



Where Do I Start?

This question is easy. It's always the same. No matter the obstacle or opportunity in front of you or inside you, start with God's precious infallible word, the Bible. **Why?** The psalmist says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105) It teaches me about me (feet) and where I'm headed (path). **But isn't scripture dry, hard to understand, and hard to swallow its directions?** Set your taste buds on what the psalmist says, "Thy words are sweeter than honey to my mouth." (Psalm 119:103b)

I'll bet my problem isn't covered in the Bible 'cuz it was written for people long ago and far away. Sink your teeth into the Bible's description of itself, in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (rules), for reproof (testing), for correction (discipline), for instruction (training) in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (Notice the 'all scripture' and 'all good works'.) (Parentheses added).

Other scriptures tell us that God gave us the Holy Spirit to be our schoolmaster in scripture and spiritual growth. (John 16:13+)

Who'll Run Our Church Tomorrow?

We care about our own homes enough to plan for their future; keeping bills paid, utilities working, upkeep, door locks work, etc. Try an experiment. Walk through each room in your church. Touch each wall. Notice the chairs, tables, and other furniture – even the furnace and water heater. In a quiet spot sit down and think about the tomorrows in your church. Then ask yourself (and God), **"Who'll maintain things? Who'll make wise decisions with unity, in future business meetings?"** The simple answer is >> the youth God has loaned to us.

But Our Church Youth Have been Leaving – What's Wrong With Them?

Hint: Maybe the 'wrong' is not all with 'them'. When our skin feels cold, we look at the thermometer. It changes our understanding from feelings to fact – it tells us 10 degrees too cold etc. When we adjust the furnace control, the thermometer shows us the furnace is doing its job.

The youth of most every church are leaving and not returning, for a simple reason – the attitudes of the church are shunning them – it's cold to their needs and challenges in their present world. A church that truly cares about its future, needs to take its KID TEMPERATURE, throughout the whole building and its programs – on a regular basis too.

Kid Temperature Tips

In taking the kid temperature of your church, you must first see teens most often are visual feeders. Because their reading, writing, and typing skills are not always up to par, they go for the video/audio resources. Besides... video and audio is faster, louder, and flashier. They like to create things putting their own imagination to work. It's like they want their creation to have their stamp on it; that somehow says, "Hey. I'm no dummy!" They love challenges. Boys on games, girls on multitasking conversations and being the fastest 'news' reporters of their on-line network. Today it's a gigantic phenomenon called, "Social Networking." More specifically, boys like loud, messy, high energy, construction, and competition. The girls like feelings,

fashion, communication, and companions.

Just as important, we must fathom the information tsunami our youth entered when they were born. This is tough for us silver-haired seniors to come to grips with. Right now, there is more than 1 hour of video (free) uploaded to YouTube EVERY SECOND. In that same second there are 3,500 photos uploaded to Facebook. When it comes to geography, the Internet can show you roads and scenery on any spot on our planet. Machines follow commands we speak to them, and go places no man has ever gone. This means we need to be wise and caring in the type of 'kid thermometer' we use. We can't begin its use without deep caring prayer and trusting God's promises in scripture.

Kid Temperature – First Impressions

Our church walls should tell visitors, even before words, our hunger for spiritually nurturing our youth. Colorful posters, contest progress, upcoming events to spur the inviting of their friends to church. Even the arrangement of chairs and tables should indicate that classes are not the mechanical lecture and story agenda of each week. Classrooms should include small discovery corners where youth, even teens, can group and discuss God's handiwork in creation and their own lives.

Kid Temperature – M and Ms

What does it tell you when a church youth curriculum or Vacation Bible School theme is built around dinosaurs or stagecoaches? Though painful, the church must realize these two objects, among others are the farthest from the hourly thoughts of youth today. These themes are patterned around the curriculum used half a century ago. The problem is that church youth planners are afraid to separate the MESSAGE of the gospel from the METHODS used to teach.

Kid Temperature – Their Smarts Are Greater

To be very honest, our youth today are smarter than we give them credit for. Church youth planners assume the 'bible stories' taught to beginners will build strong enough character, no further solid principles need to be taught. When the church tries to feed teenagers 'milk' stories, they are turned off, and leave. That's not rocket science. Invite teens to planning meetings – ask them for their ideas. Do we think the Holy Spirit only leads ADULT Christians?

Kid Temperature – Prayer

Imagine you are a young person in your church, listening to prayer requests, week after week, or reading the list printed in the bulletin. You continually hear requests for health issues, sometimes even of a minor nature. But NEVER do you hear of the spiritual needs of youth, their classes, projects or leaders. Include a missions bulletin board that features youth missionaries and evangelists that are teens themselves.

Carrying the Banner in this War

The pulpit has the primary responsibility in maintaining the church's focus on youth programs and enthusiasm. But he must be continually reminded and shown support from the whole church, in unity.

We Introduce You To The ChurchKids Mega Library

This START HERE resource is an introduction to a vast on-line library of freely downloadable resources for reaching each age group of youth having a variety of attitudes. The library, often in short story format, shows how to reach out to youth – where they are, with little or no budget. While most of the tools show silver-haired seniors how and why they are the best suited for mentoring the youth, the computer flavoring is never intimidating and seldom required. The library is still growing, but we've provided a panorama of resource set banners to begin your selection. The library is at ChurchKids.org. (end)