

LOGOS USER GUIDE

Foundations and Setting the Stage

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INTRODUCTION

GENON MINISTRIES: WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

Mission Statement: GenOn Ministries equips faith communities and families to develop Christian disciples of all ages through intergenerational ministry.

Our Vision

Vision Statement: Children, youth, adults and families are nurtured toward lifelong faith and Christian discipleship, and communities of faith are energized and strengthened for renewed growth.

OUR CORE VALUES

AFFIRMING We affirm that an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is more important than anything else in life.

LIVING We seek to live with God as the center and focus of everything we do, following the Bible as our guide and standard.

NURTURING We develop and deepen Christian relationships which nurture people into lifelong faith and discipleship.

PARTNERING We recognize that partnering with the Body of Christ, the church, is essential for excellence in Christian nurture, and that God has called the church of Jesus Christ into being as the primary means of ministry in the world - including ministry with youth and children.

PRACTICING Through our ministry and training, we advocate the study and practice of four vital elements of ministry which originate from Acts 2:42 – teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and worship, and that this model of ministry, LOGOS, is of God, called in a significant way to reach out and minister to young people in and through churches of many denominations.

SERVING We strive to be accountable as stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us: time, talent, and treasure, including gifts for ministry given by God to individuals and congregations, and that dollars given to GenOn Ministries will go further, over a longer period of time, make more difference in the lives of more young people, and generate more lifelong commitments to Jesus Christ, his church and its mission.

EQUIPPING We equip adults to do ministry by providing training, resource materials and on-going relational support because it is responsible stewardship to equip thousands of churches, with their tens of thousands of members and leaders, to nurture youth and children into faithful relationship with Jesus Christ by utilizing personnel and materials already in place within congregations.

THE BEGINNING

GenOn Ministries was originally known as the Youth Club Program and was initiated in 1957. Dr. Dale K. Milligan convened and challenged a group of clergy who were conducting their own weekday Youth Club Programs to pool their efforts and help one another provide Bible Study materials designed especially for their Programs.

This group of clergy, augmented by the inclusion of Lamar Otis, a devoted Christian businessman and member of the Beulah Presbyterian Church as financial advisor and treasurer, became the charter members of what is now GenOn Ministries. They were: the Rev. Frank Bates, Dr. G. Mason Cochran, the Rev. Lloyd Dalbey, the Rev. Harry Orr Leitman, the Rev. Bruce Milligan, the Rev. Dr. Dale K. Milligan, Mr. Lamar J. Otis and the Rev. Aaron Powers.

Like pebbles dropped in a pool of water, each Youth Club Program sent out ripples of influence reaching out to more and more clergy and churches. These programs in the churches served by these leaders became so successful that increasing numbers of other clergy and congregations asked for help to start similar programs. Training seminars were begun at the Beulah Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA, and were subsequently replicated around the country under the leadership of Dr. Milligan, assisted by members of the Beulah Presbyterian Church, and Southminster Presbyterian Church in Mt. Lebanon, PA.

In 1963, Youth Club Program incorporated in Pittsburgh, PA. In the mid-80's, the name "LOGOS" was chosen to reflect the biblical basis and focus of the System and Program and the name was changed to LOGOS System Associates. In 2005, LOGOS System Associates changed its name to The LOGOS Ministry, reflecting the church wide system of ministry that transforms individual lives and entire congregations.

The LOGOS Ministry became GenOn Ministries in 2012, continuing a firm belief that an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is more important than anything else in life, and that nurturing people, especially youth and children, into this relationship of faith with God through Jesus Christ is the most important thing the church ever does. GenOn Ministries' *mission* – and we believe calling as well -- *is to equip faith communities and families to develop lifelong Christian disciples of all ages through intergenerational ministry.*

GenOn Ministries continues to equip churches to build and nurture abundant life-giving relationships of faith with God through the disciplined approach called LOGOS. LOGOS is GenOn's signature offering for a weekly intergenerational experience for children and/or youth that creates an intentional arena where children, youth and adults, together, can learn about, experience and practice the art of Christian relationships. In these cross-generational gatherings, young people and adults eat together, play together, study together, and pray together.

When effectively practiced, our intergenerational ministry has shown to be highly effective in:

- passing on the faith to younger generations,
- in nurturing children and youth on their faith journey, and
- energizing the whole church through the building of relationships

In addition to building relationships in LOGOS, GenOn Ministries continues to design and promote lifelong disciple-building experiences through annual GenOn Youth Summits (youth conferences).

By partnering with more and more churches, GenOn Ministries expects to see children, youth, and adults nurtured toward lifelong Christian faith and discipleship, and communities of faith energized and strengthened for renewed growth.

GenOn Ministries invites faith communities of all sizes to explore how adopting these practices can help them be more effective in fulfilling the mission of the church in their community.

As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, GenOn Ministries is incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania as a charitable organization for whom contributions are fully tax deductible.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our keystone ministry, LOGOS, is a 4-part experience with children and youth where everyone participates in Bible study, Recreation, Family Time and Worship Skills. LOGOS is built on three **KEY PRACTICES**:



Theology of Relationships A strong scripturally-based understanding of who God is in our lives, the nature of our personal relationship with God, and the resulting impact on our relationships with others because of God's presence in our lives.



Process of Call A scripturally-directed approach for aligning personal gifts and efforts with the needs of a ministry or mission that results from God's purpose and plan.



Balanced Ministry A requirement that ministry addresses and engages the mind, soul and body in a disciple-making process that teaches and provides an opportunity to practice the faith.

LOGOS creates an arena where people of all ages are transformed, regardless of a church's size, culture, ethnic mix or lack of it, economic context, or demographic definition. Through training, resources and support, LOGOS helps churches strengthen their ministry effectiveness with youth and children and bring young people into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

FOUNDATIONS

TO LEARN MORE, find these resources in the GenOn online store:

Quick Reference: Foundations and Getting Started

Workshop: Living by God's Design

Video: Christian Relationships

Ministry Effectiveness Models

DEFINING LOGOS

Developing and nurturing Christian relationships is at the heart of the LOGOS experience. The discussion of the theological foundations for these relationships, found later in this first section, helps us understand this. We must set our will to love one another as Christ loved us, giving each other unconditional, unearned, undeserved grace and love. Learning to do this takes time and practice. LOGOS provides both, in a safe environment every week.

The definition of LOGOS:

**LOGOS is the *theology and practice*
of *intergenerational Christian relationships*
in a *disciplined, four-part context*.**

As we look at each of the important words in the definition we begin to uncover the various components and how they form the arena in which LOGOS takes place.

Theology

"Theo" is "God" in Greek. "ology" means "study of." Theology is the study of what God is like and what God wants of each of us and of the church. Everything is theological! Everything in our experience and common life has to do with God and our relationships.

When we say that LOGOS **is** theology, we are asserting that young people, children and adults, interacting with one another in all four parts of the ministry every week are involved in experiencing, not just hearing about, who God is, what God is like, what God wants, what difference it makes, who we are, and what the meaning and purpose of everything is.

Practice

LOGOS is designed to be theology in action. In Biblical times and with Biblical people, to believe was to act. Without action, a belief is simply speculation.

An analogy: Using a railroad system as an analogy, effective nurturing educational ministry could be compared to a two-rail design. Railroad tracks have two rails. If a piece of rail is missing, the whole train is derailed and cannot deliver its passengers or freight to their proper destination. The one rail that almost every church has in place is the mind-feeding rail. This is experienced in Bible study, retreats, seminars, and VBS. The other rail, practice arena, is often not complete. We need to repair that rail and see that it is in place. LOGOS has been successful in doing just that by providing enough time every week for young people and adults to put into practice what they have learned in Bible study. It is a chance to "catch" the Christian faith.

This experience carries over into church school, youth groups, and other nurture and education ministries because relationships have been built and a pattern of living has been established.

Intergenerational Christian Relationships

Through scripture, we come to know that to God, relationships are everything. This is true for our personal relationship with God and for the relationships we have with one another. Our relationships with one another are made new because of our relationship with God. Relationships with persons of all ages are essential to Christian formation and the development of mature faith. For intergenerational Christian formation to happen, the generations must be together, they must know each other, and they must experience life in the body of Christ together.

In these relationships, LOGOS has one rule:

**Treat every person as a child of God.
No one is to treat others as if they do not matter.**

Let us be clear about what we mean by "child of God." In our only rule for LOGOS we decide to "treat every other person as if they were a child of God." Whether or not a particular individual meets certain criteria for being considered a child of God is secondary to our conviction that it is the will of God that all people become children of God and come into a relationship of faith with God.

Christians differ on how they believe a person becomes a child of God. John 1:12 is often quoted to support more than one position. Some Christian traditions stress the "to all who received him, who believed in his name" parts of the verse. They maintain that in order to be a child of God, one must make a personal decision to receive Jesus into their heart and accept him by faith as their personal Lord and Savior. Personal decision in these traditions usually leads to believer's baptism.

In Genesis 1:26-27 it is clear that God created every human being, male and female, in the image of God.

In John 1:12 it says that "...to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God..." This verse states clearly that the children

of God are Christian believers, members of the faith community. The "children of God" are those who have become part of God's "family," the church.

Other Christian traditions stress the "he gave power to become children of God" part of the verse. They maintain that it is God's will and God's action, not our own decision, which make us children of God, although we do receive the benefit of God's action by faith. Proponents of this view site the words of the next verse (v. 13) that these children of God are born "not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God." From this point of view, we receive him by receiving God's action on our behalf in Holy Baptism, including infant baptism.

Jesus used powerful examples of treating "outsiders" as if they belonged. By striving to treat every person as a child of God, we are trying to repeat Jesus' pattern of giving people experiences of God's unconditional love that will call them into an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Disciplined

Disciplined, in this context, means structure, striving for excellence, commitment, expectations, using time, energy and gifts to produce excellence. Excellence is not accomplished without discipline and this discipline takes practice. Think of accomplishments in sports, music, cooking, school, and work, where we can become excellent through intentional practice. Discipline marks our boundaries, which give us security within which we can grow. The higher the expectations, the higher we strive to perform.

For example, regular attendance in LOGOS is essential for the development of excellence. Scheduling mid-week may provide the best opportunity for this regular attendance. The middle of the week has challenges too: sports, band, dance lessons, and so forth. But, there seems to be more stability in the schedule during the week, and more control can be exerted to make time for LOGOS. Such choices force us to make some decisions that are counter-culture. But, if we believe that the Christian nurture of our young people is the most important thing we do as a church, then those choices must be made. It is a challenge to put first things first, for Christ's sake.

4-part Context

The arena for Christian nurture that is found in LOGOS is made up of *four equally important experiences* in which every young person participates. These four parts characterize the activities in which the early Christians participated as they formed the first Christian communities. Every church includes these activities to some extent in their life together. In LOGOS, the four elements combine to provide a contemporary spiritual context within which young people and adults are nurtured through the theology and practice of

Christian relationships. It worked for the first century church. It works today in any church, of any size, in any culture or economic context.

The four parts of LOGOS include:

- **Bible Study:** Bible study is critical to LOGOS because God wants us to know God, and to discover whose we are. It is where we learn about the stories of God's relationship with people and their relationships with one another. We study Biblical concepts such as life, death, sin, salvation, resurrection, peace, justice and righteousness, and define the nature and terms of Christian relationships.
- **Worship Skills:** God created us to worship him, so worship is our primary responsibility as Christians. "Worship is to the Body of Christ what breathing is to the human body. Without it the body dies." (The Rev. Dr. Dale K. Milligan) GenOn is committed to the preparation of youth and children to be involved in worship with the congregation on a regular basis. The Worship Skills portion of LOGOS provides time to learn about worship and to prepare for leadership in regular congregational worship. Youth and children become an integral part of worship as it becomes an integral part of the fabric and language of their souls.
- **Recreation:** Part of what it means to be created in the image of God is having the capacity to give and receive personal revelation. We cannot play without revealing ourselves. The challenge in Recreation is learning how to treat each other as children of God even at difficult moments. We play for theological reasons in LOGOS as well as for fun. Revelation happens for both young people and adults. Recreation also provides the opportunity for many adults of the congregation to come and share their hobbies, talents and special interests with the young people. In doing so, revelation takes place and relationships are formed.
- **Family Time:** Christ is uniquely known and experienced in the breaking of bread. LOGOS Family Time is not just a time to eat. It is a time when families of unrelated young people and adults are formed around tables. These table families care for and about each other as they share food, fun, and conversation around the table each week. There is a sacramental dimension to eating together. As Jesus is known to his disciples in the breaking of bread, so are we known to each other when we eat together.

LOGOS requires a great deal of commitment of parents, young people, clergy and the congregation. In the LOGOS arena, adults and young people intentionally practice developing Christ-like relationships. Living together week after week provides time to learn and experience the Christian faith.

This is what nurturing is all about and LOGOS is an expression of the conviction that Christian relationships grow when consistently experienced in communities where such theology is intentionally practiced.

- Relationships must be informed (learning about God), refined, renewed and kept fresh. Bible study provides this arena.
- Relationships need time for persons to delight together in fun. Recreation provides this arena.
- Relationships need to experience a communion of spirit. Family Time provides this arena.
- Relationships need to be rooted in each person's own relationship with God which is renewed and nurtured weekly in worship. Worship Skills and weekly congregational worship provide for this arena.

The four parts are inseparable. They work together within the context provided by the life of the congregation and most especially weekly worship. These four parts, plus weekly congregational worship make up the whole – providing everyone involved with a balanced arena in which to have a complete experience of Christian nurture.

One result of the commitment to LOGOS is the high attendance rate. Churches implementing LOGOS can expect a higher than average attendance every week of those enrolled. Absenteeism, disruptive to learning in an ordered sequential system, is very low.

Some will find it difficult to make a decision to commit to be present every week at LOGOS because of hours of homework and the pressures to schedule young people in sports, scouts, school clubs, music, and other secular things. A balance of the activities in which a young person participates is needed. Parents make choices from the time their children are babies between those things that are good for them and those that are not. They make choices to do what is good for the development of motor skills, coordination, social skills, musical skills and so forth. Parents want their children to reach their potential in all areas.

Parents who provide opportunities for their children and youth to be nurtured spiritually will be raising children who are able to make good choices when faced with pressures from the culture, and have stability and strength when faced with life's tragedies or hardships.

LOGOS is not intended to replace any other ministry in the church. It is intended to work in cooperation with the other nurturing programs of the church. For good spiritual health, young people need to participate in church school, youth groups, summer camp programs, VBS and LOGOS!

KEY PRACTICES

Three **KEY PRACTICES** distinguish LOGOS from all other church opportunities.



Christian Relationships

As explained in Defining of LOGOS (above), developing Christian relationships is the heart of GenOn Ministries. Through scripture, we have come to know that to God, relationships are everything. This is true for our personal relationship with God and for the relationships we have with one another. Our relationships with one another are made new because of our relationship with God. In LOGOS, we celebrate our relationship with God with our 1 rule of LOGOS: You are a child of God and I will treat you that way. Everything we do in LOGOS is relational and helps to practice being in right relationship with others.

The first and primary responsibility of every person is to **be in an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ**. As mature Christians, our task then must be to **image Christ by intentionally modeling the elements of RISK and TRUST** in Christian relationships with all other people – especially children and youth, and to seek to draw more people into Kingdom of God living through contagious Christian relationships—ever expanding the Kingdom. (For more information on the Process of Christian Relationships see Theological Foundations later in this section.)



Process of Call

GenOn Ministries has developed a process that is effective in helping the church invite people into ministry that has the best likelihood of matching a church's needs with the spiritual gifts and interests of the people. In the process of calling people to share their gifts in ministry, the person and their gifts need to be prayerfully matched to the tasks. It is a biblical process. God never recruited anyone.

GenOn believes that all persons are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27) They are endowed with the gifts and talents needed to accomplish the purposes for which they were created.

The Process of Call is deeply undergirded with prayer and patience in the work of the Holy Spirit. This process is covered in length in the LOGOS User Guide: Implementing LOGOS.



Balanced Ministry

In LOGOS, everyone participates in the four parts: Bible study, recreation, worship skills and family time. These four parts characterize the activities in which the early Christians participated as they formed the first Christian communities (Acts 2:42). In LOGOS, we experience all of them every time we meet so that the full impact of the combined elements can provide an arena for the development of genuine Christian relationships. (Each of the four parts is described in detail in its own section of the *LOGOS User Guide*.)

Summary

When these three **KEY PRACTICES** are emphasized, there is an increased possibility of congregation-wide transformation. Christian Relationships, Balanced Ministry and The Process of Call, together, can have an impact on all areas of ministry in your church when introduced and practiced throughout your ministry.

REALITIES AND CONVICTIONS

In LOGOS, striving for excellence is of utmost importance in order to build and sustain solid Christian relationships among the children, youth and adults. We understand that nurturing excellent faith and discipleship often hinges on how well we understand and respond to certain realities.

GenOn Ministries has identified twelve nurture Realities which apply to people and their life experiences everywhere. These nurture Realities are theological, sociological, behavioral, cultural, and environmental factors that are present and functioning all the time and consistently influence the context of our ministry. GenOn has responded to these nurture Realities with twelve Convictions that shape the foundations on which the LOGOS experience is built.

When we understand and pay attention to these nurture Realities and Convictions, they will work to our advantage and impact the excellence of our ministry with young people. If we are unaware of them or choose to ignore them, our ministry has a very good chance of only being adequate, which is way below our goal of excellence.

How effectively we nurture faith and discipleship through Christian relationships often hinges on how well we understand and respond to these nurture realities. It is the constant responsibility of the church leadership to bring awareness and understanding of these realities and the resulting convictions to the congregation so that they will understand the "why" behind the bones that provides the structure for the LOGOS experience.

Of the 12 realities and convictions, we lift up Abundant Life-Giving Relationship as having the highest priority, guiding all the others.

REALITY: ABUNDANT LIFE-GIVING RELATIONSHIP

An abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is more important than anything else in life.

CONVICTION: NURTURE – MOST IMPORTANT Nurturing people, especially youth and children, into this relationship of faith with God through Jesus Christ is the most important thing the church ever does.

The remaining Realities and Convictions are:

REALITY: SOCIOLOGY Sociological factors influence and motivate people more than theology. Youth and children do not normally become a part of church programs or events for theological or spiritual reasons. People go where their friends go.

CONVICTION: FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES Youth and children must be given sufficient opportunity to center their friendships in church-based relationships.

People go where their friends go. Youth and children do not normally become a part of church programs or events for theological or spiritual reasons. They attend because of their parents or because their friends attend and they want to be with their friends.

REALITY: CAUGHT The Christian faith is more caught than taught. Christian experience precedes Christian thought and theology.

CONVICTION: RELATIONAL CONTEXT Spiritual nurture always requires a relational context to be effective.

Christian experience precedes Christian thought and theology. An experience of Christ means being lovingly cared for by God and by the community of God's people. Without a personal Christian experience there is not authentic Christian community.

REALITY: SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE Many in the church have had their most significant memorable experience of Christian community in a conference/camp/retreat setting. Genuine Christian community is experienced most authentically in a setting where there is sufficient time and a structured environment for interaction with peers and adults.

CONVICTION: CAMP A vital approach of Christian nurture must include the essence of the camp/conference/retreat experience on a continual basis.

Genuine Christian community is experienced most authentically in a setting where there is sufficient time and a structured environment for sustained, continuous, cumulative interaction with peers and adults. Three to four hours per week, on a midweek day, provide sufficient time for the engagement of body, mind, and heart in Recreation, Bible Study, Worship Skills, and a Family Time meal.

REALITY: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS Challenge, adventure, risk, and excitement are all essential elements of authentic relationships.

CONVICTION: C.A.R.E. Any system of nurture that is truly reflective of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must include the elements of challenge, adventure, risk and excitement as demonstrated in the early church. (Acts 2:42)

The elements of challenge, adventure, and risk are inherent in the building of relationships. No one ever wearies of giving love and being loved.

REALITY: CLERGY Clergy involvement in the lives of youth and children is crucial to their relationship to the church. Clergy provides, as no other person of the church family can, the continuity between nurture and worship.

CONVICTION: CLERGY/TEACHER Complete and effective Christian nurture must include the clergy's highly visible Christian relationships with youth and children. Therefore, the clergy must lead in the nurturing ministry of the church.

Clergy involvement, or the lack of it, reflects and often determines the measure of importance the congregation attaches to youth and children and their nurture. LOGOS will only be effective in the church where it has the energetic support and involvement of the clergy every week.

REALITY: ADULT ROLE Adults play an essential role in shaping the growth and development of young people. Young people need the care, support and love of mature adults who serve as models of adulthood and leadership in order to know what it means to be "mature in Christ."

CONVICTION: MATURE CHRISTIAN ADULTS Mature Christian adults provide the best direction, insight, and relational security needed for the fullest development of youth into Christian discipleship.

God never intended for any child to stand alone. Young people need the care, support and love of mature adults who serve as models of adulthood and leadership in order to know what it means to be "mature in Christ."

REALITY: PARENTING The positive experience of quality parenting relationships is of utmost importance to the nurture of young people. When there is understanding, participation, and support of the goals of Christian nurture by parents and other adults, there is assurance of lasting, effective Christian nurturing into Christian discipleship.

CONVICTION: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT Parental or supportive adult involvement, in the church and home, must be present for effective Christian nurture.

When there is understanding, participation, and support of the goals of Christian nurture by parents and other adults, who serve with their children in this ministry, there is some assurance of lasting, effective Christian nurturing into Christian discipleship. LOGOS fosters relationships between youth, children, and their families.

REALITY: WORSHIP Worshiping is for the congregation what breathing is for the human body. Without worship, there is no church. Youth and children must be included and participate in congregational worship.

CONVICTION: WORSHIP PARTICIPATION Complete and effective Christian nurture must include young people in participation in weekly worship with the congregation.

Without worship there is no church. In order for youth and children to fully worship God, they must be included and participate in congregational worship.

REALITY: SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENT Great goals are achieved only with significant commitment of time, energy and ability. High standards of disciplined commitment are inherent elements of genuine Christian experience and nurture.

CONVICTION: HIGH EXPECTATIONS Ministry modeled after Christ's example sets high expectations and makes demands on youth and parents, pastors, other church professionals, and the congregation.

Genuine Christian experience and nurture must expect high standards of disciplined commitment.

REALITY: GIFTS God equips every Christian with gifts and calls every Christian to share in the work of ministry to build up the Body of Christ. There are sufficient gifts in a particular church to fulfill the ministry to which they are called and empowered.

CONVICTION: CALL The best way to deploy the gifts of all the people for ministry is to recover and implement the Biblical concept of Call.

Created in the image of God and by the grace of God, every person, younger and older, is blessed with gifts. Each person has different gifts. There are sufficient gifts in a particular church to fulfill the ministry to which they are called and empowered.

REALITY: YOUTH Youth ministry is a most critical area of the congregation's life. The vitality of the youth ministry is a barometer for the quality of the spiritual life and health of a congregation.

CONVICTION: YOUTH, INTENTIONALLY Reaching youth and nurturing them into vigorous discipleship must become a top priority in the life and program of the church.

Teen years are a window of opportunity for the church. Younger teens are emerging from an inherited faith, seeking to find out who they are and what they believe apart from their families. Young teens need the sense of identity they experience as part of a group. They need to be free to explore their own personal questions and beliefs, and to develop ownership of their own spiritual journeys.

Older teens have a need for significant relationships, but also need a sense of individual identity apart from the group. During high school, the ability to think in abstract terms emerges, allowing teens to explore the intricacies of the Christian

faith . . . to move beyond “do” and “don’t” . . . as they develop a faith that is their own.

Summary

Through an understanding of these realities and convictions, we can appreciate the need to foster Christian relationships that are modeled after Christ and involve risk, vulnerability, commitment and trust. Young people – and other adults as well – can experience what it’s like to be loved by God when everyone in the congregation practices relationships that reflect the way God (revealed by Christ) would think, care, choose and decide.

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

LOGOS is grounded in biblical and theological concepts. Churches that embrace these concepts have a solid foundation for starting and sustaining LOGOS, and respond wisely to issues and choices about LOGOS.

The central theological conviction upon which LOGOS is based is that relationships are everything, with God and with one another.

Scripture bears witness to God, who exists as three persons, in a relationship of perfect love with human beings everywhere. Even though there is much about the mystery of God that we will never be able to grasp fully or understand completely, at least this much has been revealed to us: *God is, and chooses to be, in a loving relationship with all of us.* Thus, since scripture speaks about God in a relational manner, so will we. Human beings are all created in the image and likeness of God, with the capacity to be extensions of God in their everyday lives. *To be in an abundant life-giving relationship with God enables all relationships to be right. This is the biblical, theological, practical foundation of LOGOS.*

The gift of an abundant eternal life with God is a continually unfolding drama, unlike any other, reaching its climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Beginning then and continuing even today, the Holy Spirit is God's presence at work bringing all of us to God through Jesus Christ that we might all glorify God and enjoy that wonderful relationship with God forever and ever. The gift of abundant life-giving relationship is not for us alone to enjoy, but calls us into community – into the church – to share in our relationships with one another. LOGOS has proven to be, over a great many years, a highly effective and responsible arena for the development of these Christ-like relationships.

What follows – *Living by God's Design* – are simple, easily understandable diagrams known as "theograms," which illustrate these relational theological concepts as presented in the Bible. There is no denominational "flavor" or identity with the theology presented here. Clergy, theologians, seminary professors and lay people in all Christian denominations have agreed that these theograms accurately reflect Christian theology in scripture.

Following the 4 individual theograms is a fifth theogram, a summary.

Living by God's Design

In LOGOS, everything is about theology! GenOn Ministries believes passionately that an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is THE most important thing (see Realities and Convictions earlier in this section). Theology is not just something we need to study – but something we need to put into action as a way of life.

We believe we are all called to love God, to love people and to share our God-given gifts in ministry. When we can put what we believe into practice, others can experience through us what it's like to be part of God's family – loved, accepted and forgiven.

We want bring the Word – the "LOGOS" – to our children and we do that by practicing the only rule of LOGOS:

Treat every person as a child of God.

Because everyone in the congregation is teaching all the time through our actions and relationships – whether we know it or not – it's important for us to talk together about what we believe and what we want to model. Theograms, pictures that convey a theological concept, help us to do that. The next page shows a picture of the 4 GenOn Ministries theograms. The pages following the picture explain each theogram, and these pages are followed by a summary of these theological concepts.

Theogram #1 — Revelation

Questions

Who am I?

Where am I going?

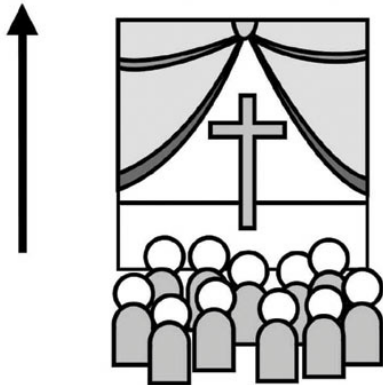
Is there any purpose
to this trip?

Ways of Answering

No answer.

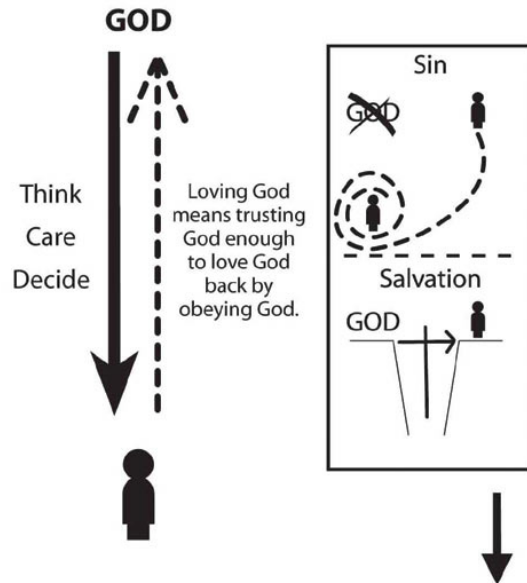
I can guess.

It can be revealed.



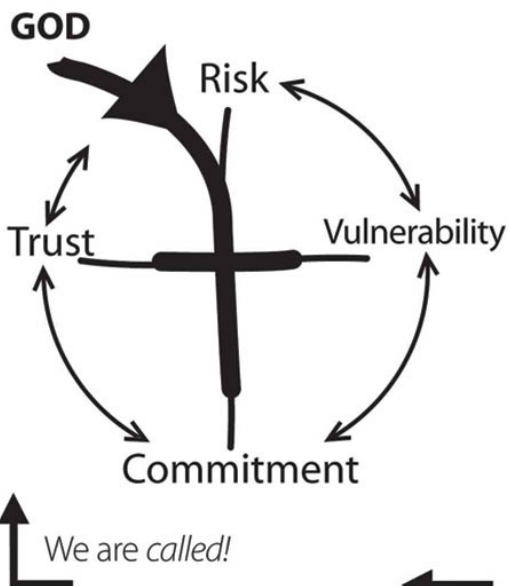
Theogram #2 — The Image of God

Who am I?



Theogram #4 — The Process of Relationships

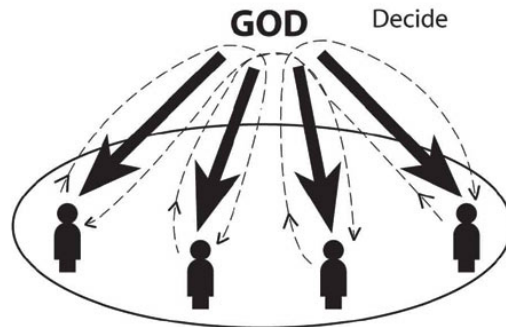
Is there
any purpose?



Theogram #3 — The Kingdom of God

Where am I going?

Think
Care
Decide



Treat every
person as a
Child of God.

Theogram 1: REVELATION

Throughout our lives, we are continually trying to find the answers to three basic “ultimate” life questions:

1. “Who am I?” (the question of IDENTITY)
2. “Where am I going?” (the question of DIRECTION and DESTINY)
3. “Is there any purpose to the trip?” (the question of MEANING)

There are three basic ways of answering:

1. “There is NO ANSWER – or if there is, no one can know it.”
2. “I can GUESS.”
3. “It can be REVEALED.”

To make a picture of what this might look like, we have a stage with a closed curtain and people sitting in the audience, wondering, “What’s behind the curtain?”

Some of the people might answer that question by saying, “You can’t know the answer.” Others might note the size of the stage, location of stage entrances, clues from sounds or smells etc., and make their best guesses about what is most likely to be on the stage. But, if someone opens the curtain – even if just for a moment – the answer has now been REVEALED! They do not have to keep wondering or guess – they can KNOW the answer.

Christians believe that, in the person of Jesus Christ, God has indeed “pulled back the curtain” to reveal the answers to our ultimate questions. Because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we can KNOW the answers to our questions about identity, direction, and the meaning of our lives.

To be human is to be engaged in the process of self-revelation. It is how we are most “like God.” As God is, ultimately and fully, so are we in our scaled-down, human proportions. And all the answers to our questions are found in that revelation. The first and prime responsibility of every Christian is to be in an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Becoming a part of a community where quality relationships incarnate the mind and spirit of Christ can help nourish that relationship. LOGOS is designed to enable everyone to experience such relationships, and through them, come to know who God is, who Christ is, who we are, and for what we have been created. Not everything about God has been fully revealed. There is much about the being of God that remains a mystery. What has been disclosed is the drama of our salvation in which the Spirit leads us to the Son through whom we have reconciliation with the Father.

Theogram 2: IMAGE OF GOD

So, “Who am I?” We don’t get much further than the first chapter of Genesis before we discover the answer to that question! The Bible tells us in the story of creation that God made people in God’s own image. Through the incarnation of God

in Jesus Christ, God clarifies for us what that means in action. In the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, God empowers us to grow into reflecting that image in our everyday living. Genesis 1:26-27: *"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

This theogram starts with GOD and a person (you or me). A heavy arrow from GOD to the person, indicates God's creation of each one of us in God's image. The arrow also is intended to remind us of God's love, unconditional acceptance and constant offer of right relationship for each of us. It is heavy and dark, to show how constant and unfailing God's offer of relationship is.

Because each of us has been created in the image of God, we – like God – have the ability to give and receive personal revelation in relationships, and have capacities to THINK, to CARE, and to CHOOSE and DECIDE – as God does. Each of us can love God back!

A dotted line from the person back to GOD indicates responding to God's offer of right relationship in love. Note that this line is not as dark, and is a broken line, because we are not God, just human and imperfect images of God.

What does it mean to "love God?" It means TRUSTING GOD enough to OBEY GOD in the way we think, care, and decide.

There are a few little side issues – actually some really BIG issues: sin and salvation!

In the "Sin" theogram, we see the same GOD and person. A heavy arrow from God to person still indicates God's gifts of God-likeness, love and offer of right relationship. However, because we are human, not God, often we get wrapped up in ourselves when we think, care, decide, and choose.

We want to do it our way instead of God's way, and so the dotted line circles around the person, effectively elevating us to the place only God should occupy in our lives. The "X" over GOD depicts how this cancels out God – in spite of God's constant offer of an abundant life-giving relationship. When we think, care and decide based on our own feelings rather than on obedience to God's way, we find ourselves alienated from God – the condition called "sin".

In the "Salvation" theogram, this separation from God is shown as a chasm, with GOD on one side and a person on the other. All our attempts to earn our way back to this relationship of faith with God are thwarted by our human nature – no one of us is able to "be good" long enough to deserve that relationship. Only because God provides a bridge are we able to fully "love God back". Because we can't do it on our own, God has provided the sacrifice that saves us and restores us to an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus.

Because of this gift, each of us is empowered to be in this relationship of faith with God – to truly LOVE God, which means choosing to TRUST and OBEY. We can claim our inheritance, moving from being made in the image of God to becoming a child of God!

Theogram 3: KINGDOM OF GOD

So - "Where am I going?"

The answer to this big question follows a decision to LOVE God by TRUSTING and OBEYING. When we choose this way, we are going into the Kingdom of God – not only sometime in the far-off future – but right now, through the quality and style of relationships we give to one another. Luke 17:20-21:

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

This theogram shows GOD and a person. The good news and bad news is that there are lots more people – each created in God's likeness – and God loves and wants to be in this relationship of faith with every ONE!

If you or I choose to LOVE God, we choose to TRUST and OBEY God's way of looking at each other. When we do this, the dotted line from person to GOD is extended to link to each person represented, indicating our decision to THINK, CARE, CHOOSE and DECIDE about each one as we understand God does.

This means each of us must decide to LOVE – not based on our feelings or whether the person deserves it – but as a conscious set of the will, choosing what is in another person's best interests before our own.

Sometimes we find it easy to love another person as God does – our friends, our family, others whom we like and enjoy. Sometimes it is more challenging – like that unruly 5th grader who disrupts and ruins plans for nearly every Bible Study lesson. And occasionally, it is truly difficult – such as the adult who took advantage in a business deal, or betrayed a secret, etc.

No matter whom we encounter, when we intentionally try to reflect God's will through our actions our marching orders must be: "Treat every person as a child of God." God loves each of these people, and desires that they come into this relationship of faith with God through the LOGOS, Jesus Christ. This theogram illustrates what each of our congregations could become: a community that truly loves, holds one another accountable, and reveals God's love through the quality and style of relationships experienced within it. It also depicts an ideal LOGOS in action!

When this theogram is lived out, new bonds are built among people based on Christ-like love, and an arena is established within which we catch flashes of what it is like to live right here, right now, with the Kingdom of God truly “in our midst”.

In LOGOS, every aspect of our life together exists in order for us to practice the reality of this recognition. No person - adult or child - has the right to speak or act as if he or she is the only one present who is created in the image and likeness of God. We forgive. We restore. We seek to consider no one merely from a human point of view, but to see them through the eyes of Christ. We reflect back to others the image of Christ.

So – “What’s my purpose?”

Theogram 4: PROCESS OF RELATIONSHIPS

If we are going “into the Kingdom of God”, most of us need a road map! How do we get there? How can we develop relationships based on Christ’s example that will reveal God’s love to others?

A person only comes into relationship with God – or any other person – by becoming involved in the Process of Relationships.

The Process of Relationships involves **risk**, **trust**, **commitment** and **vulnerability**.

This constantly ongoing process is the only way relationships begin and grow. Relationships begin with **risk**-taking, which involves **entrusting** ourselves to another in self-revelation in an irretrievable **commitment** by being **vulnerable**, sometimes experiencing suffering (hurt, rejection, humiliation), and in doing so, discovering our full **commitment** to each other.

Following Christ’s example, we must discipline ourselves to offer Christian relationship to those who have not earned and do not deserve it, to hold others accountable by helping them learn to reflect Christ in the quality of their relationships too, to FORGIVE, and to continue the Process of Relationships. John 15:12: *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

This process is what GOD has done for us, and revealed to us through Christ. Jesus laid aside equality with God to **risk** being human, **entrusted** himself to live with “you and me”, was **vulnerable** to those who opposed him, suffered, and died on a cross, and discovered the full **commitment** of God in resurrection. Through Christ, the constancy of God’s offer of abundant life-giving relationship is demonstrated once and for all – even killing God was not enough to make God withdraw that offer!

The first and prime responsibility of every person is to be in this relationship of faith with God through Jesus Christ. As LOGOS leaders, our task must be to image Christ

by intentionally modeling the elements of risk, trust, vulnerability and commitment in Christian relationships with all other people – especially children!

Leaders must demonstrate Christ to young people through relationships. We do for them, in some measure, what Christ has done for us. We are to love them as Christ has loved us. By that process, they come to know by experience, the love Christ has for them. It can be a profound discovery for youth to learn that:

- The very friendships they cherish are an expression of the fact that they are made in the image of God and are imaging God in their very capacity for and commitment to relationships.
- The process by which their deepest relationships with one another come into being is the same process by which they enter into a relationship of faith with God and to know God.
- The ultimate purpose of growing relationships and friendships is to establish and build up a relationship of faith with Christ.

To recap these pictures:

Who am I? I am created in the Image of God, graced with capacities to respond to God in love, trust and obedience!

Where am I going? Into the Kingdom of God as a style of living, following Christ's example in the way I think, care, decide about others!

How? By choosing to engage in the same Process of Relationships God does, revealed most vividly in Jesus Christ.

Is there any purpose? Yes! We are called, corporately as congregations to become the body of Christ, individually, to use our God-given gifts to reveal the Gospel through the relationships we give to each other in Kingdom of God living!

Summary

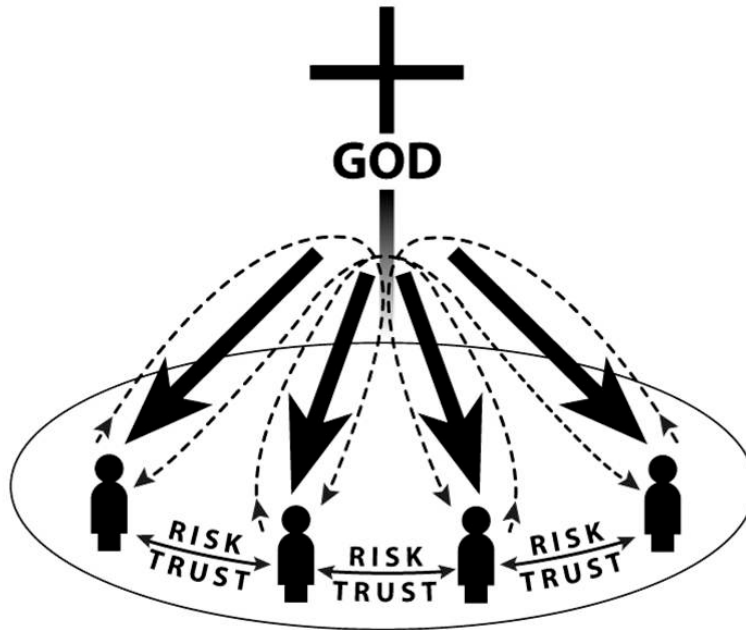
Some ideas for focusing on theological concepts in the life of the congregation, as well as those in leadership roles in LOGOS, are:

- Seminars for those who are new to the church
- Church leadership groups
- Sermon themes in worship
- Church school classes for youth, children and adults
- Men's and women's groups
- Parent meetings
- LOGOS staff meetings
- LOGOS administrative team meetings

The theological concepts may be introduced one at a time, or several at a time, depending on the circumstances. For example, it would probably be more

appropriate to focus on one concept if preaching. But in a meeting with parents or LOGOS Staff, one or more theograms could be introduced

The following theogram summarizes major concepts of the four theograms above, and can be helpful in understanding how they are connected.



SETTING THE STAGE

MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS

GenOn Ministries' Ministry Effectiveness Models are excellent tools for evaluating the effectiveness of current offerings for children and youth. GenOn Ministries acknowledge that the ultimate statement of effectiveness is an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ for each child and youth. If ministry solutions are to help children become active disciples of Christ...living in this relationship of faith...then the ministry is effective.

These are, however, very challenging "bottom line" criteria to observe and measure. As a result, the 23 factors in these tools represent the tangible ministry characteristics that underlie the consistent ability to build young disciples.

The Ministry Effectiveness Models help churches assess factors in relation to what is happening in their congregation. The model for children's ministry and the model for youth ministry use a simple "red, yellow and green light" system to tag each factor for further evaluation. The factors focus on three areas:

- Purposeful: Is the congregation intentional about why children's and youth ministry is vital for the church?
- Practical: Does the congregation have an effective plan and approach for implementing and sustaining the children's and youth ministry?
- Impactful: Is the effect of the children's and youth ministry truly reflective of ministry and not programming?

The evaluation team can discern strengths and areas of concern, prioritize these concerns for action and set forth a plan to implement the changes. Effectiveness models can be used to evaluate one element of your ministry or the total children's or youth ministry in your congregation.

The Effectiveness Models are free and are available on the GenOn Ministries web site: www.genonministries.org. GenOn staff members are ready to help churches move through this very valuable process.

THE URGENT NEED FOR THIS MINISTRY

We live in an environment, a context, of interrelated conditions. This context is shaped by time, place, history and current events in our world. It influences and sometimes even controls the receptivity and response that people of all ages make to the Gospel as it is presented and experienced in the church.

Therefore, it is important to identify, examine, and become familiar with this context and how it affects the building of quality Christian relationships. This requires an intentional process of "opening the eyes" of the congregation and raising their awareness. Once this context is understood, it must be interpreted so that an effective nurturing ministry may be provided.

Everyone is experiencing pressures and stresses, especially our children and youth. Many are not equipped to resist the pressures of social media, split families, economics and other challenges. A college education no longer guarantees employment, yet young people are under pressure to obtain high grades so they can go to college. (Search Institute at www.search-institute.org has conducted research that includes thousands of 6th to 12th graders to discover what youth need in order to live full, productive lives and keep them from at risk behaviors.) It is not uncommon to get caught up in worshiping false gods: consumerism, materialism, technology, sports, drugs, sex, glamour, entertainment, wealth, science, and so forth. This can lead to destructive behavior.

LOGOS leadership in the church must raise the awareness of their congregation to insure that they realize the urgency and need for offering an arena in which everyone, especially young people, can experience the life-giving reality of the love of Jesus Christ. We are called to bear witness to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the One given to us by Almighty God for the redemption of all humankind. The future of the world, the future of the church as an institution, and the future of our children depends on our bearing faithful witness to the Good News that we know in Jesus Christ.

Often, we find that our communities are no longer sympathetic with or supportive of Christian values. In fact, many important secular activities are regularly scheduled on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Activities at church, including worship, have become optional for many families. It is up to the church to challenge priorities and commitments and stand up for the importance of placing a higher priority and commitment to Jesus Christ than anything else.

Becoming a part of the community of faith is not an optional activity. It is a matter of life and death, and beyond!

REALITY: ABUNDANT LIFE-GIVING RELATIONSHIP

An abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is more important than anything else in life.

CONVICTION: NURTURE – MOST IMPORTANT Nurturing people, especially youth and children, into this relationship of faith with God through Jesus Christ is the most important thing the church ever does.

We must provide an environment where a strong relationship with Jesus Christ can be established. That relationship equips youth and children to resist the pressures of society.

Consider the example of a deep sea diver. The diver is able to live in a hostile environment of increasing pressure that exists as the diver descends deeper beneath the ocean's surface. The diver is able to survive this pressure because the diving suit he is wearing is connected to people on the ship by an air hose (a life-line). Those on the ship make sure that air is flowing into that life-line. The diver's support team enables the diver to remain alive in a hostile environment. However, if that lifeline is severed and the diver loses that vital supply of air, the diver will die. Why? Not because of a lack of oxygen to breathe. The diver dies because the diver's suit, which had served as a kind of cocoon in which the diver could remain alive, can no longer resist the pressure of those ocean depths. Cut off from a supply of air, the diver dies from the excessive pressure of the surrounding environment that the body cannot resist.

In a similar way, our young people are in danger of being crushed by the stress and pressures of the world around them. Their connection to the life-line (Jesus Christ) must be strong and never failing. It is up to us to provide an environment where our young people can be nurtured into an abundant life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ. Through Christ, young people have available to them the knowledge, confidence, and strength to resist, or at least live through and with, the destructive forces of our culture. Adults have the ability and courage to enter into meaningful Christian relationships with young people who are at risk and help them to know Jesus Christ.

We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans 8: 37-39]

SHARING THE URGENCY WITH THE CONGREGATION

We quickly become aware of the urgent need to strengthen and broaden the opportunities for Christian nurture of youth, children and their families when we examine the factors that influence the context in which we do our ministry.

It is critical that adults of the congregation become more perceptive of the effects of culture on young people who are often left to try and cope with it on their own. Let the information about the context guide you when introducing LOGOS to the church. GenOn recommends:

- LOGOS leaders obtain materials from the Search Institute and study them in light of the culture in the community.
- Interview the youth in the congregation to see if the adult perceptions of the life experiences and attitudes of the teens in their congregation and community are accurate or if those perceptions need to be adjusted.
- Plan for ways to share the information gathered from such activities with the congregation. Involve adults and young people in exploring the culture in which they are living.
- Ask the clergy to preach on passages of Scripture such as:

Psalms 78:4-8 (NRSV)

"We will not hide them from their children: we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God."

Matthew 28:19-20 (NRSV)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And, remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 8:30-31, 35 (NRSV)

"He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus."

Romans 12:2 (NRSV)

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 8:37-38 (NRSV)

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- Know your congregation and your community by considering these questions:

What percentage of the parents in your congregation work outside the home?

How many of your church's children are in single parent families?

How many of your church's children are "latch-key children?"

How many of the young people have siblings in daycare?

What is the most frequent discipline problem in your schools?

How prevalent is drug use among children, youth, and adults in your community?

What is the sexual activity among youth and children in the community as seen by professionals in social, psychological, counseling, health services?

What is the suicide rate in the community? Among adults? Among youth? Among children?

What is the crime rate in the community? Violent? Non-violent? Overall? Among youth?

Where are the "gathering places" of the youth in the community?

What music groups/recording artists are most popular with the youth? Any differences between what you find generally among youth in the community and youth from the church?

Are there other facts that will help you understand the culture in which you are living and ministering?

This information, when brought to the attention of the congregation, will confirm the need for the church to do everything possible to equip youth and children to

stand up against, and live in resistance to, the negative pressures of society, even though it means being countercultural.

Search Institute, an independent research institute, identifies 40 Developmental Assets that are essential to a young person leading a full, healthy life. Sixty-two percent of youth in America have twenty or fewer assets in their lives. The statistics are staggering because the number of assets a young person has, is indicative of how they will parent in the future, get involved in the community and lead their adult lives.

The good news is that next to the family, congregations have more opportunities to build assets in young people than any other sector in the community. Search Institute research tells us that youth who spend more than one hour per week in religious programs, groups, or services, have more assets than young people who do not participate in these religious programs.

LOGOS has the potential to build these developmental assets. Christian communities, involving many adults and young people in LOGOS with the structural components of Bible study, a family dinner, recreation activities and worship skills, provide an arena of time in which quality Christian relationships can be experienced and practiced in a systematic and sustainable way. It is the contention of LOGOS that church communities conscientiously applying the LOGOS principles have the potential to build 30 of the 40 developmental assets in the lives of their young people (www.search-institute.org).

A congregation that is living out the practice of mirroring Christ to one another is making it possible for youth and children to "catch" the faith and learn what it means to be Christ-like to one another. Like the diver, if our young people break their faith connections or are separated from that sustaining life-giving community, they are in great danger of being crushed by the culture pressing in upon them. A disciplined approach to Christian nurture, like LOGOS, is a proven model to intentionally nurture your children and youth into Christian faith. The fact that God created us in God's image was true yesterday, today, and is forever. Cultural changes and sin will continue to put our children and youth at risk, but God's love remains steadfast. We must strengthen our relationship with God and our intergenerational faith communities as we worship God, study God's word, and play and enjoy Christian fellowship.

ALWAYS, SOMETIMES, UNCHURCHED GROUPS

When we plan elements of our church's ministry, we look at the congregation and the community to determine needs and the potential for participation. When we plan for LOGOS, we must be aware of the potential in our church for such a ministry so that we may reach as many young people and their families as possible to connect them with an abundant life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are three groups of people who provide the potential participants for every church ministry and activity. We will look at these groups in terms of their attendance patterns.

- The "Always" group refers to the faithful core whose attendance at church is a given, when the doors of the church are open, they are there.
- The "Sometimes" group refers to those who are probably members of the church, are more sporadic in their attendance and involvement, and choose very carefully where and how they are going to participate.
- The "Unchurched" group refers to those who live in the community, but do not attend any church, but they do have friends who, likely, go to some church. They are the most difficult to reach.

These groups are related.

The Always people know some of the Sometimes people in the church. Churches need to provide opportunities for the Always and 'Sometimes groups to become better friends by loving the Sometimes people into the church, by playing together, singing together, eating together, studying together. This is exactly what happened in the early church. *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...Day by day, as they spend much time together in the temple, they broke break at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

Churches cannot ignore the Unchurched group. Many in the Sometimes group are already friends with some of the Unchurched. The success of ministry, *especially ministry with children and youth*, is impacted directly by how well churches focus on the Sometimes group because they are already connected to the Always group and the Unchurched group. The Sometimes group will bring their Unchurched friends if they feel they are being nurtured, and then some of the Unchurched will begin to meet and be in relationship with the Always group.

Now all three groups are experiencing an arena of Christian relationships and love as ONE group.

When churches consider ministry with children and youth, consider the groups that are being reached and brought into a relationship with Christ. And, consider the groups that are not being reached. The church's goal should be to create an arena where transformation is possible for all God's children.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CHURCH

A high school boy wrote in his statement of faith, "I believe the church is a school for learning as well as a sanctuary for worship. It is the common link between myself and others who share my beliefs."

All of the activities planned for our church family are designed to:

- build Christian relationships
- provide nurturing experiences for those who attend the activities
- teach what it means to live as God intended.

We hope that as people are nurtured through the activities and experiences in the church, they will come to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and make the decision to be in relationship with Jesus.

Some of these activities are *explicit experiences*. They are carefully designed to teach the content of the Bible and to enable people to grow in their understanding and practice of discipleship. Some examples are:

- Church school classes for children, youth and adults
- Sermons
- Worship services
- Workshops and seminars Bible Study groups
- Study retreats
- Mission program studies

Some church activities provide *implicit experiences* which are meant to give people a chance to bond and build relationships and "DO" the Gospel. For example:

- church suppers
- picnics
- fellowship hour after church
- mission trips and projects
- recreational activities (bowling teams, baseball teams, drama groups, theater groups, supper groups, and so forth.)

All of these implicit and explicit experiences are meant to provide a glimpse of what it is like to live in a "Kingdom of God" arena where people learn to express their understanding of what life in a Christian community is intended to be. By experiencing fellowship, acceptance, compassion, righteousness, forgiveness, joy, fun, and grace, people can learn, first hand, what it means to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Most people do not recognize these experiences as part of the teaching/learning ministry of the church and are ways that the Christian faith is more caught than taught.

REALITY: CAUGHT The Christian faith is more caught than taught. Christian experience precedes Christian thought and theology.

CONVICTION: RELATIONAL CONTEXT Spiritual nurture always requires a relational context to be effective.

Christian experience precedes Christian thought and theology. An experience of Christ means being lovingly cared for by God and by the community of God's people. Without a personal Christian experience there is no authentic Christian community.

The effectiveness of what we teach in the church depends a great deal on the quality of Christian relationships in the congregation and whether everyone uses the only rule of LOGOS to guide their responses to others. If we do not live what we teach, there is reason to question whether or not that which we believe really is true.

***Treat every person as a child of God.
No one is to treat others as if they do not matter.***

However, we are not perfect and *negative teaching* happens, usually unintentionally, explicit teaching experiences as well as in implicit (informal teaching experiences) situations in the church. When negative things happen, feelings may be hurt. A person may be made to feel worthless. A negative experience can call into question and nullify positive explicit and implicit teaching. It takes a lot of positive experiences and learning to bring about the healing of one negative experience.

Adults must be aware of these dynamics and their role as "teacher" in every relationship, especially with youth and children.

Some examples of negative experiences youth and children may experience:

- A teacher does not remember a child's name.
- No adult pays attention when there is a conflict.
- As people arrive for worship, children, who have been asked to be a greeter with his or her parents, are ignored.
- There is no handicapped access or parking.
- Yelling, hitting, using derogatory nick names or profanity are allowed.
- There are dirty linens in the nursery.
- Worship and church school are scheduled at the same time so only adults go to worship and only children attend Christian education classes.
- A teen walks into the youth room for the first time and realizes it is in an undesirable location and filled with old broken down furniture.

LOGOS builds on the positive potential of both explicit and implicit teaching and creates an arena in which persons learn how to avoid negative teaching, or at least how to bring about healing and reconciliation when negative teaching happens.

Dr. D. Campbell Wyckoff, former professor of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary once said, "Curriculum is a carefully devised means of communication used by the church in its teaching ministry in order that the Christian faith and life may be known, accepted, and lived."

LOGOS works at helping the congregation become aware that in all their relationships they are teaching what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The curriculum of the church is more than printed materials; it is everything the church plans and does with, for, and by the congregation, for the Christian nurture of all of its adults, youth and children.

There is a need to look carefully at the total life of the church to determine what kinds of teaching and learning experiences are happening.

- Negative experiences can happen to anyone in the church regardless of age.
- Negative experiences of adults seriously affect the staffing and support of LOGOS as well as other nurturing ministries of the church.
- Negative experiences of youth and children cancel out the positive explicit and implicit teaching experiences that have been provided for them.
- Youth and children often have negative experiences when the only rule of LOGOS is not applied in discipline situations.

The diversity of a congregation contributes to the way in which positive and negative teaching happens in the church. It is the responsibility of the LOGOS leadership in the local church to make the effort to help all the generations in the church understand and appreciate each other. This means recognizing the differences in cultural and sociological backgrounds of individuals in the church. This can be done when LOGOS leaders are aware of how each generation in their church is viewing and responding to the context of our culture.