

# Effective Youth Ministry

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 02 May 2010

Preacher: Kerensa Symons

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. It's great to be here. I've never been to Loaners Exchange so I guess this is my debut here and I'm also speaking. So that's good I guess.

I actually became a Christian when I was in youth group. I became a Christian when I was 15. My friend Sally from school invited me along to the youth group that she attended at a church in Sydney and it was there that I learned about Jesus and decided to follow him.

So I really see the value of youth ministry because I know it worked in my life and I've seen it work in the lives of many of the people I know.

So I've actually, when I graduated high school I worked in the youth ministry team as a volunteer in my church that I attended and then since coming to St John's over the various number of years I've been involved in the youth in St John's in various ways as well.

So today what we're going to talk about is effective youth ministry. I'm not claiming to be an expert but I'm hoping that this will whet your appetite for it.

[ 1 : 15 ] It's not a comprehensive analysis of youth ministry but it's kind of the start of a conversation. So hopefully you will enjoy it and it will give you some things to think about.

So I'm going to talk about three things in particular. I'm going to look at two really common models of youth ministry and give them a brief critique and then move on to what I think is probably the way forward, probably a more biblical model of youth ministry, effective youth ministry.

So that's what I'm going to do today. The two models of youth ministry that I'm going to be talking about are the funnel model and relational or incarnational youth ministry.

So the funnel model. What is it? Well it's called a funnel for a reason. The idea is built around the shape of a funnel. That you provide activities or attractions that will attract the unchurched youth. And that's the entry or the come level of the funnel. And the idea is to get as many people as you can. And then once you've attracted them, the idea is to move them down the funnel to the build level.

[ 2 : 39 ] Where you set in, programs are set in place to deepen the level of commitment. And the end goal is that after everything, that the attracted youth up at the come level are brought down the funnel and are, at the end of the process, they come out a committed disciple of Christ.

So what's the basis for this program? There were two prominent beliefs that led to the funnel's development. The first was that youth ministry must reflect the fact that young people are at various levels of spiritual development.

And the second was that young people crave fun and social interaction. So the basic premise is that you give them a whole lot of fun with then the chance to hear about Jesus.

So these events, these events, these events that come at the top of the funnel, these entry level come events, are meant to be attractive and create a desire for them to come again to a different activity.

So either they do two things. They either have a high emphasis on social events, things like jumping castles or rock concerts or dances, sumo wrestling, big things that kids will be interested in coming to do.

[ 4 : 08 ] I've done it in youth groups. Believe me, it does happen. They put rings, I'll just tell you what it is first. They put, you know, the inflatable tyres, the inner tube of the tyre, they do a whole bunch of those and tape them together and you hop in and then you create a circle and two kids run at each other and whoever can bounce the other person out of the circle.

It is quite fun, but I'm not really sure how it relates to Jesus. So the idea is to have all these really fun things or what they do is either have really social things or they have a high, sort of, a large degree of fun activities in their program week by week.

Because most youth groups don't have the resources to run separate come activities and build activities, which the funnel sort of lends itself towards more.

But because it's really high in you need people, you need time and you need money, they tend to combine the two together. So say if they had a two-hour program every week, the first hour might be some fun or some sort of social activity and the second hour might be a talk or Bible study groups or something like that.

So they tend to try and combine the two together. And I have to be honest, most youth groups across the world play some really awful games.

[ 5 : 36 ] Things that it doesn't, if you hear, I'm going to share a few of them with you and there's probably worse ones out there. One is that you get a sheet of glass or some sort of clear thing.

You put some peanut butter or something on each side and then get two people, maybe a boy or a girl up, who can lick off their side clean first. Yes, it doesn't make sense that anyone would enjoy that.

And it's not really, in a lot of cases, it's not appropriate. But these are the fun things that kids like, apparently. I played frozen chicken bowling before.

And to be honest, I was actually a part of a youth group that ran something like a funnel model when I was a youth leader. And it's really hard when you're in that to see its problems.

Because you can get a lot of people coming. It's hard to get out of that numbers mentality. If you get a lot of people there, then we can tell them about Jesus. So, it's kind of shocking.

[ 6 : 53 ] But when you're in it, it's really hard to get out of that mentality. So, a brief critique. It does place a high premium on attraction.

And it has usually a possibly simple or repetitive gospel message. And that won't feed the Christian young person.

Just the same is that if we had the exact, very similar or exact same message preached from the pulpit every week, then we wouldn't be growing in all the fullness of Christ. And that's the same for young people.

They need more. It's giving milk to those craving meat. So, the stated goal of the funnel is to attract young people to our churches and then move them to maturity.

Is it happening? And in Canada, as with the world, the simple answer is no. It's not a system that is creating disciples to keep sustaining the model.

[ 8 : 03 ] Statistics show that our churches are not characterised by a healthy number of young people. And there's a high dropout rate of young people in our groups.

So, long term, it's not effective. In the short term, it's really hard to not see that it's not working.

Because if you keep running these fun activities and rock concerts and dances and things that kids, you're trying to attract them with, it's not going to maintain them long term.

It's not going to create disciples who will want to keep carrying on the youth ministry. The driving force behind most youth programs is numbers.

It's numerical growth. So, they pick an attractive time. They pick, so, attractive time may be a Friday night. An attractive name, so something like chaos or extreme that sounds kind of catchy and cool.

And they pick what they call is, they think what they use, sorry, what they think is attractive content. So, games, entertainment, social activities. But kids are intelligent.

[ 9 : 23 ] The youth coming through high schools now are probably the most educated ever. They are pushed in every which way. We tell them that education is really important.

That they should be doing extracurricular activities. They should be doing sporting activities. We push them in every way. But to not say, so we're saying that those things are very important.

But then not to place any emphasis on scripture. Or meeting with other Christians. Even though we're not doing it, we're not saying those things to them.

But what they're hearing is, these things are important. The Bible's not. Meeting with Christians is not. And kids really love reading the Bible.

And if you don't believe me, go talk to some of the youth of our church. They don't just want fun.

[ 10 : 25 ] It's as opposed to... We do the things that we think are attractive.

As opposed to what we know is actually really attractive. And that's the person of Jesus. By doing these things. By implying that we need to have attraction events.

Or do things that are fun to attract kids. To come and tell them about Jesus. Is that we think we need to trick people. To trick youth. To wanting to hear about Jesus.

It's not intentional enough. It's like we don't even believe that the message that we have is good news. And that it's good news to youth.

Because it is. So lastly, the structure of the funnel. And it's intent. Are really labour intensive.

[11:21] You need a lot of people. You need a lot of time. You need funds. Particularly if you're going to run a rock concert every week. So for the average youth leader.

For the volunteer. It's very labour intensive. A lot of planning. On their own time. A lot of... When they're there they have to be on. Make sure that it's fun for the kids.

It's exhausting. So our next model we're going to look at. So that was the funnel. And this is relational. The relational model. Or another name is the incarnational model.

Of youth ministry. So what is it? The philosophy of this ministry. Is that it seeks to communicate. Jesus' love. Simply by building relationships.

With young people. Through which. They can experience the love of God. The formula. Is that relationships. Over time. Produce ministry.

[12:25] So. This model is actually revolutionary. To the field. It changed. It shifted. It shifted. The focus from programs. To people. In this model.

Everything revolves around. The relationship between the youth leader. And the students. Or the youth. So the idea is that they share. Jesus within their life.

In the way they interact with the youth first. And then they share it with words. The idea behind it. So the basis of this ministry. Of this model. Is. And this is a quote from someone.

Who's done. This type of ministry. So the idea behind it. Is if they built relationships. With the natural leaders in the schools. Then they can reach the crowds that followed them.

And the theology. Behind this. Is that God. Became human. In order to communicate. On our level. And reveal the holy to us.

[13:22] So then. We need to enter the world of teenagers. To share the gospel with them. Just as God entered our world. And the scriptural basis. Is that. That we seek to.

Follow the pattern that Jesus built. Of building relationships with his disciples. And in that he revealed himself to them. So. What does this structure look like?

It's not necessarily. A week. A weekly time slot. Of an activity. It's more focused on the relationship. So it's being seen.

Making conversation. With young people. And spending one on one time. With them. In their environments. It's about friendships. And hanging out.

With young people. Spending time with them. Sometimes they do have a weekly meeting. But it's usually. A majority of time. Is just hang out time. A place to be.

[14:22] To hang out together. And then sometimes. Someone might share. A testimony. Or. Or something that's. Sort of an optional extra. For if they want to hear that. Then they can stick around.

But the majority of it. Is just time. To be together. So. Critique. Jesus.

Jesus. Was capable. Of revealing. The true and full nature. Of God. In his person. We aren't. Not in the.

We don't relate perfectly. With people. And. The relational model. May actually be. May reflect. An actual. More.

A modernist. World view. Than a biblical one. Kids. Can hang out. Anytime. It's kind of crazy.

[15:20] That we think. If. Non-Christian kids. Why would they want to hang out. With a bunch of Christian kids. On a Friday night. It doesn't really make sense. That they don't have any.

Same interests. The. The idea behind this. Is that. It's not really offering. The kids anything. They don't have already.

And what if you're shy. Or you're awkward. If you're. If you're meant to be a leader. If you're. If you're not. Extroverted. And really comfortable. Making conversation with people. Then what do you do?

Is this. Is this a model. Just for extroverts. And if the process. By which. The youth come. To know Christ.

Is entirely dependent. On that. Their relationship. With that youth leader. What happens when. They leave. Turnover of youth leaders.

[16:16] In most models. Is quite quick. But the reality. Of this model. Is that it hasn't gone far enough. It took a step. In the right direction. It moved.

The focus away. From programs. To people. But communities. Of faith. More authentically. Reflect. And incarnate. The gospel. Than individuals do.

We need to build. Relationships. That lead. Lead to communities. Of believers. God exists. In community. The Holy Trinity.

Is a communal relationship. And we've seen. Going through the book. Of Acts. In church. That the key leaders. Are more concerned. With building. The body of believers. And in John 17.

We see Jesus. Praise. For the body of believers. For the community. In Romans 12. And Ephesians 4. Scripture calls us. To be the body.

[17:11] Of Christ. And. And teaches that. Our task. Is to. Our task. In ministry. Is to. Build up. The body. So.

What's the way forward. In my opinion. We need to find. A model. That can affect.

The greatest number. Of youth. At various. Levels. Of development. So. We need to run. A single. Layered. Program. A one size. Fits all. Program.

That's similar. To the New Testament. Church. Where there were. So many different. People. At different levels. Gentiles. Jews. Greeks. Slaves.

Free. The Bible. Must shape. Our method. And our message. So. I'm going to. This is kind of a little activity.

[18:07] For you. I'm going to read out. Some passages. I've got them on the. On the. PowerPoint. So. I'll read them out. And I want you to note. Either in your head. On a piece of paper. What.

Are the things. What things. Characterized. The early church. Okay. So what things. Characterized. The early church. And this is from. Acts chapter 2. And they devoted.

Themselves. To the apostles. Teaching. And the fellowship. To the breaking of bread. And prayers. And all. Came upon. Every soul.

And many wonders. And signs. Were being done. Through the apostles. And all. Who believed. Were together. And had all things. In common. And they were selling. Their possessions. And belongings.

And distributing. The proceeds. To all. As any had need. And day by day. Attending the temple. Together. And breaking bread. In their homes.

[19:01] They received their food. With glad. And generous. Hearts. Praising God. And having favor. With all the people. And the Lord. Added to their number.

Day by day. Those who were being saved. And the Lord. And the Lord. So Colossians 3. 16. Let the word. Of Christ. Dwell. Richly. Dwell.

In you. Richly. Teaching. And admonishing. One another. In all wisdom. Singing psalms. And hymns. And spiritual songs. With thankfulness. In your hearts. To God.

And 2 Timothy. Chapter 4. Verse 2. Preach the word. Be ready. In season. And out of season. Reprove. Rebuke. And exhort. With complete patience.

And teaching. Jude 20. But you. Beloved. Building yourselves up. In your most holy faith.

[19:56] And praying. In the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 10. 25. Let us not. Give up meeting together. As some are in the habit of doing.

But let us encourage one another. And all the more. As you see the day approaching. So what were some things that. So what were some things that.

Characterized the early church. Community. Community. Fellowship. Fellowship. Apostles teaching. Apostles teaching.

Love. Pardon? Love. Love. Prayers. Prayers. Patience and endurance of others. Yep. Patience and endurance of others. Giving to each other.

Giving to each other. I'm going to suggest to you. That we need to be doing all these things with youth. We need the youth. The model of youth ministry.

[20:50] To be shaped. By the Bible. By shaped by what Christian community is meant to be. To teach kids the Bible. To pray with them. Sing with them. Encourage community.

Encourage them to be in relationship with each other. Seek relationship out of the timeline of church or Bible study. Help encourage them to love one another.

These are the things that should shape the model of youth ministry that we do. So. The Bible must shape our method.

And our message. So. We want a community that is centered on the word. And they pray together. So. We want to teach and preach the world to youth. We want them to be in Bible studies.

We want to teach them having speakers. Go away for retreats. Talk about a specific topic. Preach through a chapter of the Bible. A book of the Bible with them.

[ 21 : 54 ] We want them to know how God wants them to live. We want them to be a Christian community. Christian community is so different to what community in the world is like.

It's characterized by love. And that we have something bigger in common. Youth want to know why they're here. They're trying to search for purpose.

What are they going to do with their life? They're asked probably if they're anything from grade 9 onwards. They've asked what are you going to do with your life? Grade 9.

That's ridiculous. I think I changed my mind six times in there and didn't end up doing any of them. And we want to do effective outreach. We want to raise up youth who are equipped to share their faith and witness.

So we want to preach the word. We want our focus to be on spiritual growth, not numbers.

[ 23 : 00 ] We want to teach the full word of God. And we want to focus on what is truly attractive. Jesus, the bread of life and living water.

We want Christian community because it's meant to be a shining light. We want to feed the youth. We want them to hear God's word. And they need to know how to be a Christian in this world.

Christian community is so important. Youth groups must focus on doing the things that they know must characterise their groups. Relationships can be dime a dozen.

But belonging is priceless. And belonging to a Christian community is so special because of Jesus. It's not just a social club. We are centred on the person of Jesus.

That's our focus. That's what drives us to want to live differently. He equips us to do that by his spirit. And I found this wonderful quote by Francis Schaefer.

[ 24 : 02 ] It says, Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful. Christian community is the ultimate apologetic.

So we want to foster community. We want to teach them how to be in community with each other. Get them to eat together.

That's such a blessing. It's something that the early church did. We want to encourage friendship. Resolve conflict. Don't let that be something that stops you from coming.

Seek reconciliation. Make them want to seek reconciliation. And encourage them to spend time together. Bible studies together is such a wonderful way of forming community.

Centering around the Bible. I had the privilege of leading a bunch of grade 10 girls in Bible study last year. And for a lot of them it was their favourite time of the week.

[ 25 : 02 ] They couldn't wait. They're like, I had such a horrible week. But I was so excited this afternoon when I realised it was Bible study. That's what you want your youth to say. You don't want to say, Oh, I'm so excited because we're doing frozen chicken bowling.

That doesn't mean anything. You want them to be excited about hearing from God's word and being with each other and sharing the difficulties of life with each other. Because although we may water them down, when you're a teenager, things seem like a big deal.

Things, Oh, I have an exam. That, in our eyes, is like, Well, it's one exam of, you know, you won't even remember that exam next year. But in that moment, in that time, that's a stress in their life.

And I think we need to be aware of that. And they're aware of that. So we're going to create community for them to feel loved in, to have people that they can come to and share the things that they're having trouble with, share and ask for prayer and pray for each other.

The youth of St. John's love praying for each other. The junior youth group that meets at 11am on Sunday mornings, I'm told that you can't shut them up when they're praying.

[ 26 : 16 ] They would happily pray for hours out loud in a group together. That's wonderful. So we want to do effective outreach.

We want a youth ministry that seeks the lost. Sorry. We want the focus to be on going out. We can't expect unchurched kids to just want to come to us.

I mean, God does work in the way that happened with me when I was 15. I was like, Yeah, I'll go to youth group. That sounds like something that I'd be happy to do.

So we can expect God to work, but we can't just sit here. And in particular, I just ask the youth to sit there and hope that more people will just come to them.

We want to raise up youth who are equipped to go and share their faith and share what God's done in their life with their friends at school.

[ 27 : 17 ] We don't want to do a bait and switch. We don't want to do basketball for Jesus. We don't want people, we don't want to run a program that youth have to feel like they come to this basketball event, but then why is someone making them all sit down halfway through the game and telling them that Jesus died for them?

It's confusing. We want to create disciples who are excited, who it just pours out of them when they're at school that, Oh, what did I do on the weekend?

Well, I had Bible study on Friday night and it was so nice to meet with other Christians and I learned this about God. And on Sunday, we have our youth group and it was just so nice being with each other.

And they're my best friends. And I know they'll be my best friends forever. Um, we, we want to equip the fish who are in the reef.

Um, they have the most contact with all the other youth, uh, through school and soccer and, uh, music and all the things that they're doing. We want to equip them to be able to go and make disciples themselves, um, to share their, what God's done in their life, which is so important to them, um, in their own contexts.

[ 28 : 33 ] Because I can't, I don't have a lot of contact with, um, grade eight girls who do ballet. But the grade eight girl who does ballet, who's a Christian, does.

Um, so we can be effective in that way by equipping, um, our youth from God's word. Um, and allowing the spirit to work in their lives. So, a great example of this is the youth ministry at St. John's, which you've heard me ramble on about. Um, the model that was implemented, uh, that we have implemented at the moment was implemented by Jenny, uh, Ken and Julie Moser. Um, and it involves, I want to tell you about what it looks like.

So, Friday night they have Bible studies, um, which meet at the church from five to seven mostly.

Um, and they're split up into grade groups and gender. So, so grade seven boys, grade, um, seven girls and so forth up to grade 12.

Um, and that's, they have, uh, one or two youth leaders that meet with them and, and run that Bible study every week. Uh, and then they have a big meeting. There's CTC, which stands for Christian Teens Club, which is why they call it CTC because it doesn't sound very cool.

[ 29 : 46 ] Um, but they, uh, they, that's grade seven to nine and they meet at 11 a.m. uh, downstairs, um, on Sunday mornings. And then there's senior youth, which meets from four till six, um, on Sunday afternoons before evening service.

And a lot of them tend to, uh, come for youth group. They have dinner together and then a whole bunch of them come over for the evening service. Um, we've seen the, the fruit of this ministry.

Um, the idea of doing Bible studies is so great. It's meeting, um, it's meeting, um, meeting the youth at this stage of life, um, and, uh, their developmental level as well in terms of what they can understand.

Um, uh, and they're all in the same boat. They all understand what pressures are facing them. Um, um, because leading a Bible study of grade seven boys is very different to a Bible study of grade 11 girls.

Um, they're on different levels. They have different concerns. Um, um, so this is a great place for them to meet and encourage one another also. Um, um, and the idea is that, that, that you select committed youth leaders who hopefully if you get them, um, hooked up with a group in grade six, um, so when they come into grade seven, that they carry them the whole way through to grade 12.

[ 31 : 06 ] So there's consistency in their leadership. And it's also very encouraging for, um, the youth leaders. The grade 12s that are going to be graduating this year are the first group, um, to have been in, under this model, being carried through from grade six and had their same leaders all the way through to grade 12.

Um, and you can talk to those youth leaders and, and see how in, in their lives they've been so impacted by seeing these girls, young men and women go from rambunctious and crazy in all those cases and trying hard to get them to sit down, let alone listen from, um, uh, read a passage of scripture and talk about it to, um, not wanting to, sharing time where they go around and share things they want to pray for goes for two hours.

Um, they don't want to leave. They really want to know what God's word says to them. Um, so it's, it's great for the leaders also to see, um, how God's working in these kids' lives.

Um, we've seen the fruit of this ministry, this style of, uh, youth model. Um, disciples are being made and making more disciples.

The youth leaders that are being raised up now to take over the, the, the youth leadership, uh, youth who have been discipled themselves in this, in this model. Um, and we have such a godly group of young people at this church.

[ 32 : 30 ] Um, I remember when I first came to, uh, Vancouver, um, in 2006, um, I was asked to lead the grade, um, grade, then grade eight girls Bible study.

And I was wowed by them. Um, and then, um, and their, their knowledge of the Bible and their love of Jesus and wanting to pray for their friends.

Um, um, I've been involved in youth ministry for, um, I've been involved in youth ministry for, um, um, St. John's, um, but I was just so encouraged by, um, by how these kids really do want to live their lives for Jesus.

Um, they give up soccer on Sunday mornings, um, so they can come to, to youth group. Um, they really, they, in small ways for, from our eyes, they're counting the cost of following Jesus.

Um, but they, all of them are giving up big things, things that their parents or the world holds, um, dear because they know Christian community is important. They really get it and they really love each other.

[ 33 : 37 ] Um, and it's really wonderful. So I just want to briefly talk about the culture, um, that, um, the youth are growing up at the moment.

Um, our culture, um, now is so opposed, um, to the Christian message. Um, I think much more than it ever has been. And, um, and I think particularly in Vancouver, um, so opposed to Christians.

And, and this is the same in high school. Um, this is the same in junior school. It's extremely hard to be a Christian teenager. Um, the fashion, for one, for, for young girls, it's so difficult for young women to find clothes that aren't extremely revealing.

Um, uh, we, I've had to do a modesty talk with, um, some, some girls in our youth. Uh, and I said, I know, I know it's really hard.

You've got everything against you. You can't go out and buy something, a t-shirt that's not low cut.

Um, the shorts you buy are really short shorts. They're not, they don't sell clothes, um, that can equip, uh, that, so they've got everything against them.

[ 34 : 50 ] Um, so it's really hard, basically when all their friends at school, addressing one way, um, they feel the pressure. The, uh, there's a lot of trash on TV and, and the movies that are coming out at the moment.

Um, the moral, it's, it's, I would, it has very loose morals, if any at all. Um, and, and the same with that. They, they're wearing things, um, that is probably not appropriate or helpful for, for young people to wear.

Um, and this is what the Christian, this is what Christian teenagers have to face. Um, and they're facing it, uh, head on. And even in the books that are out there, I don't know if you've heard of the Twilight series, um, but I read the first book because a whole bunch of the youth girls are reading it. And it's terrible. Um, it creates, the, the ideals it's creating, um, are so anti-Christian and, and subtle in the way they do them. So it's not even a direct attack on things.

Um, but it's, it's a sort of a, a shifting attention. Um, so, I think it's probably the hardest it's ever been to be, to be a Christian teenager now than it ever has been.

[ 36 : 04 ] Um, even when I was a Christian teenager, like things were so different 10 years ago, um, to they are now. And I think they're just going to get worse. Um, so, this is why kids need a Bible.

Um, everything else in their life is telling them the opposite. Um, to do it differently. That things don't matter. Um, so, because of this, I really want, um, to encourage you to pray.

Um, I really would like you to pray for the youth of St. John's, um, and pray for their youth leaders.

Um, and pray for the youth of Vancouver, because they really need Jesus.

And, uh, and one of the ways they're going to hear about Jesus is through youth that really follow Christ genuinely. Um, so what I've got, I, uh, emailed the youth leaders of the church and asked them for things that we can pray for them.

So I've created a, uh, um, so take one and pass them back. These are yours to keep, um, with some prayer points on them. Actually, can I grab one?

[ 37 : 11 ] Um, things that, that you can be praying for them. Um, I've got some things that you can, that the specific requests from the youth leaders, um, and things that they would like us to pray for the youth as well.

Um, and if we don't have enough, then I'll print off some more at the end. Um, so I'll just want to read out some of the things that, uh, that the youth leaders and they want to pray for. And I've actually put at the bottom of the page, put all the names of the youth leaders and what grades they, um, what grades they lead.

So you can pray for them by name as well. And, uh, and contact them. I really want you to encourage, if you don't know any youth of this church, to get to know them. Um, if you contact Ben Short, then he'd be more than willing for you to, um, to come and sit in on a, on a youth group. Um, and to get to know these youth kids, because they really need your encouragement. Um, they need to know that it's sustainable to be a Christian your whole life. Um, they need to see, uh, what it, what it looks like to live as a Christian in the next stage of your life, which is why youth leaders are so important.

They go, oh, okay, I can be a Christian in my twenties. Um, and then when you get to, when you get to, uh, young adult stages, important to have people that, oh, I can be a Christian in my thirties. Um, because, because it's, it's so hard to look forward to that.

[ 38 : 32 ] Um, um, it's so far in the future of these youth kids, and they're facing so many pressures that, um, that Satan will use to, to tear them away. Um, so I really want you to encourage, and to encourage you, to encourage the youth, um, and to be praying for them.

Um, and if you don't know any of the youth leaders, um, they're wonderful. They're all, they're all, they're all, I'd say they're all my friends. Um, and they are wonderful, um, Christian young people who, um, who really need your help as well, and need your prayers.

Um, so I'm just going to read out the things, some of the things. So, uh, it'd be one thing that you could be really good for you to pray for, is wisdom for the, um, the youth minister selection committee, who's in the last stages of, of selecting the new youth minister, um, that you would give them, uh, ask that God would give them wisdom, um, in selecting, uh, the right person for that job. And, uh, and pray for whoever it is, that is the new youth minister, as they, they're potentially hoping to hire someone to start in September, um, August, September. So it'd be really good if we pray for them as they come, um, to St. John's.

Um, for the youth leaders, they, uh, requested that you, that you pray for wisdom, strength, and support for them. Um, and that they'll keep being able to do ministry wholeheartedly, um, and not burn out.

[ 39 : 52 ] Um, they're feeling very tired after a year of having no, um, no youth leaders, um, for them, youth ministry team supporting them. Um, um, after a year with that, Ken and Julie, it's been, it's been a really tough year on the youth leaders.

Um, um, um, um, but, uh, I'd like you to keep praying for Ben Short. He's done a really good job in, in sustaining, um, the youth ministry model and, um, and keeping things going.

Um, but he's tired as well. Um, so we'd ask, it'd also be a good thing if you asked God to raise up more leaders, um, to equip the youth now to be leaders in the future.

Um, and for the youth, it'd be really good if you prayed, a whole bunch of the youth are depressed. Um, that's one of, it's, it tends to be a trend in our culture at the moment too.

Um, and in the group particularly we're seeing that. Um, so we need, it'd be good if you pray for those who are affected by depression, um, and that they can be healed, um, and that those ministering to them, um, will have wisdom.

[ 40 : 57 ] Um, and pray for gospel thinking in these kids. They are surrounded by thousands of temptations and wrong thinking. Um, if they don't listen to the word of God twice a week, then there's little hope for some of them.

Um, pray that the spirit would work in their hearts. But, uh, a big point from the youth was that they want to thank God for, um, for all that is still happening. There's so much fruit.

Um, this year we had four youth baptized, all from non-Christian homes. Um, and the service was amazing to have so many, non-Christian family members there as well.

Um, and one of the girls, when she was interviewed, she said, they, they were asking like, you know, why, um, why do you want to be baptized? And she said, it sounds kind of silly, but I just love Jesus.

Um, and that's great. That's what you want them to say. Um, and there's a large, and there's, is a large number of youth in St. John's that come from non-Christian homes.

[ 41 : 56 ] Um, and these kids are on fire for God. They're facing, um, not only family pressures, but, um, but all the pressures that the, um, the other youth are facing. Um, so I'd really ask, um, I actually come from a non-Christian family myself, and I've experienced this head on in my own family.

So I'd really encourage you to pray for those kids. It's really hard to be the only Christian in your family. Um, and, and I just ask you, just ask God to strengthen them, and, and surround them with love and support.

Um, Christian family to non-Christian kids is so important. Um, they need people to be their Christian mum and dad, um, and Christian brothers and sisters, because they're not getting that support from anywhere else.

Um, also a good thing to pray for is the transition between grade six and grade seven. Um, soon, in the next month, um, grade six kids will be graduating up into, graduating up into the youth program. And that can be a kind of a tricky transition. It's different. They're going to enter, um, high school, not next year, but the year after. Um, they feel like they're the old kids, but now they're going to be babies again.

[ 43 : 01 ] It's kind of a tricky transition. So pray that that would go smoothly. And pray for the grade 12 kids who are leaving. There's a whole bunch of the grade 12 kids from St John's who are moving away for school, um, to go to university.

And, uh, and just pray that God would keep them and, um, provide Christian communities. Um, where they're, um, where they're headed. Um, and as I said, there's the name of the, of the youth leaders there.

Um, I would encourage you to pray for them by name, um, and get to know them. Um, just even a kind word or a pat on the back may be a really good thing. Um, um, so I hope, um, that was helpful in terms of, uh, just giving you a, uh, sort of, uh, insight into what kind of youth ministry is thought of or how you, how most people would approach youth ministry.

And what I think is, um, and what I know to be in seeing the fruit of it, a much more effective model. Um, and we see that in our church. Um, and we see that in our church. Great.

Um, we can have a time of the change. Sure. I'll kick it off if you like. Um, those terrible games you've talked about.

[ 44 : 09 ] Mm-hmm. I used to teach, uh, sumo. People would be surprised to hear that, but I used to teach sumo as well. Yep. These things can be great metaphors.

Even frozen chicken is a great metaphor for people, the way they go through life. There's nothing, their coefficient of friction is so low, right?

They're bumping into things all the time. And, uh, so you can build on those terrible games. Even the, uh, peanut butter on two sides of the glass, you could build a metaphor there of what relationships, um, are made of, and what stops a relationship.

And, you know, all of that, I, I would encourage, if you're not doing it already, I can't wait. Yeah. I'm not anti-games. I'm anti-bad games.

I think there's a, a place, I think, and I think the word games comes with so many, uh, ideas. Um, uh, um, but I think, um, activities, I think you can do, you can do Bible battleship, um, which is a, a favorite of this, the, the junior group.

[ 45 : 25 ] Um, do, if you've done a series of, um, of teaching or something, do a trivia game of, um, X's and O's, or, um, there's ways you can, uh, I think you can use these things, um, and use, do Bible activities, which are fun, um, and the kids enjoy them, but it's, it's not make, doing it, making too far of a stretch between something that doesn't really seem to fit, um, and bringing it over.

It's much easier to, to be a lot more intentional about it. It's a lot clearer in kids' minds. Otherwise, you kind of, it, it is confusing to them sometimes, I think. But I think there is a place for doing an activity and explaining it, or, um, things like that.

Do you have anything in your program with respect to relationships between the old and the young? Because the Bible talks about that. Yeah. The teaching of, by the old people, to the young. Yeah.

Well, the idea, that's, I think that's the idea of, uh, youth leaders, is that hopefully there's, um, people mentoring the youth leaders, and the youth leaders are mentoring the youth kids.

Um, and that, that hopefully then, as they grow up, then they mentor youth kids. Yeah. I, I definitely agree with the, like, that there's, the old to teach young, and there's always someone, someone else for you to teach, I think, that you to encourage and disciple.

[ 46 : 50 ] Yeah. I was curious about your comment about, uh, the youth and depression. Mm-hmm. And depression is, pretty broad, in general.

Is it your sense that it's more so, in a Christian group, and if so, why? I'm not sure. I think, I know in, St. John's, in St. John's youth at the moment, it is.

Um, but they, I think a lot of that may be to do with circumstances. Um, with Ken and Julie leaving, um, last year, um, was big to a lot of kids.

To a lot of kids, they are, they were their parents in Christ. Um, so I'm not sure if that's, I think, generationally, I think the youth, in terms of, young people now, they are more depressed.

Um, and I'm not sure, I don't know if it's just more, um, uh, that we're more aware of it now. Um, but, um, yeah, I'm not sure, I'm not sure that's more, that's significantly more in their Christian population.

[ 47 : 50 ] Yeah. Thank you. Um, how do you find, um, depression showing itself in you? Um, um, um, um, a lot of them are very sad, um, or not wanting to come to things.

Um, just, I think, a lot of them feel very low. Um, so, meeting with other Christians is probably, is, is the really high part of the point of the week, or it's a really hard point of the week, um, um, which some of them want to avoid, because they know they have, they can't hide there.

Um, so, it's kind of, it's kind of a tough one, but I think it's, um, it's showing in a general, I think people are really, the youth are really lethargic. Um, um, I think in, in the, the, the populations of, um, the youth at St John's at the moment.

Um, yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Can I have a little talk? I really enjoyed it. And I, you did it very well. Thank you.

I'd like to ask about, as the youth go on, to academia, and, um, how, what formal, or is there any kind of formal, um, system in place, with the youth, to draw other young people into the church?

[ 49 : 17 ] Um, I think there has been. Um, I think in, in the last eight months, it's, I was talking particularly with the Ecclesia group, which I'm involved in as well. Everyone's kind of just been on, needing to get through.

Um, everyone's had a, I think, from most of Ecclesia in particular, have had a really tough year. Um, so, it's kind of been a year that we haven't seen very much growth, which has been a marker, a marker in the, the young adults group, um, is that it's, that God's just been, where there was a, there was a period where God, randoms would just come every week.

We're like, oh, did you hear about this? Oh, no, I just saw a flyer, and I just decided to come. So, no connections. Um, but I think the, I think the idea is that we, now I've got through this, the period that there's, Aaron Roberts is, um, in, is heading up Ecclesia at the moment, and I know that he has a, a strong vision for making that, um, making us, making people very evangelistic, and, um, intentional in their relationships, but also, um, in terms of running, like, I'm not sure if we've, in the past we've done, um, like, kind of a bring a friend night, um, or a night that's more open to that, um, and the youth has done that in, in the past years, um, in terms of, uh, they'd have, um, like a, they call, there's kickstart every year, which is, uh, it's a series of, it's kind of a conference for, for youth. It's the first weekend before they go back to school in September, the last weekend in August usually, um, and the idea is to, to gear up, um, the youth for, for the year, but it's also, um, evangelistic, um, and they've done things called youth search, um, in, uh, in the past years where they'd have, um, uh, on a Friday night after Bible study, they, um, have where they can invite all their friends along, um, and I think they experienced, uh, and they'd be a speaker, and they'd run basically what I would run as a youth group, but make it a bit more open to newcomers, but I think the idea of the, the, the model is that, that it's not just, you don't, what, if you brought a friend to youth group, then they would have, they would get something out of it as well as you would, so that kind of that one size fits all program, um, and encouraging people to bring others into Christian community, um, uh, but I think they experienced trial and error with different things with the youth incident, which I think Ken and Julie did in terms of, um, coming from a Sydney, um, diocese, um, um, and then seeing the differences in youth in, um, in Vancouver and Sydney, and that's something that I've, still learning as well, um, in terms of, uh, culture, um, in my own age group, um, but I think,

I think there's, there's definitely that, um, that heart there and that mindset. I think it's kind of going to be, I think, try a whole bunch of different things, um, but there, they have been, yeah. I'm not sure.

[ 52 : 33 ] Um, I'm still, I'm still learning what it's like, what churches are like in Vancouver. Um, um, I've only been here two years and, and have been at St. John's that whole time.

So it's kind of, um, from what I, what I've grasped is from, um, different conversations with people, but I'm not sure. Um, I think Ben Short might have a better idea of, um, of what that's like, but I'm not sure.

Don't they normally come from other churches to attend the healing conference? Yeah. We've, we've tried to encourage that. Um, yeah, we, we try, the idea between, behind VYLC, um, Vancouver Youth Leadership Conference, which is a week in August, um, is to equip, um, youth leaders in Vancouver to do, um, to do youth ministry.

Um, so they're taught from the, they're taught, there's usually a bit of exegetical preaching. There's, um, then they do small groups and in different strands. So they get taught biblical theology if they've never come before.

Um, and I think, I'm not sure that, I think they get to write a talk the second year or something like that. So, um, there's programs in place to bless not only the youth of Vancouver, but the youth leadership of Vancouver.

[ 53 : 42 ] But it's, it's very difficult because a lot of these people, a lot of, uh, are in these different mindsets. Um, and, uh, I think, I'm praying that, that God will open their eyes to, um, a model that is more efficient and effective and biblical.

Um, so, it's kind of a, it's kind of a different, a difficult situation. Um, but it is, it's, in the last five years, I know that God has been working in, um, um, making connections between youth leadership at, at St.

John's and, um, and St. John's Richmond, um, and with other, with other churches and stuff as well. Thank you for that.

This is the first time I've heard an expansion of the model that, um, uh, the Moses, uh, actually described at a conference. We had a social media a lot ago.

Um, and I'm glad that you're continuing it. One of the things I like about it is the empowerment of young people, because, you know, this is a very confusing time in their lives when everybody wants to feel more powerful, or at least begin with powerful people.

[ 54 : 55 ] And, um, you are giving them tools to be more powerful in terms of their, their Christian life and, and supporting and reinforcing, uh, those ideals.

Um, I noticed that the biblical model, and this, I don't, I don't have a biblical reference from, and please do not tell me Jesus when he was 12, argued with the people in the temple.

But, you know, the older Christians looking after and mentoring and so on, some of the younger ones, is not necessarily, uh, the only model that's available to these kids.

Mm-hmm. And I'll just give you one example of that. A young man who was befriended by the minister's son at a church I previously attended, became a Christian in a non-Christian family. He was in high school. Before he graduated, he had converted his two brothers, both of his parents, an aunt, and one of his cousins. Yeah. And everybody thought, oh, Axel's going to be an evangelist, you know, I mean, look at the skill.

[ 55 : 54 ] The problem was that, a little bit like Ben Short, he was a quiz, quiz at math. You know, sort of up there in the scholarship range when he graduated. So, that thing was getting reinforced all the way to university.

He's a wizard of math. He's got to use math. So, he did study math, and he became a teacher. I cannot really remember whether he spent one year or no years at teaching. But God hit him, and said, this is the wrong turn.

I want him for ministry. And so, he did go into the Carrie region program, and has been a Baptist minister for a lot of years. But, I mean, there's a kit, you know, not even through high school.

And, he just kind of swapped through the atheists, or the non-believers, maybe indifferent, within his own family. Yeah. And, both of his parents, actually, went into ministry, with using a bed and breakfast kind of thing.

Okay. Where they ministered to people that came to them, and they did the diploma course, that region as well. I mean, he was impressive this kit. He really was. And, I think you're training people,

who would be able to make use of that kind of unit, you know, that kind of, they're, they're demonstrating something already, that would make them available for that.

[ 57 : 16 ] My one concern about the degree of depression, is that, I hope some people in your group, are learning what the signs of clinical depression are, because we do have, too high a suicide rate among teenagers.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Just from my, my small experience of young people, especially university students, I find that, the fact is, that they've never been taught, you know, that God is a creator, as well as a sustainer of life.

Mm-hmm. And this side is not emphasized, unfortunately, but I mean, that would be a great basis for many of these kids, I'm sure. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. How do the youth relate to the rest of the church?

I think, I think it's, it's, it's very separate. And that's, from, coming from an outsider, which I feel I am still, it, yeah, I think it's, you've got a lot of things against you, and being in big church, because it just, time-wise, people go to different things, so, it's hard to be, um, connected, we're united in, in that, because I feel, I know we are in Christ, um, uh, but the fact that the youth go, tend, a lot of them tend to go to the evening service, um, means it's hard they, they, they, don't get contacted with a lot of people from the morning service.

Um, I mean, the youth, a lot of them come from families at St John's, so there's a lot of connection that way, um, but, I think the average youth wouldn't know very many, um, older people, or have relationships with very many older people, um, than them, um, in the church.

[ 59 : 01 ] Do they do any activities that, um, involve the, the older people in the church? Not really. I think that's something that, that's, um, been encouraged. I mean, last summer or the summer, uh, the summer before, um, um, they were involved, um, they were involved, E.D.

got them, um, a whole bunch of youth, um, involved in, um, going to visit, um, people who are housebound or, um, uh, people who don't have as many people to talk to in the church and, um, and, uh, and that was one way that they got some sort of connection.

Um, but then last summer it didn't seem to work out again. It's, uh, I think, I think a lot of youth went away last summer. Um, but I think there's, there's, there's been the desire there, but I'm just not sure if it's worked out yet.

Um, uh, with respect to that question, I think it's important, um, uh, not to expect the youth to reach up to the adults. I think it, it doesn't really make sense for it to work that way.

It should probably work the other way. Um, uh, I don't know if it's fair to expect youth to, to, to take that as people. Um, but, but I think it's really, really important, um, like Prince said, to pray for these people and to get to know them.

[ 60 : 14 ] Um, they're really great and they would really like to meet you. Um, but not just the youth leaders, the youth in general, and just, just, um, I think try to support them. And like Prince said, it's been a really tough year for the youth, um, but, but they would, they would love to get to know you.

Um, I'm sure. So, so an encouraging word, um, how many should add after, um, um, uh, the formal service or something like that, when they're getting out of CTC. I know they would really appreciate that, but, but I think it's really important for the adults to take an active role in trying to communicate with the youth, rather than expecting it to be the other way around.

I think that's just, um, um, I think that's just, um, can I speak to that too? Um, I know, uh, one group that, uh, used to go to Honduras every year, and every month they have a soup, um, uh, lunch, and, uh, people, uh, you know, uh, give soup or whatever it is, and the youth serve it out, and it, it, and everybody is surprised, the whole congregation goes, and that's the sort of thing I had in mind, was sort of, um, while you're getting soup, you talk and chat, you're sitting at the table with them, and so on and so forth, that, that was the only reason I had, but I also know it.

I think, I think there's been some things, like, I think there's, um, every year they used to have a, a kickoff for the summer barbecue, and I think that's been a time when they've invited, um, anyone in the congregation to come, um, so I think it has been there, but I think you're, like, I think it'd be great if there was more connections, I think you're right.

I just want to speak about the, um, this program, uh, Ken and Julie's program, and I realize that it has been a wonderful, um, program in some ways, currently, that I would, that I mean, there has been so much fallout, um, for certain young people, um, I mean, I'm sorry, I'm actually in the culture of it, that it's devastating, so I'm hoping that as it goes on, that will, cease to be.

[ 62 : 20 ] Yeah, and I think that's, I mean, I realize that it's, I think it's not the, I'm not sure it's the, I'm not sure it's the model, but I think that, there has been things that happen, um, as with any church, that, um, but this has been considerable, I mean, there were a bunch of children, some of these kids are still members, a lot of them are still members, some of them have gone on the playtime, but there, that there was, you know, there was a lot of exclusivity, so it was a devastating, well, I think, and I think the thing is, um, not children, but young people, yeah, young people, and it is, it's, it's a very, I think, the, um, from what I know of the, the, the change in what the youth ministry used to be like, um, to now, um, uh, there was a lot of things that, that happened, that, that would have been better, you know, it would have been nice, if, if it didn't happen.

Um, I don't want to detract from the, the good parts of the program, because I realise that. Because I think, I don't think it's the program, but I think people, um, will carry out the program in different ways. Um, people have different personalities, um, and things, uh, and I think people are going to be opposed to this model, um, because in other ways it does, it does warrant exclusivity.

Um, um, it, it's unforgiving in some of its, um, uh, in some of its, um, what's the word I'm looking for? Um, expectations. Yeah, expectations, because I think, um, it's, it's, it's drawing a hard line, it's drawing a hard line for a purpose. Um, and, um, yeah.

Um, I don't belong to St. John, so I've not been in Magdorba very long, so now what I'm going to say is going to be relevant to this church, what it is. But, I would say you're quite right in saying that the culture, uh, in general, is greatly opposed to the Christian message as such.

[ 64 : 17 ] And in that sense, the Christian message is the good news. Um, the only, uh, uh, doubt that I had, cutting things short, is that, I, I just heard the word exclusivity, but I've seen it in a different church where they became very holy, or a very small group became very holy, and therefore excluded all the rest.

Um, so, and on top, it was very much based within. So, my question, uh, initially started off by saying, and I was encouraged by the lady over there, saying, how do you go out?

Um, so, um, how do you go out to the other people? Yeah. Rather than just expect here. So, therefore, I'm not saying lower the standards, but maybe, it means opening up a little bit, uh, not being too rigid, what, what is expected.

For example, I think also the question is, having had two or three kids, which, uh, have no point in life, and everything has been invented, kind of, so, what, what can I do?

But I think, for example, in Vancouver, uh, the homeless, and or some other social activity, where they're actually providing something, uh, without forcing the gospel down other people's throats, um, can be extremely positive, because they're actually contributing something, and then they open up their doors.

[ 65 : 41 ] Yeah. And when I say exclusive, I don't, I'm not saying, I'm not saying you're open up. Yeah, I'm sorry, I just want to clarify myself, and I'm not saying that it's an exclusive program, where you only, you have to sign some contract, to, to do some certain thing.

Um, the, and the idea behind this model is that you, if you're teaching kids the Bible, and the fullness of the Bible, then, um, it's going to be impacting their whole life. Um, and you want to welcome people into that, because you want them to come and to know Jesus as well.

Um, and, and there's a big focus of that, but, uh, the, the main difference between this model and others is that saying, that you can equip kids themselves to do that, um, and hoping that they're doing that, and encourage them to do that in our own context, create, um, structures for them to do that, um, events that they can bring these to, um, uh, yeah.

So, this lady's had her hand up like six years. We did. Uh, when I lived in Ottawa, something happened, and, apparently, pray, pray, pray was the beginning.

There was either seven, seven ladies praying for four years, or four ladies for seven years. And, uh, so it was, uh, absolutely a grassroots upbringing.

[ 66 : 57 ] And when it came to the youth, one of the, fellow that was, say, 30, got the idea of, um, coffee houses. So, as, people who weren't 30, we would bake something, and show up.

And, he knew who to, point to what table, to talk to who about what. And I was the one who knew about cults.

He said, go talk to these guys. They're, uh, uh, kind of interested in the Mormon thing. You know, so I, uh, anyway, uh, it was passionate.

