

# Understanding Adolescents Today

## Tom Schwolert

(LifelongFaith Associates, 2018)

When I began doing youth ministry full time in a church in 1988, I viewed the adolescent years as a challenging age with whom to engage in ministry. I thought they were complicated people and I needed a unique approach if I was going to have an impact on their lives for the sake of the gospel. I had great empathy for young people as I remembered my difficult years of being an adolescent. I could identify with the young person who “didn’t fit in” and felt I had a gift in working with these complex people. I followed a simple formula of that followed the mantra of “make church fun” and they will come. When they come, simply get to know them and make sure they participate in the activities we offered. Hayrides, ski trips, pizza, and any number of fun activities mixed with an occasional Bible study or discussions about the “issues” of the day made for the perfect formula. Or so I thought. That’s the model I had been taught so it was all I knew.

Fast forward almost 30 years and we see a totally different landscape for ministry with those in the adolescent years. It is not news that young people are navigating a complex world and how we engage with them for the sake of the gospel must change drastically. There is no simple formula to follow. There is no perfect curriculum. Adolescence has always been a complicated, challenging time in life but one could argue that young people today are living in the most complicated and confusing time the world has ever seen. Information is more accessible than ever. The smart phone has become a place for connection instead of the neighborhood park. Young people are bombarded with thousands of images daily that beg for their attention. And we as faith formation leaders also have to navigate our current reality and seek ways to connect the relevant message of the gospel to their daily lives. Challenging? Yes. Hopeless? No. We have a myriad of new tools and opportunities at our disposal that unleashes multiple locations and spaces for being present with young people as we walk with them in the discovery of their relationship with Jesus Christ. In this chapter I’d like to paint a broad brush of what young people are experiencing in this time of life so that we can better understand the opportunities for developing faith in this important and informative time of life.

## Developmental Overview

I think the research group called Generation Z out of Australia says it best when they define this generation:

“Gen Z is part of a generation that is global, social, visual and technological. They are the most connected, educated and sophisticated generation ever. They are the up-agers, with influence beyond their years. They are the tweens, the teens, the youth and young adults of our global society. They are the early adopters, the brand influencers, the social media drivers, the pop-culture leaders. They comprise nearly 2 billion people globally, and they don’t just represent the future, they’re creating it.

Gen Z’s have been born into the crisis period of terrorism, the global recession and climate change. They are predicted to spend their young adult years in a time of economic and social

renewal. They are also living in an era of changing household structures, and are the students of today and university graduates, employees and consumers of tomorrow.”<sup>i</sup>

It is not my goal in this chapter to present a certain theory about adolescence but rather to provide a general overview so that one who is working in the field of faith formation can be better informed. It is my hope that this would lead to informed decisions that lead to new innovations in their faith formation efforts. Adolescence as defined by the World Health Organization as from ages 10-19. However, there has been some debate on the actual age span. For some, this stage can go well into the 20's as young people are living at home longer, looking for jobs and seeking to find a life partner.<sup>ii</sup> As we explore the world of young and older adolescents we will take a look at these four areas of development: human development, family development, social and cultural development, and faith and spiritual religious development. As mentioned earlier in the chapter about children, it is crucial to understanding what is going on in these areas of development to be effective at creating opportunities for faith transformation. In this phase of life adults are quick to give labels to teenagers like unpredictable, emotional or confused. Unfortunately, we tend to focus on the negative labels and fail to look at the whole person and see the great potential that young people have in these stages of growth. The evening news is riddled with what young people are doing wrong and it seems to be a rare occasion that we see the bright moments of the adolescent years, as they are more often than not. We need to look at the whole person lest we forget the mystery of God's great design of the human and divine journey.

Understanding the whole person points to the true purpose of this book, *that we see the promise and potential in each child and youth and celebrate the unique opportunities that we have for faith formation.* As you work with adolescents and their families there is a temptation to simply create activities that we think they need, but without taking a closer look at the full range of what is happening in this unique time of life it will simply be like a guessing game and our efforts will have little likelihood of success. We are not called as leaders of faith formation to “fix” the lives of young people or make them “good.” We are called to reveal God who comes to us in the real person of Jesus Christ so that they know the One who has called them by name and loves them no matter what stage of life they are in and regardless of their circumstances. It is our role to provide them with places, spaces and relationships where this loving God is revealed to them in a way that is transformational, leading to meaning and purpose that they can find nowhere else. So let's explore this phase of the life journey.

Here is an overview of what is likely going on in these challenging and wonderful years. Keep in mind that this is fairly general. For some, adolescence starts earlier and goes much later. This is a basic overview to give some context.

## **Ages 10-14: Where do I fit?**

A major shift is happening at this time in a young person's life. This is a time when they go from being in the top grade of elementary to the new kid at school (recognizing that most schools are middle school, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade, but some are still Junior High, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>). A whole new world of relationships and social context is introduced. It is an exciting and nerve wracking time. The young person is met with a variety of conflicting polarities. It is a time when each child is most likely walking into every situation and relationship with the prominent question of “do you like me?” This shift includes a

wrestling with letting go of childish things and beginning to want to be more mature. This might result in going to bed with a teddy bear but being attentive to the new cell phone on the night stand.<sup>iii</sup> There can be a constant feeling of awkwardness as they navigate this time and they usually look to be part of a “group” that becomes their little family group away from home where they belong. There is a “who’s in, who’s out” mentality that can be the source incredible acceptance and excruciating rejection. Their brains are developing at a rapid pace too and suddenly some very smart things are coming out of their mouths. In fact, they may think they are smarter than the average adult. This is a place that youth and parents can begin to collide as they don’t seem to be taking mom and dad’s advice quite like they used to.

This is also a time when sports, music, arts and extra curricular activities increase rapidly. This can be both a good thing and present many challenges for young people and their families as they seek to balance all the activities in which they are involved. It is not uncommon for a young person to be to school at 7am for soccer practice, head to hockey after school and drive thru McDonald’s on the way to private music lessons. Parents are trying to give their kids many “options” so they can help them find what they really love. It is a time of discovery but it also is a time that is rapidly pushing them into adulthood and they are gradually being given more and more responsibility.

We must not forget that this is the primary time for young people to receive their own “device.” Yes, the dreaded smart phone opens up a whole new world for this maturing young person. Even though they are “digital natives” who are quite familiar with using the Internet and smart devices, this is often the time when they get their own. It becomes a part of them. They don’t want to put it down for fear that they might miss something that one of their friends said of not be “in the know” about the latest gossip. Questions arise in families about the proper use and the amount of data that can be used and it becomes a regular part of parent/child conversation. Relationships online and in the flesh has merged and in this phase there seems to be no difference.

In general, there does not appear to be very much opposition to church activities. As long as it is high energy and there are friends there, they are often very active in the ministries offered. It is not uncommon for young people at this age to invite their friends to church as it is another thing they can “do.” “Doing” is a huge part of this time in life. That is not to say that they don’t have a lot of questions about spiritual things. The concrete things they have been told about God are now not seeming as easy to accept. They are wondering and wanting to see evidence of God active in the world. A whole new young adolescent has emerged in light of the whole new world that surrounds them. I will explore in more detail the four factors of development in this abstract phase a bit later.

## **Ages 15-19: Where do you fit?**

I’ve often joked that in youth ministry I felt that young people just don’t like adults. I know that’s not true (at least not all the time), but in appearance there seems to be a skepticism that these adolescents share. But what is really happening is that they are wondering in whom they can trust. They want to know with whom they can be their authentic self. The high school years can be a constant battle of taking off masks and putting them right back on again when the stakes get too high. Because of this they are looking at other youth and adults and trying to evaluate if this is someone in whom it is worth having a relationship.

As a young person moves from middle school to high school there can often be a time of letting go of old friendships and finding new ones. In fact, it is relationships with their peers that bring the most joy and pain and occupies most of their emotional energy and time. Add to this the pressures of taking the right classes in high school and making good grades so they can prepare for the future makes this time challenging. It is likely they have landed on that one sport, art, music or club activity that really drives them. And they also feel the pressure to add private lessons at a high cost both in dollars and time that has added pressure. As they navigate this exciting time they also are more likely to be exposed to at risk behaviors that can lead to a variety of challenges. The pressure of *being* with friends and *doing* what they do is a regular need that they have. An extreme amount of strength is needed to resist what will cause harm and could lead down a path from which it is difficult to return. So lets take a deeper look at what is going on in these four areas of development both in early and late adolescence.

## Early Adolescence (Age 10-14)

### Human Development Influences and Realities

#### Puberty.

Of course, this is the time of puberty. The body is simply growing at a rapid pace. It's important to understand the difference between puberty and adolescence. Puberty is about physical development while adolescence is about the psychosocial change, from childhood to adult (Dr. Scott-Jupp, The Guardian). As we look at the physical changes going on there is some evidence that for some, puberty is starting much earlier. A widely recognized study by the Institute of Child Health in London in the 1960's and 1970's led by James Tanner claims that the 3 basic signs of puberty are changes in genitalia, breast development and pubic hair. The body becoming reproductively mature along with growth spurts makes for a very confusing time for the young person, especially if they have not been prepared for it. This process on average goes from age 11 to age 16 but recent studies have shown some starting as early as 8 or 9 and growth spurts continuing into the 20's. (Smith, pp.16-22) Needless to say, when puberty is in full swing young people are susceptible to awkwardness, confusion, and insecurity and are often teased and bullied.

#### Brain Development.

We can't forget the brain development at this time of life either. With advancements in medical technology and science we can now study the brain more efficiently. Changes in brain growth have an immense impact on what the child is experiencing. At this stage in the growth of the brain, young people read the emotions of other much more intensely. Some research indicates that young people at this age have a much more propensity to "take things personally" even for the smallest things, unlike older adults who may be able to not let the actions of others bother them.<sup>iv</sup> This contributes to deep feelings of exclusion in peer relationships. Seeking acceptance and knowing "where I fit in" become the norm of this stage of life.

#### Behavior.

In this stage of adolescence there appears to be a temporary imbalance between emotions and cognitive control. They are moving from concrete thinking to abstract, which often leads to taking action without thinking about consequences. There may be more time being spent in the bathroom trying to make

things look just right. There is often high energy, which needs to find an outlet. It may also cause their judgment to be a bit off. But it is also an age of laughter, fun and adventure.

### **What They Need.**

This is no doubt a confusing time for young people and a time when they need to know they are accepted and loved no matter what their feelings or thoughts are. Young people at this age want to be noticed. They want others to know that they are in the room. As we lead our faith formation efforts, we must be keenly aware of what is going on with their human development. They need learning to be active and they want what we teach to be relevant to their lives. Tapping into what they are good at will also give them a sense of purpose and will help them see their unique place in God's world. <sup>v</sup>

## **Family Development**

### **Parents**

The second part of development in early adolescence that is important to understand is what is happening with the modern family. At this stage, parents are often confused at the behavior of their soon to be adult. They sometimes see the youth's irrational decision making and behavior and see it as rebellion and disrespect. Patience and understanding is the key for parents at this point. While youth are getting much smarter about the ways of the world and their environment, they may think parents know absolutely nothing. It is as if parents were just born as parents and never had a childhood. All joking aside, this can be a difficult time for families especially as the American family has gone through major change. It is easy to see that the definition of "family" has changed immensely over the past few decades.

### **Change of the American Family**

There are numerous statistics on how the family has changed that would take a whole chapter, but I think there are a few that are important to note that can have a major impact on faith formation. It seems that the divorce rate is still hovering around 50% which means if a child is not from a divorced family, they have a friend who is. If we look around at congregations across America there is very little for families that aren't "traditional," meaning two parents and children. Also, 84% of single parents are mothers. This means that moms are taking care of the majority of faith formation efforts in single parent families. Add to that need to work, get the kids where they need to go and take care of the daily needs and it becomes difficult for a single parent to tend to religious needs. In addition, with more relaxed laws on same-sex marriage we're seeing more same-sex couples with children and it is becoming more and more accepted. There has also been an increase in multi-generational households that has gone over 10% as well as a shifting of religious beliefs. Some 70% believe there is more than one way to God. Needless to say, the definition of the word "family" is changing constantly so it would be helpful as we think about faith formation in the family as whoever is living under one roof together.

Technology also plays a factor in the family in how they live and operate together. While it does introduce some vulnerability for teens it also is a way for parents to keep tabs on their children. At this age parents are still trying to keep some limits on phone and online use but it is becoming increasingly more difficult. According to Pew Research, 83% of parents say they are friends with their teenagers on Facebook. 33% say they follow their teenager on Twitter and only 17% say they follow on some other

social site. Technology has created new ways for families to communicate. Some of these are helpful and others can be a deterrent to

## **Social and Cultural Development**

Many children from this age group were playing on their parent's iPhone at the age. The first iPhone was released in 2007 and the first iPad in 2010 that launched a whole new world at the fingertips of children. For this cohort of young people the use of technology at their disposal and in the classroom is rapidly changing. What is amazing is that they are used to it changing and expect it so they easily adapt. This rapid change is simply difficult for adults to understand at times. Adults just don't see why it is so important that they have their phone in their hand or pocket at all times.

The continued isolation of youth from the adult world in the American culture has made things difficult in our faith formation efforts. Youth live in a culture where they are consumed by the world around them and just about anything is available to them at their fingertips. However, they are starved of the most basic human need, the need for deep, meaningful relationships. Chap Clark, in his book *Hurt*, outlines his ethnographic study of middle adolescents. Rather than relying mostly on quantitative research, he spent time "being" with teenagers in their daily lives attempting to learn about what he calls "the world beneath." His conclusion is that teenagers live in a culture of "abandonment" and claims it is the defining issue for contemporary adolescents. "We have evolved to the point where we believe driving is support, being active is love, and providing any and every opportunity is selfless nurture. We are a culture who has forgotten how to *be* together."<sup>vi</sup> (Clark, 46) It is indeed heartbreaking to know that youth perceive themselves as being abandoned by adults. It is even more troubling, because we know that most adults are not intentionally trying to abandon them. We are so consumed with careers, financial worries, the day-to-day rush and providing for our kid's physical needs that we often forget about their emotional and spiritual needs. We must understand. I am not trying to claim that adults do not love teenagers. It is how we express that love that is in question. Perhaps adults have dropped the ball in entering into the world of adolescents. Providing for their needs and getting them involved in youth activities are not bad in and of themselves, but too often they replace meaningful relationship.

In this modern context young people are bombarded with thousands of images and messages a day. Being smart, beautiful, thin, strong, talented, athletic, sharp dressed and handsome to name a few, put immense pressure on the young adolescent.

Young adolescents are like a sponge absorbing the environment around them. While they are going through rapid change in their bodies and brain, the world around them is rapidly changing as well.

## **Faith and Spiritual Religious Development**

This is a time of curiosity in spiritual things with this age group. They are beginning to form their own "theology" instead of simply accepting the theology of their parents. Many questions arise and in this time it is questioning that is exactly what they need to be allowed to do. This is a time when emotions run high and values become more solidified. It is commonly a time when Jesus becomes "more real" possibly through a retreat or camp experience where deep strides are made in relationships and the

youth has intense experiences. There is a clear reason why many congregations consider this an ideal time for teaching and experiencing the faith. This is a time when young people often make clear decisions about the trajectory of their relationship with God (i.e. – confirmation, catechism, accepting faith as own, etc.). This is a time of great opportunity for congregations to connect with young people and their parents. And it is especially important that churches connect with the parents. There is often a disconnect between what the young person is “required” to do involving church and what the parents are doing. This does not go unnoticed to these youth. Remember, they are questioners. So the question for them becomes, “Why is it that I am participating in learning about God, but my parents aren’t?” They see the disconnect. Since we know from research parents have the most influence on the faith of their children, this becomes problematic. Simply put, studies like the Exemplary Youth Ministry Project and The National Study on Youth and Religion tell us that the more we can keep young people involved in Christian relationships(a variety) and activities, the more likely they will continue on that journey.

## **Late Adolescence (Age 15-19)**

### **Human Development**

In early adolescence the body has gone through drastic change. For some in this stage of development that bodily change has practically ended, but for others it continues with some growth spurts going into the 20's, especially young men. Their unique personality and opinions are beginning to take shape and they are becoming more independent. They are more capable of making responsible decisions than they were just a couple years earlier. While relationships with friends are still very important, other interests and questions of identity are beginning to compete for their time.

One thing that is very important at this time is the amount of sleep young people get. According to the National Sleep Foundation this can be a big problem for teenagers. They need 8-10 hours of sleep a night but because of the way they are developing they tend to stay up late. This is problematic as most high schools begin classes early. It can have dramatic effects on their grades as well as cause them to be irritable towards friends and family, develop unhealthy eating habits and increase the amount of caffeine use. The brain needs sleep to grow healthy.<sup>vii</sup>

This is also a time when interest in a sexual partner often increases. Questions of sexual identity are being shaped as well. The intensity of this along with the pressures of conforming to what might be considered the norm of the culture and create a lot of stress. Older adolescents often have a higher amount of depression and anxiety. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in young people ages 15-24 according to the Centers for Disease Control. With all that is going on in older adolescence young people can be prone to at risk behaviors. Religious, government, law enforcement, parents and educators need to work together to provide environments and assets to help young people succeed.

### **Family Development**

As eloquently said in *It's Just a Phase So Don't Miss It*, “the days of ‘because I said so’ are gone.”<sup>viii</sup> Older adolescents are more equipped now to have full conversations, negotiate with parents and many use these tools to manipulate their parents. However, because of their capacity to have conversation there

are ample opportunities for parents to have conversations about relationships, decisions and how they spend their time.

As the young person becomes more independent by getting a driver's license, finding a sport or art they love, being in a relationships and often getting a job the parent often find's themselves wondering, "where has my baby gone?" The reality of them leaving the nest is beginning to set in. Yet this can be a very exciting time for parents as well as they watch their young man or woman become an adult and begin to look to the future. However, it is young people who feel that they have no future that can cause great stress on the family. 72% of this generation blames their parents for their problems. Parents are concerned about the influence of their peers and at risk behavior like drug use and sexual promiscuity. This can be very difficult as we look at the earlier mentioned statistics about the makeup of the American family. There is a heightened pressure on young people at this age to know what they want to do with their future. This can be cause for great anxiety in the family. Financial concerns and how to afford college become a regular conversation. Only about half of families actually save for college. With added uncertainty in the job market young people often feel they need to include a masters degree or higher in order to get a good job. This not only adds to the financial burden but also leads to more young people staying at home longer or returning home after college.

## Social and Cultural Development

### Digital technologies

This generation of young people has been labeled "Generation Z" by many but has also been know as the iGeneration, Post-Millennials, Centennials, or Plurals. MTV for now is calling them "The Founders." Whatever the label, they are certainly a generation like no other. They are global, social, visual and technological.<sup>ix</sup> These youth don't remember there not being cell phones although they certainly remember when they got their first one. Few at the age of 15 are still waiting to get one. The smart phone has been a game changer not only for communication but how it has become a part of their relationships. A 2015 Pew Research study showed that 73% of teens have a smartphone, 15% have a basic cellphone and 12% don't have one at all. It also revealed that some 58% use texting as the main form of communication with their closest friends. Even with the 12% who don't have a cell phone they still claim they use social media as their primary mode of communication. While Facebook use is less than the previous generation, apps like Snapchat and Instagram that give immediate feedback using images, has increased. Instant feedback seems to be what they crave. Often adults see these kinds of statistics as alarming and think that it means that youth have replaced face to face time with people. Rather, texting seems to be an extension of face to face time with their friends.

### Social

Another insightful work in entering into the world of adolescents is *A Tribe Apart* by Patricia Hersch. She basically tells the stories of real teenagers in the daily quest for meaning. She asserts,

"We don't know them. America's own adolescents have become strangers. They are a tribe apart, remote, mysterious, vaguely threatening. The tribal notion is so commonplace that it is hard to know whether it derives from the kids or from adults...The individual child feels lost to a world of teens, viewed mostly in the aggregate, notorious for what they do wrong, judged for their inadequacies, known by labels and statistics that frighten and put off adults." (Hersch, 14)<sup>x</sup>

These are frightening yet powerful words that should wake the adult world up to understand the depth of disconnect between the generations. Both *Hurt* and *A Tribe Apart* point to a relational void that continues to swell in the hearts of American teens. Not only do young people need significant relational connections with adults, but they need more than one or two. The youth of this generation are concerned with standing out rather than fitting into the norm.

## **Faith and Spiritual Religious Development**

The concept of “church” for adolescents is changing. More and more there is a broader definition. Church is more about whom you are with rather than where you go.

And with whom young people in this age group hang out with is able to shape their identity in powerful ways. They have pulled away more from their parents in developing their own identity. It doesn’t mean they don’t need their parents; they are still in need of that close relationship. But they are coming into their own person and considering what might be beyond the household years.

Yet with the current state of our American churches in flux, it is proving to be a challenging time to connect this generation with faith communities. Most churches are declining in numbers which is having a direct effect on the number of young people being connected to a faith community. According to Pew Research, the number of people who identify as Christian dropped from 78% to 71% from 2007 to 2017. The number of people who consider themselves “religiously unaffiliated” has now rose to 23%. In short, their research reveals that no major denominations in America are growing and only a few are able to just hold their numbers.<sup>xi</sup> There is a particular pressure on the local church to “get more people in the pews.” But as I mentioned earlier, older adolescents are more concerned about with whom they do church. This is a perfect time for faith formation leaders to get less caught up in denominational loyalty and institutional traditional and get more caught up in empathizing with young people and learning from them about what their needs are. Tapping into their relational, family and social needs will be essential to helping this cohort of young people grow in their faith.

## **Look at the Person Not the Problem**

### **What’s the Goal?**

In my work with congregations across the country I often hear people asking the wrong questions. How do we get young people to show up? What’s the best curriculum? What are the latest strategies? These are just a few of them. While these are not bad questions, there are other preliminary questions that need to be asked when seeking to create a faith formation process that will lead to lives transformed by Jesus Christ.

### **3 Things You Must Do and Questions You Must Ask**

“Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature’s inexorable imperative.” – H. G. Wells

Here are three things I get pretty fired up about. Please take my urgency and pushy comments as you and I simply having a passionate conversation about the future of faith formation. The following is an excerpt from a blog I wrote recently.

Is it time for you to change your approach to faith formation? Do you want to lead real change? Then STOP! Stop filling your time with activities that you think you *should* be doing but aren't sure if they are effective and do these 3 things NOW:

- 1) **Hear** – You've got two ears, use them. Are you listening to your community? Are you listening to parents? To young people? Not just the loudest voices, but everyone? I'm talking about listening in a comprehensive way. I'm talking about truly listening to what is on the hearts and minds of the people you see out in your community. If all you do is listen to the loudest voices inside the walls of your church, there is a good chance that you won't change what really needs to change for people outside the walls. When someone says, "I'm overwhelmed." Truly try to understand what they mean. Are they simply busy or is there something deeper going on? So please, take the time to hear the depths of what the needs are so that what you change has the most impact on real lives.
- 2) **See** – Are you watching? Are you paying attention? Are you noticing what people are doing with their time? Are you seeing the issues that youth and families are dealing with on a daily basis? Are you opening your eyes to the reality of the demands that people are facing regularly? Do you see the pain in a child's eyes who feels like they don't belong? Can you notice the stress in the face of the single mother who is doing all she can to keep her family together? It's time to open our eyes and look around us. Walk outside of the four walls and take a tour through your community and see the reality of what people are dealing with on a daily basis. You might be compelled to do things differently.
- 3) **Think** – Use the brain God has given you to discern a path that matters. I believe thinking can be a spiritual practice. Paul said in Romans, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect." (NRSV) Are you discerning a way forward that truly matters in the lives of the people you serve? Are you looking at research on faith formation that will help you with best practices that lead to transformed lives? The decisions we make impact lives.

Frankly, our arrogance as leaders of faith formation has gotten in the way. We think we know what people need. We go to seminaries and continuing education events to look to the experts for easy answers. Instead, we need to take a much deeper approach. In order to take this deeper approach we need to be keenly aware of what is happening developmentally in early and later adolescence so that we can be better equipped to see the opportunities for faith formation. As you embark on the journey of reimagining faith formation for a new generation, do not be afraid to take some risks and use your imagination. It is a challenging time to be a faith formation leader but it is also an exciting time.

## End Notes

---

- <sup>i</sup> Generation Z, <http://generationz.com.au/characteristics/>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Smith, Peter K., *Adolescence: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- <sup>iii</sup> Joiner, Reggie and Ivy, Kristen, *It's Just a Phase So Don't Miss It*. Cumming, Georgia, 2016, p. 27.
- <sup>iv</sup> Smith. p. 26.
- <sup>v</sup> Becker, Mary Lee, "Goldilocks in Our Midst: Ministry with Young Adolescents," *Lifelong Faith Journal*, 2012.
- <sup>vi</sup> Clark, Chap, *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004, p. 46.
- <sup>vii</sup> National Sleep Foundation, "Teens and Sleep." <https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/teens-and-sleep/>.
- <sup>viii</sup> Joiner, p. 33.
- <sup>ix</sup> Generation Z, <http://generationz.com.au/characteristics/>.
- <sup>x</sup> Hersch, Patricia. *A Tribe Apart: A Journey Into the Heart of American Adolescence*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1998, p. 14.
- <sup>xi</sup> *Growing Young*.