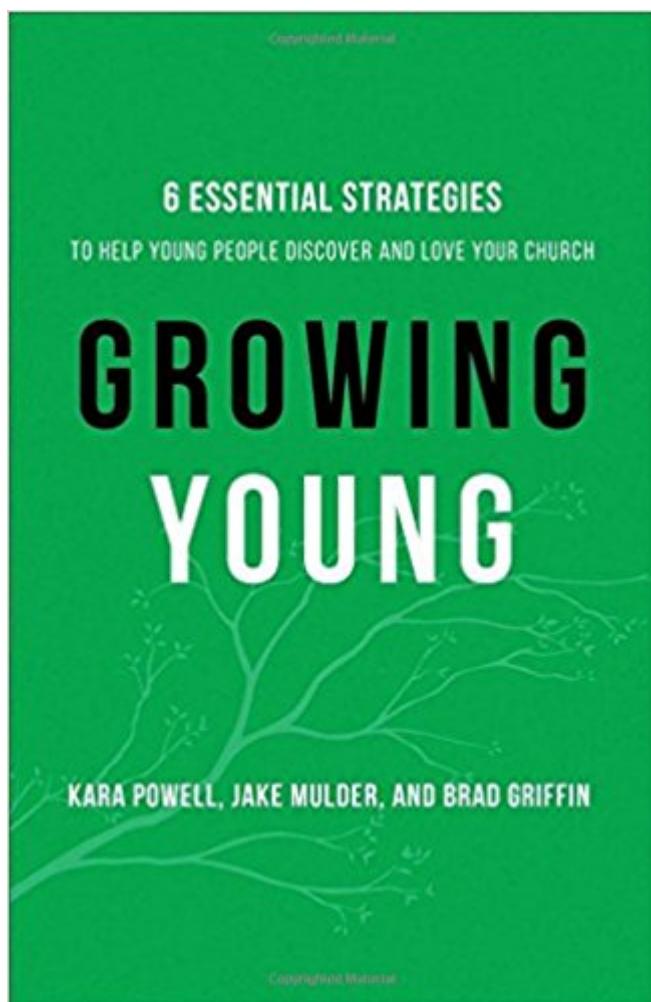


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Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies To Help Young People Discover And Love Your Church



Synopsis

All churches grow old. Strategic churches grow young. Across the United States, churches are losing both members and vitality as increasing numbers of young people disengage. Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults. It profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29-year-olds and as a result are growing--spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically. Packed with both research and practical ideas, *Growing Young* shows pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole church. "Growing Young carries an urgent message. Young people need the body of Christ--and vice versa. This book is theologically informed, research savvy, and pragmatically outstanding. Read it now, before you get any older." - John Ortberg, senior pastor of Menlo Church, author of *All The Places To Go*"There's a fine line between catering to young people and understanding the context of our fast-changing culture so that we can engage young people and invite them into discipleship and mission. *Growing Young* is a gift to the wider church." - Eugene Cho, pastor of Quest Church, author of *Overrated*"Every young person should have access to a church community that will support their spiritual development. *Growing Young* provides research that charts the effectiveness of the church's role in the engagement of youth and their families. Church leaders will learn to create and implement strategic steps to strengthen their youth ministry touch. The secret to *Growing Young* is now out!" - Virginia Ward, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

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Customer Reviews

"Parents, families, and churches often struggle with how to get and keep children and young people interested and invested in Christian faith and church life, especially as culture and technology change at an increasingly faster pace. *Growing Young* provides practical answer to this question based on serious empirical research. I know of no book quite like it and recommend it highly." - Christian Smith, University of Notre Dame, National Study of Youth and Religion, author of *Soul Searching and Lost in Transition*"Through a series of surveys and studies, the authors discovered many positives about how churches function as well as areas where churches can improve outreach programs to appeal to teens, college-age students, and young professionals. Readers will appreciate that each chapter includes accounts of churches successfully executing [the book's] suggestions. In addition to explaining how to make these changes happen, the authors provide a summary of highlights at the end of each chapter along with strategic questions to help the reader's church "grow younger." - Publishers Weekly"At various points throughout the development of this book, I was afforded the privilege of engaging both the project and the researchers. I can attest to the careful attention and rigorous research that the team brought to this topic. During a time period in our American church narrative when it is imperative that more attention be paid to how best to reach young people, Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin have developed an important and significant resource. My strongest recommendation for those committed to reaching the next generation of believers is to purchase, read, engage, and apply this book." - Soong-Chan Rah, North Park Theological Seminary, author of *Prophetic Lament* "Every decade or so a book comes along that reminds us why children's, youth, and young adult ministry really matters. *Growing Young* goes far beyond the average book. It not only champions the best practices of growing churches everywhere, it also digs deep into the core issues that are crucial for making a forever impact in the heart and soul of young people. This book is a must-read for any leader or team who is investing in the future faith of the next generation." - Reggie Joiner, CEO of Orange/rethink, author of *Think Orange*"What's irresistible about *Growing Young* is that it's not primarily about age--it's about hope. Through story after compelling story, the authors demonstrate how prioritizing the young is a church-changing strategy, not a youth ministry-changing strategy, and how pursuing Jesus by growing young fundamentally changes the ways congregations interact with their communities and their leaders, as well as with youth and adults. With refreshing candor, this book blows the sanctuary doors open thanks to its

insistence on following Christ in a way that prioritizes listening, empathy, and care for all young people and families, not just the Christian ones. If you're looking for a book on youth ministry--keep looking. This book is for the church. At last." - Kenda Creasy Dean, Princeton Seminary, author of Almost Christian

Unleashing the passion of young people in your church is possible! Churches are losing both members and vitality as increasing numbers of young people disengage. Based on groundbreaking research with over 250 of the nation's leading congregations, *Growing Young* provides a strategy any church can use to involve and retain teenagers and young adults. It profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29-year-olds and as a result are growing--spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically. Packed with both research and practical ideas, *Growing Young* shows pastors and ministry leaders how to position their churches to engage younger generations in a way that breathes vitality, life, and energy into the whole

church. ChurchesGrowingYoung.org #GrowingYoung@FullerFYI Kara Powell is the executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute and a faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary. Named by Christianity Today as one of "50 Women to Watch," Kara is the author or coauthor of several books, including *Sticky Faith*, and a regular speaker at national leadership and youth ministry conferences across the country. Jake Mulder is the director of strategic initiatives at the Fuller Youth Institute and is pursuing a PhD at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has worked in a variety of ministry and professional roles, including as a youth pastor in the Reformed Church of America, ministry director with Youth for Christ, and missionary with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) in Europe and Asia. Brad Griffin is director of the Fuller Youth Institute. A speaker, blogger, and youth pastor, Brad is the coauthor of several *Sticky Faith* resources as well as *Can I Ask That? 8 Hard Questions about God and Faith*. He speaks nationally at churches, leadership training events, and youth ministry conferences.

So you've probably found your way to this review because you care about young people. Me too! I'm glad we have that in common. I bet we have another thing in common—the struggle of determining just what exactly to do about it. This field is so full of feelings and 'personal experiences' it is difficult to sort out what is worth listening to and what will work in your context. Here is what *Growing Young* brings to the table: research based findings. It's not common, and I REALLY like it. What the actual research shows is actually quite different from many of the conclusions myself and others have reached

about millennials and what they are looking for spiritually. I don't think I realized how many preconceived notions I had about millennials (despite the fact that I am one of them) and most of those notions were discouraging at best. The findings presented in *Growing Young* are exciting! They are completely in-line with scripture! They give me hope! They are going to change my approach to ministry in many ways! Despite being based on research, the book presents the findings in a very readable and relatable way. They also do a great job of providing you with tangible ways to make the leap from simply becoming educated on the issues to doing something about them. I don't care what place you might hold in your church, from upper level leadership to low-person on the totem pole you CAN have an impact in helping your church grow young and in the process become a healthier, better functioning, God-pleasing body of believers. The time and money you spend on this resource will most definitely pay out dividends! In fact, I suspect after reading it you'll buy another copy to share. I did.

"The truth is, every church needs young people. Their passion enriches the soil around them. The curiosity they bring to Scripture and the authenticity they bring to relationships keep your church's teaching fresh and fellowship fruitful. Young people also need a thriving church. A thriving church both grounds them in community and sends them out to serve. Your church needs young people, and they need your church. One without the other is incomplete." (From page 14 of "*Growing Young*") Many youth workers have read FYI's Sticky Faith materials or used them in some capacity in their church and youth ministries. *Growing Young* is the next phase in their work, where the team has worked tireless hours interviewing and researching what characteristics a church should have in order to not just keep young people (ages 15-29) attending church but also having them become a vibrant part of the church DNA. This is where the idea of "*Growing Young*" comes from. The folks at FYI have read dozens (at one point in the book they state 80) of books and spent time with over 350 churches conducting interviews with adults, young people, and church leaders seeking to determine what has worked. If you want to spend 10,000 hours reading books and doing all sorts of research to figure out how to help your church attract, keep and empower young people then go ahead. OR, you could buy this book and learn from the hard work the folks at FYI have done. I love the stories included that give hope to the reader. Throughout the book there are dozens of practical ways churches can grow young. Each chapter has loads of statistics to back up what they're saying, along with several tips for growing young. The chapters also include highlights that allow you to quickly flip through and understand what the chapter is about (which allows you to decide whether you want to read that chapter or not...which you DO), along with "strategic questions" to help your

church makes its way to becoming a young church. Oh, and in case you read this book and you want more: in the back there are footnotes which give a little more detail on certain points as well as bibliographic information regarding resources you can read up on. As a 15+ year youth ministry veteran I cannot recommend this book enough. Growing Young is a challenge to us all to continue ministering to young people. It's a shot of encouragement that any church, big or small, no matter what denomination or what area of the wordlists in, can have youth that love your church.

So many great stories of hope... As a Youth Pastor, a Dad, a follower of Christ, and one who has invested most of my life into the development of young people I was particularly fascinated by this books approach to understanding young people within the church context. We hear all the time about the decline of churches in America, how young people are leaving the church in droves, but rarely does one take the time to understand this shift in culture from a research based approach with a theological underpinning that is accessible and practical in its response. This book nails it on the head with what's going on with young people in the church. There is a great balance between research, theory, theology, and practicality along with some incredibly honest questions. I love that with each practical tool they give the authors thoughtfully put into a general context so one doesn't feel as though this is a prescription for how to do ministry but that this is a suggestion or a guideline that might help one in ministry, life, and engaging young people. The book has appeal to me as a youth leader, but more importantly as a dad and a member of the body of Christ. It dispels the myth that we should attempt to paint pretty and fun pictures of Christianity all the time, but that young people really long for deep meaningful relationships, that are honest and challenging. I like that it helps me to identify ways as a member of the body of Christ to more thoughtfully and intentionally engage our young people with the congregation. My favorite part of the book is not the theory or theology behind their reasoning, but the practicality and the stories that go with the practical application. Its got me thinking how do I implement some of these ideas in my own ministry, family, and church. Thanks!

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