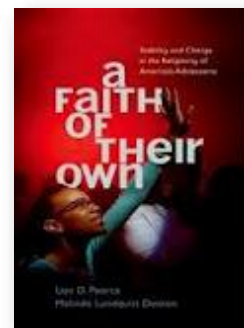
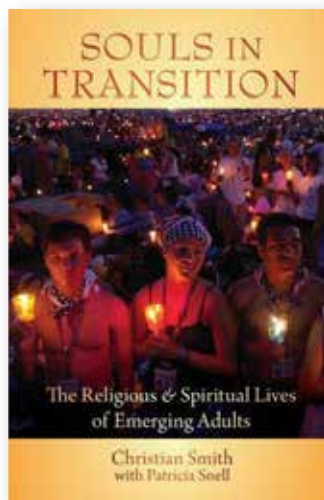
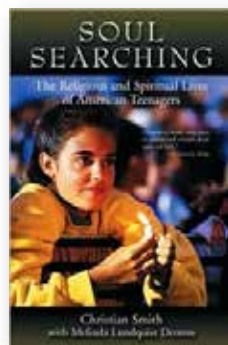


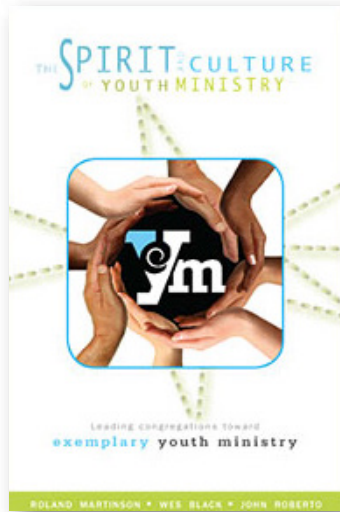
A 21<sup>st</sup> Century View of Children  
& Youth Faith Formation

John Roberto, LifelongFaith Associates

## Research (NSYR Research

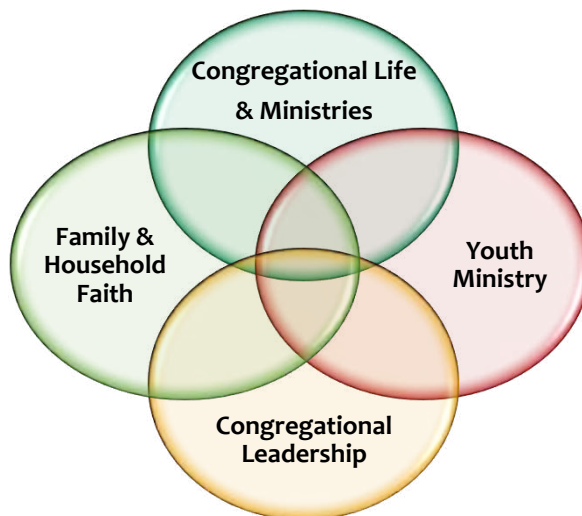


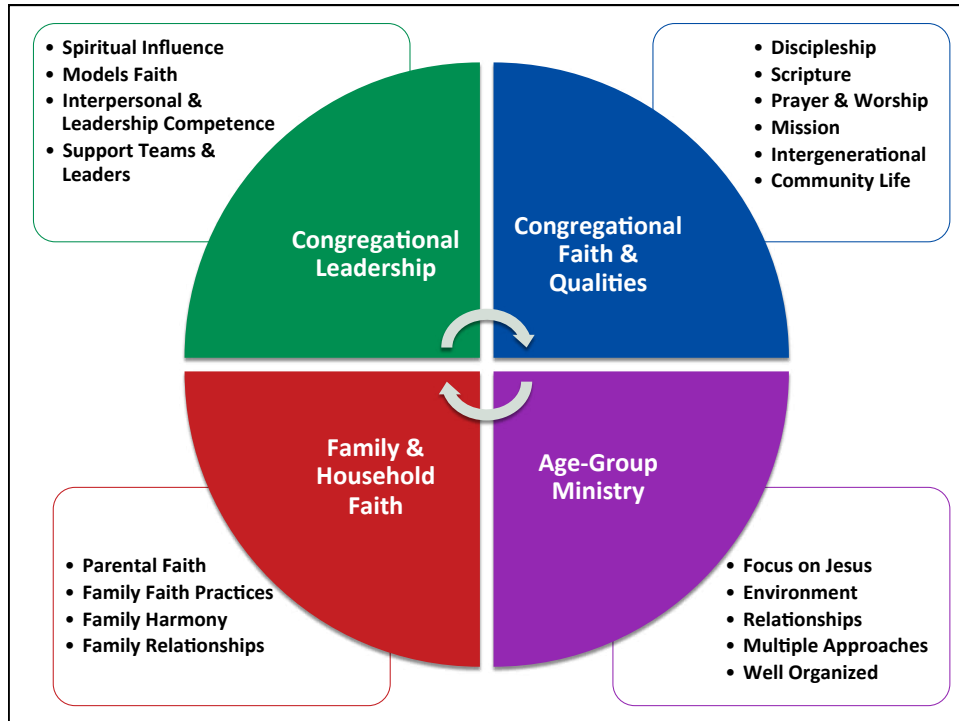
## Exemplary YM Research



## Congregational Culture

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





## Faith Forming Processes



## Congregational Faith

1. Congregation's Biblical Emphasis
2. Congregation Teaches Core Christian Concepts
3. Congregation's Moral Guidance
4. Worship Services' Positive Characteristics
5. Congregation Promotes Service
6. Congregation's Mission Effectiveness

## Congregational Qualities

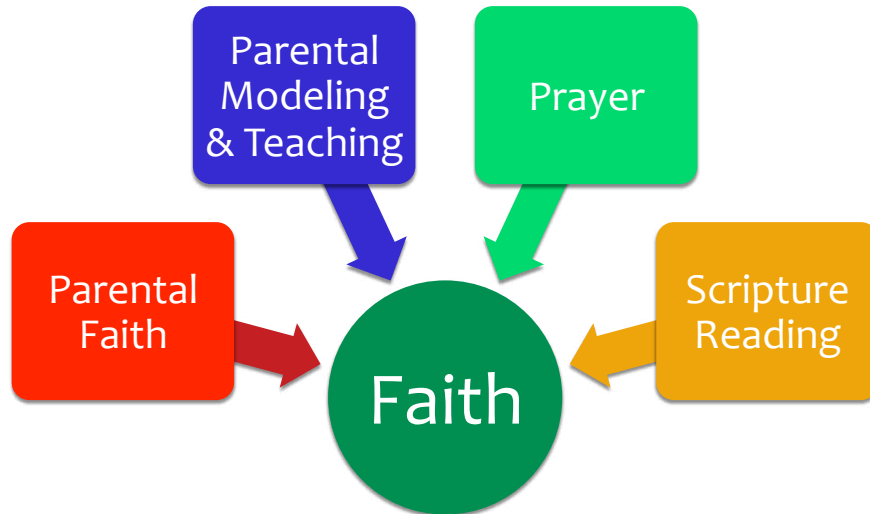
1. Warm, Challenge Congregational Climate
2. Welcoming Atmosphere
3. Satisfied with the Congregation
4. Importance of this Church to Me
5. Congregation's Moral Guidance
6. Congregation's Social Interaction
7. Congregation's Openness to Change
8. Members Experience Love and Support

## 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



## Factors that Promote Faith Growth

- The combination of the following factors makes an enormous difference in religious outcomes during emerging adulthood:
  1. the teenager's parental religion
  2. importance of faith
  3. lack of religious doubts
  4. prayer
  5. Scripture reading and
  6. personal religious experiences
  7. having support nonparent adults in the church
- These most influential factors make differences of sizeable magnitude in substantive outcomes.

## Factors that Promote Faith Growth

- Approximately 70% of youth who at some time or other before mid-emerging adulthood commit to live their lives for God, the vast majority appear to do so early in life, apparently before the age of 14.
- Most make their first commitments to God as children or during the preteen or very early teen years.
- Many religious trajectories followed in the course of life's development seemed to be formed early on in life.

## Critical Role of Family

*“ . . . teenagers with seriously religious parents are more likely than those without such parents to have been trained in their lives to think, feel, believe, and act as serious religious believers, and that that training “sticks” with them even when they leave home and enter emerging adulthood”*

## Family Faith

*“Emerging adults who grew up with seriously religious parents are through socialization more likely (1) to have internalized their parents religious worldview, (2) to possess the practical religious know-how needed to live more highly religious lives, and (3) to embody the identity orientations and behavioral tendencies toward continuing to practice what they have been taught religiously.”*

(Christian Smith & Patricia Snell)

## Critical Role of Family

*“At the heart of this social causal mechanism stands the elementary process of teaching—both formal and informal, verbal and nonverbal, oral and behavioral, intentional and unconscious, through both instruction and role modeling. We believe that one of the main ways by which empirically observed strong parental religion produced strong emerging adult religion in offspring is through the teaching involved in socialization.”*

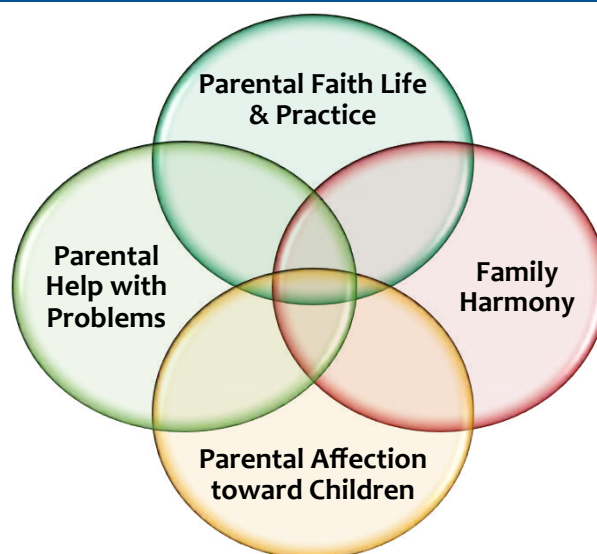
(*Souls in Transition: The Religious & Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*  
by Christian Smith with Patricia Snell)



## Critical Role of Family

*What people have been in the past is generally the best indicator of why they are what they are in the present and what they will likely be in the future. That is a fact that needs to condition the understanding of emerging adult religion.*

## 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.***

## Family Faith

### **Faith of the Parents...**

1. My faith helps me know right from wrong
2. I have a sense of sharing in a great purpose
3. I have had feelings of being in the presence of God
4. I have a sense of being saved in Christ
5. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation
6. God helps me decide what is right or wrong behavior
7. I have found a way of life that gives me direction.

## Family Faith

### Faith of the Parents...

8. Religious faith is important in my life.
9. My life is committed to Jesus Christ.
10. My life is filled with meaning and purpose.
11. I have a real sense that God is guiding me.

**Each of the 11 items rate 7.30 or better  
on a 9.0 scale.**

## Family Faith

### Teens: How have your parents influenced your faith life?

1. Values are focused on serving others and God.
2. Positive influence on my religious faith
3. Talk with me about my relationship with Jesus Christ
4. Attending Sunday worship
5. Talked with my parent about religious faith
6. Reading the Bible

## Family Faith

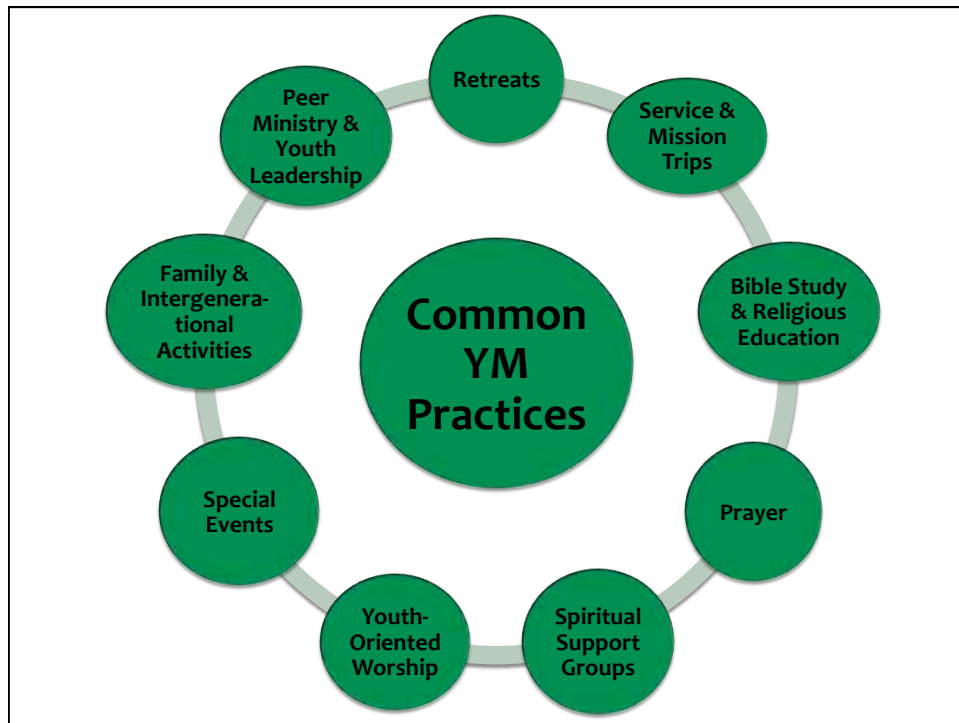
- One in four teens said their family sat down together and talked about God, the Bible, and other religious things on a weekly or daily basis.
- 40% of teens said they did this once or twice a month.

## Youth Ministry Qualities

### **What impact did involvement in youth ministry have on young people?**

1. Deepen my relationship with Jesus
2. Understand my Christian faith better
3. Apply my faith to daily life
4. Make serious life choices (future, relationships, values)
5. Share my faith

**These congregations are serious about making disciples of Jesus Christ.**



## 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

**Pastors matter immensely in effective youth ministry and in very specific ways.**

1. Support for Christian education and youth ministry (and involvement)
2. Leadership effectiveness
3. Communication skills
4. Interpersonal characteristics
5. Support for youth staff

## Congregational Leadership

6. Creates a healthy culture
7. Spiritual Influence (devout faith, exemplary life)
8. Personal characteristics
9. Good counselor
10. Mission is to make disciples
11. Preaches to make disciples

## Congregational Leadership

### Leadership of the Youth Minister

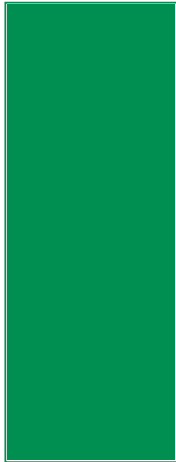
- **Positive Characteristics & Competence**  
(devout faith and exemplary life, good counselor, effective model for others, helps youth on their spiritual journey)
- **Leadership & Effectiveness**  
(trusted and respected, recruits and trains leaders, supports leaders, good organizer, works with parents)

## Congregational Leadership

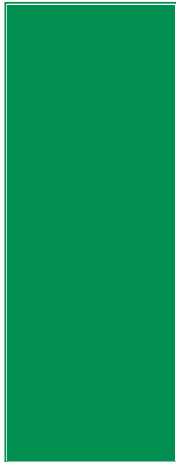
### Adult Leaders in Youth Ministry

- **People of Faith**
  - God consciousness
  - Moral responsibility
  - Centrality of faith
  - Theological competence
  - Social responsibility
- **Relational Characteristics**
  - Positive relationship with youth
  - Positive relationship with parents

## Research to Practice

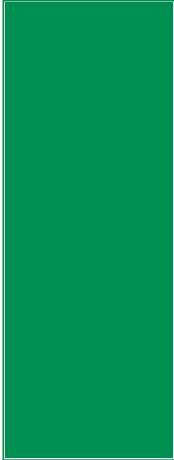
- 
1. Start early in life!
  2. Take an ecological view.
  3. Pay attention to the culture of the whole congregation
  4. Recognize the power of the congregation's theological commitments.
  5. Make discipleship the heart of congregational life & ministries.

## Research to Practice

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



## Research to Practice

- 
9. Apply common youth ministry practices and approaches contextually.
  10. Stay connected with young people into the college years/emerging adulthood.