

LOGOS USER GUIDE

LOGOS with Youth

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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.

YOUTH: DO WHATEVER IT TAKES

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

Quick Reference: LOGOS with Youth

Workshop: LOGOS with Youth

WHY THIS AGE IS CRUCIAL FOR THE CHURCH

Senior high, typically ages 14–18, is considered an essential element of any successful ministry. LOGOS was first designed as a ministry to high school students.

The focus then and now is on teenage youth because this is a critical time period in their development—including the development of their faith. This age group is pivotal because our window of opportunity to reach them with Christ’s message of love and grace closes the older youth get.

That said, the age parameters for defining ministry to youth need to be expanded. Why? Because of society’s relentless pressure on young people for everything to happen sooner, teens today experience more and do so earlier than in the past. This is coupled with the reality that youth mature physically much earlier.

This means that what was once true of those in senior high is increasingly happening to those in middle school or grades 8, 7, 6. For example, where youth used to start dropping out of church once they got a car and a job, we are now losing young people in middle school.

Our successful ministry to youth is a test of our ability to fulfill our calling as a church. We must be very intentional about this ministry. It doesn’t just “happen” because youth are raised in a Christian family, or even because they walk through our church doors each week. Successful ministry to youth happens only when it is an intentional focus of the church—where the efforts of the congregation are like the staff of an emergency room when a patient arrives. We need to do whatever it takes to reach them for Christ.

Effective ministry to youth is urgently needed to connect them to the lifeline relationship with Christ before they graduate from high school. Teenagers and pre-teens have a critical need for the support and guidance of healthy, reliable, authentic Christian relationships—not only with peers, but even more so with clergy, parents and other adult role models.

But adults often feel out of touch with today’s youth. They need to learn the answers to this question: “What is it like being a teenager today?”

TODAY'S CULTURAL FACTORS

Generations Y and Z

Generation Y (or Millennials) and Generation Z (or Boomlets) refer to those born between 1981 and the present. A wealth of information is available to help understand these young people.

Socially Networked and Globally Connected

Today's youth are texters, tweeters and surfers who carry the internet on their phones. Don't expect them use a landline, email or even pen and paper. If you want to reach these "children of the tech revolution," you need to be as plugged in and thoroughly connected as they are.

Generation Z was born during the era of globalization. Perhaps because they're so comfortable with technology as a communications and learning tool, they are more culturally diverse and accepting than other generations have been in the past.

Youth of this generation are also influenced by aspects of postmodernism, which make them question explanations claiming to be valid for all cultures, races or groups. This generation is more comfortable with concrete experiences vs. abstract principles.

Other Influences

Today's youth are the first generation that may not become more prosperous than their parents' generation. They face potentially shorter life spans than their parents due to obesity and other health trends. Post 9/11, they've grown up with the concept of increasing surveillance, as well as political and religious polarities.

Like other generations before them, youth are stressed. They may face peer pressure, academic pressure or over-scheduling. They may be struggling with the physical and emotional changes of adolescence. Their families may be facing significant economic pressures, health issues or divorce, leading to dysfunction or other negative influences in their lives.

Whether they realize it or not, youth can benefit from caring adult role models in their lives. Successful youth ministry based on healthy, reliable, authentic Christian relationships between youth and adults may help teens discover the role models who can help them deal with the challenges they face.

ESSENTIALS FOR UNDERSTANDING MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

Through years of experience in working with youth, GenOn Ministries has observed and identified certain realities about nurturing young people in the church. In response to each of these Nurture Realities, convictions are included to address ways the church must address each reality.

REALITY: ABUNDANT LIFE-GIVING REALTIONSHIP

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 Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization's research reports that 95 percent of people who make decisions for Jesus Christ do so before they are 20 years old. Barna Research Group Inc., a marketing research company that studies cultural trends and the Christian Church, reports that if teens and adults have not developed a relationship with Christ before the age of 14, there is only a 4 percent chance that they will do so by the time they are 18.

Barna continues, "The statistics are eye-opening because they show how little evangelistic impact we have in America with teenagers. It does not mean that teens cannot be reached with the gospel. It simply challenges the approaches currently used. The most effective evangelistic strategies tend to be intensely relational and are less frequently emphasized by churches. Adolescents are most impacted evangelistically by family members, peers and youth groups, such as Sunday school and mid-week faith-based youth activities."

Many young people begin to drop out of church while in middle school, and the numbers increase each succeeding year. The church must find ways to keep them and nurture them in the Christian faith. LOGOS, along with the other youth programs, increases the opportunity to keep these young people active in the church.

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.

Younger children attend church events because their parents bring them. Youth come to church events when their friends are there. All of us, especially youth, want and need authentic relationships. The church's challenge is to provide sufficient opportunities for such relationships to develop. It is strong, authentic Christian relationships that will keep youth coming to church. When they come, the church is given the opportunity to offer them Christian nurture and invite them to make a commitment to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

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.

A youth ministry's vitality is a barometer for the quality of the spiritual life and health of a congregation. Conspicuous participation of older youth in the ministry of the congregation, including regular leadership in congregational worship, is a critical factor in the growth of the congregation. The quality of the ministry to youth has a direct and powerful influence upon LOGOS for younger children. What child does not want to do what the older youth are doing?

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 provide, as no one else can, the continuity between nurture and worship. When clergy make friends with youth, youth develop life-long relationships and loyalties to both the clergy and the institution 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. The youth program especially needs the energetic support and involvement of the clergy.

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.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the youth portion of LOGOS. Asking for significant commitment and having high expectations will reap stronger disciples and more committed youth.

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—young and old—is blessed with certain gifts. There are sufficient gifts in a particular church to staff and support the youth area of LOGOS.

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.

The increased separation and isolation of youth from the adult world is a severe hindrance to the processes that lead teenagers to mature adulthood. The 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: 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: 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.

Teenagers still need parental involvement even though the role of the parent in LOGOS may change from the earlier years. When parents and other adults understand, participate and support the goals of Christian nurture, there is some assurance that lasting, effective Christian nurturing will lead to Christian discipleship. LOGOS fosters relationships between youth, children, and their families.

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.

LOGOS seeks to replicate this same camp experience for the young people each week.

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)

When planning each of the four parts of LOGOS (Recreation, Family Time, Bible Study, and Worship Skills) for youth, incorporating the four essential elements (challenge, adventure, risk, excitement) will ensure authentic relationship-building.

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.

Youth must be integrated into regular congregational worship, not just offered separate worship opportunities. The enthusiastic participation of youth in worship energizes and deepens the worship life of an entire congregation.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Common Misconceptions

One-Eared Mickey

In a sincere effort to minister to youth and make them feel special, we often separate them from the life of the church, which unintentionally emphasizes differences through isolation. Imagine a one-eared Mickey Mouse with the larger face circle representing the congregation and a smaller, single ear circle representing youth ministry. The youth begin to feel that the church at large has little interest in them, no matter how much money is expended on them, staff hired, or equipment purchased.

The One-eared Mickey model produces spiritual orphans because the only significant contact the youth have known with the church has been through this set-apart ministry, which they outgrow after high school graduation. They become young adults without any relationships within the church.

Graduation Mentality

Young people often receive the message in many churches that when they complete a certain study or program, they're done. Completing confirmation or joining the church can feel like a graduation ceremony if the church does not assimilate young people into a sense of full participation in the life of the church.

Malnourished Relationships

Teens' No. 1 interest is making friends. But most have few friends at church, and even fewer think of adults of the church as friends. We must be intentional about allowing enough time each week for Christian friendships to develop between peers and between adults and youth.

Adults: Out-of-Touch and Scared

Adults often think they know what youth like, think and want. But surveys show that most adults have misunderstandings regarding youth. Few adults take the time to establish deep enough friendships with young people to get below the surface of their understandings. Congregations need to intentionally explore the world of youth so they can connect Biblical truths to the realities of the life of youth today. Because of the bad reputations that youth often have, and the reality that many of them are more sophisticated than adults were at that age, many adults are not comfortable around youth. Adults observe teens' strange clothing and hairstyle choices, body piercings and tattoos. They hear offensive or unintelligible language. In short, adults are intimidated by youth. This is unfortunate because, behind all those observations, decent, sensitive, compassionate youth are hungry to be accepted, loved and nurtured into adulthood.

Boring Meetings

Young people want substance and something to hang on to in their life. They are desperate for adults to be role models, to be their unconditional friends, to accept

them as they are, and to help them grow into the people God intends for them to be. The primary purpose of ministry for youth is not to entertain, but to nourish. The church must break through these generational barriers and help youth and adults discover their commonality and the good in one another. Personal relationships are the bridge to good communication and are essential to any effective, nurturing ministry. The church that builds long-term, deep relationships with youth will reap long-term results.

Overcoming Misconceptions

Part of the responsibility of the LOGOS Leadership Team is to plan ways to counteract these misconceptions. Some of these can be overcome by model and example. Others can be addressed through your interpretation of the vision for youth ministry.

Face Reality: Many Regard Working with Youth as Risky

Some adults will feel that opening the church to youth involves risks. Whether the potential for these risks is real or not, the LOGOS Leadership Team needs to be aware that some people see them as such. For example:

- Risk to beautifully kept buildings and rooms
- Risk to the parlor where the grand piano is located
- Risk to all the special places in the church as you remove the locks and assure the youth, "This is your church"
- Risk to previous priorities as the clergy and staff make ministry to youth a very high priority
- Risk to the budget as more utilities are required, more repairs and maintenance are needed
- Risk to the comfort of older adults who might be disturbed by intense noise and activity
- Risk to the security of material things
- Risk to old patterns of communication as new families come into the church and express their views, and as youth express their voice

Churches need to be very certain that they believe their resources to be expendable for the Gospel and not a treasure on earth to be preserved and protected for posterity. What does it profit a church to gain all its facilities in perfect condition and lose its purpose of winning souls for Christ?

Accept the Conviction: Do Whatever it Takes

LOGOS, when combined with church school, youth groups, retreats, conferences, mission trips and other programs for teenagers, will provide an arena in which young people have the opportunity to:

- Build Christian relationships with their peers and adults from the church
- Build developmental assets
- Explore and experience the Christian faith
- And, most important of all, enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ

The time spent building Christian relationships and experiencing what it means to live in a community of faith, will help each young person face life with purpose, hope, faith and joy.

Roadblocks and Responses

ROADBLOCK

This is a different generation; most things we used to do with young people in the church don't work with them anymore.

- It is harder to reach youth today than it was a decade ago.
- The church cannot stand up to the competition for the commitment for the interest and time of young people.
- For youth, the church is on the low end of priorities.

RESPONSE

Deep human needs, especially the hunger and thirst for quality relationships, are unchanged. If anything, the needs are more intense now than ever.

Relationships are the most important thing. Youth yearn for trusting relationships with genuinely caring adults. Youth demand authenticity from adults and will test them for it. Not only are youth reachable, they bring their friends!

ROADBLOCK

To work with youth, adults must either be young or act that way.

- Those who want to make friends with youth have to get into and identify with the youth culture.
- They should be young (not more than mid-20s), possess a charismatic personality, play the guitar, and be a good entertainment director.
- We need to find adults who will copy the way youth dress, speak and style their hair.
- Youth won't respond to folks like us.
- You have to entertain youth or they won't come back.

RESPONSE

Trying to identify with youth in such a way is counterproductive. It is a cue to the adults' close-mindedness and is rightly suspect by the youth as fake. *Youth themselves have identified persons in their mid-40s and above as the most effective youth leaders.*

Youth respond to adults who:

- Authentically care for and about teens
- Offer teens unconditional friendship
- Speak truthfully and simply at all times
- Never practice deception of any kind
- Never manipulate

Consistently seek the best interest of others—especially youth

ROADBLOCK

The clergy should spend their time with adults.

- Working directly and personally with youth is a low priority for the clergy, most especially the senior pastor.
- It should be delegated to a junior member of the clergy staff, or a person employed to work with the youth, or volunteers from the congregation.
- Our clergy already have too many responsibilities to take the time to build special relationships with youth.
- Our clergy was not hired to be a youth minister.
- Older adults, those interested in mission, and other special interest groups will be short-changed if the clergy spend a lot of time with youth.

RESPONSE

Youth are one of the most critical and strategic groups within a congregation that need personal pastoral attention.

The clergy establish a pastoral environment, the value of which is impossible to overestimate. The relationship between clergy and youth sets the tone and attitude about participation in worship for the youth. Because youth are with us such a short time, it is imperative that the clergy establish a caring friendship as soon as possible. This friendship models for the youth the caring nature of the whole congregation.

ROADBLOCK

What youth really want is fun, music and food.

- The most successful youth programs offer a wide variety of fun activities with lots of singing, free food and drinks, fellowship, and occasionally, a short devotional time.
- To reach teenagers the church must entertain them.

RESPONSE

Superficial programs and leadership in any activity with almost any age group is a sure guarantee of ultimate failure.

Look at almost any teen, and you find an electronic gadget invented for communication and entertainment. Simply put, the church does not have the means to compete with the world in trying to reach kids through entertainment or food.

What the church does have is God. Teenagers want authentic substance. They had a deep spiritual hunger, and if the church does not offer them a diet of true spirituality, they will go somewhere that will.

ROADBLOCK

Youth ministry is not critical to the effectiveness or the success of a church's ministry.

Youth ministry is no more important than any other ministry of the church. It is sufficient to simply hire a youth minister to take care of the youth.

RESPONSE

The vitality of the youth ministry is a barometer for the quality of the spiritual life and health of a congregation.

The quality of the youth ministry has a direct and powerful influence upon the ministry with all children. The church family is incomplete without every age group

represented, participating and being affirmed in visible ways. Churches where youth actively participate in the full life of the church tend to grow. Churches without active youth tend to decline.

HOW TO START LOGOS WITH YOUTH

Church-wide Assessment

Before starting something new, take the time to assess of all the ways your church is currently ministering to youth. Church programs have a way of taking on a life of their own. They often continue without thought as to what purpose they serve. This is not to suggest that what is done is superfluous, rather that each area and activity needs to be examined for how it contributes to the whole effort to reach youth for Christ. Involve as wide a group as you can in this evaluation—church school teachers, youth group leaders, parents, interested church leaders, and even the youth themselves.

Though a variety of methods and tools are available for assessing programs, GenOn Ministries highly recommends its Youth Ministry Effectiveness Model. For details, go to Ministry Effectiveness Models in the Foundations section.

All of this will take time. But it is time very well spent, and will contribute greatly to the effective integration of LOGOS into the life and work of the church and enhance the value of all else that your church is doing.

Lay the Foundation

With the above assessment completed, you can now begin the process of starting LOGOS.

1. First and foremost—pray

Gather together those who are concerned about the spiritual welfare of the youth in your church. The primary gift for members of this group is a habit of prayer, combined with a concern for youth. These members may or may not be called your Leadership Team. But they are doing something more important—they are keeping this entire process wrapped in prayer.

Ask this group to pray sequentially as your planning progresses:

- for God to lead you to those who will lead this program
- for God to make clear to parents and the church the urgency of this ministry
- for God to help families embrace the need to commit to this LOGOS
- for God to empower and lead those who both plan and lead LOGOS
- for each youth by name

Never stop the prayer process. Ministry surrounded by prayer is always more effective.

2. Form a team

Form a Leadership Team for both middle school and high school. Relationships are the foundation of the LOGOS style of ministry. Seek out those who you feel are gifted with both a concern for the spiritual welfare of youth and who have the gifts needed to lead the four parts of the program.

Who might this include? Youth consistently list those who are the age of their parents as those they would most like to work with them (though almost always not their parents). You might poll the youth and ask them to identify four or five people in the congregation they would most like to work with them.

Qualifications for this Leadership Team:

- A concern for the spiritual welfare of youth
- A gift that contributes to balancing the team for its calling
- Commitment to the long-haul, or at least one year
- They love God, love youth, have a gift to share—in that order

What this team does:

- Plan and develop LOGOS for its age group
- Share leadership skills in the four parts
- Meet with youth and parents to interpret the significance of the ministry
- Participate in all four parts each week
- Seek out LOGOS training

The LOGOS Leadership Team is not responsible for doing everything. Rather, the team is responsible for the overall planning and guidance necessary to run an effective LOGOS midweek program. A big part of that planning is utilizing the Biblical call process to identify additional adults with a love for God, a love for youth and gifts to share so they can help lead the four parts of LOGOS.

It's important to note that you absolutely must have the unqualified, unflinching commitment to this ministry from the clergy, the youth director, and the music staff in order to make LOGOS a success in your church.

3. Set the stage for LOGOS with youth

This will vary depending upon whether you are starting LOGOS for the first time or adding youth to an existing elementary age LOGOS program.

In either case your target group—the youth and their parents—must be properly addressed. Parents need to understand that the over-scheduled lives of their teens do not leave adequate time for their spiritual growth. They should be prepared to reassess their family's priorities.

Respect your youth by sitting down with them and sharing both your passion for them and your anticipation of the significance this ministry will bring to their lives. This is best done by letting them "experience" the program. Such a "taste of LOGOS," where each part is experienced briefly or even a full sample night, needs to be the best thing you have ever put on. Remember you are competing for their time and commitment. Put some creativity and energy into it because you are working to overcome the assumption that "church stuff is dull."

When preparing for these meetings, develop creative ways to reach the largest number of potential youth with your vision for LOGOS:

- The youth who always come to church
- The youth who are on the rolls but come only occasionally
- The grandchildren of adults in the church
- The friends of all the above

This requires time, so start months before your LOGOS program starts.

WARNING: Youth are naturally cynical and hyper-judgmental. They may not leap to enroll. Be patient and if necessary follow up with individual calls or visits. Start with who responds but continue to invite and encourage those who enroll to bring others.

4. Keep LOGOS fresh and attractive for youth

One way to do this in LOGOS is to reserve special events that will be experienced “only when” youth reach middle school or high school. Do this planning in connection with your whole LOGOS leadership and that of the church as well. As you look for ways to make your youth feel special, make sure to avoid the “One-eared Mickey” approach (refer to the section “Common Misconceptions about Ministry with Youth”).

5. Consider how to add LOGOS to other offerings for youth

The church-wide assessment of your congregation’s ministry to youth is used at this point to show what LOGOS will add to your current youth ministry. LOGOS should never be a replacement for existing programs, especially if those programs are valued. LOGOS is added as a sign of how committed your congregation is to reaching youth for Christ.

Address well in advance the concerns about staffing. Those in charge of church school teachers, choirs and youth groups will assume that adding LOGOS will take people and leaders from existing programs. Experience proves that adding LOGOS brings new people into all ministries.

Remember everything calls for commitment. So if, for example, you have a youth choir, starting LOGOS will create another commitment. In fact parents may complain that their kids are already over-committed to church. You can address this concern by comparing it to how little time spiritual development gets in relation to all other family commitments.

In all cases do not regard the concerns of those leading other programs for youth as valid expressions of their commitment to the needs of youth. Work with them to understand and give them time to embrace your vision.

Adding youth to existing LOGOS for children requires special attention because while children long to do what the “big kids” are doing, few teens want to do what the “little kids” are doing. If the children’s program has been in place for several years, you may need to present LOGOS for youth as a different experience—something that you are doing especially for your youth. Consider a different name, different time, or different place to launch the youths’ LOGOS program.

SIGNIFICANT COMPONENTS

GenOn Youth Summit

Take youth to a GenOn Youth Summit. GenOn offers two conferences for youth every summer. These events, for youth who've completed grades 8–12, and are held in the north east, and at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo.

LOGOS Youth Summits are so effective at acclimating youth to what LOGOS is all about that you may want to consider using this event to actually launch your church's LOGOS program. For testimonials, videos, activities, schedules and registration information, visit the GenOn Ministries web site/GenOn + Church tab.

Critical Mass vs. Cliques

Youth require a group, i.e., critical mass, if they're going to feel comfortable. What constitutes a group will vary from time to time and from place to place. But the youth themselves will instinctively know when there is an authentic group versus a collection of individuals or cliques.

When community has been formed, it will be attractive to them and they will bring their friends. When there is not, they will be reluctant to be a part of any program. They will certainly never bring their friends except to possibly form defensive cliques.

Cliques can make the growth of a group very difficult. It's important that leaders recognize when cliques are beginning to form. The safe environment in LOGOS, provided by a cadre of caring adults, helps break down cliques and provide a more comfortable and safe arena in which youth—especially those who may feel intimidated socially—can be present. Christian relationships are everything!

In every church, this means reaching beyond the core group to draw in the youth who are connected with the church but who do not usually make long-term commitments to groups. When these young people make the commitment to be a part of LOGOS, they will bring their friends. Those friends are often youth from the community who are unattached to a church. The key to reaching all the youth is to build personal Christian relationships. If the few are being drawn in because of the magnetic attraction they feel toward loving, caring adults, the few will become the many in due time. The need for critical mass for youth eliminates the policy of having a class for each grade in older youth Bible Study. Youth should be grouped so they feel comfortable.

For some churches in some communities, creating a critical mass may mean combining the youth from several churches (each fully supporting LOGOS with clergy leadership and parental involvement) into one LOGOS for Youth, only identified by its own distinctive name. The entire youth group can lead worship in one of the participating churches each week.

Corporate Worship Participation

Weekly attendance and meaningful involvement in worship are critical. Youth have the capacity to bring real gifts to the congregation, and through this, they'll discover a sense of their value as a part of the congregation. Helping youth prepare to lead in worship also tunes them in to what worship is all about and helps them to make Sunday worship a collective experience.

Congregations without children and youth decline. Congregations in which youth and children are present and involved will thrive. Adults experience renewed faith when they experience the "next generation" leading in worship. This leads to a positive feeling among adults toward youth.

CHECKLIST FOR STARTING LOGOS

- Commit a group of adults to pray for all the youth on a regular basis.
- Enlist clergy to give pulpit support, work at being youth-friendly, and help raise congregational awareness as to the needs of youth.
- Evaluate all the existing programs in your ministry to youth. Affirm the strengths. Address the weaknesses and needs. Determine the purpose of each program.
- Interpret for the congregation and church leaders the critical need for doing more. Use sermons, newsletter articles and presentations to small groups within the church. Create a youth Facebook page and invite youth and parents to join it so they know what is happening with the youth.
- Discern whether or not there is a commitment to do more. Never be critical or negative about existing programs or previous efforts. LOGOS is intended to enhance what is already established.
- Call adults with mature faith and with relational skills to make a commitment to ministry with youth.
- Include current leaders of youth ministry programs to plan and implement LOGOS.
- Each year, take as many leaders, parents, and other adults as possible to LOGOS training.
- Establish relationships with each youth before you begin.
- Interpret LOGOS to all the youth in the congregation.
- Be clear about the program's high expectations and the consistent commitment youth will be asked to make.
- Be intentional about reaching out to all of the youth in the congregation and their parents. Many youth will initially attend because their parents have learned about LOGOS and value Christian care and nurture for their teens.

- Remember the youth whose attendance is marginal. This "sometimes" group is the strategic group. They will bring friends who are not attached to a church.
- Take youth to visit another church in your area with successful LOGOS program.
- Take your youth and leaders to one of the LOGOS Youth Summits.
- Host an evening at your church for youth only to let them experience the four parts of a weekly LOGOS program.
- Focus on the unique needs of youth.
- When making decisions about space, place, time, language and leadership, consider the needs of youth first.
- Make a commitment for the long haul. Relationships take time.
- Lay a solid foundation. Don't rush to start LOGOS.
- DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Benson, Peter L. and Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland. What Teens Need to Succeed. Minneapolis. Search Institute. Describes 40 developmental assets that teens need, then gives hundreds of suggestions teens themselves can use to build their own assets at home, at school, in the community, in their congregation, with friends and with youth organizations.

Building Assets in Congregations: A Practical Guide for Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy Building Assets in Congregations. Minneapolis: Search Institute. Offers everything you'll need to create an asset-building congregation. Perfect for youth workers, clergy, volunteers, and others, this practical book includes:

- Worksheets for assessing and planning your current priorities and programs.
- Strategies and ideas for introducing assets into youth programs.
- Tips for creating intergenerational programs and parent workshops.
- Ten reproducible bulletin inserts.

1998, 176 pages, 8 1/2" x 11", softcover.

You can order from Search Institute online at www.search-institute.org or by calling 1-800-888-7828.

Benson, Peter L. and Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland. *What Kids Need to Succeed*. Free Spirit Publications Inc. Based on the Search Institute study, *What Kids Need to Succeed*. Provides more than 500 specific, concrete suggestions to help build the 40 assets at home, at school, in the community and in the congregation. Checklists help identify the assets young people already have.

Caldwell, Elizabeth. Leaving Home with Faith. The Pilgrim Press. (from the back of the book) Explores themes faced by adolescents, their families and their congregations, and seeks to answer such questions as what changes are our adolescents experiencing?, what are the implications of these changes for those who live with and work with them?, and what consistencies of family, congregational life, and faith are necessary in order to support them?

Campbell, Ross. How To Really Love Your Teenager. Scripture Press. Designed for personal use or for group study. This book shows how to help teens know that they are loved and accepted unconditionally. The book challenges the fact that we may not be doing that, even though we want to do it, or may even feel that we are doing it. Gives direction in helping teenagers spiritually and intellectually. Shows adults and youth how to appropriately express emotions.

DeVries, Mark. Family Based Youth Ministry, Revised and Expanded. Intervarsity Press. 2004. In a culture that worship youth as it abandons its young, this book gets adults, families and congregations involved. This revised and updated edition continues to hold out its bold challenge: Young people belong in the life of the church, and the church belongs in the lives of its youth.

Lytch, Carol. Choosing Church: What Makes a Difference to Teens. Westminster John Knox Press. (from the back of the book) Well-researched study of what attracts teenagers to church and what keeps them there. Includes interviews of a number of teenagers and their parents from mainline Protestant, evangelical, and Roman Catholic congregations. Serves as a highly useful description of the most effective ways that congregations and parents can foster faith in early teenagers that will help them value the church as a place to obtain identity, belonging, and growth.

Powell, Kara and Dr. Chap Clark. Sticky Faith. Zondervan. (from the back of the book) This guide presents both a compelling rationale and a powerful strategy to show parents how to encourage their children's spiritual growth so that it will stick with them into adulthood and empower them to develop a living, lasting faith.

Youth Ministry Effectiveness Model. Available at www.genonministries.org.