

Top 10 Things to Teach Young People

by Pastor Dimas Salaberrios

My prayer is that your ministry, church or family can take these 10 ministry essentials and become experts at implementing them. These ministry essentials are not easy to implement because it takes a lot of planning and personal study to articulate these essentials in profound and relevant ways to young people. Most people do not think deeply about anything let alone about how the gospel impacts every area of our human existence, so I am going to attempt to make this as simple as possible.

Essential 1: How to understand the gospel (Luke 2: 10,11,31,32)

We need to teach our youth that God loves them and died and rose for them and that He would do it again right now for them. They need to know that Christianity is not a works based religion and we don't obey to appease God but we obey because we love God. Our youth need to understand that they are accepted by God so they don't need to try to fill the acceptance void through outside approval. Scripture says the gospel is the power of salvation (Romans 1:16) and we need to communicate it with all its nuances.

Essential 2: How to live out the gospel in their world (John 17:15)

One of the challenges we face is serving God in a culture that flaunts around sin as the meaning of life. In our communication of the gospel we need to empower our youth with case and point on how to live out the gospel in their cultural experiences. I often have to teach young men how to serve Jesus while leaving gangs, how to serve God in a tough neighborhood and how to obey Jesus while living with unsupportive parents.

Essential 3: How to live in gospel community (Acts 2:42)

We need to work really hard at building a counterculture in which our youth can experience fellowship and support. Our youth need

to be in a worship community that is separate from the world that desires to live for God. This is often accomplished after a meeting when youth just kick it and hang. Gospel community is often done through small groups, trips and retreats. If we neglect to teach our youth how to live in gospel community we will most likely see our youth compartmentalize their spiritual lives, which adds more room for hypocrisy to dominate their lives. However, in gospel community our youth will hopefully challenge each other's walk from an insider's point of view. Let's be honest with ourselves, we are outsiders to youth culture no matter how cool we think we are unless we're teenagers ourselves.

Essential 4: How to spread the gospel (Mark 16:15)

Our youth of today want to be involved in something bigger than themselves. Why not show them that the gospel is the main cause to die for. Young people need opportunities to practice what they have learned. Too many teenagers have spent their entire lives in church and have never had an opportunity to pull out their sword (word) and go to battle. Young people should be encouraged to think about ways to reach their lost friends and classmates with the gospel.

Essential 5: Teach our youth to be sober minded (Titus 2:6)

Ministering to a young person doesn't mean that you must become a youth. Young people want you to be an adult. I remember the First Lady of Harvest Fields Community Church, Charlotte Torres saying, "As a leader the people don't want you to let your hair down with them." I have found that to be true. I cannot imagine Dr. A.R. Bernard doing a rap from the prestigious Christian Cultural Center pulpit nor do I believe the church would appreciate it. In the same way my young soldiers want to see me in all my manliness and my wife Tiffany as a strong woman and not a childish one. As Paul said, when I was a child I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me (1 Corinthians 13:11). Our

youth need to learn to think seriously and as an influence in their lives we must be serious examples if we desire them to be sober minded. Please don't read this in the wrong way, there is appropriate humor and times to relax, but make sure that your balance scales are leaning more toward the serious over folly.

Essential 6: Teach your youth how to fear God (Proverb 1:7)

Our young people must have a healthy understanding of the sacred because there is a sacred side of church and ministry. The Holy Communion Ceremony, Baptism Service, Baby Dedications and Worship through Giving are very serious times. God has consumed people for disrespecting the sacred places of ministry. Our youth need to have a healthy fear of God. God is loving and kind but He is also committed to dealing with sin. Our youth need wisdom and Scripture says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Essential 7: Teach our youth to get involved in ministry (1 John 2:14)

The greatest compliment to our ministry is when everybody wants to put our youth in leadership. In the Greater Allen Cathedral I led the Young Men's Rites of Passage and we produced incredible leaders. When our guys went to Shekinah, the Youth Church of Allen, our guys became the top servers and leaders. Our young people need to be prepared to be involved in high-level positions in the world and church. As leaders we have teenagers sitting through adult leadership meetings to help them understand the dynamics of a well run meeting. So when our youth travel they would have already developed the confidence to participate in high-level meetings. We train young people on how to do security, event planning, hospitality, serving and greeting people. Our youth love to serve in ministry and if they leave us they will be an answer to prayer for the next pastor.

Essential 8: Teach our young people to pray (Matthew 6:9-13)

This is the greatest gift we can give young people is the knowledge on how to pray. When your teenagers learn to pray and connect with God in rich and personal ways that is half your battle won. I see the most growth in people when they learn to pray and do it consistently.

Essential 9: Teach about the effects of sin (Romans 6:23)

Our young people need to understand the outcomes of sin. We need to amplify in as many ways as possible that the wages of sin is death and that death manifests itself in very clear ways all around them. Then we need to highlight that our Jesus desires to save us from all the pitfalls and death sentences that this world offers us.

Essential 10: Teach our youth to love Jesus (Matthew 22:37)

Nothing will make our youth live holy lives like when they love Jesus. You can give all the threats you want, you can have your young people read, “Divine Relation from Hell” every month but until our youth love Jesus and understand that he suffered for them you will be on the rollercoaster with extreme victories and huge failures. The difference between the gospel and other religions is that all the rest make you do something to get God to love you, but in Jesus we are loved beyond comprehension and because we are so loved we willingly give our obedience to Christ.

My hope is that you can take these essentials and teach them to your young people again and again in various different kinds of ways. If we hammer out these issues on how to live, process and minister the gospel we will see transformation in the lives of our people.