

stickyfaith

youth worker edition

Practical ideas to
nurture long-term faith
in teenagers

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A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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the not-so-sticky faith reality

sticky discussion questions

1. When people decide to read a book, they are often trying to solve a problem. What problem(s) are you hoping to address by reading this book?
2. How would *you* define “Sticky Faith”?
3. As you think about your youth ministry leadership up to now, what have you done that has helped your kids develop a long-term faith? What do you wish you had done differently?
4. What are the ramifications for your youth ministry if you follow the advice that it’s “never too early” to start thinking about Sticky Faith?
5. Do you agree that the top suggestion for youth leaders should be to trust the Lord with kids and beg the Lord to build Sticky Faith? Perhaps you’d like to put this book down and pray for a few moments before you turn the page . . .

2

the sticky gospel

sticky discussion questions

1. How would you have defined the gospel before reading this chapter? How about now?
2. Dallas Willard describes the “gospel of sin management” as only dealing with sin and its effects, instead of the ultimate freedom and grace we experience in Christ. In what way(s) is your faith an experience of the “gospel of sin management”?
3. How do you see your students’ faith in light of this chapter? Where do you see them growing in what it means to trust Christ, and where do you see them living out of the “do’s and don’ts” of Christianity?
4. When you teach, how do you frame your invitations to students to obey God’s commands? Ask yourself: If I were a teenager hearing this talk, would I think I was supposed to obey God because God said so? Or would I know that my obedience flowed out of my trust and the Holy Spirit’s work in and through me?

5. How can you better take advantage of teachable moments this week to help students see the Sticky Gospel?
6. In light of what you've just read, how would you like to respond when one of your students shares with you about a sin he or she has committed?



3

sticky identity

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Trust vs. Mistrust	Infancy (1 yr)	Do I trust my caretaker?
Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	Toddlerhood (1-3 yrs)	Do I feel secure enough to exert some independence?
Initiative vs. Guilt	Early Childhood (3-5 yrs)	Am I able to begin to take responsibility for myself?
Industry vs. Inferiority	Middle and Late Childhood (6-11 yrs)	Am I mastering knowledge and skills?
Identity vs. Identity Confusion	Adolescence (11-25 yrs)	Am I exploring options and working toward commitment to who I want to be?
Intimacy vs. Isolation	Early Adulthood (25-40 yrs)	Am I closely connected to others? Or another?
Generativity vs. Stagnation	Middle Adulthood (40-60 yrs)	Am I helping prepare the next generation?
Integrity vs. Despair	Late Adulthood (60s +)	Life review: Have I accomplished anything during my life?

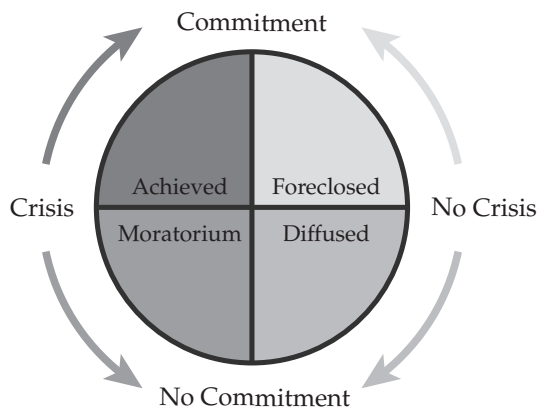



Figure 3.1 Adapted from James Marcia's Typology



sticky discussion questions



1. How does your youth ministry currently help students process the questions “Who am I?” and “Who am I as a part of us?”
 2. In what ways have you seen graduates from your youth ministry put their faith in an identity lockbox—or not?
 3. Do you agree with the idea that the first year of college is a lot like redoing middle school? Why or why not? How are the two life stages similar? How are they different?
 4. What “sparks” are you seeing in your students? To whom could you connect them in order to develop those sparks further?
 5. Take a look at your volunteer youth leaders. Do they look, think, and live just like you do? How could you recruit people who are *different* from you to reach and embrace students who are also different from you?
 6. What would 4 + 1 look like in your setting? How could you make that fifth year more feasible and appealing for your youth leaders?
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4

sticky churches

Some Theological Principles Behind Intergenerational Youth Ministry

by David Frazee

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one . . ."
—Deuteronomy 6:4

Most of us have probably read, sang, contemplated, and perhaps even memorized this passage of Scripture. A deeper examination of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 reveals several important principles of intergenerational philosophy for youth ministry.


- *Parents and the surrounding community of adults are expected to exemplify what it means to be fully devoted followers of God.* The expectation of total devotion is indicated in several portions of the Deuteronomy 6 passage. To declare "The LORD our God, the LORD is one . . ." is no small matter. Research shows, whether for good or bad, children follow the spiritual lead set by their parents and surrounding adult community.
- *Adults, starting with parents, are commanded to be active participants in their children's spiritual formation.* The phrase "Impress them on your children" indicates parents' responsibility and agreement to teach their children about the Lord. The action verbs that follow the command to "impress" indicate constant process and interaction.

Jesus' experience and teachings mirror and often intensify the principles of intergenerational ministry already highlighted from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

- The obedience of the cross is evidence enough that *Jesus lived life as a fully devoted follower of God*. Jesus requires the same full, cross-bearing devotion from those who make the commitment to follow him (Luke 14:26-27).
- *Jesus spoke of adults as active participants in a child's spiritual formation*. Jesus strongly opposed the disciples who were attempting to keep children away from him (Mark 10:13-14).
- *Jesus welcomed children into his crowded schedule* and urged others to do the same in his name (Matthew 18:5).



sticky discussion questions

1. In what ways does your church have separate “kids’ tables” and “adults’ tables”? In what ways are those tables more convenient and “easier,” for both kids and adults? What do you think Jesus would say about the way you tend to separate kids and adults?
 2. What are the advantages of trying to surround each kid with five caring adults? What are the costs?
 3. In this chapter we asked the question: “What do I do if I don’t want the kids in my youth group to have the faith of the adults in my church?” What elements of the faith of the adults in your church would you want your students to emulate? What elements would you want them to avoid?
 4. Given your role in your congregation, what can you do to help change your church’s culture? While you may have a limited sphere of influence at your church, what changes can you suggest in your own sphere?
 5. What current rituals, events, or worship services does your ministry or church offer that could be infused with a 5:1 flavor?
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5

sticky justice

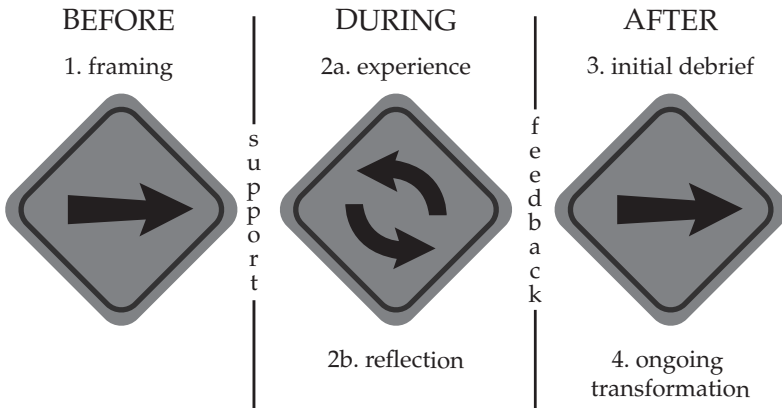



Figure 5.1 The Before/During/After Model



sticky discussion questions

1. How would you define the difference between *service* and *justice*?
 2. What examples have you seen of service experiences not producing the spiritual “bang for the buck” you hoped for and expected? Why do you think they’ve fallen short?
 3. Think about your next service experience. What could you do before the event to help prepare kids for what they will face? What could you do afterward? If you had to drop other ministry events to make space in your calendar, what would you drop?
 4. Think about a few kids in your ministry. How can you help unleash their creativity to see God’s kingdom justice come on earth as it is in heaven? As their youth leader, what will you need to do differently?
- 

6

sticky family relationships

sticky discussion questions

1. Do you agree with the idea that, in general, “When it comes to kids’ faith, parents get what they are”? As you think about a few specific kids in your ministry, do you end up agreeing with the quote more or less?
2. What prevents the parents you know from talking about faith and life with their kids?
3. Which story (or stories) in this chapter would be the most motivating or encouraging to the parents in your ministry?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being “strongly agree”), how strongly do you agree with the advice that parents should never explain something to their kids if they can ask a question instead? Is this principle also true in your own relationships with youth group kids?
5. What ideas do you have for training that could help parents be catalysts in developing their kids’ Sticky Faith?

sticky youth groups

sticky discussion questions

1. How do you make space for struggles, questions, and doubts to be voiced and heard in your ministry? What could you do to foster a more open environment for sharing?
2. Chances are good that the older students in your ministry are longing for more time for deep conversation, as were the students in our study. What are you doing to create that room within your programs and relationships?
3. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. Label the first column “Sticky Environment” and the second “Not-so-Sticky Environment.” Then do a quick analysis of your ministry’s programs and relationships, jotting down practices in the appropriate column based on your assessment after reading this chapter. Then flip the paper over and brainstorm ideas for either eliminating or re-imagining the Not-so-Sticky practices in ways that contribute to a stickier youth group environment. Share your lists with your team, or do the exercise together and see what emerges.

4. Contact some former “student leaders” who’ve graduated from your ministry and get together or talk by phone, asking them to evaluate the way your ministry approaches leadership and develops leaders. Looking back, what was helpful? What was not-so-helpful or even harmful? What’s most meaningful to them now from those experiences? How do they see things differently now that they are beyond high school? Take this feedback to your ministry team and consider how your approach to student leadership might be modified.



8

sticky seniors

sticky discussion questions

1. How would you describe your current plan for preparing seniors for life after youth group?
2. After reading this chapter, what ideas do you think are already represented in your plan, and what new ideas could you use to bolster or revise your plan?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how equipped is your ministry to help prepare seniors for the transition? If your score is pretty low, what resources might increase your ministry team's ability to support students through the transition to college?
4. What people in your church could help you strategize and develop support for students after they graduate from high school? Who will you contact this week to get the conversation going?
5. Can you personally write down the names of three to five seniors whom you can invest in for the next two to three years across the transition? Who are they?

9

the path to sticky change

sticky discussion questions

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being “very much”), how much do you like the definition of *vision* as a “shared story of future hope”? If you scored an 8 or higher, what do you like about it? If you scored a 7 or less, what should be different about a definition of *vision*?
2. What stories of real-life people in your ministry or church already embody the Sticky Faith vision?
3. If you could imagine stories that capture how you hope God builds kids’ faith, what would they be?
4. What other adults (and maybe even kids) can you invite to be part of your Sticky Faith team? When can you connect with them? If you were to start meeting with that team regularly, what would you do to maintain disciplined attention?
5. What are your five best ideas for how to communicate about your desired changes?

Appendix

the college transition project: research overview

The Fuller Youth Institute's College Transition Project is comprised of four separate research initiatives: an initial quantitative pilot study involving 69 youth group graduates; two three-year longitudinal (primarily quantitative) studies of high school seniors during their first three years in college, involving 162 and 227 students respectively; and qualitative interviews with 45 former youth group graduates between two and four years beyond high school graduation.

In 2004, the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI), at that time known as the Center for Youth and Family Ministry, initiated a pilot research study called the College Transition Project (CTP), surveying a group of 69 college students who were alumni of a single youth group in the Northwest. The preliminary results suggested a link between a college student's current spiritual state and the quality of key relationships during the high school years, including the youth group environment itself.

As a result, in 2005–2006 FYI launched a broader study, recruiting students involved in church youth groups during the spring of their high school senior year. To participate in the survey, students were required to be 18 years of age or older, part of a church youth group, and intending to attend a college or university upon graduation. Students were recruited through FYI's nationwide network of youth leader contacts, resulting in a sample of 162 students who

were surveyed four times over three years. Thirty of these students participated in subsequent one-hour interviews during their fourth year out of high school.

In 2006–07, with the support of funding from the Lilly Endowment, FYI launched another nationwide longitudinal study of high school seniors connected to church youth groups to examine their experiences at five points: the spring of their senior year in high school (2007), the fall and spring of their first year in college (2007–2008), the spring of their second year in college (2009), and the spring of their third year in college (2010). The primary goal of the study was to determine if there are programmatic and relational characteristics of high school youth ministries and churches that have a demonstrable relationship to how students make the faith adjustment to life beyond high school.

With support from another private foundation, Dr. Cheryl Crawford conducted two-hour qualitative interviews with 15 college students who had been part of a leadership development program at a Christian camp during high school. These interviews were conducted during spring semester of the freshman year of college. She subsequently interviewed the same students the following spring.

Participants

The sample for this longitudinal study launched in 2007 consisted of 227 high school seniors drawn from different regions across the United States. More than half (56.3 percent) of the respondents were female while 43.7 percent were male. The sample was predominantly White/Caucasian (78.0 percent). Asian/Asian American students comprised 11.0 percent of the sample, while Hispanic/Latino students accounted for 5.0 percent. African-American and Native American students each accounted for 1.4 percent of the sample. Participants reported a median grade point average of 3.5 to 3.99, with 63 percent of the sample having GPAs above 3.5. Given that 88 percent of seniors who apply to college have a GPA over 3.0, our sample represents a high-achieving group. The majority of the participants came from larger churches. The median youth group size

was 51-100 students, while the median church size was reported to be over 800 members.

Participants were mostly from intact families, with 83.8 percent reporting that they lived with both their father and mother; another 4.1 percent lived with a parent and stepparent. Overall, the parents of the participants were well educated; more than two-thirds (69.7 percent) of the mothers and nearly three-quarters of the fathers (73.0 percent) held at least a college degree. By far the majority of the fathers (88.2 percent) of the participants were employed full time, while fewer than half of the mothers were (42.5 percent).

Procedure

From October 2006 to February 2007, members of the research team who had developed networks in four geographical regions of the United States (the Southwest, the Northwest, the Southeast, and the Northeast) identified churches representing size, denominational, socioeconomic, and ethnic diversity. For this study, only churches employing full-time youth pastors were recruited. From March to June 2007, the youth ministry staff of each participating church was asked to invite senior students involved in their youth ministries to participate in the study. As with the pilot, students were eligible only if they were 18 years old or over and intended to attend a college upon graduation.

Students who agreed to participate in the study could do so in one of three ways: They could complete a paper-and-pencil version of the survey together (facilitated either by their youth pastor or a member of the FYI research team); they could complete a paper version of the survey individually at a time and place convenient to them; or they could complete an online version of the survey. In addition to the survey, each student was required to complete a consent form assuring confidentiality. Signed consent forms also contained an identification code that was unique to each individual, as well as contact information (i.e., an email address and a physical address) in order to track each student for future waves of data collection. All future data collection was done via online surveys.

Instruments

Faith Measures

Five measures of faith development were employed in order to create a composite picture of both internalized and externalized faith commitments and behaviors. For four of the measures, participants are asked to rate their agreement with each item on a five-point scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The Intrinsic Religious Motivation scale is comprised of 10 items measuring the extent to which an individual's religiosity is not simply external and behavioral, but internalized in terms of one's values and motivations. Sample items include, "My faith involves all of my life," and "I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life." A similar measure, the Narrative Faith Relevance Scale, assesses the extent to which one's decisions are influenced by the sense of having a relationship to God. Sample items include, "If and when I date someone, it is (or would be) important to me that God be pleased with the relationship," and "In choosing what college to attend, it is important to me to seek God's will." The third measure is the 17-item short form of the Search Institute's Faith Maturity Scale, including items like "My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day," and "My life is committed to Jesus Christ." And the fourth is the Religious Support Scale, assessing the extent to which participants feel supported and nurtured by God. Using social support items, the scale incorporates indicators such as "I am valued by God."

The fifth measure is a measure of religious behavior created for the CTP pilot. Ten items assess the frequency of engagement in a variety of corporate and individual behaviors, including such items as "pray alone," "read your Bible by yourself," and "attend a worship service or church-related event." Responses are given on a six-point scale, ranging from *less than once a month* (1) to *once a day or more* (6).

Youth Group Experience Measures

Three sets of items were created from qualitative data from earlier stages of the project in order to assess students' participation in and

attitudes toward their youth group experience. First, students were asked about the frequency of participation in eight items over the past two months or the past year, including activities like retreats, mission trips, and midweek youth group. Second, participants were presented with 22 statements representing why students go to youth group, including, "It's where my friends are," and "I learn about God there." Students were asked to rate how true each statement was for them using a five-point scale ranging from *not true at all* (1) to *completely true* (5). Third, students were asked what they would want to see more or less of in their youth group. Thirteen items were presented, such as "one-on-one time with leaders" and "mission trips." Participants responded on a five-point scale ranging from *much less* (1) to *much more* (5).

Other Measures

In addition to these faith and youth ministry measures, other scales and questions were added related to perceived social support, parental support, support within the youth ministry, loneliness, extraversion, social desirability (as a control factor), and risk behaviors (sexual contact, alcohol use, and pornography use). Subsequent waves of data collection have included most of these same measures (particularly faith measures), in addition to scales and questions related to religious behaviors in college, the college spiritual environment, adjustment to college, doubts about faith, parental and other adult contact in college, parental faith discussions, preparation for decision making, and college participation in church and campus ministry.

The following are some of the spirituality instruments and their corresponding items.

Intrinsic Religious Motivation (Hoge, 1972)

1. My faith involves all of my life.
2. One should seek God's guidance when making every important decision.
3. It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I live a moral life.

4. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine.
5. My faith sometimes restricts my actions.
6. Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
7. Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best I know how.
8. Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.
9. I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
10. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.

Narrative Faith Relevance Scale (Lee, 2004)

1. It is important to me that my future career somehow embody a calling from God.
2. I try to see setbacks and crises as part of God's larger plan.
3. If and when I date someone, it is (or would be) important to me that God be pleased with the relationship.
4. In thinking about my schedule, I try to cultivate the attitude that my time belongs to God.
5. It is important to me that whatever money I have be used to serve God's purposes.
6. In choosing what college to attend, it is important to me to seek God's will.
7. When I think of the things I own or would like to own, I try to remember that everything I have belongs to God.

Faith Maturity Scale (Benson et al, 1993)

1. I experience a deep communion with God.
2. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day.

3. I help others with their religious questions and struggles.
4. My faith helps me know right from wrong.
5. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible.
6. Every day I see evidence that God is active in the world.
7. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually.
8. I take time for periods of prayer or meditation.
9. I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people.
10. My life is filled with meaning and purpose.
11. I try to apply my faith to political and social issues.
12. My life is committed to Jesus Christ.
13. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.
14. I have a real sense that God is guiding me.
15. I like to worship and pray with others.
16. I think Christians must be about the business of creating international understanding and harmony.
17. I am spiritually moved by the beauty of God's creation.

Religious Support Scale (Fiala et al, 2002)

1. God gives me the sense that I belong.
2. I feel appreciated by God.
3. If something went wrong, God would give me help.
4. I am valued by God.
5. I can turn to God for advice when I have problems.
6. God cares about my life and situation.
7. I do NOT feel close to God.

High School Version of Religious Behavior Scale (created for the CTP pilot)

For the following 8 items, please tell us how often you engaged in each of the behaviors listed, during *the past 12 months*: Less than once a month, About once a month, Two to three times a month, About once a week, Two to three times a week, Daily.

How often did you . . .

1. talk with another Christian about your faith, outside of a church-related context?
2. pray alone?
3. attend a worship service or church-related event?
4. speak or try to speak with a non-Christian about your faith?
5. volunteer your time to serve others?
6. participate in a small group of your peers for religious or spiritual purposes?
7. read your Bible by yourself?
8. meet with a spiritual mentor (other than your parents)?

College Version of Religious Behavior Scale

How often did you . . .

1. talk with another Christian about your faith, outside of a church-related context?
2. participate in an on-campus Christian fellowship?
3. pray alone?
4. attend a worship service or other event at a church off-campus?
5. speak or try to speak with a non-Christian about your faith?
6. volunteer your time to serve others?
7. participate in a small group of your peers for religious or spiritual purposes?
8. read your Bible by yourself?
9. attend a school-sponsored chapel?
10. meet with an older Christian for spiritual growth, mentoring, or discipleship?
11. participate in service or justice work that helps people in need?