

Top Ten Things the Church Should Know about the 20's/30's Generation

1. Young adults are coming to church seeking relationship and belonging. The first step in reaching out to young people is to create an atmosphere that allows them to feel welcome.
2. No one type of worship suits all young adults any more than one type fits other groups in the church. Don't assume that we need "alternative" worship services. Many of us are drawn to the Episcopal Church by the mystery and sanctuary that traditional liturgies can offer.
3. Authenticity matters. Many young adults are skeptical of organized religion and associate smarmy televangelists with Christianity. Be authentic. Don't try to be "hip" to be attractive. We are compelled to join a community because of how it lives.
4. Many of us are ready to become leaders in the Church (some of us already are). Churches can be mentoring communities for young leaders if they learn to balance teaching and listening, advising and collaborating.
5. When young adults come with ideas for the community, don't make things complicated. Simply receive them. The bureaucracy of getting things done in the church can be alienating to young adults.
6. Even young adults who don't identify themselves with a particular faith or denomination take their spiritual lives seriously and are looking to be engaged. In return, the church must be open to being engaged by their questions, their challenges and their gifts.
7. Be relevant. While politicians are busy pointing fingers and congratulating themselves, the church ladies are quilting blankets for orphans and holding bake sales to raise money for whatever needs to be done. Young adults often seek out churches that address issues of social justice and provide relief-relief during our personal private tragedies and the nation's public ones.
8. Young adults are often very transitory, moving about for school and work. This is a recipe for lonely living. Does your community have ways to plug new people into community events, especially with others their age?
9. Take a look at the program your parish offers and see how much they are geared to young children as well as families. Are events and prayer groups scheduled at times and for purposes that will work for the frenetic lives of young adults?
10. Your website is as important as your church's exterior. Before we decide to visit your community, we'll probably check it out on-line first from the safety of our home, school or office. And if we don't get a sense of who you are or find the pertinent information quickly and easily, we are less likely to join you in person.