

What are young adults willing to give to the church?

1. Young adults are saying, “I am willing to invest in you, to learn from you, to humble myself before Christ, and to admit when I am wrong and, by the grace of God, grow together until kingdom come!”
2. Young adults want to give their talents, creativity, and open minds, in order to take ownership of the church and speed the return of Christ.
3. Young adults will pioneer again through risk, passion, creativity, their story, their mistakes, and their love.
4. Young adults are willing to give their curiosity and impulsiveness to create a passionate church environment and go where God sends them.
5. Young adults are willing to collaborate with all generations to bring the hope of Christ to reality.
6. Young adults are willing to give all facets of their being to seek truth, to be transparent, and to live with passion and love.

Conclusion

It is our hope that this report will inform our church leaders as we continue to explore the topic of young adult retention and involvement in the church. We, as young adult leaders in our respective schools, will take the information gathered here and find practical ways to carry out the ideas expressed in this document.

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YOUNG
Adult
LIFE

2014 Summit for Young Adult Retention and Involvement

The representatives of Adventist universities and colleges in the North American Division collaborated to discuss the issue of young adult retention and involvement in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The delegates' addressed these four questions:

- a) Why are young adults staying in the church?
- b) Why are young adults leaving the church?
- c) What do young adults need from the church?
- d) What are young adults willing to give the church?

The responses are listed in order of priority, as voted at the Summit.

Young Adult LIFE is one of the six initiatives
of the North American Division

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Why are young adults staying in the church?

1. The church creates a safe environment in which young adults can come as they are and search for God, choose God, share God, pray to God, and live out their love for God. In other words, young adults stay in the church when there is a safe place to be real, ask questions, and be broken.
2. Through relationships and doctrine, young adults have seen Jesus at the center.
3. Young adults stay when, through the church's encouragement and openness, they find their identity and purpose as children of God.
4. Young adults stay when all generations of the church fulfill their mission together.
5. Young adults have accepted that they are God's legacy.

Why are young adults leaving the church?

1. Young adults do not see the enactment of God's character within the church.
2. Young adults do not take responsibility in the church because we are not permitted ownership in the church.
3. Young adults do not grasp the vision of the church because the church community does not see them as equals and, at times, refuses to acknowledge that they are valuable, needed, and vital members of the church.
4. Because of a lack of meaningful relationships, young adults do not feel as if they belong in the church.
5. The church has neither understood nor accepted the complete role God has called them to. Often, young adults are casualties of the church's inability to portray God's love.
6. Young adults feel as if they are not allowed to ask questions.

What do young adults need from the church?

1. The church needs to see young adults as a mission field by prioritizing the finances for education¹ and by putting young adults in leadership positions at the local church, conference, union, North American Division, and General Conference levels.
2. Young adults need a church family who accepts and values their input and questions, but also holds them accountable in their relationship with Christ.
3. The church needs to value young adults the same way Christ values His children rather than valuing them according to materialistic appearance.
4. Young adults wish to hear the church say, "The prayer warriors, the doubters, the artists, the analytics, the musicians, the introverts—any and all are needed and wanted in our church family."
5. Young adults wish to hear the church say, "We are all broken and we will find healing together in a judgment-free environment through Christ."
6. Young adults need to be engaged with the church through responsibility and ownership and need to be treated as an equal part of the body of Christ.

¹Find ways to lessen the cost of educations through alternative means so that more Adventist youth can attend our schools, academies, and universities.