

UNDERSTANDING

# Young Adults

*18–24 Years*

*Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today*

Compiled by  
Morlee Maynard

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*Young Adults*  
*18–24 Years*

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ISBN 0-6330-1381-1

Dewey Decimal Classification: 305.242

Subject Heading: YOUNG MEN\YOUNG WOMEN \ TEACHING

This book is a text for course number LS-0035  
in the Adult Leadership Diploma Plan of the Christian Growth Study Plan.

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Printed in the United States of America.

LifeWay Christian Resources  
of the Southern Baptist Convention  
127 Ninth Avenue, North

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## Introduction

Have you ever sat on a bench at the mall just to watch and listen to people as they walk by? During a quiet moment of a worship service, have you looked around and considered how God created such a diverse universe of people? If so, you are well aware of how they differ from one another as well as how they are similar. If you have not stopped to observe the young adults around you, take a few moments to do so during your next session with the young adults you teach at church.

God has truly blessed you with the opportunity to teach, lead, and minister with young adults during this time in history. You have a tremendous opportunity to let God work through you in their lives. If you are willing to let God minister through you, lives will be transformed and become more Christlike. You can make a difference in our world!

Why should you take the time to watch and listen to the young men and women in your group? They are sending you messages and signals that help you understand the way God made them. God created each one of them in His image and to glorify Him. The more you understand them, the more you understand their Creator. In this sense teaching adults is an act of worship that is pleasing to God.

In addition, God is teaching you how to teach young adults. He has given you this opportunity as a gift with the promise to guide you to be the best teacher and leader that you can be for your group. That is what this book is about. It is designed to be a tool for teachers in understanding the needs that God gives all young adults. This book is a collection of articles that provide insights in accepting and helping young adults deal with various life situations. Through prayer God will help you understand each unique young adult and his or her unique situation. With this understanding you can guide young adults to apply the truth of God's Word to meet their needs and solve their problems. When young adults connect their lives with the truth in God's Word, they can find the living Lord in their lives.

When you understand young adults individually, the way God created them, you are truly able to let God use you in their lives. For example, when you accept that young adults learn in a variety of ways, you will understand that

you need to use a variety of approaches to learning. With this understanding carefully construct your teaching plan to include a variety of approaches instead of one approach. Consequently, effective teaching that leads people to our living Lord is a result of a positive understanding of the way God created men and women who live in today's world.

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### Appreciation

Many thanks to the group of Southern Baptist leaders of young adults who designed and guided the development of this resource:

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## Introduction

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**Laura Savage** (Woman's Missionary Union)

**Sean Taylor** (North American Mission Board—Mission Education)

### Suggestions for Ways to Use This Resource

As you read and study each article, consider the young adults in your group. You will not find pictures in this resource because we want to provide you with an inexpensive tool for developing your teaching skills. We also want you to think of the young adults in your group. To enhance your experience with this book, take pictures of the men and women in your group as a group, then individually. Lay the pictures on the table nearby as you read the articles. Or tape them to your computer.

As you read an article, apply the discussion to each person. How does the information relate to him or her? Use the discussion to prompt a desire to know more about each person. As you reflect on each article, answer the “Here’s a Thought” questions by taking notes on how the information applies to each specific person in your group. The more you understand each person, the more effective you will be in guiding him or her to our living Lord.

You have choices as to how you will engage this resource.

1. **Online:** click on [www.lifeway.com/bibleinsites/understanding.asp](http://www.lifeway.com/bibleinsites/understanding.asp) for a free online guide of this resource.
2. **Download:** click on [www.lifeway.com/bibleinsites/understanding.asp](http://www.lifeway.com/bibleinsites/understanding.asp) to download the resource at no cost. You are welcome to make copies for others in your church. Or print out specific articles as you need them.
3. **Text:** A text is available for \$5.95 plus shipping. Call 1-800-458-2772 to place an order. Please allow three weeks for printing and shipping.

As you use this resource, send us topics you would suggest as additions to this resource. What you have now is a starting point, which will be revised as changes come in the world of young adults. You may send your suggestions to any of the Southern Baptist leaders of young adults listed on pages 5-6. Or contact Alan Corry (email: [Alan.Corry@lifeway.com](mailto:Alan.Corry@lifeway.com) or phone: 615/251-2231).

## Leadership Development Resource Series

This resource is part of a series of resources designed to equip teachers of young adults as they let God use them in the lives of their students. The information you will explore in this resource answers the *who* and *why* questions. Whom do we teach? Why do we teach the way we do? The *what* question will always be answered with the Bible. The Bible guides us in becoming Christlike in all that we do and say. It is our source of information that leads us to our living Lord.

If you minister with all adults, you are encouraged to use the companion resource related to middle and senior adults titled *Understanding Today's Adults: 25 Years and Older* by Jim Walter. In addition, the following resources answer the "how to teach" question. You will also find administration resources that answer the *when* and *where* questions. All of these resources are available by calling 1-800-458-2772 or online at [www.lifewaystores.com](http://www.lifewaystores.com) unless noted:

### Adults on Mission

*Adults on Mission Guide*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

### Baptist Men on Mission

*Leading Baptist Men on Mission Manual*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

### Collegiate Student Ministry

*Crossseekers Leaders Guide* (call 615-251-2777)

*Three-Hour Manual* (call 615-251-2777)

### Discipleship Training

*Transformational Discipleship: Your Church Helping People Be like Jesus*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*Share Jesus Without Fear*



## Introduction

### **Family Ministry**

*How to Minister to Families in Your Church* (available 3/1/01)

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*Witnessing Through Your Relationships*

### **Men's Ministry**

*Drawing Men to God: Men's Ministry Manual*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader*

### **Music Ministry**

*The Ministry of the Choir Member*

*The Volunteer/Bivocational Music Leader: A Guide to Song Leading*

### **Single Adult Ministry**

*The Single Adult Ministry Solution*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*Witnessing Through Your Relationships*

### **Sunday School**

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*A Place for Everyone: A Guide for Special Education Bible*

*Teaching-Reaching Ministry*

### **Women on Mission**

*Women on Mission Guide*

*Five Steps to the Great Commission*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

### **Women's Enrichment Ministry**

*Transformed Lives: Taking Women's Ministry to the Next Level*

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching*

*WiseCounsel: Skill for Lay Counseling—LIFE Course*



## Who Says You're a Young Adult?

**Here's a Thought:** Ask a few of the young adults you know, "What makes a young adult a young adult?" In other words, when does this thing called adulthood begin?

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Our title for this section poses an interesting question with tremendous implications for the ministry of your church. One answer is **the law says so, that's who!**

Legally a young adult is defined by chronological age. That is, a majority of the population of a nation, state, or community determines that at a specific age an individual is legally responsible for certain actions.

How is that played out in the real world? A person is an adult when the society in which he or she resides recognizes a legal status that carries with it both responsibilities and benefits. That is, the person is legally responsible for his or her actions. The person holds certain rights and privileges.

The problem is, of course, no one agrees on when that is. Some states say a person is legally an adult at age 18. Others define adulthood at age 19. Still a few insist that adulthood begins at age 21. Even within states there exists a great diversity of views. For instance, a person may be "legally" an adult when it comes to the privilege of operating a motorized vehicle on a state highway at 75 miles per hour as early as age 15 or 16. In two states that could be as young as 14! However, while judged chronologically capable of making instinctive life or death decisions in a split second, that same person would not be judged competent enough, in those same states, to determine who the next governor should be!

Of course, you might argue that voting age is a federal matter. So we will look at the issue from the opposite perspective. In that same state where you

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can legally drive at 15 but cannot vote until 18, you are judged by the law to be unable to purchase certain “adult” products until you are 21. At the time of this writing, in Louisiana, a person can legally drive to a bar or package store at age 15, purchase drinks from a package store at age 18, purchase the store or bar at age 18, but cannot drink the beverages that they “own” until they are 21, *unless* they are at least 18 and accompanied to a restaurant by someone who is 21. A legal definition can be slightly confusing!

All of these illustrations address the issue of “adult privileges” (by the world’s definition, of course). The other side of the legal definition of young adulthood surfaces with a discussion of adult responsibilities. Specifically, when is a person a young adult in matters of accountability to the society that has such a confusing definition about when he or she is actually an adult? For instance, if a 14-year-old, without any kind of permit, steals a car for a joyride, is he or she considered an adult by the law when it comes to dealing with the consequences of his or her choices? In most cases, no. However, in an increasing number of instances, people as young as 13, 12, or even 11 years old can be tried as adults if a crime that is committed is particularly menacing or ample evidence demonstrates an “adultlike” premeditative strategic planning of a criminal activity.

The conclusion? Simple chronological age, as defined by a nation, state, or community, may not provide a clear definition of young adulthood. In church life adult responsibilities are assigned to members at differing life stages. In many churches all members are given full voting rights in the life of the church regardless of age. In some churches teenagers serve on church committees and within church ministries. However, in other churches (frequently smaller churches), an adult may not really be viewed as a full adult in the functional life of the church until his or her parents have moved out of leadership roles in the church.

The debate continues, “What makes a person a young adult?” Another answer is **when society says so!** This definition of adulthood is generally described as social-cultural. That is, a person becomes an adult at the moment he or she chooses (or is forced) to assume any number of roles the society or culture in which they live defines as uniquely “adult.” Sounds simple enough, but is it really that simple?



**Here's a Thought: Do a little personal reflection. Make a list of the social-cultural roles that you believe would make a person an adult. How do the young adults you serve measure up to your list?**

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Without question certain life roles have traditionally been viewed as the unique domain of adulthood. Of course, great variety exists when it comes to defining what those roles might be. Historically, people who work to support themselves represent the acquiring of an adult role. Other similar social-cultural roles for adults include when people marry and when they bear and rear children.

History may provide for us a precedence, but Generation Xers have always battled historical trends. For example, many young adults live at home with their parents. One explanation could be that while they may pay some kind of rent to their parents, they are probably working to “better” themselves by attending school at least part-time. Or they may be working to “entertain” themselves by using their income on leisure interests. They are not working to support themselves. If the social-cultural role of working to support yourself is used to distinguish a young adult from a teenager, then those individuals would not be young adults.

**Here's a Thought: Do an impromptu review of the roles of your young adults.**

- **How many of them are still living with a parent?**

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*Understanding Young Adults, 18–24 Years: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today*

- Do they exceed the national average? \_\_\_\_\_

- Do they match the national average? \_\_\_\_\_

- Do they represent a lower than average response?

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- Then identify some of the potential implications of this information on the way to minister to and with young adults.

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What about the social-cultural role of marriage? Imagine a person marries at 16 or 17. Admittedly this person would be bucking the national trend, although still not uncommon in some rural parts of American even today. Does the decision to marry make that person an adult?

What if a person decides to marry and complete high school? There you have a married person (adult role) attending still in high school (a more typically adolescent role). So is he a young adult? Do you minister to him as an adult or youth? Where do you group him should he come to your church?

Or what if a person chooses never to marry, or at least to postpone marriage? Many of you may serve with young adults who have professional roles that they play in the work force. Since they have chosen not to marry (a social-cultural adult role), does that make them youth? Interestingly enough, many of them would say that their own families often struggle with accepting them as adults because they choose to remain single.



Confused yet? Then consider one additional example, child-rearing. As a part of a recent gubernatorial campaign in the south, one candidate, aligning himself with family issues as a strategy, claimed to have had a conversation with a 31-year-old grandmother in an urban area of the state. This woman's daughter was now 16 and caring for her own daughter. National attention has been directed toward this issue because of numbers of young teenagers fathering or carrying the children of adult *lovers*. The question is, does that decision make her or him an adult? A pure, traditional, social-cultural definition would say yes. Most individuals would say no.

Sounds simple enough, adolescents become young adults when they take adult roles in their society or culture. In reality, the lines are far more blurred than they once were. What are the implications for those who minister with and to young adults? Consider these:

- Some young adults expect adult privileges without adult responsibilities. This impacts your expectation level for ministry with these adults.
- Other young adults may behave with a tremendous sense of responsibility but, legally, not enjoy certain adult privileges. This impacts the topics you tackle in studies.
- Many young adults may vacillate between adolescence and adulthood—within the same conversation! This raises the question, are those who minister with young adults engaged in a type of youth ministry or a type of adult ministry? This impacts your behavior toward these young adults. Are they to be treated like youth or like adults?

When does a person become a young adult? Legally and functionally, there are no easy answers!

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*Written by Dr. Randy Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.*

## Today's Young Adults

### It's Not Easy Being Young!

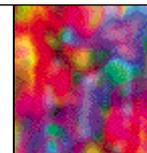
The young adults that you lead or seek to reach are struggling with many issues. Have you asked young adults about key challenges they face? You will be surprised at what you will learn. For instance, **young adults struggle with the pressure that it is not OK to be “just ordinary people.”** The ways we are to look, feel, and think are constantly being redefined by the media. The standard is a few freaks of nature who have all the right body parts in all the right proportions. It seems that “more” is never enough! Young adults have been raised in three primary places: schools (filled with unproductive peer pressure), in front of television and movies (filled with the values of a few), and at the mall (just hanging out, surrounded by stuff). It is simply not OK to be just ordinary.

*Young adults also struggle with the pressure to be supersexed.* For most of them, the world has always considered sex as a sport. The issue, however, is not one of sex but one of identity. The church has traditionally responded in one of the following three ways:

1. Silence: “Say nothing and hope it will go away.”
2. Legalism: “We are the moral police, and this is what we say!”
3. Ignore it: “It is their decision. They have to make their own mistakes. It is simply none of our business.”

*Young adults also struggle with the pressures of loneliness and isolation.* Loneliness is not “aleness.” It has been said that loneliness is most abusive when it meets us in a crowd. Loneliness (isolation or the lack of a developed identity and real intimacy) has captivated today's young adults. They live in a world of alone activity: TV viewing, Internet surfing, and so on. Too often the church's response is busyness when what is needed are opportunities to build community. Koinonia is a real, measurable, accountable sense of partnership between an individual believer and God and between believers. The building of community will not be easy for several reasons:

1. The idea that we are just fine the way we are means many young adults do not recognize their need for community.
2. “Cocooning” has isolated people more and more.



The issue is not related to quantity of activities but rather to the quality of community-building activity taking place.

***Young adults also struggle with the pressure to find security.*** Change threatens security, and change is normal for today's young adults. Change impacts our lifestyles, our emotional life, our self-esteem, and even our physical health. Insecurity leads to the "If only . . ." diseases of young adult life: "If only I'd married." "If only I'd stayed single." "If only we had waited to have children." "If only I'd taken that job." "If only I'd turned down that transfer." They constantly second-guess everything.

Young adults are insecure regarding relationships, the future, money, safety in our culture, and so much more. There are at least two consequences to the insecurity of young adult life:

1. People rushing through life, driven by something outside themselves. The idea is, I've got to do it all and have it all—now!
2. A preoccupation with the need to be somebody. That is, we substitute external things for internal issues. We do therapy, jog, and even "do" church.

Being a young adult is not easy. Strugglers can best be helped by those who have struggled through the same pressures and survived. Have you? Will you?

**Here's a Thought: Consider the pressures individual young adults in your group face. What are the implications for your ministry to each person?**

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*Adapted by Randy Millwood from Young Adult Ministry: Step-By-Step for Starting or Revitalizing Your Ministry with People Ages 18 to 35 (chapter 3) written by Terry Hershey (Colorado:Group Publishing, 1986). Dr. Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.*

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### The Primary Needs of Young Adults

Throughout His ministry Jesus started teaching by meeting needs of His learners. With the woman at the well, He started with her need for water (John 4:7-26). With Zaccheus, He invited him to come down from the tree so that he could see and hear Jesus (Luke 19:1-10). With the centurion, Jesus healed the servant (Luke 7:1-10). The same approach of meeting needs through Bible study, missions, and discipleship opportunities is effective for leaders today. By first addressing the needs of young adults, leaders and teachers are helping adults discover how God meets their needs through the Bible. Only then do Bible study and discipleship become relevant to their everyday lives.

Gilbert Peterson identified six primary needs of adults in his book *The Christian Education of Adults*. All adults in some form experience these needs: physical, security, affection, significance, accomplishment, and creativity. With these in mind, ministry leaders and teachers can plan Bible studies, discipleship opportunities, and ministry/missions avenues that will address these needs and allow God to work in the lives of young adults.

#### *Physical Needs*

Human beings of all ages need sleep, food, water, air, and exercise. These needs stem from bodily functions. Adults, however, experience physical changes that affect how these needs are met in their lives. During the young adult years, physical abilities peak and begin to decline. Consequently, young adults have special concerns with diet, weight, exercise, and addiction.

Many young adults increase their use of drugs, according to John W. Santrock in his book *Life-Span Development*. Heavy drinking among college students and cocaine use among young adults are special concerns.

Young adults often give little thought to the effects of their lifestyles on their future health. During these years many engage in patterns of skipping breakfast, snacking during the day instead of regular meals, and getting by with only a few hours of sleep. If continued, these patterns will cause health problems during the middle adult years.



Church families can play a part in fostering healthy habits among young adults. Providing balanced meals for college students and single adults is one way to meet physical needs. Another way is to provide health-related study groups. The *fit4 Health Wellness Plan* is an excellent resource for young adults (available by calling 1-800-458-2772).

### ***Security***

The need for security is a common need for preschoolers, children, youth, and adults. Security is feeling safe physically and emotionally. It also involves a feeling of acceptance by others. Acceptance by Jesus Christ is a spiritual experience that meets the need for security. The doctrine of the security of the believer confirms that Christ's acceptance is eternal. It can never be taken away. This spiritual security is an important gift to all adults.

In his book *Foundations of Ministry*, Michael Anthony warned church leaders to avoid assuming that all adults who call themselves Christian have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Churches are full of adult believers who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior but have never become His disciples. They may never have experienced Christ's acceptance. In George Barna's "State of the Church, 2000" report, he concluded that half the people who say they are born again have lost souls (Ted Byfield and Virginia Byfield, "Half the Born-Agains are Still Lost Souls, a Researcher Finds, and There's a Reason," *Report/News magazine*, 27:9 [9/11/2000]: 54). Bible study, discipleship opportunities, and missions education have the potential to help adults experience Christ's acceptance and be transformed by His love.

In addition to experiencing spiritual security, social issues affect the level of security for young men and women. Single men and women alike fear they will decrease in their ability to be attractive and interesting. Marital adjustments cause young adults to feel insecure in their marriages. Career challenges often cause young adults to feel insecure. Consequently, social concerns promote the need for security in young adulthood.

The stereotypes of young adults often cause confusion among young adults themselves. Many young adults do not feel they fit the stereotypes and

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think something is wrong with themselves (Charles M. Sell, *Transitions Through Adult Life* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991], 133). By accepting these anxious feelings, adults can retain their sense of security. Christian education can meet this need of security by providing small-group opportunities where adults can talk about their struggles. They can share ways to understand what is happening and accept one another with love.

The crises of life may cause adults to become involved in learning activities. Through these learning activities they are attempting to meet their need for security. By understanding their situations and experiences, they can accept what is happening to them as normal and respond with a feeling of security.

### ***Affection***

Peterson also identified the need for affection as a specific concern for all adults, but it differs for young adults when compared with older adults. For example, as a result of the major physical changes taking place in midlife, affection becomes an important need that must be met. Young adults' need for affection may be more of an emotional need.

Young adults may have many friends. Typically, friends are important to both single and married young adults. These friends are important ways for young adults to meet their needs of affection.

Young adults experiencing special circumstances heighten the need for affection. Divorce, underemployment, unemployment, health problems, and death of family members may occur during the young adult years. Expressions of affection can help adults journey through the grief associated with these experiences.

### ***Significance***

Another basic need of all adults is the sense of significance, feeling appreciated by others. This need is particularly important to young adults as they begin their careers and establish themselves as adults.

Some young adults experience a sense of inadequacy with a self-perspective largely reflected by roles played as a spouse, parent, and employee. These



feelings of inadequacy are normal as young adults become spouses, parents, and employees for the first time. Expressions of affirmation are meaningful to young adults who are attempting to fulfill the variety of roles played by adults.

As Christians, however, the need for significance was met in creation. The fact that human beings are created in God's image and by His love is truly grounds for significance (Gen. 1:27). As children of God, believers find their self-worth is part of what it means to be made in God's image. God wants human beings to thank Him for all of His blessings. In a similar way human beings find worth in God's love.

Recognition for one's accomplishments is quite important. Many young adults tend to desire forms of recognition that suit their personalities. For example, a shy person would not want to be recognized in front of a group. Whether they receive recognition greatly affects their sense of self-worth. This external source of self-worth can result in frustration. When a sense of self-worth is anchored in God's love, adults can realize and accept appreciation from others with a healthy sense of significance.

### ***Accomplishment***

A fifth primary need of adults is accomplishment. Whether young adults are college students, homemakers, firefighters, engineers, teachers, or artists, God creates human beings with a drive to accomplish something during their lives.

In the book *Adult Development and Learning*, Alan Knox identified the following major characteristics of home and family settings that contribute to accomplishment in life:

- General acceptance by family members that adult life entails growth and change.
- Familiarity with other adults as role models engaged in systematic learning and adaptation.
- Availability of learning resources for adults in the home, such as books, recordings, and study guides.
- Awareness of opportunities for organized learning for adults outside the home.

- Opportunities for adults to engage in activities that help clarify needs to grow and change.
- Willingness for adult members to spend time and money on continuing their education, along with encouragement and recognition when they do.

Christian education can play an important role in meeting the need for accomplishment. In *The Adult Learning Projects*, Allen Tough discovered that when adults are the learners, they prefer self-directed learning opportunities where teachers serve as facilitators. As they learn this way, they experience accomplishment. As teachers, they need guidance in developing their teaching skills that allows them to be self-directed and recognizes their accomplishments. They need opportunities to discuss and reflect on their experiences with a small group of fellow teachers. In addition, the Christian Growth Study Plan ([www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog](http://www.lifeway.com/cgsp/catalog) or call 1-800-968-5519) can be a learning strategy for young adults to pursue on their own and receive recognition when they accomplish or complete courses. Church leaders are wise to provide these kinds of opportunities for the adults in their churches.

### ***Creativity***

The final primary need of adults identified by Peterson is creativity. Just as God is creative, adults are open to creative change in their lives. During the adult years, the need for creativity is met by opportunities for new experiences. These new experiences may stem from getting a new job, graduating from college, getting married, having a baby, or any number of other new opportunities.

The need for creativity is also met by new relationships. For most these new friendships are healthy expressions of creativity for both men and women. Again, church families can provide a variety of fellowship opportunities for single and married young young adults who need healthy relationships with Christian friends.

Young adults also need to be creative. Drama, art, music, and even teaching Bible studies can give adults opportunities to use their skills and talents in creative ways. These opportunities can be strategic side doors for

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many persons to enter the church. They can get to know people in a church family and develop relationships that can eventually bring them to Jesus Christ.

**Here's a Thought: As you reflect on these needs of adults, identify how you experience these needs. This identification will help you relate to the adults in your group. How can you meet the needs of the young adults in your group?**

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Written by Morlee Maynard, ministry coordination specialist, LifeWay Church Resources.

# Young Adults and Learning

## Ways Adults Learn

How do adults learn? Everyone who teaches adults has an answer to that question. However, one question is much more critical in the development of an approach to helping adults learn: Why do adults learn? By answering this question, we will develop a more usable answer to the question, how do adults learn?

Learners enter an educational environment for a variety of reasons. Each learner has a primary motivator for engaging education, whether vocational training or a Bible study. Adult learners want to know how the educational setting is going to address their motivation for being there. Basically many adults walk into a classroom asking, “What’s in it for me?”

### *Foundational Elements to Adult Learning*

Adult learners have the following five foundational elements that better enable teachers to facilitate adult learning.

1. ***Adults have a need to know.*** In today’s hectic society the fact that an adult learner is in the classroom indicates he or she has a purpose for being there. One of the greatest challenges for the teacher is helping learners identify the gap between personal knowledge and biblical principle. Adults sometimes fail to differentiate the two, seeing their personal opinion as biblical truth.
2. ***Adults want to be treated as if they can learn on their own.*** Adults resist situations in which they feel as if they are being manipulated by the leader. Teachers of adults need to design educational experiences to capitalize on learners’ desire to discover things for themselves. Questions should be asked to evoke reflection not a specific, obvious answer.
3. ***Adults want to relate their personal experiences to the educational setting.*** Within a group of adults are a variety of experience levels. Experiences can positively contribute to the learning environment through activities such as group discussion, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, and case studies. Personal experiences, however, can have a detrimental impact on the learning situation when they lead learners to develop habits, biases, and presuppositions that close the minds of learners to new ideas, fresh percep-



tions, and alternate ways of thinking. Critical self-reflection enables learners to open habits, biases, and presuppositions to reevaluation.

4. ***Adults enter the learning environment from a life-centered perspective.***

Adults will devote themselves to an educational experience they perceive to be beneficial in dealing with problems and tasks they encounter in their life situations. Adults tend to learn best when new knowledge or skills are presented in response to real life situations.

5. ***Adults enter the learning environment for a variety of reasons.*** For

example, a life crisis often causes adults to participate in a study group related to that crisis. However, the normal motivation to learn might be hindered by lack of confidence, time constraints, or the unavailability of quality resources to guide the learning experience.

### ***Learning Approaches***

In regard to how adults learn, consider the following biblically based learning approaches:

1. **Relational**—activities that focus on interaction and cooperation with others.
2. **Musical**—activities that focus on music, learning, and performing.
3. **Logical**—activities that focus on analogies and problem solving.
4. **Natural**—activities that focus on exploring elements of the natural world.
5. **Physical**—activities that focus on active involvement in projects.
6. **Reflective**—activities that focus on self-expression and personalizing biblical truths.
7. **Visual**—activities that focus on visual images and representations of what is being learned.
8. **Verbal**—activities that focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Most educators agree that certain learning approaches are more applicable to adults than are others. Children, adolescents, and adults have certain primary learning approaches. These primary approaches do not mean that other learning approaches are inappropriate for a specific age group. It simply means that each age group tends to be more responsive to certain approaches to learning.

For instance, children can learn musically more effectively than they can

## Young Adults and Learning

learn reflectively. Their mental capacity does not allow them to experience the full benefit of reflective learning. At the same time many adults find learning musically inappropriate for certain educational settings.

Habermas and Issler (Ronald Habermas and Klaus Issler, *Teaching for Reconciliation: Foundations and Practice of Christian Educational Ministry* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 162.) identify primary learning styles for each age group. Habermas and Issler state that children tend to learn environmentally. Adolescents learn relationally. Adults learn dialogically. If the eight approaches to learning are subdivided into the categories of learning styles proposed by Habermas and Issler, the following broad categorizations apply:

1. **Environmental**—natural, physical, and musical.
2. **Relational**—relational and visual.
3. **Dialogical**—verbal, reflective, and logical.

Based on the work of Habermas and Issler, we can assume primary and secondary learning styles for each age group. For children the primary learning approaches are those associated with the environmental category. For adolescents the primary learning approaches are those associated with the relational category. For adults the primary learning approaches are those associated with the dialogical category.

Secondary learning styles can be determined by investigating developmental issues related to each age group. For adults the dialogical category contains the primary learning styles for adults. This category includes verbal, reflective, and logical learning approaches. The secondary learning styles are drawn from the relational category. This category includes relational and visual learning approaches. In light of our culture, it can be observed that music plays an important role in the lives of people of all ages. Therefore, we can include musical as a preferred learning approach for adults. The exclusion of the learning approaches in the environmental category does not negate the appropriateness of natural and physical learning approaches with adults.

Within each learning approach are certain methods a teacher can use to facilitate learning. The following chart includes methods associated with each learning approach.



STYLE CATEGORY	LEARNING APPROACH	METHODS
Dialogical	Verbal	Listen, paraphrase, list, report, recite, dialogue, monologue, question and answer.
	Logical	Organize, compare and contrast, debate, analyze, word study, worksheets.
	Reflective	Self-evaluation, open-ended sentences, prayer, reflective writing, reflective thinking, personal stories.
Relational	Relational	Clarify, affirm, interview, case study, small-group discussion, role play.
	Visual	Object lessons, diagrams, illustrations, displays, maps, multimedia presentations.
	Musical	Listening to music, rewriting lyrics, interpreting lyrics, searching a hymnal, singing, watching music videos.

### ***Basic Principles of Adult Learning***

#### **THE NEED TO KNOW**

John had several years of formal education and on-the-job training and was considered to be one of the authorities in his field. Generally, when John spoke, what he said was authoritative. Bill was new to the company and brought with him some research into some new approaches to John's area of expertise. Soon Bill publicly was discussing his ideas. John refused to accept Bill's work since it contradicted much of what he already knew.

Adults cannot learn what they believe they already know. The same idea applies to biblical principles. Certainly the principles never change, but our

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understanding of the principles is subject to all kinds of external influences. From discussions about various versions of the Bible to interpretation of specific passages of Scripture, we find our faith built upon personalized interpretations of the biblical facts. Think about the traditional nativity scene. Mary, Joseph, Jesus, the Magi, a couple of shepherds, and assorted farm animals all gathered in a wooden structure something like an open-face barn. Is this traditional representation of the nativity scene biblically accurate? Would it ruin your Christmas if I told you that most scholars believe the manger actually was housed in a cave and that the Magi never arrived at the manger? Would it further complicate the issue if I challenged the inclusion of three Magi?

When you read the biblical passages, you will find the Magi arriving in town and visiting Jesus at His house. You will also see that there were three gifts, but there is no indication of the number of individuals bringing those gifts. Suddenly tradition comes face-to-face with fact. This is when learning can take place.

Adults must be led to the point where they recognize that their knowledge level is insufficient. This gap between what they know and the truth empowers adults to learn. Unless adults see a gap, they are unlikely to learn, regardless of the creativity of the teacher. We often make the mistake of assuming that adults will grasp anything that is packaged creatively. The need to know drives the learning situation for adults.

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Not only do adults need to recognize the need to know; they also must have a practical application for what they learn. Our televisions flood our minds with stuff. Most of what we see and hear has no direct application to our lives. That is why we have a remote control. How many times have you looked through a hundred channels of digital excitement only to conclude that there is nothing on television?

When did you learn to change a flat tire? My father taught me the basics of tire changing, but I never really learned how to change a flat tire until I experienced a flat tire. It was at that point that I recognized one of the truths of tire



changing: There always is one lug that is too tight to be loosened with the tools you have on hand! Once I made practical application of the information, I was able to learn how to change a tire.

Adults in your class are no different. We have a limited amount of time in which to communicate information that can help adults make it through the difficult aspects of life. If we invest that time showcasing our own knowledge and study skills, students are not being provided the help they came seeking. This leads to one of the most important questions a teacher can be asked: Are you a student-centered teacher, or are you a teacher-centered teacher?

### **FOCUS ON THE STUDENT**

Teacher-centered teachers tend to lecture more than they interact with students. They project the attitude that their lesson plan is the priority. Teacher-centered classrooms tend to be more formal and structured. Student-centered teachers tend to evaluate student needs and mold the classroom experience to meet those needs. A student-centered classroom is less formal and more interactive. A student-centered teacher is prone to venture away from the lesson plan if there is an obvious need to do so.

Most of us were raised in teacher-centered environments. We might understand the need to become more student centered, but something in our makeup prevents us from engaging a new method. Most teachers who are taught a new way of teaching will revert to a more comfortable method unless the new method is routinely reinforced. If teachers of adults are going to be effective, they must continually evaluate themselves in light of the biblical standard demonstrated by Jesus. He taught so that lives would be changed. Is that the focus of your teaching?

### **UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVATION TO LEARN**

Why are adults in your classroom? When I was a minister of education, I often saw new classes begin with great enthusiasm. However, in many cases the attendance declined to a few regular attenders. Why was this the trend?

The answer has to do with the adult learner's motivation to learn. Adults

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tend to be internally motivated to engage the learning situation. Those who enter the learning situation because of internal motivation are more likely to stay involved in the class. For instance, if a parent is having difficulty communicating with her teenage son, a class dealing with communicating with teenagers might seem helpful. This is an internal motivation.

However, many of our tools for reaching out to adults are external. We encourage learners to attend a class because of the expertise of the author of the text or because we have enlisted the best teacher in the church to lead the class. These are external motivators. These might appeal to a few people, but if the internal needs of the adults are not addressed, many adults will choose to disconnect from the learning environment.

In today's society adults seldom attend church activities out of a sense of obligation. More and more adults are evaluating their calendars and making choices based on their perceptions of the personal application of the specific event. If our church groups are boring and lecture oriented, some parents might view the time spent at the soccer field chatting with other parents as more beneficial. There is an inherent motivation to engage those things from which you receive support and encouragement. Many parental discussions around the soccer field meet that need better than some church study groups.

We must begin to understand why adults are in our classrooms. Getting to know the learners in a class is critical. Most adults will not share publicly their deepest concerns. But an intuitive teacher can get to know adults so that he or she can get a basic understanding of the issues certain adults are facing. When you begin to understand adults' motivation for being in the classroom, a creative, student-centered teacher can adapt the material to meet the needs of the participants. Without grasping the motivation of the learners, we are likely to see the attendance decline week after week.

### **OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTRY**

The church scene has been inundated with “mega-teachers” and “mega-classes.” Week after week large groups gather to watch a video or learn from a specially trained teacher. Weeks turn to months, and months turn to years. Some individ-



uals boast about having been in a particular Bible study for 10 or more years.

What would happen if leaders of a church-based educational activity were required to carry out a ministry within the local community? Students want an opportunity to put to use the principles they are being taught. Principles that are not reinforced with action are quickly forgotten. The fact remains that adults will learn best when what they learn is reinforced with action.

### THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Many of us are the beneficiaries of excellent church-based educational programs. But what are we doing to prepare the next generation to take our places? Most church rolls verify that we are not reaching young adults. Some people blame the young adults. If they would get right with God, they would come back to church! Other people look at the situation more realistically. We still are using 1960s methods to reach today's younger generation.

How would your life change if you discarded all of the changes we have experienced since 1960? No microwave, satellite dish, DVD player, cordless phone, computer in the den, and the list goes on and on. Yet in our churches we expect today's young adults to embrace methods rooted in our personal educational experiences, dating back to the 70s, 60s, 50s, and earlier.

If adults are to learn, we must understand where they are coming from. Today's 30-year-old faces a different world than many of us faced when we were 30. Adults in our churches aren't learning because we have failed to create an environment conducive to learning.

Effective classes find themselves creating new classes and producing new leadership year after year. These classes can review their histories and see the impact they have had on their community and church. Adults learn when we allow them to learn. Are you a guide or an obstacle?

For teaching suggestions use the resource *Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching* by Rick Edwards (Nashville: LifeWay Church Resources). For curriculum resources, consider the following:

**Sunday School (available by calling 1-800-458-2772)**

*Explore the Bible Series*



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*Family Bible Study for Adults Series*

**Discipleship Training (available by calling 1-800-458-2772)**

*Baptist Adults*

**Adults on Mission (available by calling 1-800-968-7301)**

*Dimensions*

*Missions Mosaic*

**Women on Mission (available by calling 1-800-968-7301)**

*Missions Mosaic*

**Baptist Men on Mission (available by calling 1-800-448-8032)**

*Missions in Motion*

**Here’s a Thought: Consider how the five foundational elements of learning are true for each of the young adults in your group. Identify the primary learning approaches preferred by each person.**

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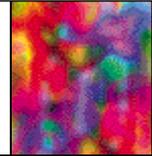
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Written by Dr. Terry Hadaway, multimedia designer, Adult Sunday School Ministry Department, Sunday School Group, LifeWay Church Resources.



## Understanding Adults Who Have Learning Disabilities

Kevin is 25 years old. At 7, he was diagnosed with a verbal learning disability that affected his reading and oral expression. He struggled through school but managed to graduate from high school with help from his family, tutors, teachers, and friends.

Kevin was involved in church until he reached his junior year in high school. He recalls the day he decided he no longer wanted to go to church. His Sunday School teacher required the class to memorize a set of Bible verses she said would help them as they approached their college years. Kevin took the assignment seriously, and for him it was a disaster. He struggled to read and comprehend the Bible verses. And although he was able to read them, he was unable to memorize them. He rarely could memorize vocabulary words for Spanish, much less whole Bible verses. Kevin told his mother that he would never return to this class. Gradually he dropped out of church altogether.

### *How Common Are Learning Disabilities?*

According to information from the National Institutes of Health, 15–20 percent of the U.S. population have some form of learning disability. Most individuals who manifest learning disabilities have deficits in reading or in the processing of language (e.g., understanding what is said or in succinctly organizing a response). Most experts agree that more boys than girls (some researchers suggest approximately a 3:2 ratio) are likely to have learning disabilities.

### *What Is a Learning Disability, and How Does a Disability Develop?*

Controversies continue about a clear definition and criteria to be used to diagnose a learning disability; however, most experts agree there are different types of learning disabilities. Subtypes of learning disabilities include: (1) dyslexia (a verbal learning disability that impairs reading, spelling, verbal memory tasks, and rapid naming); (2) dyscalculia (a disability that impairs math skills due to

## Young Adults and Learning

spatial organizational problems, sequencing difficulties, poor graphomotor control, inadequate attention to visual detail, and poor number logic); (3) dysgraphia (a writing disability; however, there are limited studies in this area).

Adults with a diagnosis of dyslexia make up the largest group. A smaller number of individuals have deficits in visual-spatial cognition (nonverbal learning disabilities) and experience significant difficulty conceptually understanding math or have poor handwriting and appear to be motor clumsy. In addition, over the last 15–20 years, concern has grown for individuals who experience significant difficulty in social situations. These individuals experience difficulty interpreting the behavior of others, such as gestures and facial expressions; thus, they may appear to be socially awkward and experience limited skills interacting with others.

Adults who have learning disabilities are likely to experience poor reading comprehension, slow reading rate, laborious writing, slow processing of new information, poor mathematical skills, and/or secondary emotional or behavioral problems, such as depression, poor self-esteem, somatic complaints, anxiety disorders, and social problems.

While the causes of learning disabilities remain unknown, a genetic basis is likely. Risk factors cited in research literature associated with learning disabilities include: (1) the presence of learning disabilities in other family members; (2) a very low birth weight; (3) head traumas; (4) seizure disorders; and (5) radiation therapy treatment for long-term survivors of acute lymphocytic leukemia.

Many laypeople mistakenly associate low intelligence or laziness with a learning disability. While each person with a learning disability is unique, one of the most common factors noted in these individuals is that they tend to achieve significantly below their intellectual abilities even though they are of average or above average intelligence.

### ***What Is the Prognosis for Individuals with Learning Disabilities?***

“I can read pretty good now, but it takes me much longer than it does my wife. My spelling is terrible, too.”



Despite their disabilities, many people achieve functional reading skills. They can read the newspaper and most material at work. Most continue, however, to read at levels that do not match their intellectual abilities. Most adults with learning disabilities report that they rarely read for pleasure, even though they remain curious and possess a desire to learn. They just adopt other methods to acquire information. They may do this by carefully listening and watching educational or news programs on television.

A learning disability is a chronic problem that does not go away with maturity. Research has suggested that even if an individual with a learning disability graduates from college, he or she is at high risk for job dissatisfaction. Thus diminished feelings of self-worth continue to plague many adults with learning disabilities.

However, an important positive influence in the lives of adults with learning disabilities is a strong family support system. The church can serve as an extended support system, and this support system is significant even when the person with a learning disability has a strong family support system. If you teach a person with a learning disability, you may be a vital link for acceptance between a person with learning disabilities and his or her peers.

### ***What Can I Do to Help an Individual with a Learning Disability?***

First, increase your efforts to empower and encourage the individual with a learning disability. You can do this by helping that person feel safe in the class and church environment. Don't set up the individual for embarrassment or failure by asking him or her to read a passage of the Bible aloud before he has read it silently.

Deborah Hancock, experienced teacher of adults in California, offers examples of approaches that can result in embarrassment and/or alienation for the individual with a reading problem ("He Can Hardly Read and He's in My Class," *Life and Work: Directions*, Winter 1998-99). The person with a learning disability is more than able to participate in your Sunday School class if you create an atmosphere in which everyone makes an effort to accept all individ-

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uals and it is tailored to fit the unique needs of its participants. Every member is responsible for creating an emotionally safe environment.

Evidence now supports the use of strategy and organizational instruction for individuals with learning disabilities rather than an approach that uses the lecture and a “take-a-turn” approach to reading the Bible. Strategy instruction provides a framework for thinking as well as techniques for teaching concepts and truths. This approach works well for an individual with any kind of language-related learning disabilities (i.e., problems with reading, understanding language, or expressing himself/herself) or for the individual with memory problems. This approach can be helpful for all participants in your class.

Here are some steps to using strategy instruction in your adult groups:

1. Prior to launching into the details of the discussion, provide a clear idea of the central concept (or “big idea”) for the lesson. One possible approach to share this with the class is by preparing a handout of this statement with several letters deleted in key words. For example, “Jesus offers God’s f \_\_\_\_ g \_\_\_\_ n \_\_\_\_ and restoration, not condemnation, to those who have broken God’s l \_\_\_\_ .”

By distributing this at the beginning of the lesson, the individual with learning disabilities will be able to listen more attentively and effectively. Discuss the meanings of more difficult words or modify the language. For example, the big idea mentioned could be restated: “Jesus offers God’s forgiveness, not blame, to those who have broken God’s laws.” Discuss what this means in everyday language.

2. If the discussion has a number of concepts that seem important, sift through the possible concepts and determine the most important ones. A well-organized and well-supported lesson can be retained more easily than one that focuses on the details in the passages in a hit-and-miss approach. Provide the class with a written outline of the discussion with the main ideas listed. This outline can be presented on the chalkboard, an overhead projector, or in a handout.
3. Use effective questioning techniques and discussions, as well as visual aids, charts, pictures, and graph organizers. If you allow members time to discuss



a topic in small groups or with one other person, the persons with learning disabilities will be better able to process the information with greater understanding. Individuals with learning disabilities appear to do better when they have many opportunities to verbalize what they are learning.

4. At the end of the discussion, summarize what was presented. Using a common rule for public speaking is helpful when teaching individuals with learning disabilities: “Tell ’em what you’re going to tell ’em; tell ’em; then tell ’em what you’ve told ’em.” By providing opportunities for (1) previewing the main idea, (2) presenting the information in a well-organized approach using good questioning and discussion techniques, and then (3) summarizing the information presented, more opportunities for learning will occur. Other suggestions for your teaching include:
  1. Before beginning the discussion, review the main concepts from last week and try to relate new information to old knowledge. By doing this, you will be integrating prior learning to new learning. This helps all learners acquire new information.
  2. Provide practical problems that encourage the learner to apply concepts presented. Talk about them.
  3. Rather than ask members to memorize Bible verses, ask for a paraphrase of the verse or discuss what the verse means.
  4. Never ask class members to take turns reading the Bible passages aloud. Ask for volunteers, ask individuals in advance to read a selected passage, or read the passages aloud yourself.
  5. Use mnemonic approaches when presenting new information. For example, an adult missionary with dyslexia used a mnemonic approach when he recently presented a talk to adults at our church. His topic was on the role of each individual as a missionary. The mnemonic approach was G-O-T. Step 1: Make God your number one priority in life. Step 2: Be Open to daily opportunities to serve God. Step 3: Take these opportunities to serve God and be a missionary. As do many adults with learning disabilities, this young man developed excellent compensatory strategies to assist him in remembering verbal sequences.



# Young Adults and Learning

6. Provide members with videotapes and audiocassettes to supplement the printed material. For the individual who is motivated to study the material in advance, tape record the printed material and offer this tape to the individual with a learning disability.

Your role as a teacher should be to help each person gain a better understanding of God’s truth and to help each person live out this truth. If someone in your group has a learning disability, carefully consider the way you share God’s love. Be appreciative that someone along the way has not alienated him or her from church. Remember that people with learning disabilities can have the same desire to learn and grow in their relationship with God as all others. They are just as intelligent and curious as everyone else is. They simply may need a different approach or added steps to their learning and growing process. These approaches may make you a more effective teacher to your entire class, too.

We may all need to recall the old Chinese proverb in our teaching: “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.”

For further reading:

*A Place for Everyone: A Guide for Special Education Bible Teaching-Reaching Ministry* by Athalene McNay (Nashville: Convention Press)

*Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching* compiled by Rick Edwards (Nashville: LifeWay Church Resources)

**Here’s a Thought:**

- **Do you have adults with special needs in your class? What techniques have you incorporated into your teaching to keep them involved and to help them learn?**

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## Young Adults and Learning



- You may have adults with learning disabilities that you don't know about. How can new techniques help them?

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- How might these same teaching-learning approaches help all learners?

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Written by Dr. Jane Hannah, assistant professor of pediatrics, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, and a member of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.



## Adults and Faith

How would you draw a map of the faith development in young adulthood? Would it show a flat terrain until death, or would there be hills and valleys along the way? Let's focus on some unique issues faced by young adults as they travel through their spiritual journey.

While young adults have many years to deepen and broaden their faith, the territory and direction of Christian growth in these years is hazy, especially if they have been in a strong youth program, which emphasized discipleship, and then move toward an adult ministry that is weak and inconsequential in contrast. They wonder if adult discipleship is just an adult version of the youth faith pilgrimage. Sometimes they need to overcome poor or inadequate faith presentations learned as children or youth.

Read the following description of God from a young boy's perspective (written by Bruce Barton in the 1925 best-seller *The Man Nobody Knows*):

The little boy's body sat bolt upright in the rough wooden chair, but his mind was very busy. This was his weekly hour of revolt. The kindly lady who could never seem to find her glasses would have been terribly shocked if she had known what was going on inside the little boy's mind.

"You must love Jesus," she said every Sunday, "and God."

The little boy did not say anything. He was afraid to say anything; he was almost afraid that something would happen to him because of the things he thought:

Love God! Who was always picking on people for having a good time, and sending little boys to hell because they couldn't do better in a world he had made so hard! Why didn't God take on someone his own size?

Love Jesus! The little boy looked up at the picture, which hung on the Sunday-school wall. It showed a pale young man



with flabby forearms and a sad expression. The young man had red whiskers.

Then the little boy looked across to the other wall. There was Daniel, good old Daniel, standing off the lions. The little boy liked Daniel. He liked David, too, with the trusty sling that landed a stone square on the forehead of Goliath. And Moses, with his rod and his big brass snake. They were winners—those three. He wondered if David could whip Jeffries. Samson could! Say, that would have been a fight!

But Jesus! Jesus was the “lamb of God.” The little boy did not know what that meant, but it sounded like Mary’s little lamb. Something for girls—sissified. Jesus was also “meek and lowly,” a “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He went around for three years telling people not to do things.

Sunday was Jesus’ day; it was wrong to feel comfortable or laugh on Sunday.

The little boy was glad when the superintendent thumped the bell and announced: “We will now sing the closing hymn.” One more bad hour was over. For one more week the little boy had gotten rid of Jesus.

**Here’s a Thought: Reread that description of the little boy’s faith. This time underline words and phrases that show immature faith. What challenges do young adult leaders have when confronted by biblical and theological ignorance and illiteracy? What kinds of misunderstandings do your young adults bring into the classroom?**

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## Young Adults and Spiritual Growth

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With the provocative title *What Prevents Christian Young adults from Learning?* John Hull has given a fresh diagnosis of the central problem of today’s church, namely why young adults have such a reluctance to be involved in church educational programs for them. According to Hull, young adults are taught as children that the Christian faith is something one grows out of. It is necessary, yes, for children and youth, because they are in a learning mode most of their growing up years. That is, they are in school, and *Sunday School* is appropriate for them. So, when they become young adults, over 18, they no longer need the trappings of youth or childhood. In fact, they define themselves as young adults in part by not needing schooling anymore. Young adults who think this way insist children and youth need religious training but they do not.

More than likely you have heard strong support for calling a children’s minister or a youth director but not a minister to young adults. Part of this lack of attention to adult spiritual maturity can be traced to Hull’s assumptions. “So it is that as young adults and parents we socialize our children into that for which we have a fond nostalgia but can no longer take seriously ourselves. Deep in their hearts many young adults believe that religion really is for children” (Hull, p. 8). Children and youth observe this as well. They conclude that if parents and other young adults are not really committed to their own growing discipleship, they can “look forward” to the days when they can stop growing spiritually as well—as young adults.

How then do Christian young adults face their own need to continue their spiritual growth? In Christian education settings they often give the safe,



remembered answers they learned as children. They seek to preserve, not enhance, the faith once delivered to them long ago. These young adults pay a high price for their failure to go on growing in discipleship in their adult years. They have stopped learning. They know the church answers. They can recite the Sunday morning schedule for worship. They know the major Bible stories. They have “got it down,” so to speak.

Ironically, though, these same young adults who have “got religion down” continue to grow and mature in other areas of their lives. They marry, have children, take on a career, get involved in civic life, and shoulder a host of other responsibilities. In family life and work they solve problems, seek answers, continuously retrain and retool. Then suddenly a crisis appears—unemployment, a death in the family. Anxious young adults then harness all the resources they can muster, including their faith. This becomes a crisis of faith, when they cannot solve the spiritual problems of young adulthood with a faith they left in high school.

What else keeps Christian young adults from learning? In most classes young adults want to preserve and enhance their self-respect and self-image. So they are careful not to admit that they do not know the answer to a question posed by the teacher. Many are reluctant to be involved in any exercise designed to assist in spiritual growth. In this case ignorance breeds embarrassment. Their greatest fear is having their ignorance discovered. They are afraid of giving the wrong answers because they are supposed to have learned all this information years ago as a child or youth. This is not the case for children and youth. Why? Because the childhood and youth years are times of education and growth. It is understandable that they don't know biblical truth.

We may feel uncomfortable with the little boy's thoughts about his Sunday School experience. And we would hope that future lessons would correct his impressions. However, many young adults retain these impressions well into adulthood. One cause is that they have become Sunday School dropouts and are not involved in Christian education during their youth years. Or they unconsciously pick up these childhood interpretations from society and bring them to the young adult Bible class.



# Young Adults and Spiritual Growth

The task of the young adult Christian education teacher is formidable—not only to teach current Bible truths but at the same time to shore up the shortcomings of years of childhood (mis)education.

**Here's a Thought: Consider the group of young adults you lead. How can you help them develop a desire to develop their personal relationship with Jesus Christ?**

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Written by Dr. Jim Walter, professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now the minister to median and senior adults at First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida.



## Religious Cults and Young Adults

This past decade has seen an explosion of interest and involvement in religious cults in America and around the world. For instance, 39 members of the Heaven's Gate, including their founder Marshall Applewhite, committed mass suicide in an effort to shed their earthly containers and move to a higher level of experience aboard a spaceship they believed to be following the Hale-Bopp comet. Why then do young adults join religious cults? An easy but not definitive answer is that they want to; young adults do what they want to do. They may not know why they are attracted to cults or give large sums of money and time to them, but they do. Maybe they are hoping the cult or its leaders can give them a fulfilled life.

But what is a cult? It is a religious group with a distinctive theological view that varies greatly from the dominant religion in a country or society. The usual structure is "us versus them." Hence, cults are often authoritarian in nature.

Generally cults appeal to young adults, ages 18–28. Young adults are most attracted to cults at times of transitions in their lives—leaving home, deciding on a career, entering college or work, and getting married. When young adults are in transition, especially when their own family is dysfunctional or far away, they find cults attractive because cults have definite beliefs and lifestyles. Cult members provide them with the support and "family" lacking in their lives. People join cults because they have found a social and psychological safety net.

Near the end of the Sermon the Mount, Jesus offered a stern warning against false prophets and teachers—then as well as now. Matthew 7:15-23 says:

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who



# Young Adults and Spiritual Growth

says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, evildoers!’”

**Here’s a Thought:**

- **How can you ensure that the needs of young adults are being met, particularly at times of transition, so that cults are not an option?**

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- **List young adult transitions being experienced by persons in your group.**

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## Young Adults and Spiritual Growth



- How does your church or group minister to young adults during these times?

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Written by Dr. Jim Walter professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote this article. He is now the minister to median and senior adults at First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida.



## So, Why Marry?

Engagement is, historically, the climactic result of a period of dating or courtship. Indeed, today's young adults still value the institution of marriage and anticipate, *some day*, marrying. However, the search for “the right person” has taken a lot of turns through the years.

Young adults choose to marry for a great variety of reasons. Knowing these reasons may better prepare us to reach out to those who are unsaved and help young believers learn new values.

First, some marry for **love**. Love, as defined largely by the media, is considered the number one reason to marry. This kind of love is often self-serving, i.e., “I like the way I feel when I'm with her or him.” Young adults consciously or unconsciously seek out the person with whom they have “chemistry.” This chemistry is understood to be love, and love results in the invitation to marry.

Second, others marry for **companionship**. Even the remote possibility of spending your whole life with someone in a more or less permanent and visible relationship is a positive motivation that leads many young adults to marry. Unfortunately, the motivation of companionship has given way to multiple alternate lifestyle issues. The argument goes something like this, “If we like each other's company and are willing, even anxious, to legally commit ourselves to each other, should we not have the opportunity to marry?”

Third, for some, peer pressure or the desire to **conform** motivates them to enter into engagement. This remains particularly true for young adults who live in the same community in which they went to high school or college, or those who still spend time with adolescent acquaintances. In other words, getting engaged is just “the thing to do.” It is the obvious next step.

A fourth motivation for engagement and marriage is **sex**. The sexual revolution of the 60s and 70s resulted in the sexually transmitted diseases of the 80s and 90s. All of these developments have created a generation of young adults who, for reasons seldom spiritual, have preferred a “look but don't touch” approach to dating and/or courtship. Engagement represents a window in the dating relationship when the couple have committed to each other and



believe that sexual explorations would now be all right.

A fifth, and final, motivation for marriage among young adults is **children**. Those young adults who do choose to be sexually active during late adolescence and early adulthood frequently do so without giving thought to children. Many who do become pregnant choose the completely legal alternative of abortion. However, of those who choose to give birth, the majority marry. Unfortunately, most of these marriages do not survive.

An understanding of the motives behind the decision to marry will better equip us to assist young adults through the turbulent waters of the early years of marriage.

**Here's a Thought: Interview the young adults members of your class who currently are considering marriage, and ask them why. Then interview some young adults who are unchurched who are considering marriage and ask them why. Compare the two responses!**

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Adapted by Dr. Randy Millwood from Contemporary Adulthood 5th ed. written by Jeffrey S. Turner and Donald B. Helms (San Diego: Harcourt Trade Publishers, 1994). Dr. Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.



## Why Is Marriage Being Postponed?

It is likely that the young adults with whom you serve are single. Why? Because marriage is being postponed. In 1970, the average first-time marriage ages were: men, 23.2 years old; women, 20.8 years old. In 1998, the average first-time marriage ages were: men, 25.0 years old; women, 26.7 years old (“Facts of Life,” comp. John MacIntyre, *Spirit*, June 1999, American Airlines Publishing, DFW Airport, TX, 152).

You’ll note that the average age for men to marry the first time increased less than two years in two decades. However, during that same period of time, the average age for women to marry for the first time has increased almost six years. Average, of course, means that about as many folks younger as older married for the first time at those ages. Therefore, the odds are that most of the emerging, young adults you lead are single. But, why? Is it because marriage is unpopular? Certainly not. Indeed, if current trends continue, 92 percent of America’s adults are likely to marry sometime.

**Here’s a Thought: Ask the single young adults you serve if they would like to one day marry. If the answer is yes, continue by asking why they are choosing to wait to marry. See if any of the following answers come up.**

- ***A marriage squeeze***—Since men have historically married women who are a couple of years younger than themselves, the demographics of the baby boom and baby bust resulted in more women than men of marriageable age. The popular description of this phenomena from women is usually, “All the good ones are taken.” Over time, this phenomenon will play out, and we may see a slow lowering of the average age of first-time marriages.



- **Longer education pursuits**—The popularity of community- and distance educational programs, along with the general cost of a college, graduate school, or professional school education has resulted in a lengthening of the time young adults are in school, part-time or full-time. School years are generally thought of as a time to play the field or concentrate on studies. Therefore, this increase in time spent in school has a correlating increase on the average age of first-time marriages.
- **Female career choices**—Since 1970, a exponentially growing number of career paths have opened for women. In order to complete formal training for those careers or to concentrate energies on establishing themselves in the early stages of careers, more women are postponing marriage. This single factor explains the massive difference in the impact of 20 years on the average age of women and men marrying for the first time.
- **Career first**—Both men and women place career decisions ahead of marriage. This generation of young adults has been bombarded by the availability of entry-level jobs with little hope for future advancement because of the enormous number of baby boomers ahead of them. However, as these late members of the buster generation step up to the career plate, they are finding increasing opportunities. Boomers are aging and opting for early retirement or being down-sized out of companies. They are likely to pursue other avocational interests, but their departure does represent a swing in career path opportunities for young adults entering the work force. Many will postpone their first marriage in order to make the best of such opportunities.



# Young Adults and Life Issues

- **Historically based fear of future commitment**—This issue is what some call the residual affect of high divorce rates from the 1960s to the end of the century. An entire generation has been raised not to trust the institution of marriage. Many of the young adults you serve are the children of broken homes. Fortunately, early research indicates that those who do marry are trying harder to make it last, largely because of their first-hand knowledge of the impact of divorce. However, this fear factor has resulted in delayed marriages.

**What did your research reveal? Were the basic reasons the same? Which additional reasons were discovered in your interviews? How do these realities impact the way you minister to and with young adults? What are the potential impacts on the way they use their time, including how they make their time available to you?**

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Adapted by Dr. Randy Millwood, from *Contemporary Adulthood* 5th ed., written by Jeffrey S. Turner and Donald B. Helms (San Diego:Harcourt Trade Publishers,1994). Dr. Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.

## Why Don't You Grow Up?

Young, emerging adults (18 to 24 years of age) hear the question repeatedly. They hear it from their parents and extended family. They hear it from college professors. They hear it from early employers. They hear it from Sunday School leaders, collegiate ministers, disciple group leaders, and they hear it from the church. But *what exactly does it mean to “grow up”*? A holistic take on the subject would define *maturity* as “physical and psychological well-being: value system in check, self-concept understood, emotional stability, satisfying social relationships, intellectual insight into life, and so on.”

With such a holistic definition, several questions beg to be asked:

- Is it really possible to be mature?
- Is it possible to be mature in some areas of life while remaining immature in others? If so, is that really maturity?
- How do you measure maturity?
- How do you know you have attained maturity?
- Is maturity an important issue for young adult believers?
- Does the church carry any responsibility for assisting young adults along the path toward maturity?

Paul frequently pleaded with his first-century readers to busy themselves in *attaining the full measure of maturity (or being mature) in Christ* (Eph. 4:13). Apparently he believed the church should help believers continue to grow up in Christ until they reach the full measure of His maturity. If that was so in the first century, it is so in the 21st century. Those who lead in the church must assume that at least one of their responsibilities is to assist young adults with the roller-coaster ride from adolescence to adult maturity.

Sociologists refer to *personality foreclosure* as that period of time when young people identify with the goals and values of their parents without seriously questioning whether they are right for them. However, the maturation process drives young adults to question those values. The result of this questioning is everything from rebellion to adoption of those values for themselves.

Regardless of how one defines or measures maturity, one of the greatest



# Young Adults and Life Issues

*Understanding Young Adults, 18–24 Years: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today*

individual challenges of young, emerging adults is that of maturing. Because the issue of maturity is a major issue for young adults, it must be a primary concern for those who work with young adults in church.

**Here's a Thought: Consider the maturity level of young adults in your group. How can you assist young adults in their journey toward maturity?**

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Written by Dr. Randy Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.

## Philosophical Changes

“Philosophy” is the foundational set of values through which we view and interpret the world. Everyone, including young, emerging adults, has philosophical moorings. Some of these views are more developed than others. Some are more conscious than others. Nonetheless, they do exist.

The world in which young adults live and move about is also motivated, at different times, by different basic philosophical views. In the case of today’s young adults, there are several predominant views that shape their world and the lenses through which they develop their own personal philosophies.

**Here’s a Thought: Ask some of the young, emerging adults that you serve or that you are attempting to reach to assist you with a personal learning project. Ask them to write a one-page statement of the kinds of philosophies that help them make day-to-day decisions. When you receive these, compare them to the issues below.**

### *Relativism*

Relativism is the basic idea that everything is relative. What is right or wrong at a given moment in time is determined by multiple factors and simply cannot be known until that very moment. For the relativist, absolute truth does not and cannot exist. For example, question: Is murder absolutely wrong?

Relativism answer: No: There are circumstances in which murder would be warranted. Relativism stands in opposition to the scriptural view that absolute truth does exist and is most perfectly demonstrated in Jesus Christ. Where has relativism come from? Excessive individualism, the abandonment of family ties, and a general sense of hopelessness have paved the way for such thinking. Of course, relativism is not limited to emerging adults. As you read the example question above, your first thought may have been no as well. Remember, these philosophical concepts impact us all.

## Young Adults and Life Issues

### *Postmodernism*

Postmodernism is a general way of thinking that contrasts with premodernism and modernism. Premodern thinking preceded the Industrial Revolution and basically held that all cultural presuppositions were uniform—no need to question things. Modernism represented the emergence of a belief that reason and logic could bring straight-thinking people to discover truth, though they may not agree on the answers. Postmodern thinking is related to relativism and the dismissing of absolute truth. Individual choice determines what is true. For example, the postmodernist might say, “Christianity may be true for you, but not for me.” Truth is not presupposed (premodernism), nor debated and reasoned (modernism); it is constructed by each individual to offer circumstantial explanations for life.

### *Subjectivism*

Subjectivism is a philosophical view that addresses values and virtue. Subjectivism basically teaches that whatever your passions demand is virtuous for that person. Subjectivism is the moral counterpart to postmodernism. The idea is that it simply is not natural, normal, or healthy for someone to act in opposition to their passions. If it *feels* good, it stands to reason that it must *be* good.

Here’s the formula that philosophically impacts the way emerging adults make day-to-day decisions in life: Something feels good, so I make an individual choice to consider it true, which is proper because everything is relative; there are no absolute truths.

**Here’s a Thought: With this cursory understanding of these three predominate philosophical moorings, make a list of the issues of normal young adult life that could be distanced from scriptural standards.**

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Adapted by Dr. Randy Millwood from Handbook of Young Adult Religious Education edited by Harley Atkinson (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1995), 300. Dr. Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.



## Change: The Only Constant

It has rightly been said that, in the 21st century, the only constant that exists is change. Indeed change itself seems to be changing . . . soaring toward us at faster rates, cycling instead of staging. The young adults that you attempt to care for, minister to, and reach out to are products of change. They know only change. They have no real recollection of stability in any area of life. Consider the major impact of the following mainstreamed technological changes of the last half-century.

**The electric light**, a revolutionary creature. This small thing has changed the world of young adults from one of 12-hour days to 24-hour days. Time is no longer structured by “going to bed with the chickens” and “rising with the sun.” Most of them have been employed at one time or another in a business that kept them at work until 10 p.m. or later. “Shift” work is not an inconvenience for them, reserved for those who were not preferred by the boss; it is normal. Time is structured by the individual rather than being the victim of time. Urban living is not the sole possession of the resident of the city. The 24-hour lifestyle of young adults is a reality everywhere.

**Transportation**, not a luxury or a necessity, but an expectation. Because of the advent of transportation for everyone, young adults live farther away from family and support systems than any time in the history of the world. Personal transportation has led to an individualism and independence previously unknown. Long before reaching adulthood, individuals have discovered the freedom to go where they want and leave when they want. This freedom, which has always existed, can reach from town to town, across county lines, or, thanks to transportation, to different states and countries. In addition to individual transportation, air travel—at one time the sole possession of the elite—has always been the right of young adults. There simply are no spacial limits.

**Television**, the eye to the world. The Builders Generation can recall their first TV. Boomers remember color and cable. Busters, however, know only a world with multiple TVs in each home, all color, and hundreds of channels from which to choose.

## Young Adults and Life Issues

**Here's a Thought: Ask the young adults you know to keep a log of the exact time that their TV is on for seven days. *Exact* means anytime the TV is on and you are in the room with it.**

The monological communication of the TV has raised up a generation of folks who have had less time to learn to talk to one another and provided a never-ending parade of poor role models or unrealistic expectations.

**VCR and DVD**, the “you can have it now or later” inventions. Boomers grew up planning schedules around programs. Busters have never had to do that. They just insert a blank tape and set the timer to record. This means greater freedom without sacrificing entertainment or multiple use of time. If that is not enough, you can run to the video store and rent a handful of movies, so you can vegetate and isolate yourself even more.

**Computers**, a window on the world you can control. The availability of information delivered directly to homes of young adults is staggering. The computer and the Internet have become more ways in an already crowded life to steal time from building a marriage, to provide additional competition for real relationships, to pretend to be what you are not in virtual relationships.

Five simple, everyday technologies. Some newer than others but all standard fare for the young adults of the 21st century.

**Here's a Thought: Jot down these five gifts of technology on a blank piece of paper. Beside each, list two implications for the way you lead, love, and reach young adults. Now identify the implications for VCR/DVD, the Internet, chat rooms, satellite television, and portable CD players.**

This is the 21st century. We cannot go back to earlier times. But, by God's grace, we can go forward through these.

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*Written by Dr. Randy Millwood, associate professor, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at the time he wrote these articles. He is now a consultant specialist for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and director of the Church Health Center, Maryland/Delaware.*

# Group Study Guide

**Purpose:** To provide teachers and leaders of young adults with the opportunity to reflect on what they read in this resource, talk with one another, and apply the information to the young adults in their groups.

**Objective:** Through reflection and conversation, teachers and leaders will develop an understanding of the young adults in their groups. With this understanding they will be able to transform their methods to match the needs and characteristics of their adult learners.

**Participants:** This plan is for teachers, leaders, and ministers who relate to young adults, 18-24 years.

**Sessions:** This plan can be used in a variety of settings. The suggestions are designed for one-hour sessions, but you are encouraged to adapt it to meet the needs of your group. Also feel free to use the sessions in any order. A conclusion exercise to the entire study is located at the end of the session titled “Young Adults and Life Issues.” Use this exercise at the end of your last session.

**Approach:** This plan is designed for a group of teachers and leaders to participate in a discussion based on what they have read in this resource. The convener serves as facilitator of the discussion. All group members participate by sharing their reflections or thoughts concerning what they have read. The exercises enable the group to identify implications for applying the information to their young adult learners.

**Room Arrangement:** Having tables and chairs arranged in a square is preferable so that participants can see one another. If tables are not available, arrange chairs in a circle.

### Introductory Session

#### *Preparation*

- Gather paper and pencils or copies of class or group rolls for the participants.
- Order copies of the book *Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Understanding Young Adults 18-24 Years* (allow three weeks for delivery) or download the contents page and make copies.
- Provide name tags if the participants do not know one another.

#### *Reflect and Practice*

1. As participants arrive, ask them to write down the names of the young adults in their class or group or distribute the class or group rolls. Guide them to keep this list with them during the group discussions so that they can consider how the information is true of the individuals in their groups.
2. Ask participants to share what they would like to learn about the young adults in their groups. Refer them to the contents page. As a group, determine the order of sessions the group will discuss.
3. Encourage members of your group to read before each session the section to be discussed during the session. The group experience will be enhanced by individuals reading the section to prepare themselves for the discussion. Have a time of prayer to give each person an opportunity to make a commitment to understand the young adults in his or her group.
4. Depending on which section your group decided to discuss first, ask them to share what they know about the subject and what they want to learn during the next session. For example, if your group decided to reflect on the section “Young Adults and Learning,” ask them to share a learning experience in their own lives that changed their behavior. Ask, “What do you want to learn about learning as we read this week and reflect next time?”
5. Close the session with a season of prayer concerning personal needs and concerns of participants. Remind your participants to read the section for the next session.

### Today's Young Adults Session

#### *Preparation*

- Look through the comic strips in your newspaper and magazines to find funny illustrations that answer the question, what does it mean to be a young adult? Cut them out and prepare them for sharing with your participants.
- Borrow a copy of demographic studies that have been done for your church community. Prepare a summary of information from the report that has implications for young adults. If your church does not have such a study, assist your pastor or staff person in getting a study from your Baptist state convention office. (Ask for the Scan US office.)

#### *Reflect and Practice*

1. As group participants arrive, share the comic strips with them.
2. Open the discussion with prayer.
3. Distribute copies of the summary of the demographic study of your church community. Ask, "What implications do you see for our young adult classes and groups?" Continue the discussion about what your study group could do to help your church respond to the church community. For example, did you find a nearby ethnic group that needs a church family? Did you find that your community has a significant number of single young adults?
4. Pair group members to select one of the primary needs of young adults (pp. 16-21). Ask each pair to present creatively one way teachers and leaders can meet that need. After 10 minutes, begin the presentations. After each presentation, spend a few minutes reflecting on how the young adults in their groups express these needs.
5. Conclude this session by making a list of implications for teachers and leaders to consider for their classes or groups as a result of this session.
6. Close in prayer. Remind participants to read the section for the next session.

### Young Adults and Learning Session

#### *Preparation*

- Ask teachers to bring their leader guides to this session.

#### *Reflect and Practice*

1. Open the session with prayer.
2. Ask, “How do you see your group of young adults experiencing learning in light of the five elements on pages 22–23?”
3. Ask participants to pair off. With their partners ask them to identify how to use the eight learning approaches in the next lesson or session with their learners. You are asking them to reflect on what they read in the article “Ways Adults Learn,” then practice the learning approaches during the next session with their adult learners. If you have general church leaders in your group, discuss ways to use the learning approaches in their leadership meetings.
4. As a group, identify tips for applying the basic principles of adult learning on pages 25–30. Some tips may come from their experiences with this study.
5. Ask your participants to review their list of group members. Say, “Analyze your experiences with each person. Do any of his or her behaviors indicate a learning disability?” As a group, discuss the strategy and organizational instruction approach on pages 34–36. Ask, “How does this approach complement the learning approaches?”
6. Conclude the session by discussing the implications of how young adults learn to the ways teachers teach and lead young adults. Ask, “How can you create an environment where young adults expect to learn something when they come to church?”
7. Close the session with prayer asking God to guide the teachers and leaders to focus on learning more than teaching.



### Young Adults and Spiritual Growth Session

#### *Preparation*

- Gather sheets of paper (8½ by 14) and pencils.

#### *Reflect and Practice*

1. Open the session with prayer.
2. Distribute the paper and pencils. Ask participants to write their spiritual development timelines on the sheets of paper. Ask them to mark the timeline with their faith development milestones.
3. Spend this session letting each participant share his or her timeline. As the other participants listen, compile a list of common elements in the way your participants have grown spiritually. Ask, “How do our experiences compare to those described on pages 38–42?”
4. As a group, consider ways to evaluate the spiritual growth of the young adults in their classes and groups. Ask, “Is the amount of church participation a sign of spiritual growth?”
5. Ask participants to reflect on the influence of religious cults and the young adults in their classes and groups (pp. 43–44). Identify the life transitions being experienced by young adults in their groups. Ask, “How can you help them through these transitions so that they will not be tempted by cults?”
6. Close the session by praying for specific young adults experiencing transitions.

### Young Adults and Life Issues Session

#### *Preparation*

- Gather five shoe boxes, several recent newspapers and magazines, glue sticks, markers, and scissors.
- Place one shoe box and materials in each corner and the center of the room.
- Assign each area one of the life issues: Marriage, Single Young Adults, Maturity, Philosophies, and Change.

#### *Reflect and Practice*

1. Open the session with prayer.
2. Ask your participants to be creative during this session. Say, “Select an issue in one of the corners or the center of our room. Go to that area and start working on a collage dealing with that issue. Cut out pictures and key words that illustrate the implications of the issue and effective ways to deal with that issue. Glue them to the box. Prepare two questions to lead the group in a time of reflection on your issue.
3. Let the participants work in their groups. At the appropriate time ask them to come back together and begin the presentations and reflections.
4. Conclude the session by identifying ways teachers and leaders can minister to people in their groups regarding these issues. Ask, “What can our study group do to influence our church leaders to respond to these issues in our church and community?”
5. **If this is your last session**, spend a few moments reflecting on the experiences participants have had with this study. Ask, “What difference has this experience had on the way you teach and minister? What actions can we take to encourage our church family to be more intentional in ministering to young adults?”
6. Close with a concert of prayer where teachers and leaders verbalize the names of young adults in their groups at the same time. Open the prayer time for specific requests and concerns about understanding young adults in your church and community.

# CHRISTIAN GROWTH STUDY PLAN

In the **Christian Growth Study Plan (formerly Church Study Course)**, this book *Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Understanding Young Adults 18-24 Years* is a resource for course credit in six Leadership and Skill Development diploma plans. To receive credit, read the book, complete the learning activities, show your work to your pastor, a staff member or church leader, then complete the following information. This page may be duplicated. Send the completed page to:

**Christian Growth Study Plan**  
**127 Ninth Avenue, North, MSN 117**  
**Nashville, TN 37234-0117**  
**FAX: (615)251-5067**

For information about the Christian Growth Study Plan, refer to the current Christian Growth Study Plan Catalog. Your church office may have a copy. If not, request a free copy from the Christian Growth Study Plan office (615/251-2525).

## COURSE CREDIT INFORMATION

Please check the appropriate box indicating the diploma you want to apply this credit. You may check more than one.

- Leadership Skill Development (LS-0002)
- Adult Leadership Sunday School (LS-0035)
- Adult Leadership Discipleship Training (LS-0035)
- Adult Leadership Adults on Mission (LS-0035)
- Adult Leadership Women on Mission (LS-0035)
- Adult Leadership Single Adult Ministry (LS-0035)

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Rev. 6-99

Social Security Number (USA Only)		Personal CGSP Number*		Date of Birth (Mo., Day, Yr.)	
-	-	-     -			
Name (First, MI, Last)			Home Phone		
			-		
Address (Street, Route, or P.O. Box)			City, State, or Province		Zip/Postal Code

### CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Name		
Address (Street, Route, or P.O. Box)		City, State, or Province
		Zip/Postal Code

### CHANGE REQUEST ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Former Name		
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Address		City, State, or Province
		Zip/Postal Code
<input type="checkbox"/> Former Church		City, State, or Province
		Zip/Postal Code
Signature of Pastor, Conference Leader, or Other Church Leader		Date

\*New participants are requested but not required to give SS# and date of birth. Existing participants, please give CGSP# when using SS# for the first time. Thereafter, only one ID# is required. Mail To: Christian Growth Study Plan, 127 Ninth Ave., North, MSN 117, Nashville, TN 37234-0117. Fax: (615)251-5067