good in this world.. A genuine faith, put into practical action affects everyone. We are not just talking about the love of God – we’re living it.
- How can we “set the stage” for people to meet God without forcing it upon them, which is especially important when working with young people?
A christian life with practical implications is important – what kind of opportunities do we create for our youths to put their faith into practice?



Participation – cooperation - co-creation

- We serve "ready made dishes" – they consume..?
- How do we create a culture of participation?
- It is important to feel ownership to create a sense of belonging
- Young people have the right to speak their mind in questions that concerns them and to have their opinions respected and taken seriously
- But not just that - children and teens are also limbs in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)
- "Children and young people are the church of today, not merely of tomorrow"
- Great potential as active agents in Gods mission



Participation – cooperation - co-creation

- Let the participants in a certain activity be a part of shaping that activity
- Eventually bring them into leadership roles
- Participation by showing trust (but not without guidance!)
- Participation in the local church and it's future
- Identify and encourage their gifts

