

# Connector Churches reaching young adults

by Ed Stetzer

These nine traits characterize churches that reach young adults.

Let's look at some examples of churches that are actually reaching young adults. We surveyed almost 200 churches to search for trends and found a series of nine common characteristics in these churches that are effectively reaching young adults. Here's what they're doing:

## **Creating Deeper Community**

Churches that are effective at attracting and developing young adults place a high value on moving people into a healthy small group system. Young adults are trying to connect and will make a lasting connection wherever they can find belonging.

## **Making a Difference through Service**

Churches that are transforming young adults value leading people to serve through volunteerism. More than being pampered, young adults want to be part of something bigger than themselves and are looking to be part of an organization where they can make a difference through acts of service.

## **Experiencing Worship**

Churches that are engaging young adults are providing worship environments that reflect their culture while also revering and revealing God. More than looking for a good performance, young adults desire to connect with a vertical experience of worship.

## **Leveraging Technology**

Churches that are reaching young adults are willing to communicate in a language of technology familiar to young adults. Young adults sense that these churches are welcoming churches that value and understand them, engaging them where they are.

## **Building Cross-Generational Relationships**

Churches that are linking young adults with older, mature adults are challenging young adults to move on to maturity through friendship, wisdom, and support. Young adults are drawn to churches that believe in them enough to challenge them.

## **Moving Toward Authenticity**

Churches that are engaging young adults are reaching them not only by their excellence but by their honesty. Young adults are looking for and connecting to churches where they see leaders that are authentic, transparent, and on a learning journey.

## **Leading by Transparency**

Churches that are influencing young adults highly value an incarnational approach to ministry and leadership. This incarnational approach doesn't require revealing one's personal sin list so much as it does require that those in leadership must be willing to express a personal sense of humanity and vulnerability.

## **Leading by Team**

Increasingly churches reaching young adults seem to be taking a team approach to ministry. They see ministry not as a solo venture but as a team sport—and the broader participation it creates increases the impact of ministry.

Ed Stetzer; excerpted from *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (B&H Books, 2008). Used by permission.

## **Evaluate Your Church**

1. What practices from the list above resemble what our church is doing? What things are these churches doing that we are not doing?
2. In what practical ways can we make our congregation more welcoming for young adults?
3. What obstacles do we currently face that prevent us from implementing practices that resonate with young adults?