

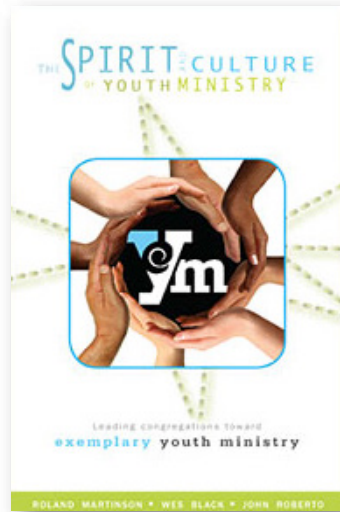
A 21st Century View of Children
& Youth Faith Formation

John Roberto, LifelongFaith Associates

The slide features three photographs of diverse groups of children and youth smiling. The top photo shows a group of seven children standing in a hallway. The bottom-left photo shows a group of seven children in a close embrace. The bottom-right photo shows a group of seven children smiling together.

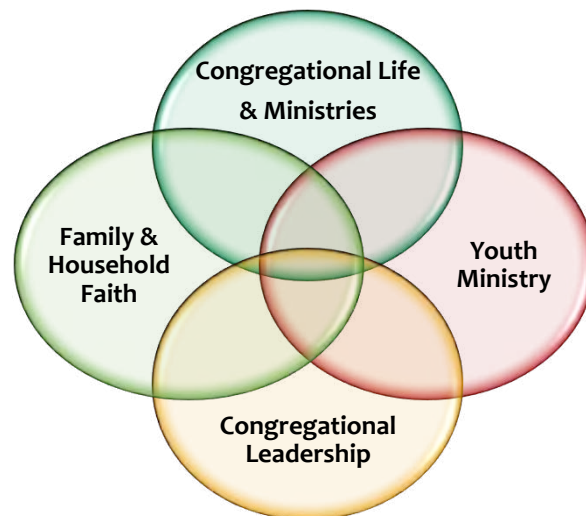
An Ecological Approach

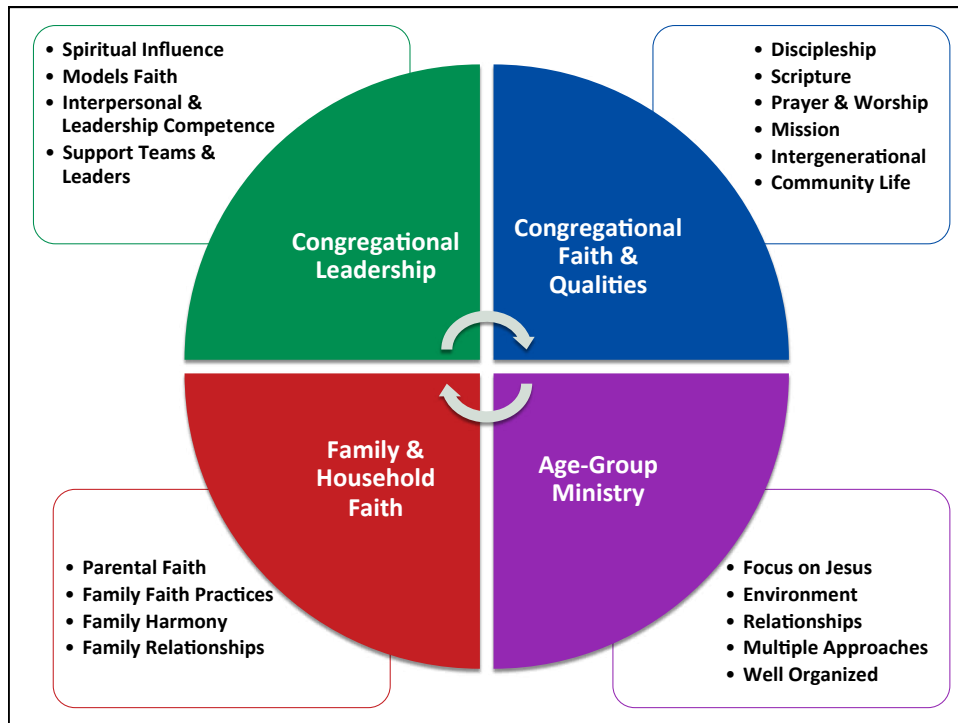
Exemplary YM Research



Congregational Culture

It is the culture of the whole church that is most influential in nurturing youth of vital Christian faith.





Faith Forming Processes

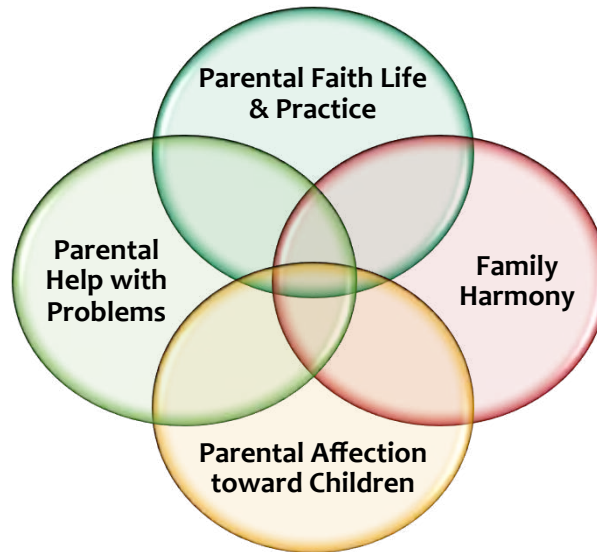


Intergenerational Connections

The congregation's basic ministries are thoroughly intergenerational.

- ▣ Young people are welcomed and expected to participate.
- ▣ Young people lead in church-wide ministries:
 - Worship
 - Education
 - Fellowship
 - Service and Outreach
 - Decision-making

Family Faith



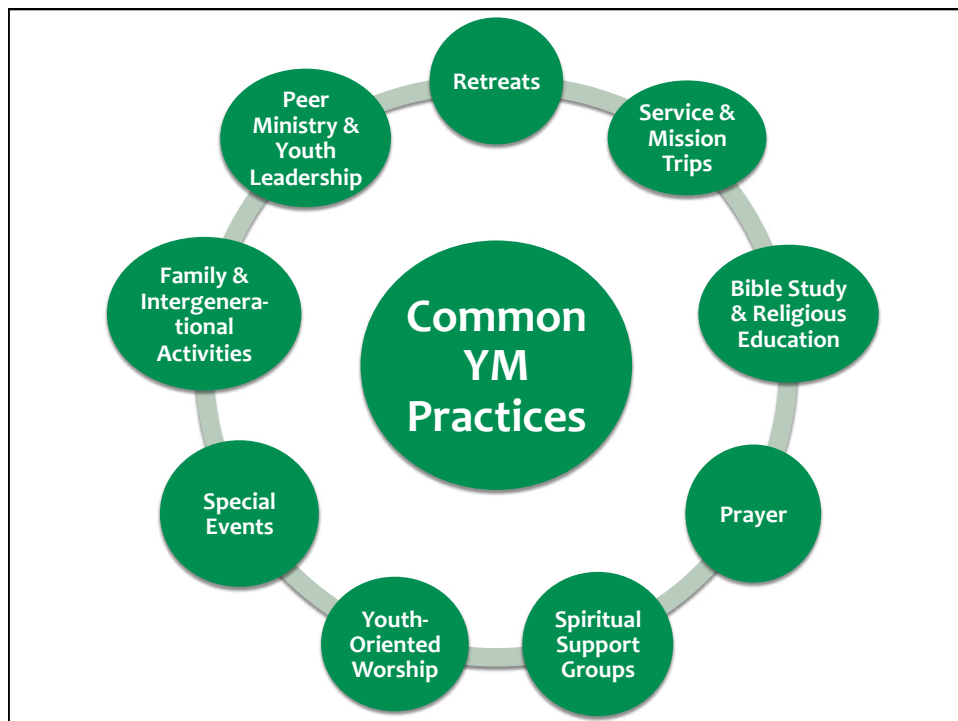
Family Faith

- ***Parents possess and practice a vital and informed faith*** – understanding the Christian faith, participating in worship, praying, and engaging in service and mission.
- ***Family members' expressions of respect and love create an atmosphere promoting faith.***
- ***Parents engage youth and the whole family in conversations, prayer, Bible reading, and service that nurture faith and life.***

Youth Ministry Qualities

Congregations have developed age-level ministries.

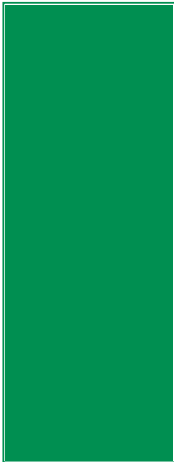
- ❑ Marked by trusted relationships
- ❑ Custom-designed ministry practices and activities
- ❑ Caring atmosphere of high expectation
- ❑ Multiple nurturing relationships and activities intentionally planned to create:
 - atmosphere of respect
 - growth
 - belonging
- ❑ Generates an “alternative youth subculture



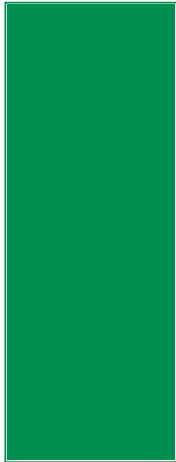
Congregational Leadership

- **Positive Characteristics & Competence**
(devout faith and exemplary life, interpersonal competence, effective role model for others, helps youth on their spiritual journey)
- **Leadership Effectiveness**
(trusted and respected, leadership skills, recruits and trains leaders, supports leaders, good organizer, works with parents)

Research to Practice

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1. Take an ecological view.
 2. Pay attention to the culture of the whole congregation
 3. Recognize the power of the congregation's theological commitments.
 4. Make discipleship the heart of congregational life & ministries.

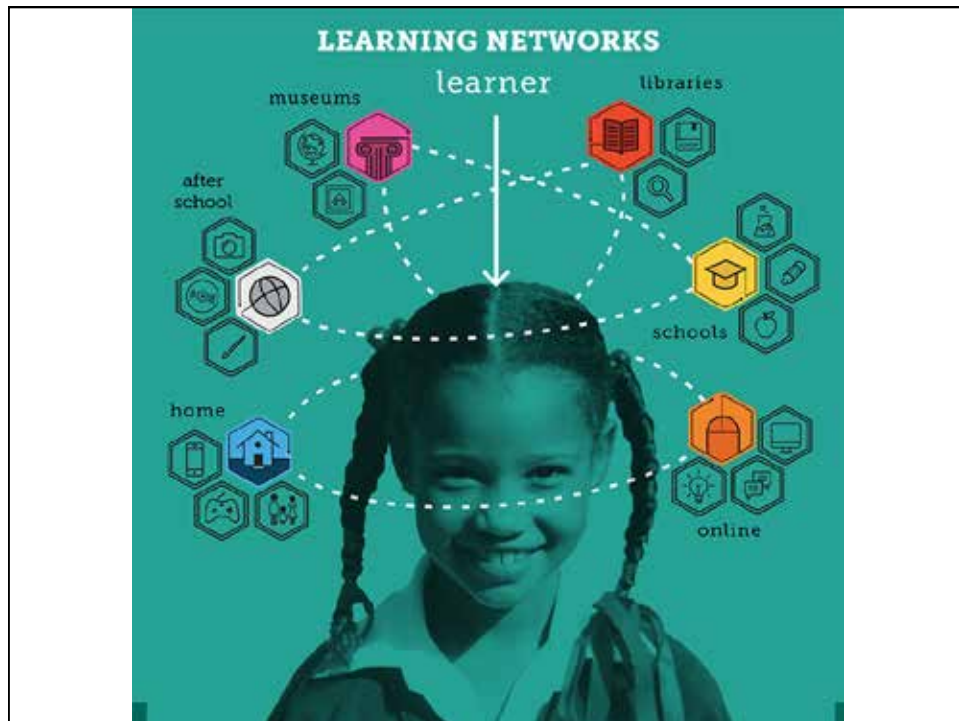
Research to Practice

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- 5. Nurture the power of faith-filled, multi-generational Christian relationships; create intentional intergenerational connections, relationships, and faith experiences between all ages and generations.
 - 6. Equip parents for family socialization & faith practice at home.
 - 7. Deepen the faith and spiritual life of parents.

A Network Approach



**A shift from education to learning anywhere, anytime.
A shift from consumption of information to participatory learning.
A shift from institutions to networks.**



Faith Formation Networks

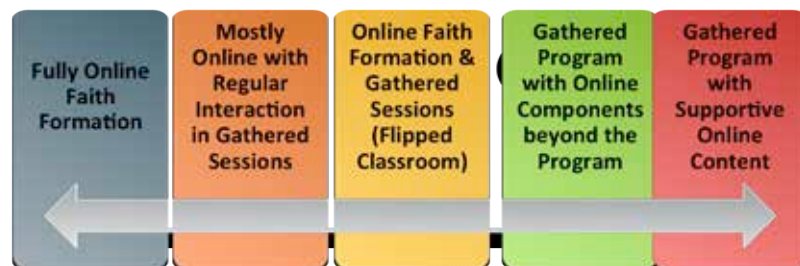
A network of relationships, content, experiences, & resources. . . .

- Offering a **variety** of content, methods, formats, and delivery systems (online & physical settings) to address the diverse life tasks and situations, needs and interests, and spiritual and faith journeys of people.
- Offering content and experiences that is **responsive** to the diverse religious and spiritual needs of people today—from the spiritually committed and engaged to the spiritual but not religious and the unaffiliated.
- Offering **multiple environments** to address people's busy lives and providing more ways to participate: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community, and in the world.

Faith Formation Networks

Digitally-Enabled

Blending gathered community settings with online learning environments and utilizing the abundance of digital media and tools for learning and faith formation



Faith Forming Processes



Faith Formation Networks

1. Caring Relationships
2. Celebrating the Seasons
3. Celebrating Rituals & Milestones
4. Learning the Christian Tradition
5. Praying & Spiritual Formation
6. Reading the Bible
7. Serving, Working for Justice, & Caring for Creation
8. Worshipping God
9. Life Stage Issues
10. Missional

