

Camps, Conferences, Teaching and Training

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The Troubling Statistics:

How many young people are leaving? We want to be realistic without being alarming. The research shows 50 - 65 %

ABC News / Washington Post Religious Affiliation Poll by Langer Research Associates (2018). Based on 174,485 interviews from ABC News and ABC News/Washington Post polls conducted by telephone from 2003 to 2017, the study found:



Young people age 18-29 are increasingly non-religious, at a pace that far exceeds their older counterparts.

From 2003 to 2017, the number of 18-29 year-olds who identify as non-religious has increased 16 % (from 19 % to 35 % of the American population), while the percentage of Americans over the age of 50 who identify as non-religious has only increased 5 % (from 8 % to 13 %).

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (2017). The CIRP Freshmen Survey of first-time students at 184 U.S. colleges and universities collects data on incoming college students' background characteristics. This survey revealed the following key points:



30+ % of incoming freshmen are religiously unaffiliated, a threefold increase since 1986, when just 10 percent identified this way.

*BEFORE THEY ARRIVE ON CAMPUS
can't blame it on college*

Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation - Barna Research Group (2018). Students in this age group offer the following "barriers to faith":



- a. "I have a hard time believing that a good God would allow so much evil/suffering in the world" (29%)
- b. "Christians are hypocritical" (23%)
- c. "I believe science refutes too much of the Bible" (20%)
- d. "I don't believe in fairy tales" (19%)
- e. "There are too many injustices in the history of Christianity" (15%)
- f. "I used to go to church but it's not important to me anymore" (12%)
- g. "I had a bad experience at church with a Christian" (6%)

*TRUTH
4*

RELATIONSHIPS

No one says it's not fun enough or engaging enough! :)

Millennials and Their Retention Since Confirmation: A Survey of LCMS (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) Congregations (2018). Congregations reported that only 1-in-3 of young people who were confirmed between 2004-2006 still worship at an LCMS church today. The study also found that LCMS churches retained young believers at a much higher rate if:

*Give them 2 "whys" for every "what."
Why do I think that is true?
Why does that matter to me?*

> answer these for them



- a. They retain their youth pastor or youth leaders over a long period of time
- b. Their church leadership was generally younger
- c. Their youth group is larger

*passionate & engaged
"young at heart"*

Nothing Less: Engaging Kids in a Lifetime of Faith by Jana Magruder and Ben Trueblood (2018). In addition, they found that parents who had successfully passed on their faith to their children typically were involved in the following activities:



- a. Reading the Bible several times a week.
- b. Taking part in a service project/church missions trip as a family.
- c. Sharing faith with unbelievers.
- d. Encouraging teenagers to serve in the church.
- e. Asking forgiveness when they messed up as parents.
- f. Encouraging their children's interests.
- g. Taking annual family vacations.
- h. Attending churches with teaching that emphasized what the Bible says.
- i. Teaching their children to fit in.

*They like
action
&
truth*

*Age of skepticism has dropped.
Worldview used to get challenged at college for 1st time.
Now immediately in social media.*

*Parents tend to focus on behavioral
truth, rather than doctrinal.*



A Possible Strategy

Whatever Christendom is doing in its effort to teach it's young, the effort appears to lacking. It's time to stop teaching our young people; it's time to start training them.

Every affirming of what we do? equipping i

T - Test (Challenge students to expose their weaknesses)



At some point officers will be tested. At some point students need to be tested too.

Once you know how much you don't know... You'll know exactly what you need to learn ...
To be the kind of Christian you need to be

Sometimes they role-play as atheists & offer objections to see well
how the students do. Usually not pretty.
How well did you do? 1-5 How well did you treat me? 1-5

One Possible Readiness Review:

*usually the church starts to get nasty when don't know
how to respond. They don't have the calm of being
secure in truth.*

- a. Why do you trust what the Bible says about Jesus?
- b. Why would God send people to hell just because they don't believe in Jesus?
- c. If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why is there so much evil in the world?
- d. If God is the creator of everything, who created evil?
- e. Why would a loving God command the total destruction of all of Israel's enemies (including their children and livestock)?

We need to be able to answer these specific questions at minimum.

*If you can't
answer these
questions, then you
haven't passed the
test.*

R - Require (Expect more from students than we sometimes think they can handle)



W/in families we have a much higher standard than church. Prepping for the SAT, etc.

Aim high because you never know who you might hit

A - Arm (Provide students with the truth and teach them how to articulate it)



Isolation vs. Inoculation

I don't want students to encounter objections for the first time away from support. They should encounter these while w/ you.

"My Dad was a Southern Baptist Preacher and while I was growing up I basically lived at the church. I knew all of the bible stories and was even baptized when I was eight... After graduating high school, I went to college to get a degree in mechanical engineering. One might think a degree of this kind would involve little to no discussion of whether or not God exists, or if Jesus was a real person, but I encountered these and many more objections..."

"I think of college almost like an _____ ambush"

If you isolate them at home, they'll be unprotected at university.

If you inoculate them at home, they'll be protected at university.

I - Involve (Deploy students to the battlefield of ideas)



There's no point in training if you never intend on deploying
We are getting ready for a challenge

_____ to wrestle ≠ _____ to wrestle

Deployment Examples:

Take an excursion

Start an online Group

Start a Family " " Study

Share with Somebody Important

Start a group at Your Church

apologetics class

A calendared challenge turns teaching into training

What they do:
Scheduled training.
Want to learn about theology?
We are taking an 8-day ministry trip about that.

N - Nurture (Develop relationships and model the nature of Jesus)



Both _____ AND _____ can leave you wounded

lead to students' wounds & model the nature of Jesus

- Born of a virgin, in a cave, on December 25
- His birth was attended by shepherds
- Considered a great traveling teacher and master
- He had twelve companions and promised immortality
- He performed miracles and sacrificed himself
- He was buried in a tomb and after 3 days rose again
- His followers celebrated this (it became "Easter")
- He was called the "Good Shepherd," the "Messiah"
- His followers celebrated Sunday as his sacred day
- His followers celebrated a Eucharist or "Lord's Supper"

Truth is always more impactful when delivered in the context of _____

Theology
Apologetics
Behavior

7-day Salt Lake City trip
7-day Biola trip

Maybe social justice - get ready to go to Skid Row & serve for a day

Offer students an opportunity to master something & teach it to others.
at end of week present how they want, record, post, vote
→ they really dig into it whenever they can

Idea for:
Staff training/
Leadership
Experience

Actions ingrain beliefs

What can we creatively calendar to prepare

maventruth.org

google "atheist roleplay"

Objections to truth:

- 1) Rational
- 2) Emotional
- 3) Volitional - almost always that the other two often mask this

I can't get to the real problem until I get past the rational objections. Then can expose the real objection (e.g. I want to sleep w/ my girlfriend).

#1 value in America: Moral autonomy

I get that you want to run, but I want you to know you're running from the truth.